Developing Identities
The relational Identities of New Zealand NGOs

By Andrew Johnston

A thesis submitted to Victoria University of Wellington in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Development Studies

School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences
Victoria University of Wellington
Te Whare Wānanga o Te Ūpoko o Te Ika a Māui
Aotearoa New Zealand
2011
Abstract

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are significant institutions within development. Ideally, they represent the voice and aspirations of grassroots communities and they are born of a movement of local communities in the North and South. NGOs, however, are experiencing a crisis of identity. Changing geopolitical paradigms, increasingly critical analysis from the development academy and, in New Zealand especially, significant changes in the funding environment have caused substantial challenges to NGO identity, purpose and legitimacy. This research qualitatively assesses the identity of Northern NGOs (NNGOs) in New Zealand. It explores the elusive identity of these organisations through the focal point of their partnerships.

Using narrative analysis in semi-structured interviews with development practitioners from varied organisations, this thesis elucidates the challenges and aspirations of NNGO identity. This thesis analyses these identities through three themes: in the manner in which they communicate their identity to their partners and supporters; in their understanding and enactment of the inherent power imbalances of the North-South dichotomy; and in the forming of relationships in the South that inform their primary functional identity. In response to the changing environment within which they work, NNGO identities are increasingly fragmented, their roles as fundraisers, programme workers and advocates for justice often conflict and inform an identity that is multiple, fluid and complex.

Contemporary NNGOs must find legitimacy in their connection to the grassroots in the North and the South, in advocacy, in programming, in fundraising and in fulfilling their in role of translators and mediators of development. The changes to the New Zealand government’s support of NNGOs have brought a significant challenge to these roles, and the NNGO response to these challenges will be definitive in the years to come. Most importantly, NNGOs are reclaiming their role as the representatives of a transnational movement of people working together to bring equity and justice, and to facilitate development that local communities can understand and control.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank firstly all my participants in this research and all the hardworking staff and volunteers of NGOs in New Zealand; they give our movement voice and are a constant inspiration. Secondly, I would like to thank my research Supervisor Dr. Andrew McGregor, for his patience and ability to see clear ideas through my crazy ramblings. I would like to thank all the Deve Girls that were friends, proofreaders and examples to me for this last two years. Especially I want to thank Alana, for being there in my craziest moments and allowing me to be there during yours.

I want to thank my friends, family and flatmates, for your support, encouragement and putting up with my complaining and my tendency to be a hermit. I especially want to thank Janesha, for loving me and reminding how to be human. Lastly, I want to thank my grandparents, Margaret Johnston and Frederick Armour, and all those in their generation who have been supporting development for decades before I cared. These people tirelessly support NGOs and care deeply. They have never given up and provide the voluntary hours and fundraising that nobody notices. I hope my generation will learn from you and make you proud.
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTENTS</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ACRONYMS</td>
<td>VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 DEFINITIONS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 RESEARCH RATIONALE</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 THESIS OUTLINE</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 THE DEVELOPING IDENTITIES OF NGOs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 The evolution of NGOs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 NGO identity crisis</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3 Multiplicitous identities</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4 Legitimate and reflexive identities</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 POWER WITHIN DEVELOPMENT RELATIONSHIPS</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1 Different frameworks of power</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2 The enactment of power</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 IDENTIFYING THROUGH RELATIONSHIP</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 CONCLUSION</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 3 – NEW ZEALAND NGOS

3.1 INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 19
3.2 INTERNATIONAL AID AND NNGOS ................................................................................... 19
    3.2.1 Becoming the Magic Bullet .......................................................................................... 19
    3.2.2 The new context for NNGOs ....................................................................................... 21
3.3 DEVELOPMENT NGOs IN NEW ZEALAND ...................................................................... 22
    3.3.1 New Zealand’s own development ................................................................................. 22
    3.3.2 New Zealand NGOs .................................................................................................. 23
3.4 AID ENVIRONMENT OF NEW ZEALAND NGOs ............................................................... 25
    3.4.1 Support for New Zealand NGOs .................................................................................. 25
    3.4.2 Relationship between the state and New Zealand NGOs ............................................ 26
3.5. 2010 REFORM OF NZAID ............................................................................................... 28
    3.5.1 The response from NGOs and Academics ................................................................. 29
    3.5.3 Growing tension ......................................................................................................... 29
3.6 CONCLUSION ..................................................................................................................... 30

CHAPTER 4 – METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................... 31
4.2 POSITIONALITY ..................................................................................................................... 31
4.3 PREVIOUS STUDIES INTO NGO IDENTITY AND RELATIONSHIPS .................................. 34
4.4 METHODOLOGY .................................................................................................................. 34
    4.4.1 Qualitative Methods .................................................................................................... 34
    4.4.2 Appreciative inquiry ................................................................................................... 35
    4.4.3 Narrative Analysis ....................................................................................................... 36
4.5 METHODS ............................................................................................................................ 38
    4.5.1 Semi-structured interviews ......................................................................................... 38
    4.5.2 Analysis ....................................................................................................................... 40
    4.5.3 The participants ......................................................................................................... 41
4.6 ETHICS ................................................................................................................................. 42
4.7 LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH .................................................................................. 42
4.8 CONCLUSION ....................................................................................................................... 43
7.3.2 The prevalence and risks of opportunism ..................................................76
7.3.2. Fitting the complexity of development into a ‘box’ .................................77
7.4. NNGOs AS ADVOCATES, MEDIATORS AND TRANSLATORS .......................... 78
7.4.1 Being an advocate to the Development industry ......................................79
7.4.2. Recognising difference and creating dialogue ......................................80
7.4.3. Identifying through solidarity ....................................................................82
7.5 CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................83

CHAPTER 8 – CONCLUSION .....................................................................................84
8.1 INTRODUCTION TO CONCLUSION .................................................................84
8.2 REVIEW ............................................................................................................. 84
  8.2.1 Schizophrenic identities ............................................................................ 84
  8.2.2 The identity forming nature of power ....................................................84
  8.2.3 Relational identities .................................................................................. 85
8.3 EMERGING THEMES ..................................................................................... 85
  8.3.1 The destabilising and fragmenting of Northern Identity ....................... 85
  8.3.2 Bridge-building ...................................................................................... 86
  8.3.3 The challenge of legitimacy .................................................................... 86
  8.3.4 2010 reform of New Zealand’s ODA .................................................... 87
  8.3.5 Rebuilding a movement .......................................................................... 87
8.4 FURTHER RESEARCH .................................................................................... 88
8.5 CONCLUSION - THE FUTURE FOR NNGOs .................................................89

REFERENCES ...........................................................................................................91

APPENDICES ..........................................................................................................106
  APPENDIX A - INFORMATION SHEET FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS .... 106
  APPENDIX B - CONSENT FORM FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH THE NGO STAFF ...... 107
  APPENDIX C - THE PARTICIPANTS .................................................................. 108
List of Figures and Tables

List of Figures

Figure 3.1 - The Funding of New Zealand NGOs .................................................................24
Figure 3.2 - New Zealand ODA towards the Pacific.............................................................25
Figure 3.3 – NGO programme budgets by region.................................................................26
Figure 4.1 - Semi-structured interview outline.....................................................................39

List of Tables

Table 4.1 – The participants..................................................................................................41
## List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORSO</td>
<td>Council of Overseas Relief and Service Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CID</td>
<td>Council of International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWS</td>
<td>Christian World Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAF</td>
<td>Humanitarian Action Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOHA-PICD</td>
<td>Kaihono hei Oranga Hapori o Te Ao - Partnerships for International Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFAT</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNGO</td>
<td>Northern Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZADDS</td>
<td>New Zealand Aid and Development Dialogues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZAID</td>
<td>New Zealand Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODA</td>
<td>Overseas Development Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDF</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNGO</td>
<td>Southern Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VASS</td>
<td>Voluntary Agency Support Scheme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Non-Governmental Organisations work on behalf of communities across the world. Their interactions with various groups cement their purpose and value within the aid chain. Their legitimacy, purpose and constituency however, are under increasing scrutiny and they need to re-establish their identities to retain their important role. In this thesis, I observe the identities of Non-Governmental Organisations in Development through their interactions. Throughout history, governments and businesses have consistently pursued development within societies. Meanwhile, a movement has grown representing the development aspirations and concerns of local communities. This movement creates organisations with policy and process, to represent their goals and desires for the betterment of people's lives. The institutional result of this movement is the growing number of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the wealthy/developed parts of the world, or the North; and the poorer/less developed parts of the world, or the South.

Northern NGOs (NNGOs) work towards representing the needs of those in poverty in their own countries, while raising funds and advocacy to help their Southern equivalents. Meanwhile, Southern NGOs (SNGOs) work towards lifting their own people out of poverty, and creating sustainable engagements with the wider world. These two functional identities have a working reciprocity, while NNGOs provide essential funds and bring international influence and expertise to the SNGOs. SNGOs provide legitimacy and purpose to those in the North. N NGO identity and its creation through this relationship is the point of inquiry in this thesis. NNGOs are experiencing a challenge to their legitimacy and identity as their context and relationships have changed dramatically. It is in this new context that they strive to define, understand and justify themselves as they work. Resolving this ontological challenge is a primary inspiration for this thesis.

This introductory chapter lays the foundation and structure for the research and its findings. I will explain the aim and objectives for this thesis, which forms a framework for the following sections of analysis. I will then explain the rationale behind this inquiry. Lastly, I will outline the structure of the overall thesis.
1.2 Aim and Objectives

Aim: To examine the identities of New Zealand Development NGOs

I will examine these identities through three research objectives, each contributing towards a comprehensive exploration of NNGO identity.

Objective One: To explore NNGO staff perspectives of their organisations’ identities

Firstly, this inquiry is through the perspectives of NNGO staff. This objective explicitly looks at identity through the way NNGO employees communicate and understand their work in context. This analysis focuses especially on the communication and justification of the NNGO’s identity. Chapter 5 analyses this objective.

Objective Two: To analyse the sharing of power in SNGO-NNGO relationships

Secondly, the perspective and practice of power pervades the work of NNGO staff. This objective gives this research and NNGO identity a framework of power as a backdrop and develops a picture of the influences over NNGO work and identity. This objective will be analysed in chapter 6.

Objective Three: To investigate NNGO staff stories of SNGO-NNGO relationships.

The formation of NNGO identities is primarily through their relationships. By investigating the stories of relationship between NNGOs and SNGOs, I will examine the primary functional identity of NNGOs. I will analyse this objective in Chapter 7.
1.3 Definitions

In this thesis I use several terms that are common in Development studies. It is important to spend some time looking at my word choice for three specific terms: Development, Civil Society; and North and South. I will define other important terms, such as identity and power throughout the thesis, as they become relevant.

Firstly, development itself is a highly contested term. To understand development clearly, it is important to understand the different ways it is used. In this thesis I work within a twofold definition presented by Cowen and Shenton (1996 and 1998) of immanent and intentional development. Immanent development is an on-going process that is perpetually changing countries and communities economically, socially and environmentally. It happens everywhere and to everybody. When referring to immanent development throughout this thesis, I will use a lower case d, as in development. Intentional Development, on the other hand is the process where different actors try to control immanent development by empowering those who are most negatively affected, or by implementing projects through Development aid. When referring to intentional development throughout this thesis, I will use an upper case D, as in Development. This division has become a common way to define and analyze development, and it is especially useful for the study of NGOs (Hart, 2001; Hickey & Mohan, 2005; Mitlin, Hickey, & Bebbington, 2008; Thomas, 2000). This definition is useful in that it frames NGOs as practitioners of intentional Development attempting to mitigate and control the reckless process of immanent development.

In this research, I position NNGOs within the context of civil society. Frequently academics define civil society by its position as a counter pole to government and market (Kenny, 2007; Lehman, 2007; Valentinov, 2008). Civil society represents communities that gather informally, drawn by motives of social cohesion, shared beliefs or cultural commonalities, rather than governance or profit. I place NGOs within civil society as is often done in the study of development (Aveling, 2010; Bano, 2008; Clark, 1995; Kenny, 2007; Lehman, 2007; Logister, 2007; Mitlin, Hickey, & Bebbington, 2007; Mowles, 2008; Thomas, Chhetri, & Hussaini, 2008; Turner, 2011). This placement is especially relevant for my thesis as it reveals an important theme within this research. NGOs, in the North, South, and collectively, consider themselves as a source of community voice and mobilisation.
Lastly, I adopt the terms North and South to refer to different parts of the world in the context of Development (Elliott, 1987; Fowler, 1991; Johnson & Wilson, 2006; Thérien, 1999). The North is a term to describe what has been referred to in other times as ‘The West’, the ‘First World or the ‘Developed World’ (Thérien, 1999). The North in this conception is the countries that are industrialised, developed and democratic, who comprise the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Within Development, Northern countries are generally donors. The South on the other hand refers to the, previously termed, ‘developing’, ‘undeveloped’ or ‘underdeveloped’ countries, or ‘the Third World’. They are generally the recipients of Development aid (Thérien, 1999). I have chosen these terms primarily because they are within the lexicon of my participants, and the primary terms used within Development literature (de Jong, 2009; Elliott, 1987; Fowler, 1991; Hellinger, 1987; Johnson & Wilson, 2006; Lewis, 1998; Mawdsley, Townsend, & Porter, 2005; Maxwell, 1998; Meyer, 1995; O’Reilly, 2011; Salm, 1999; Silk, 2004; Simbi & Thom, 2000; Thérien, 1999; Van Rooy, 2000; Wallace, 1997). I chose them to help identify and integrate the analysis from interviews and research from literature. An important theme in this research is the realisation that these terms are currently losing their meaning in the changing world, as the borders between North and South begin to dissolve. However, I retain their usage, as it reflects the dichotomised worldview that envelopes NNGO work and understanding, and is often a symbolic justification for their organisation’s existence.

1.4 Research Rationale

This research is firstly a personal academic interest. Over the last four years, I have worked in an NGO where my role was to communicate our organisation’s work to supporters. I found in this role, a constant challenge to understand the identity and purpose of the organisation. It was from this professional challenge I formulated the idea for this research. In my work, I felt that the relationships our organisation had were instrumental in developing the organisation’s identity. It was the stories of partnership that created our sense of purpose and legitimacy. It is through these relationships I want to explore a clearer understanding of NNGO identity.

This question of legitimacy is a second motivation for this research. Several authors within Development studies have recently claimed that there is a crisis of legitimacy for NNGOs (Bernstein, 2011; Collingwood, 2005; Edwards, 1999b; Edwards & Hulme, 1996; Jarvik, 2007;
NGOs based in the North are finding it difficult to claim the right to represent and to advocate on behalf of those in poverty in the South. This is for several reasons: the changing nature of geopolitics and economics within an increasingly globalised world, the emerging empowerment of Southern communities and the change in the funding arrangements in the North. This thesis looks through the relationships and identity of NGOs as a means of observing their claims of legitimacy and purpose. This is also, why power is an essential element in my thesis. It is the history and nuances of power between North and South that has influenced their previous and current problems of legitimacy (Chambers, 2006; Ferguson, 1990; Gaventa, 2006; Groves & Hinton, 2004; Kelsall & Mercer, 2003; Kilby, 2006; Lister, 2000; Miraftab, 1997; Oller, 2006; Shutt, 2006; Simbi & Thom, 2000). As mentioned previously, the dichotomy of the North and South is beginning to dissolve. Poverty and wealth are endemic to all parts of the world, and the response to it, similarly, is from everywhere to everywhere. This has fundamentally challenged the NGO role. It is within this challenge that I situate this research, as a means of understanding NGO purpose in a vastly different world than that which birthed them.

I also situate my research within New Zealand. This is partly because it is in New Zealand that I have been involved within the NGO sector, it is also where I feel most comfortable and appropriate conducting research. Furthermore, the NGO sector in New Zealand at this time is a fascinating field of study. For years, these organisations have been heavily subsidised by the New Zealand government through a scheme called: Kaihono hei Oranga Hapori o te Ao - Partnerships for International Community Development (KOHA-PICD). This has recently been overhauled causing the industry to have a difficult time financially. This overhaul has led to the need to find space within already tight budgets and a new reporting procedure that may cause the change of some fundamental Development principles. It is in this time that NGO grasp of identity and purpose is essential.
1.5 Thesis Outline

The remainder of this thesis will follow the subsequent structure:

In Chapter 2, I review the literature following my three main points of focus: identity, power and relationships. In this chapter, I look through the research analysing the NGO mechanism of aid throughout its history. This review informs my perspective as I analyse the data I gathered through interviews. In Chapter 3, I provide the reader with a contextual picture of New Zealand where I conducted this research. I explore the movement that created NGOs internationally, how that movement translated to a New Zealand context, and how it exists today. This section provides important background for many of the changes faced by those I interviewed. In Chapter 4, I outline the framework that guides me as a researcher. Firstly, I explore how my positionality affects my research and findings. I then explore the methodological considerations of qualitative research, narrative analysis and appreciative inquiry. I will also use this chapter to explain the logistics of the research itself, including how I interviewed people, and who those people were.

In chapters 5, 6 and 7 I will analyse my research results. I will accumulate the stories and thoughts of my research participants into a cohesive flow of narrative, integrating aspects from the literature and my own analysis. In chapter 5, I will explicitly explore identity construction within NNGOs. I will look especially at their conflicted identities, their claims of legitimacy and lastly their reflexive approach. In chapter 6, I will explore the power dynamics between NNGOs and SNGOs. I will look at power in context, as it is experienced in the North, the South and between these two places. In these places, I will explore three key frameworks for understanding power, revealing that relational power is a defining feature for NNGOs. In chapter 7, I will look at the relationships implied as chapter 6 ends. I will analyse these relationships through the priority of relationship, flexibility in relational process and the bridge building role that NNGOs increasingly find definitive.

In Chapter 8, I will review the thesis as a whole, and then explore some emerging themes from my analysis. I will tie together the ideas of legitimacy, multiplicity and power into an understanding of how New Zealand NNGOs construct and justify their identities. I will provide comment on further research this thesis has provoked. I will then end this thesis with a reflection on the future identity and purpose of NNGOs in the New Zealand context.
Chapter 2 – Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the construction of identity within Northern Non-Governmental Organisations (NNGOs). The primary focus is the way the relationship between NNGOs and Southern Non-Governmental Organisations (SNGOs) informs identity. The interplay between North and South has always been formative in development ideologies and practice, this relational context is especially formative for the identity of NNGOs. In this thesis, I have three main themes of analysis: identity, power and relationships. These correlate to my three research objectives. In chapters five, six and seven, I will explore these in depth through participant interviews. In this chapter, I will lay the conceptual and theoretical framework for these discussions.

Firstly, I will examine the often-vague term NGO, and obtain a firmer definition for use within this thesis. I will derive this definition from the practice of organisations that have identified as NGOs throughout the history of development work. To explore the idea of NGOs I will look at the historical and contemporary means by which NNGOs form their identities. I will also look at how the overall development context has influenced NGOs and their identities.

In the second section, I will examine the different frameworks for understanding power within these relationships. Power is an essential ingredient in NNGO identity: it shapes the interactions of NNGOs with their partners and imbalances of power are a significant motivation and obstacle in their work. I will explore the literature’s examination of power as a resource, power in discourse and relational power as something shared and grown collectively. I will explore how these different understandings of power influence NNGO relationships and identity. I will end this section with a reflection on the emerging symbolism of transformational development recognising that development is at its heart a transformation of power structures.

Thirdly, the relationships between NNGOs and SNGOs are formative in identity and it is important to examine how these are understood within development literature. Taking a relational approach to power displays the nuances of power sharing within development. The building of networks and relationships in order to achieve development goals has been a
fundamental identity of NGOs. It is for this reason that exploring the practice and nature of relationships is essential to an inquiry into NGO identity. This will include reflections of relational space between these institutions and the context within which they exist. I will also look at the priority put on relationships and how informal relational actions can be formative in development work. I will lastly look at how the relational understanding of NGO work brings NGO employees to their function as a bridge between worlds, and how increasingly there is a call for NGO-SNGO relationships to become a network of solidarity rather than a financial preoccupation of the aid chain.

2.2 The developing identities of NGOs

NGOs are inherently vague and problematic creatures to describe and observe (Ahmed & Potter, 2006; Desai, 2002; Edwards, 1999c). Definitively, NGOs are organisations that are not part of a government’s structure. Development literature, however, creates a clearer understanding, explaining NGOs as units of civil society existing as the counter pole to the state and the market (Kenny, 2007; Lehman, 2007; Valentinov, 2008). NGOs are the functional and institutionalised edge of civil society as they enact the voice and purpose of communities without the influence of commercial or electoral mandates. More functional definitions would describe NGOs as organisations that are autonomous from the state, who do not strive for profit, and deliver or advocate some form of benefit to society (Biekart, 1999; Simmons, 1998). This definition has been adopted by the United Nations (Simmons, 1998).

This description is, unhelpfully vague, as Simmons (1998) suggests, saying that “the working definition of NGOs embraces just about every kind of group except for private businesses, revolutionary or terrorist groups, and political parties” (Simmons, 1998, p. 83). Because of the unclear nature of this definition, I will explore the existence of NGOs in their context, exploring their history and geography to better define them.

2.2.1 The evolution of NGOs

In the following paragraphs, I explore NGOs ontologically as they have evolved alongside the development paradigm. During the last 30 years NGOs have built a firm place within the development landscape in their advocacy, humanitarian and programmatic roles (Hulme & Edwards, 1997; Lewis, 2006). There are over 30,000 Development NGOs existing within the North and possibly millions within the South (Crewe & Harrison, 1998; Roberts & Frohling, 2005). NGO existence and identity originated at a certain time and place in history, and their
role and identity as development actors has been the creature and creator of much
development discourse (Mitlin, et al., 2007). The term NGO itself was first popularised in
the United Nations (U.N.) Charter in 1946 (Boli & Thomas, 1997; Simmons, 1998; Willetts,
2000), where they were given a consultative status within the U.N framework. The
organisations that the U.N. described and endorsed were considered the first generation of
development NGOs (Martinussen & Pedersen, 2003). These organisations created a
community-based means of interaction between North and South. ‘Development’ as an
intentional pursuit began in this same context. The historical roots of this movement are
arguably in colonial relationships or a post-colonial drive for the North to support
development in former colonies (Fisher, 1997; Hudock, 1999).

Whether the perpetuation of Northern imperialism or earnest philanthropy, the 1940s
started a new stage in the negotiated space between North and South in how they work
towards common development goals. The latter half of the twentieth century saw the rise of
organised civil society’s role in development relationships. NGOs became a preferred method
of delivering development aid (Fowler, 2000a; Parks, 2008; Pishchikova, 2006; Tembo, 2003;
Thomas, 1996; Thomas, et al., 2008), emphasising their position as the third influence on
development, alongside the state and the market (Kenny, 2007; Lehman, 2007; Mitlin, et al.,
2007; Valentinov, 2008). Many theorists saw the role of NGOs in mediating the negative
effects of mainstream development implementation from state and market actors (Salamon
& Anheier, 1997; Valentinov, 2008). The dominance of aid delivery continued to be through
bilateral and multilateral aid agreements. However, civil society aid delivery became an
important place of praxis for the forging of new aid modalities and Northern partners’
increased ability to support advocacy alongside programmatic development work (Dicklitch
& Rice, 2004; Ebrahim, 2001). Some would contend, however, that civil society development
relationships became a microcosm of the dominant ideas and practice of mainstream
development (Simbi & Thom, 2000; Van Der Heijden, 1987). As such, the history of NNGOs
followed similar patterns to the history of development ideologies in general, creating a
related and challenging critique to the function of NNGOs.
2.2.2 NGO identity crisis

Contemporary NGOs are experiencing an identity crisis (Edwards, 1999b; Hailey, 2000; Harris, 2011; Lister, 2000; Ossewaarde, 2008). There are three key influences on this ‘crisis’: firstly, critique from the development academy; secondly, discontent of the southern NGOs and lastly a change in the North/south paradigm. Development academia has characterised NNGOs as part of the as discursive and controlling field of development. With well-intentioned development often dismissed as neo-colonialism and coercion. Civil society would seem to be free from this critique, with its roots in community and its ability to retain radical and often dynamic methods. However, even the promises of NNGOs’ emphasis on participation have revealed underlying power structures. Local participants from the South are often involved in the implementation of projects, but not in their governance or design, which reflects a Northern-owned process (Mitlin, et al., 2007). Many have called the NGO relationships themselves highly unequal and old systems of inequality in disguise (Fowler, 1997; Malhorta, 2000; Mohan, 2002).

An increasing discontent from the South has complemented the academic critique (Edwards, Hulme, & Wallace, 1999; Fowler, 1991; Van Rooy, 2000). While NNGOs have always relied on their partners in the South for legitimacy, donors and SNGOs are beginning to question the necessity of this intermediary. SNGOs upset by the continuation of inequalities in these relationships, and donors insisting for more efficient aid delivery, often bypass NNGOs altogether (Malhorta, 2000). There also exists in Vandra Harris’s (2008) findings, as well as in other literature, a feeling that it may be best for SNGOs to reject foreign partnerships altogether and continue on their own, despite the lack of funding (Ahmad, 2004; Harris, 2008).

The empowerment and discontent of the South complements an increasingly globalised world where the lines between North and South are increasingly blurry (Maxwell, 1998), and the division between civil society in the South and the North is becoming increasingly unclear. Some writers suggest that an insistence on the north-south model of civil society has itself become a harmful distraction (Ahmad, 2004; Brigg, 2002; Fisher, 1998; Lewis, 1998). As mentioned in chapter one of this thesis, the borders between North and South are becoming harder to define, and this challenge to NGO identity is common in development literature (de Jong, 2009; Johnson & Wilson, 2006; Lewis, 1998; Mawdsley, et al., 2005; Maxwell, 1998;
It is no longer clear which countries are wealthy and which are poor, as new divisions of wealth and poverty develop that are transnational and intra-national. This confusion challenges the entire premise of a NNGO. Edwards (1999a) suggests the changes in geopolitical borders mean the decrease in importance of aid and an increase in the importance of international co-operation (Edwards, 1999b). This dissolving of the North-South dichotomy has directly challenged the role and legitimacy of NNGOs and, subsequently, their identity.

NNGOs face a crisis of identity, with a changing geopolitical context, a rising of Southern empowerment and a strong critique from academics. The time of NNGOs being an uncritical ‘magic bullet’ has clearly faded. To respond to these issues, NNGOs have developed several identities. In the next section, I will explore this multiplicitous and fragmented nature of NNGO identity.

2.2.3 Multiplicitous identities

One inherent issue for the clarification of NNGO identity is the challenge they face in having multiple identities and constituencies. They have donors from their home countries, advocacy networks that are international, and recipients in Southern localities (Lister, 2003). It is clear their identity is multiplicitous and has been described as schizophrenic (Bebbington, 2004; Doel, 1993; Hailey, 2000; Price, 2000; Tembo, 2003; Turner, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2010). In a case study conducted by Matthew Harris (2011), NNGO staff described that in their work “there were several identities in play simultaneously”; that “we attend to donors”, “we attend to beneficiaries”, “we attend to the confederation”, and finally “we attend to ourselves”. Fletcher Tembo (2003), in his analysis of contemporary NNGOs, says that because they must present certain images to states, donors, markets and their recipients, NNGOs constantly must present different identities to each disparate group they work with. It is in this functional context that NNGOs adopt multiplicitous identities.

A multifaceted and fluid identity appears to be the norm within NNGOs; one clear advantage of this is in the organisation’s ability to adapt and learn (Elliott, 1987; Sen, 1987). Another advantage is the ability for multiplicitous NNGOs to be strategic; their identities are not only ontological but also can be wielded to challenge the structures that create inequality (Harris, 2011). This multiplicity, however, can cause some difficulties, as it makes it hard for
NNGOs to have clear goals and guidelines (Berthélemy, 2006; Burnside & Dollar, 2000; Collier & Dollar, 2002; Roy & Chowdhury, 2009; Van Der Heijden, 1987). This schizophrenia can also lead to a disconnection between what NNGOs do in their programmes, what they say in their reports to donors, and in their marketing and advocacy work in the North. These three sides of NGO work are dependent on the desires of those who they are communicating with, rather than their integrity to each other (Berthélemy, 2006; Burger & Owens, 2010; Van Der Heijden, 1987). Some have challenged this multiplicity, saying it can be a way for NNGOs to ignore their own positioning, that they are from the North and they should be aware of the paradigm and privileges this entails (Cooke, 1997). There is a constant battle between being rooted in a certain paradigm but trying to work within a multi-paradigmatic model (Cooke, 1997).

2.2.4 Legitimate and reflexive identities

The challenges of legitimacy and reflexivity have caused NNGOs to look inward. An emerging trend within development literature is for practitioners to engage in reflexive thought; for NNGOs to consider earnestly their own positionality within the development field (Brigg, 2002; DaCosta, 2010; Kothari, 2001; Wils, 1996). The aforementioned crisis of identity is a key driver in this, as NNGOs try to discover the value they add to the development process. In part, this quest for identity for NNGOs is a quest to find legitimacy. Some theorists have chosen to say NNGOs are actually in a crisis of legitimacy rather than identity (Brigg, 2002). Settling the legitimacy of NNGOs is especially difficult due to their nature. They lack guaranteed support, government funding is often elusive and inconsistent, and their private donors’ support is completely voluntary and highly discretionary (Fowler, 1997; Uphoff, 1993). NNGOs are careful to be uncritical of donors, so to not threaten their funding, and very careful not be too challenging to the SNGO, so as not to threaten their justification for existence (Wallace, Bornstein, & Chapman, 2007). Lister (2003) claims that the legitimacy of NNGOs has often been justified technically through accountability, performance and representation, however we must dig deeper and discover the reasons behind NNGOs existing, this thesis is an attempt to unearth those reasons.

The resistance of NNGOs against self-reflection may be due to their inherent ironies as organisations. The purpose of NGOs is often to destroy the inequalities that allowed them to exist. Edwards (1999a, p. 28) puts it this way: “Founded as charities to channel money from
rich countries to poor countries, it is hardly surprising that NGOs find it difficult to adapt to a world of more equal partnerships and nonfinancial relationships.” Within development practice, many refer to this dilemma by the cliché of NGOs ‘working themselves out of a job’. If NGOs really achieve their goals, should they still exist? One example highlights this, Bill Clinton, reflecting on the aid given to Haiti and its lack of self-sufficiency building, asked the question, “Are we serious about working ourselves out of a job?” (Jones, 2010, p. 1). In response, one NNGO development practitioner informed the media that working ourselves out of a job “was not standard practice” (Jones, 2010, p. 1). Development theorists feel a similar tension in regards to NNGOs’ on-going purpose, and many are now asking the question of whether they should exist at all.

The challenges of reflexive and multiple identities lead this thesis to a discussion of power within development relationships. Power structures influence and define many of the concerns of legitimacy for NNGOs. It is in redressing power imbalances that NNGOs find their purpose, and it is in perpetuating power imbalances that creates the greatest challenges to NNGOs’ identities.

2.3 Power within development relationships

Nuances of power pervade all aspects of NNGO work. It is important to grasp the influence and understanding of power to comprehend how NNGOs conduct their relationships and form their identities. In chapter six of this thesis, I will explore how New Zealand NNGO practitioners viewed power. In the current section, I will explore different explanations and performances of power through NNGO work. The role of NNGO staff is one where they experience power within a conceptual dichotomy, between power as their enemy and power as their patron. NNGO employees often join the development industry in the hope of restructuring power to help those in poverty, then throughout their work eventually realise that a power imbalance is endemic to NNGO work itself. Cathy Shutt (2006) provides an interesting investigation of this journey of power within development, by exploring her work in an NGO as becoming a citizen of ‘aid-land’ (Shutt, 2006). Her metaphor reveals the intentions and frameworks of power through the journey of a young naïve development practitioner, from their beginnings within the aid industry until they themselves are perpetuating the destructive power structures within mainstream development.
The relationships between North and South are riddled with dilemmas and dialogues of power, as these relationships emerge from a context of inequality (Harrison, 2002). Increasingly, research is suggesting power is a key determinant of development relationships (Cahill, 2008; Lister, 2000; Simbi & Thom, 2000). NNGOs, despite claims of independence from the mainstream of development and a base in local communities, are working within an unavoidable context of power. Those trying to understand power explore its diverse definitions to comprehend how we can explain and mitigate the harmful power relationships within civil society development (Brigg, 2002; Cahill, 2008; Lister, 2000). Despite myriad understandings of the creation and experience of power, I will focus in this section on a threefold division that is in most development understandings: power in things, discursive power, and power in relationships (Allen, 2003; Cahill, 2008; Surrey, 1986).

2.3.1 Different frameworks of power

In the first conceptual framework, power is a reference to control that is inherent in ‘things’; that power is something we possess when we control certain resources. Amanda Cahill, in her analysis of power within development, concedes that this view, although discredited by many, has been very influential in development in the drive for people to be empowered by amassing material wealth (Cahill, 2008). Those who have certain things can coerce those without, to do what they want. The dominance of funding as a basis for relationships in development most clearly illustrates this type of power. This funding, somewhat ironically, is the main form of relationship and is also seen by many as the main barrier to an authentic partnership (Stirrat & Henkel, 1997; Wallace, et al., 2007). It has been suggested that this dominance of funding may make true partnership impossible (Lister, 2000). This funding dominance seems to imply that NNGOs cannot escape their history: their beginnings were as a post-World War II and postcolonial phenomenon, primarily as a new form of north-south resource exchange. The role of NNGOs can be considered a link between donors and beneficiaries, but it is generally still a bridge that brings funds from the North (Ahmad, 2004; Harris, 2008; Oller, 2006).

Cahill (2008) and others (Oller, 2006; Power, Mohan, & Mercer, 2006; Reith, 2010; Rossi, 2004; Sachs, 1992; Wallace, et al., 2007; Ziai, 2009) suggest alternative frameworks of power for understanding these relationships, influenced especially by the work of post-structuralist Michel Foucault. A post-structural approach to power offers a useful means of
understanding power in development. Foucault introduces us to power being multiple, relational and contextual, and these realisations can offer alternative pathways to empowerment of marginalised groups (Cahill, 2008). Power is considered immanent, within processes, practices and discourses of everyday life (Cahill, 2008). Foucault reminds us that power is not a substance; it is only a particular and specific type of relationship between individuals (Foucault, 2001; Oller, 2006). Foucault’s understanding of power also brings an awareness of the discursive nature of power; that the way we talk about development reflects and perpetuates power inequalities. The inequality in many development relationships is evident in the simple use of language: the term ‘partner’ is mostly used by NNGOs, while SNGOs often still consider those who partner with them as ‘funders’ (Harris, 2008). Words such as ‘local’ and ‘partner’ can act as discursive symbols in NNGOs’ quest for legitimacy and are often employed by NNGOs to legitimise their work (Grillo, 1997; Lister, 2003; Ossewaarde, 2008).

The third understanding of power, relational power, is power created within relationships. This framework is more beneficial to an understanding of NNGOs, as a relational framework envelops their work. NNGOs are simply a node in a vast network of development, it is in their network they create their meaning and create influence within the wider mechanisms of development. Relational power also offers a means of dismantling the unhelpful imbalances of power often associated with development, allowing NNGOs to construct effective and genuine relationships with meaning and influence in how they work together with SNGOs, rather than a simple transfer of power from North to South (Lister, 2000). This inherent power structure is endorsed from the South, as SNGOs often ask for respect and transparency more than money (Harrison, 2002). Relational power is also important for the context of New Zealand NNGOs, as their ability to network locally has been the foundation of effective advocacy and collaborative development outcomes, mainly through the organisation and networking of the Council of International Development (CID).

2.3.2 The enactment of power

The importance of redressing our understanding of power is not simply to identify the structures of power; the way we understand power also affects our maintenance of power. The Weberian framework, for example, by assuming material as being the holder of power, perpetuates the power of the rich and the powerlessness of the poor (Cahill, 2008). This
framework means that money remains the main source of power. Legitimacy or connections to grassroots communities may be other sources of power, and ones that NNGOs lack, and SNGOs possess (Medina, et al., 2009; Patel & Mitlin, 2002; Simbi & Thom, 2000). It is through this idea of power resting in things that a great irony of development exists: the drive for empowerment, if conducted simply through funding, has made many groups feel disempowered (Lister, 2000; Wallace, et al., 2007). Other examples include popular micro-enterprise projects that help women acquire wealth, but do not challenge gender roles within a household, assuming that the power comes with the resource — when, in some cases, the man still controls the wealth that women may acquire through relational power (Cahill, 2008).

Analysing the three systems of power allows one to view the power relationship within which NNGOs exist. This is an essential factor in their emerging identities. On one side, NNGOs are in a position of power, often with a vast Northern constituency within which they retain support. In relation to SNGOs they are a funder, controlling the resources and in many ways controlling the discourse through the promotion of western development speak and reporting techniques (Chambers, 2006). However, sometimes these positions of power are deceptive. NNGOs are reliant on funding themselves, they must pursue a vast and fickle constituency, as the supporters’ donations are entirely voluntary (Aldashev & Verdier, 2010; Okten & Weisbrod, 2000).

This leads to either a drive for populism and appeasement, or clever marketing strategies that may not represent the reality of their work (Berthélemy, 2006; Burger & Owens, 2010; Van Der Heijden, 1987). They are also often reliant on the support of their local governments. Government funding either supplements or provides the bulk of NNGO budgets; this arrangement can leave NNGOs vulnerable to political manipulation. The influence of donors on NNGOs has become a major concern within development literature (Ahmad, 2004; Dichter, 1999; Harris, 2008; Lister, 2000; Medina, et al., 2009; Oller, 2006; Sizoo, 1996). On the other side, they are also reliant on their Southern counterparts for connection to the “fields of development”, to the “grassroots”, to the immediate “needs” of those in “poverty” (Dichter, 1999; Nunnenkamp, Weingarth, & Weisser, 2009). Their connection to these terms is from their SNGO partners, and is essential in maintaining a home constituency (Grillo, 1997; Lister, 2003; Ossewaarde, 2008). Therefore, although the NNGOs are often
considered the wielders of power within the aid chain, in reality they are doubly dependant, and need resources from both sides (Lister, 2000).

It is imperative, in many authors’ opinion, that the process of development should ensure that in the North and in the South we can all be part of a transformative process that will dissolve these dichotomised divisions and enhance learning for all involved (Fisher, 1997; Takahashi, 2006; Tembo, 2003). In referring to development partnerships Sarah White said: “If it is genuine, the process must be transformative, not only for the ‘weaker’ partner but also for the outside agency and for the relationship between them” (White, 1996). This relationship is where SNGOs and NNGOs create and share power. It is where civil society wields a power to contend with mainstream development. This relationship, however, is not a simple friendship, it is complex and fluid, the next section will explore the way NNGOs exist and function within relationship.

2.4 Identifying through relationship

Relationships for all people and organisations are integral to an understanding of self. Geographic understandings of social identity are often placed within theories of a network (Brigg, 2002; Doel, 1993; Lemke, 2001; Rossi, 2004). Identity within a network is primarily defined by the interactions with other actors within that network (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Hailey, 2000; Harris, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2010). It is through this ontology that theorists have emphasised development relationships’ formative effect on the identity of development organisations. Nira Yuval-Davis (2010, p. 1) explored the relational aspects of identity, saying: “To be means to be for the other and through him, for oneself. Man has no internal sovereign territory, he is always on the boundary; looking within himself he looks in the eyes of the other or through the eyes of the other. I cannot do without the other; I cannot become myself without the other.”

Development theory is now prioritising the relational aspects of civil society’s role. This is prompted by the questioning of the role NGOs will play in the future, and the realisation of a far more fluid and dynamic environment within which they work, “Civil society—and the place of NGOs within it—must therefore be treated carefully, historically, conceptually, and above all relationally” (Bebbington, 2005). What this relational understanding means in development practice is an emphasis on forming relationships rather than achieving outcomes. While the process and outcomes of development in documentation may be clean,
accountable and controlled, in relationships this is very different (Wallace, et al., 2007) where the dominant mechanism of collaboration is considered to be personal relationships (Lister, 2000). It is often personal connections rather than institutional ones that are considered primary in maintaining good relationships with ‘partners’ (Lister, 2000). The trust needed for a good relationship does not always rely on rigidly mutual goals, but rather in valuing and acknowledging each other through building a trusting relationship. Many of those interviewed by Vandra Harris identified small gestures as being very important in creating trust, such as learning some of the local language and taking some effort to respect cultural nuances (Harris, 2008; Mommers & van Wessel, 2009). Many development academics strive to remind us that development should be a process not a project (Kothari, 2001); that the way we do development is far more important than the outcomes or specifics of any project plan — it is in this reminder that we are shown the primacy of relationships. One on-going problem within the research of development is that its drive to be rooted in practice leads to a concentration of thought on case studies and atomised development moments, and subsequently NGOs have been considered as bounded conceptual units, whereas, in reality, development is a fluid and constant process delivered through friendships. Rather than existing within geographic constraints, development pervades and moves through networks.

2.5 Conclusion

The relationships between NNGOs and SNGOs are primary to the identity formation of NNGOs. This chapter has explored the ontological construction of NNGOs through their history; the power between North and South; and the relational process of development, in practice how development academics have explored these identities. Development NGOs have vague identities. However, they have etched an important function for themselves between the North and South within the development landscape. It is in this space that NNGOs translate and mitigate power relationships and create identity in practice. In their work, NNGOs construct identity through relationships; the flexible and informal nature of their work is hard to represent in reporting, but it forms genuine connections that are functional in an emerging transnational network of development rooted in civil society. The literature envelops my three research objectives, exploring the urgent need for inquiry into NNGO identity and legitimacy, the importance of power in these identities and the need to explore NNGOs in their relational context.
Chapter 3 – New Zealand NGOs

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the context of NGOs in New Zealand. The history of NGOs provides an important backdrop for their current identity. Firstly, I will examine the history the NGOs internationally. I will then explore the history of development in New Zealand. Finally, I analyse the environment within which the organisations conduct their work. In this chapter, I will also explore in depth the changes in the New Zealand government’s Aid programme during 2009 to 2011. This change represents a significant challenge to New Zealand NGOs, their identity, their work and their relationships.

3.2 International Aid and NGOs

Academic analysis considers NGOs a recent phenomenon (Hulme & Edwards, 1997; Lewis, 2006). However, communities banding together to support the distant ‘other’ have been in existence for centuries. NGOs simply represent one of the most recent institutionalised forms of civil society. When examining Development NGOs, many writers consider a four-stage history (Ahmad, 2004; Bratton, 1989; Edwards, 1999a; Korten, 1987; Martinussen & Pedersen, 2003; Mitlin, et al., 2007). In this section, I explore today’s NGO environment within this four-generation history.

3.2.1 Becoming the Magic Bullet

The first generation of NGOs began after World War II as relief organisations to assist countries recover from war (Challies et al., 2011). In New Zealand, many of these NGOs began as a means of supporting Europe’s own recovery from the wars. For example, Christian World Service’s (CWS) beginning was an appeal by New Zealand churches to provide shoes for the clergy in Greece (Mackay, 2010). Oxfam began when a university chaplain brought together students to give money and provisions for civilians in Greece (Ahmed & Potter, 2006). These NGOs were characterised by their appeal to the charitable nature of people to help those in need, especially using imagery of famine and desperation. At this time NGOs acted as direct implementers of Development, setting up branches in the South to deliver Development initiatives (Ahmad, 2004; Korten, 1987).
Practitioners and academics frustrated with the overt control in these methods challenged this approach. In response to this critique, a second generation of NNGOs was born in the 1970s (Edwards, 1999a; Korten, 1987). This second generation was a response to the inherent power struggle between North and South, and inextricably linked with the populist and participatory Development movements (Martinussen & Pedersen, 2003). Within this new role NNGOs adapted their modalities of aid and became more involved in participatory techniques to ensure that Development is owned by the locals it affects (Desai, 2002; Salamon & Anheier, 1997). This second generation focused on community Development strategies, helping locals develop their own resources and capacity to provide for their own people. With its insistence on grassroots solutions, Development strategies were decentralised and decisions delegated increasingly to the local level.

A third generation of NGOs emerged in the 1980s, interested in the global causes of poverty as well as local solutions. It was during this time that NGOs became popular as an aid modality. As Northern policy analysts and advisors promoted a neoliberal approach to government and Development, NGOs became seen as an alternative to government bureaucracies (Fisher, 1998; Fowler, 1991, 2000b; Malhorta, 2000; Salamon & Anheier, 1997; Thérien, 1999; Valentinov, 2008). NGOs became a ‘magic bullet’, able to solve any Development issue they targeted (Wils, 1996). Braton (1989) called this time the “NGO decade”. As a result there was an influx of writing on NNGOs at this time (see Antrobus, 1987; Bratton, 1989; Elliott, 1987; Hellinger, 1987; Korten, 1987; Lemaresquier, 1987; Minear, 1987; Mishler, 1989; Nyoni, 1987; Sen, 1987; Van Der Heijden, 1987).

A fourth generation of Development NGOs has arisen, with an increased emphasis on advocacy and challenging the root causes of poverty situated in the North (Nelson, 2004; Teegen, Doh, & Vachani, 2004). This may be a reassertion of NGOs as the counter pole to government (Ahmed & Potter, 2006; Bebbington, 2005). However this new generation is highly contested, other theorists suggest NGOs are in fact entering a time of deepening co-option by the state (Simbi & Thom, 2000). Many of those claim that this is a time of extreme transition and confusion for the role of NNGOs (Malhorta, 2000; Nunnenkamp, et al., 2009).
3.2.2 The new context for NNGOs

Many development academics lament the notion of the past that NGOs are the most effective means of aid delivery (Fowler, 2000a; Parks, 2008; Pishchikova, 2006; Tembo, 2003; Thomas, 1996; Thomas, et al., 2008). These authors challenge this assumption and suggest NNGOs may actually be a further cause of inequality in the Aid system. Critics of the NGO Development model have several points of contention. Firstly, they have highlighted their lack of legitimacy. As groups they are not answerable to a democratic scrutiny such as government, yet, they hold many of the same biases (Mitlin, et al., 2007) and may undermine a fragile government’s autonomy (Bratton, 1989; Bryce, 2009; Mitlin, et al., 2007). NGOs rely on a voluntary support base, leaving their constituency vulnerable and lacking firm and formalised support systems (Zanotti, 2010). Critics also say that their privileged and romanticised position is a risk in itself, as NNGOs have no popular mandate and rely on spurious public support based on marketing skills (Aldashev & Verdier, 2009; Mohan, 2002). Recent analysis has also highlighted NGOs lack of distinctive value in the multi-layered delivery of aid known as ‘the aid chain’ (Aveling, 2010; Oller, 2006; Scott-Villiers, 2007). In his seminal article, Malhorta (2000) describes NGOs simply as ladles in a global ‘soup kitchen’, rather than the transformative and intentional agents they claim to be. NNGOs often find themselves in the difficult position of critically analysing the global post-colonial system from which they were born.

A final criticism is that the role of NNGOs has slowly developed into being only the conduits of Northern funding. This role, although important for a long time, has become less meaningful as the drive to build SNGOs self-capacity has proved successful (Ahmad, 2004; Lewis, 1998). Other critiques have claimed NNGOs now do little more than represent the governments of their host countries and have simply become tools for a softer, more coercive development paradigm (Ahmad, 2004; Bebbington & R., 1997; Berthélemy, 2006; Hulme & Edwards, 1997; Koch, Dreher, Nunnenkamp, & Thiele, 2009). Some suggest that NNGOs, in fear of losing their purpose, perpetuate an unhelpful North-South dichotomy (Ahmad, 2004; Brigg, 2002; Fisher, 1997; Lewis, 1998).

These criticisms have formed the backdrop for what is the ‘new age’ for Development NGOs, as highly contested agents in an ever-changing Development context. In response to these criticisms, this new generation of NGOs have formed splintered, multiple identities (della
Porta, 2005; Fowler, 1993). Some splinters are choosing to emphasize their role as state and market watchdogs. Others have become primarily reflexive agents, encouraging their constituents in the North to engage in a process of change to challenge poverty at its root, changing the North’s own lifestyle of excess (Anderson, 2000; Brainard & Siplon, 2002; Jordan, 2000; Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Nelson, 2000; Nelson & Dorsey, 2003; Nyamugasira, 1998; O’Dwyer & Unerman; Salm, 1999). Others still, have simply become marketing entrepreneurs, focusing their efforts on the increasingly discretionary and commodified Development ‘donation market’ (Aldashev & Verdier, 2009, 2010; Antrobus, 1987; Edwards, 1999c; Okten & Weisbrod, 2000; Uvin, Jain, & Brown, 2000). The most conclusive feature of this new NGO age is that of uncertainty (Lister, 2003; Yuval-Davis, 2010). NNGOs are facing a legitimacy crisis (Bernstein, 2011; Collingwood, 2005; Edwards, 1999b; Michael Edwards & Hulme, 1996; Jarvik, 2007; Lister, 2003; Logister, 2007; Medina, et al., 2009; Morfit, 2011; Ossewaarde, 2008; Parks, 2008; Thomas, et al., 2008; Walton, 2008). In the next section, I will explore New Zealand’s historical aid environment and how this has affected the unique identity of New Zealand based Development NGOs.

3.3 Development NGOs in New Zealand

3.3.1 New Zealand’s own development

In his 1967 book exploring New Zealand’s history of aid-giving, Graeme Thompson asks the question “is New Zealand really a developed country?” (Thompson, 1967, p. 63). New Zealand’s own identity of ‘developed’ and consequently not ‘developing’ has always driven our sense of obligation to contribute aid internationally. New Zealand NGOs existence is dependent on why we, in New Zealand, feel we have the right or the obligation to give to others. In many measures, we have earned the title of developed. The international ‘clubs’ we belong to, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) clearly shows we have a high enough income to be able to feel generous. New Zealand’s Overseas Development Aid (ODA) formally began, as with many countries, in the response to World War II and the breakdown of colonialism (Banks, Murray, Overton, & Scheyvens, 2011; Challies, et al., 2011; Thompson, 1967). The giving of aid is a key determinant of a developed countries identity. As such, New Zealand’s history of aid giving has been an important part of our collective and state ego. This was articulated by Scheyvens & Overton.

It is easy to forget that New Zealand’s history has seen our country as the beneficiary of well-intentioned Development projects. When 1000 years ago Polynesian settlers came upon this country, their development was systematic and pragmatic - carrying their own agriculture, culture and communities, They developed this land and became its people - the Māori people (Patman, 2005). Approximately half a century later, a further development project occurred when English settlers decided to redevelop this country as an enclave of the British Empire. Again, they brought agriculture, culture and community. The subsequent dialogue between these two groups of developers has engaged New Zealand in a century of development. It is important in a thesis exploring the relational identity of Development aid, to highlight the relational identity of New Zealand itself. The Treaty of Waitangi, with its controversies and contradictory translations has formed a perpetual, and often tense, dialogue within New Zealand's identity as a whole. Our identity is one formed out of an uneasy dialogue, much like the relationships between NGOs in the North and South. By 1901 New Zealand had become a colonial power in its own right, with the administration responsibilities of the Cook Islands and Niue (Patman, 2005). Eventually New Zealand became a country with all the titles that oblige the giving of international aid, New Zealand became ‘developed’. Now the most Southeast piece of geography on earth was a proud member of the ‘West’ and the ‘North’.

3.3.2 New Zealand NGOs

By the middle of the twentieth century, the New Zealand government was clearly following its commitments to giving international aid (Challies, et al., 2011; Overton, 2009). Local communities and church organisations followed the international trend and began developing community based Development aid modalities. A lot of these were clumsy and ill-conceived compared to today’s best practice in Development, but they represented a growing sense of obligation (Sutton, Cordery, & Baskerville, 2007). In Thompsons’ 1967 book, he explores the current state of these volunteer aid organisations. In his telling of this time, the main player is generally considered CORSO (The New Zealand Council of Relief Services Overseas) which began as a means to send clothes to war torn Greece after World War II (Sutton, et al., 2007; Thompson, 1967). CORSO’s history is especially interesting
because its evolution neatly illustrates the three generations of Development NGOs followed by its demise. CORSO originally began providing relief and material aid, actively contributing to the United Nations varied Development efforts. The concern of the hour was provision to the needy. In Keith Holyoake’s introduction to a study of CORSO, he commends CORSO’s work of “bringing succour to the sick, food to the hungry, clothing to the unclothed and hope to the hearts of countless people” (Sutton, et al., 2007, p. ii). CORSO’s modality developed over the next few decades, becoming increasingly about allowing the aid recipients to be more involved in the aid decisions. As with most second-generation NGOs, this change in programming evolved into an impetus to challenge the root causes of poverty. Finally, in the 1970s CORSOs work took a dramatic shift towards a more nuanced understanding of Development that may be indicative of the debated fourth generation mentioned earlier. CORSO started to question whether New Zealand was ‘developed’ itself, and began to implement strategies to deal with New Zealand’s own poverty. CORSO’s decision to do this meant the government of the time stopped their financial support essentially paralysing CORSOs work (Sutton, et al., 2007).

Throughout the history of New Zealand NGOs, the relationship with the government has been an increasingly significant factor in their identity (Chile, 2006; Sutton, et al., 2007). NGOs are reciprocally important to the government delivery of aid: 18 percent of New Zealand ODA is directed through NGOs compared to only 7 percent on average by other OECD Donors (OECD, 2010). In 2007, the research institution UMR Research, conducted an extensive research project to gather an understanding of New Zealanders’ views on international aid. The survey revealed that over 12,600 people were doing voluntary work for such agencies, and they employed a further 1670 in New Zealand, whilst another 284 were working overseas (UMR, 2007). Overall, private donations are the overwhelming means of their financial support, as can be seen in Figure 3.1. However for some NGOs the government provides up to 70% of their funding (Challies, et al., 2011).
3.4 Aid Environment of New Zealand NGOs

3.4.1 Support for New Zealand NGOs

For the base of their support, NNGOs rely on the communities of the countries they live within, and often this support is subsidised by government funding. Some NGOs have clear constituencies, such as Christian World Service being an agency of the protestant mainline church denominations; Caritas working within the Catholic institution; or The Council of Trade Union’s Development programme relying on support from its union members. These sectors of society form the support base and the movement that drives NNGOs; they form a significant part of their identity. Several New Zealand Aid agencies would claim no such exclusive community in their identity, however generally there is a background demographic behind each. For example, World Vision relies heavily on church and high school support, and Oxfam represents a secular approach to Development.

The New Zealand demographic is overwhelmingly supportive of Development aid, and in particular of supporting NGOs to deliver this aid. A 2007 opinion poll showed that 76 percent of New Zealanders support international aid. However 60 percent doubt the government is effective at delivering this (UMR, 2007). New Zealanders also believe NGOs deliver more aid than government (CID, 2003; UMR, 2007). This is in fact incorrect, however it shows in public perception, civil society dominates aid delivery.

One significant factor in this demographic environment is the increasing amount of Pacific Island immigrants to New Zealand. This change alters the understanding of why we give aid and how we deliver it, as we perceive Development less as a ‘mysterious’ charitable act, and more as help for our neighbours. (Banks, et al., 2011; OECD, 2010). This demographic change correlates to an increased trend in New Zealand aid towards the Pacific, seen in Figure 3.2. This move towards the Pacific reflects a geopolitical trend within Development, that donors focus on their strategic geographic interests rather
than on the areas with the highest rates of poverty (Banks, et al., 2011). NGO funding, however, does not reflect this trend, as can be seen in this figure 3.3, where the Pacific receives only 16 percent of NGO funds. This causes a significant challenge for the relationship between NNGOs and the New Zealand government.

Many New Zealand NGOs have had a consistent public presence for almost half a decade. Meanwhile, their constituency has changed dramatically. New Zealand has become older, more individually orientated, more ethnically diverse and less Christian. Their understanding and perspective of development issues has broadened and deepened, however their loyalty to specific NGOs has diminished. All these trends are evident in the changing face of New Zealand NGOs: they are less Christian, they rely on individual donations more, and they all present a relatively secular approach to Development and cater to a range of communities and ethnic groups in their advertising and approach.

### 3.4.2 Relationship between the state and New Zealand NGOs

The New Zealand government has consistently supported, subsidised or supplemented the Development work of NNGOs. Three significant moments in this relationship have occurred during its history, all of which have come through changes of government.

The first is the beginning of the Voluntary Agency's Support Scheme (VASS) established by Norman Kirk’s Labour government in 1974. This marked the beginning of the New Zealand government's recognition of the work of civil society in a formalised and supportive manner. Kirk’s government significantly altered New Zealand’s aid strategy. During this administration, New Zealand’s ODA increased to its peak in 1975 (Banks, et al., 2011; Overton, 2009). According to Don Clarke (2005), VASS recognised two important points of difference in the work of NGOs. He states “The Scheme recognises that NGOs have expertise in working at the grass-roots level and are able to work in ways that government and official
The co-funding approach recognises NGO capacity to generate funds from the public to support international Development projects” (Clarke, et al., 2005, p. 2). The significance of VASS was that it showed a government commitment to supporting the delivery of aid through civil society. It also created a partnership model that remained for the next thirty years, where the government worked with NGOs to deliver aid whenever they were more effective (Banks, et al., 2011; Clarke, et al., 2005; Overton, 2009).

During the 1980s, New Zealand reduced the quantitative aid allocation to NGOs. Secondly with the emergence of new, well marketed NGOs, such as, World Vision and Oxfam, there was an imperative to be more competitive in gaining public donations (Challies, et al., 2011). One important advance was the formation of the Council for International Development (CID), a collective of all Development NGOs in New Zealand. At its height, it had over 90 members and served as an interface for government and NGO interests (Overton, 2009). The 1980s also saw a shift towards neo-liberal models and Development modalities (Banks, et al., 2011). This shift was international and was evident in policy changes in New Zealand. The government’s focus in aid was towards foreign policy gains as clearly articulated by the foreign minister, from 1990 to 1999, Don McKinnon who famously said aid was about “doing well from our doing good” (Scheyvens & Overton, 1995, p. 1).

The next major change in the government-NGO relationship was the creation of NZAID in July 2002. This was brought in by the new Labour-Alliance coalition government and saw an overhaul of New Zealand's ODA, its methods, and structure (Banks, et al., 2011). NZAID was a semi-autonomous body with freedom to develop a professionalised staff of aid practitioners. The new agency removed the potential of politicisation under MFAT, which allowed the agency to develop models of best practice in the Development field without the bias of diplomacy. NGOs celebrated the new structure, considering NZAID a peer, with Development practitioners in its staff. NZAID reciprocated this respect with explicit collaborative policy, such as in the NZAID-CID partnership policy: “NZAID acknowledges the complementary roles that civil society and government play in the elimination of poverty. Recognising the importance of partnerships with civil society, the agency will develop a strategy that sets out the operational principles of such partnerships” (NZAID & CID, 2003, p. 4). The VASS scheme flourished under this new structure. Its name was changed to Kaihono hei Oranga Hapori o te Ao - Partnerships for International Community Development (KOHA-PICD) and there was a steady increase in its support and allowance of
NGO participation. Overton (2009) highlights that during this period another main change in New Zealand’s ODA was the move towards a poverty focus; explicitly NZAID’s new mission was “eliminating poverty through development partnerships” (NZAID & CID, 2003, p. 5). A third transition of New Zealand’s ODA occurred from 2009 to 2010, which has had significant effects on NGO identity in New Zealand. This change will form the discussion in the remainder of this chapter.

3.5. 2010 reform of NZAID

The third significant change to the partnership between Government and NGOs in New Zealand occurred during the fifth National Government’s tenure. Foreign Affairs Minister Murray McCully made several changes to the structure and focus of New Zealand’s ODA with repercussions for the aid community and specific impacts on the work and identity of NGOs. There were four changes that were most significant; firstly, the integration of NZAID into MFAT with the goal of an alignment of aid with diplomatic strategy. As Minister, McCully (2009) stated, “I have made it clear that the reintegration of NZAID into the Ministry was undertaken in order to achieve greater alignment between our Development assistance and overall foreign policy goals”. This affected NGO ability to relate to NZAID collegially as partners, as the governance and structure of NZAID was within the hands of diplomatic staff that had a stronger focus on foreign affairs. Secondly, McCully changed the focus of NZAID from a reduction of poverty to “sustainable economic growth” (McCully, 2009). This change has moved NZAID’s strategies towards an aid paradigm foreign to many NGOs who had been focusing on building holistic and sustainable community Development that orthodox economic indicators often fail to represent. Thirdly, the geographic focus of New Zealand’s aid budget was redirected towards the Pacific; 75 percent of all ODA must now be focussed on the Pacific (OECD, 2010). The last change was the dissolving of the three-decade-old KOHA partnership between government and NGOs. The new scheme, the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), complements the regional and strategic foci. This means that for NGOs to access government funding, they needed to have projects in the Pacific that seek economic development. A further significant change during 2010 was the drastic reduction in the funding given to the Council for International Development, which acted as the umbrella and networking organisation for all New Zealand based Development NGOs (Banks, et al., 2011). The result of this reduction was a destruction of the means by which NGOs collectivised and harmonised their work.
3.5.1 The response from NGOs and Academics

The collective response from NGOs was strong and immediate with 23 NGOs supporting the ‘Don’t Corrupt Aid’ campaign, set up to protest the 2010 reform (Challies, et al., 2011). However, individually NGOs were more tentative, with only 12 NGOs responding publically (Challies, et al., 2011). Publically and privately, tension and confusion pervaded the aid environment in New Zealand. Some NGOs clearly showed their disappointment: “Proposed changes to NZAID, the government’s aid programme, threaten to tie aid to a political agenda and throw away past investments that have built a world-class institution”. (Oxfam, 2009: para 3). Meanwhile others found the changes a complicated shift presenting both challenges and possibilities: “We applaud a greater focus on helping our Pacific neighbours and recognise that economic development can help developing nations, but in our experience over decades, economic development does not trickle down to the poorest; we see it therefore as an inefficient tool to address poverty issues.” (TEAR Fund, 2009: para 2).

While most NGOs were willing to deal with a change in focus, many contend that the greatest challenge was in the lack of communication and the fundamental breakdown of a thirty-year partnership. The director of CWS, Pauline Mackay, elucidated this fear, when she said, “As a result of a set of policy changes from the current Government we are now in a new financial year uncertain of how to access Government funding, and what the criteria are. As a result, we also don’t yet know if we can keep up established offshore projects and partnerships. These doubts are the aggregate effect of several changes”. (Mackay, 2010: para 4). In the wake of the changes and specifically the reduction of funding for CID, there has been a new institution formed called New Zealand Aid and Development Dialogues (NZADDS). This group has formed as an Aid watchdog compromised of academics, and former NGO and NZAID staff. Although it is not explicit in its contention to Minister McCully’s reforms, its first few working papers are clearly in critique of the changes (see Banks, et al., 2011; Challies, et al., 2011; McKinnon, 2011).

3.5.3 Growing tension

One of the main results of the changes has been the tension it has created between the Minister and those within the industry (Young, 2011). Murray McCully (2009) has antagonised many within the sector referring to Aid workers in his own Ministry and within
NGOs as “arrogant and faceless, unelected, unaccountable, aid bureaucrats”. McCully also criticised a focus on Poverty elimination by saying “You could ride around in a helicopter, pushing hundred dollar notes out the door and call that poverty elimination.” The former head of NZAID, Peter Adams, who resigned after the changes, has revealed the tension further with an editorial highly critical of the Minister where he said “the NGO community development programme, which was rigorously run and reviewed, has been replaced by a narrowly economic-focused programme” (Adams, 2011). He critiqued the process of the changes as well as their content saying “It has got off to a disastrous start with unrealistic deadlines, confused interpretation of the guidelines and a poor rate of expenditure” (Adams, 2011). Peter Adams also reflected a common sentiment within the industry, of confusion as to why these changes took place after highly favourable reviews of NZAID (Adams, 2011). Several reviews highlighted the advantages of the formation of NZAID, from the OECD (OECD, 2005), the Treasury (Hay & Rose, 2001), the National Government’s own reviews (Waring, 2005) and from wider academic research (Overton, 2009; UMR, 2007). A suggested motive behind the changes is their political ramification. The autonomous NZAID was seen as a success of the previous Labour government and its demolition was politically motivated (Adams, 2011; McKinnon, 2011; Webster, 2011). This reasoning highlights a strong risk within the donor funding framework, that donor money is tied to the current government and hence its political aspirations.

3.6 Conclusion

Many actors in the aid industry are vocal in their thoughts about the technical changes of the 2010 government’s aid paradigm. It is clear that the general mood is at least one of ambiguity and tension. The IDG and NGOs are still negotiating the implementation and prioritisation of ‘economic development’. These changes have however caused a rift in the New Zealand aid sector, between government and NGOs who for years have worked together closely. The 2010 reform of New Zealand’s ODA is a fundamental influence in the current New Zealand aid environment. This environment is an essential influence on the identity of NGOs. It affects their ability to make decisions and it affects their relationships with partners in the South. This context was a constant backdrop in my research and often referred to by participants. During my analysis chapters (Chapters 5, 6 and 7), I will explore how these changes have affected NGOs identity and ability to conduct Development relationships.
Chapter 4 – Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the theoretical and practical framework of my research. Firstly, I explore the idea of positionality and its implications. This section will include how my background and perspective influence the research in its design, implementation and analysis. Secondly, I review the previous research into Northern Non-Governmental Organisations (NNGOs) and explore how trends in this field have influenced my methods. Thirdly, I explain my research design, integrating qualitative research, appreciative inquiry and narrative analysis. I then give an overview of how I conducted my research detailing the semi-structured interviews, my specific means of analysis and the selection and recruitment of participants. Lastly, I will discuss the ethical aspects of my research and the limitations in my design.

4.2 Positionality

My own personal experience in the Development industry directly influenced this research in its central questions and its methods. While pursuing this research I was in the employment of the Northern Non-Governmental Organisation (NNGO) Christian World Service (CWS). My role consisted of communicating our purpose to supporters and as part of this, exploring and communicating the elusive identity of a NNGO. This pursuit raised challenging questions that directly evolved into the basis for this thesis. This research topic is about the practice of Development in the relational space between North and South. This is essential to my own identity, as a person from the North interested in Development. Understanding my own interest in this topic is important. It informs my research design and analysis. It also informs my approach towards participants and my final handling of results.

An emerging trend in research in the social sciences is accepting that objectivity is a myth and that knowledge is ‘situated’ (Dunn, 2005; Elie, 2006; Mikkelsen, 2005; Rubin, 1995). Donna Harraway, who introduced the metaphor of situated knowledge, suggests a new type of objectivity, one that is accountable to the knower’s position (Haraway, 1991). She suggests that that the knowledge holder influences all knowledge and that we must be aware of our perspectives when claiming to ‘know’ something. The research I conduct must acknowledge that as a researcher I have a bias and a perspective that directly influenced this
research’s questions and analysis. This positionality does not detract from the validity of my research. It enables me to understand the data with depth and understanding (Holstein, 1995; May, 2011). Because my research methods will be primarily qualitative, I am attempting to tell a story rather than derive a repeatable scientific truth. The story I tell is from my position and my point of view, this does not detract from the truth of the participants’ stories. However, it does mean that my own experience and relationships mould and deliver the analysis of this truth. This positionality is important to acknowledge as it affects the responses that I will induce in the research process and the way I filter and display information. It is for these reasons that I will now explore my positionality and its influence on my research.

I am a Pakeha New Zealander. Being a Pakeha is extremely important for my identity. It refers to being a person belonging to New Zealand, while still recognising my foreign ancestry. That word also represents an acknowledgement of the history of colonialism that created my people’s place in New Zealand, including all the good and bad stories within that history. I am Pakeha; I am the intersection of those stories. This fact is important in my research as I am a remnant of an empire that crossed the globe creating development and under-development. This force of colonialism fostered a people obsessed with progress and internationalism, and their progeny - international development. My obsession with Development and its inherent ironies correlates directly to my membership to this world of colonialism. It reflects the bias of a people privileged by the creation of underdevelopment through exploitation of other’s resources and creation of a trade system that benefits me. The reason I can afford to study at university and give to Development charities is a part of the reason many people experience poverty. I aimed in this research to acknowledge, explore and confront these positional ironies. This is to allow my conflicted and complicit identity to inform, rather than detract from my collaborative search for NGO identity. Interviews did not directly refer to the issue of ethnicity; however, it was clear throughout the process that my positioning put me in the developed world and made participants treat me as a fellow member of their conflicted and complicated geographic positioning. This allowed a reluctant sense of solidarity and honesty that may not have been present otherwise.

On a similar note, I am a man. The privileges and experiences this entails have also enabled me to pursue this research. Being a male may have influenced my approach to respondents and their responses to my questions. Interviews did not refer directly to
gender. Like ethnicity, my gender may have influenced its apparent absence as participants may have felt a male researcher would not find gender interesting. This positioning as a male also gives me a specific understanding of feminism. I am a man who views gender as perennially apparent and important. I acknowledge feminism as influential over many of my perspectives and methods in research.

I was born in 1983; this puts me on the cusp of generation Y, the generation that embodies actualised and virtualised globalisation. A generation not only influenced by post modernity, but also bred in post-modern understanding. My generation has not only questioned the dogmas of science and religion; a dogma of scepticism has raised and nurtured our understanding. This generational bias influenced my research in its post-positivist approach. I was not searching for an indisputable truth; I was simply trying to tell a story. For example, I did not argue with any participants’ versions of reality or truth rather I listened carefully and aimed to gather a collection of stories that would illustrate emerging themes.

Lastly, I come from a long line of Presbyterians. I was brought up in the community of liberal Christianity in New Zealand where giving to charity and a concern for those in poverty were essential virtues. However, the reformed church tradition never simply accepts virtues as dogma. Values are tested and developed with intellect. This tradition has influenced me to strive to be part of the Development movement, but also to support critical and well-informed Development models. This background has led me to work for Christian World Service; an organisation that I think embodies this approach. My work with CWS is my greatest conflict of interest in this research. I believe in and actively advocate the models of Development that CWS work with. This position directly motivated this research and affected the process by allowing me to use my networks and my work experience to build camaraderie with the participants. My experience within the Development sector allows me to have a conversation with interviewees that is dialogical (Kayrooz, 2008), where we create a story together that explores the research questions. I am aware of the intersected realities that create my identity and my approach to research. I hope to explore this research reflexively so that this positionality does not detract from research that is productive and well informed.
4.3 Previous studies into NGO identity and relationships

Recent attention has been paid to the legitimacy behind NGO work (Bernstein, 2011; Bryce, 2009; Logister, 2007; Pishchikova, 2006; Thomas, et al., 2008; Walton, 2008; Zanotti, 2010), and especially in their context of the Aid chain (Aveling, 2010; Bebbington, 2004; Carr, MacLachlan, & McAuliffe, 1998; Leather, 2004; Scott-Villiers, 2007). There has also been an increasing trend to study the identities and experiences of Development practitioners (Bano, 2008; English, 2005; Girgis, 2007; Harris, 2008; McNamara & Morse, 2004; Mintzberg & Srinivas, 2010; O'Reilly, 2011; Patel & Mitlin, 2002). These studies have generally concentrated on the experiences of practitioners in the South. Despite this Southern research focus, the methods and theories presented by these studies have strongly influenced my research in its qualitative direction and its themes of identity, power and relationships.

Another important theme in development research has been its connection with practice. The main work of the development academy has generally been dominated by understanding the causes and perpetuation of poverty through case studies (Bebbington, 2004; Carten, 2002; Chowdhury, 2008; Fowler, 1995; Hamukwala, Muuka, Wheelock, & Bakenya, 2008; Lewis, 2006; Peart, 1995; Smith, 2010; Thomas, 1996). These studies into NGOs are primarily case studies of how NGO relationships affect development “on the ground” through their Southern partnerships. Development academia, as with Development practice often earns legitimacy only if it is rooted in the ‘field'. Generally, researchers from the North would research where they consider development to take place, in the South. Development, and its research, however, happens everywhere, and the location of my research is intentionally located in the North. This choice reflects that my own perspective affected my research and the place I come from is the most valid place for me to research.

4.4 Methodology

4.4.1 Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research drives my methodological framework. The qualitative approach is one that does not edit out the complexities of life to generate a general quantifiable answer, rather it celebrates complexities in the story it creates (Mason, 2002). Underlying qualitative research is an assumption that research is always subjective; no objective research framework can effectively separate researcher or the researched from their cultures or their
experiences. Therefore, this research adopts a social constructivist approach, which understands that experience and positionality influence meaning (Crotty, 1998; Onuf, 1998). There is an inherent connection between qualitative research and a post-positivist epistemology. The positivist model looks for quantifiable and repeatable units of truth. Qualitative research however, explores truth in context, and through varied perspectives. In Rubin's guidance on using interviews to research he highlights this, saying, “the positivist cannot hear data in context” (Rubin, 1995). My research approach intentionally looks for the broader picture of what the participants are saying, and looks at their truths within their own context.

4.4.2 Appreciative inquiry

This research is intentionally constructive. It aims to help NNGOs resolve some of their greatest contemporary challenges. It is impossible to separate the theory and practice of development, they are intrinsically and academically linked (Mikkelsen, 2005) This thesis is no different. Because this inquiry is directly relevant to their day-to-day work, I must acknowledge the effect this research has had on the participants. Too often in development studies research, the researcher will conduct research that opens up participants to a vulnerable and sometimes difficult process. I have used an appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach; with the purpose of gathering the research partly to look for what is valued and celebrated in an organisation (Cooperrider, 2004). AI is an exploration of the stories and practices that provide ‘life’ to an organisation. AI attempts to discover what enables an organisation to continue and to thrive. It is intentionally positive, in its creation of good stories towards improving practice (Cooperrider, 2004; Lewis, 2008; Messerschmidt, 2008). For this research, I ensured participants are not only involved but they are beneficiaries of their research data. I am not aiming to develop a fundamental truth or repeatable facts. However, my research aims to develop productive truths and helpful reflective stories. In my research I aimed to derive the positive aspects of North/South Development relationships so that my research can develop an idea of what they are doing well, in order that they will do more (Carten, 2002; Cooperrider, 2004).
4.4.3 Narrative Analysis

In conducting appreciative inquiry, I adopted narrative analysis as my primary methodological and epistemological approach. In the narrative analysis approach, a researcher gathers stories from participants, and then creates narrative threads from their responses. It is an open and thematic approach to qualitative research. It has also been found that narrative analysis is an appropriate tool in exploring the identity of organisations (Carten, 2002; Elliot, 2005; Mishler, 1989; Rubin, 1995; Smith, 2008; Wodak & Kryszanowski, 2008), especially within appreciative inquiry (Hosking, 2004; Ospina & Dodge, 2005; Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, & Cooperrider, 2010). In exploring this analysis method, Jane Elliot (2005) highlights three key aspects of narratives. Firstly, they are temporal in that they represent a process or a plot. They signify change over time. In my research, I reflected on this aspect by looking at a person’s perspective of a process over time. (Elliot, 2005). Secondly, narratives are meaningful. They reflect the emotional and social connections participants have to the events they are describing. An aspect of performance always influences a narrative and this can be useful in analysing their meaningful nature. Many interview and analysis techniques in research create limitations on answers and rigidly attempt to categorise responses. This can limit the meaning a respondent is able to have in the process and suppress possible answers. Allowing for storytelling through narrative analysis gives freedom to the information (Mishler, 1989). Lastly, narratives are social. Narratives reflect and perpetuate broader discourse that is created in society amongst certain groups, and narratives generally contain a range of characters and are often created collectively (Boje, 2001; Rubin, 1995; Smith, 2006; Wodak & Kryszanowski, 2008). Along this vein, in my research, I collaborated as a researcher in creating narratives. (Frank, 2005; Mishler, 1989).

Narratives are also an iconic feature in development. In reference to Ivan Illich’s work, Gustavo Esteva (2005, p. 1) espouses the use of stories in understanding development by saying: “I can use a saying by Ivan Illich to describe that attitude. Ivan says, ‘Through argument you can only come to conclusions. Only stories make sense.’ I am convinced of that. So, in my work I don’t give advice or present a lot of arguments but tell stories”. Stories are an important resource in Development for marketing, strategising, and reporting. Stories represent a qualitative picture of the work of Development. I often found this in my own role communicating Development to the public. Stories were always the most effective means of
garnering public support. Because of this, I have used the power of stories to explore this topic. My interviews focused on stories from practitioner’s Development experience. I examined these stories in their entirety and in their context. This type of research creates and explores an entire story rather than just the language used.

One criticism of narrative analysis is its often-rigid search for complete narratives (Boje, 2001). The reality of research means a story is never complete, always partial. This partiality requires a more open ended and conversational approach to gathering stories. Arthur Frank (2005) states “within a dialogical relation, one person can never say of another, ‘This is who such a person is.’ One can say, at most, “This is how I see this person now, but I cannot know what she or he will become.” With this approach, no person or group is ‘finalised’ in research, rather, his or her story is told, with an open and dynamic future. Both researcher and researched influence and are able to tell each other’s story in part (Frank, 2005). As mentioned previously, the narratives I am examining are not clear chronological accounts. In interviewing, I found the revelation of stories, is never whole or final, rather, a participant shares little anecdotes, reflect on a conversation or share a feeling they remember. I did not expect full stories, rather, I took the data I received from all participants, and attempted to analyse these by threading together a broader thematic analysis (Boje, 2001; Rubin, 1995; Wodak & Krsyzanowski, 2008). David Boje (2001) in his advice for using narrative analysis in studying organisations refers to this problem, and directs us instead to an ante-narrative analysis. Boje claims an ante-narrative is the pre-story that has no end, no structure, no plot, but has all the potential for becoming a story.

My research is a reflection on this process. I gathered the ante-narrative threads, snippets of experience, thought and character. Through a collection of these ante-narrative elements, I have understood and communicated the broader context within which Development organisation’s identity is constructed. I did not, in analysis, attempt to collect these ante narratives into a clear grand narrative. Rather I gathered this data and presented it as a spectrum of information. Mertens (2009) describes this well using the analogy of a prism to describe qualitative research, explaining that the output is not a focused result rather a spectrum of different facets that are illuminated through the process. Through my gathering of narratives and appreciative inquiry, this research explores the identity of Northern NGOs through the perspectives of their staff.
4.5 Methods

4.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

To carry out this research I conducted semi-structured interviews. Interviews create a process of ‘talking back’ which Hooks (1989) defines as “The creation of space for authentic dialogue which enables the marginal invisible, inaudible voice to be heard.” One on one interviews with participants allowed an in depth listening to participants’ voices. These interviews were semi-structured and conversational. In line with the narrative analysis approach, I primarily attempted to gather stories from these participants. Stories that they felt represented the way they form relationships in Development. During these interviews, I asked the participants to share stories of where they felt the relationships between themselves and their partners in the South worked well and then to try to explain why and how things could be better. These interviews were semi structured, as I intended to leave the opportunity for the participants to drive the process (Bryman, 2007; Carten, 2002; Rubin, 1995). In the dialogical nature of my approach, I attempted to make these interviews an open-ended conversation rather than an extraction of facts. A semi-structured format was chosen so that all the participants could add information to my presupposed objectives for this research (Bryman, 2007; Dunn, 2005).

One consideration when using interviewing as a primary means of research is data validity. In the positivist model of research, data is valid if it is confirmed and repeatable. However, in qualitative research the validity of data is not reliant on this as the validity instead relies on the quality of interaction and the depth achieved (Holstein, 1995; Mertens, 2009). Semi structured and conversational interviews adopt the researchers intuitive conversation skills (Rubin, 1995) and are often as much about the relationship formed as the information shared (Holstein, 1995; Mishler, 1989). To create an interview that achieves all these goals is difficult. I will now outline my interview process to explain how I gathered the data for this research.

Stage one – initial contact: I began initial contact with a participant through email and then a phone call. During this first contact, I begun to form a relationship, create expectations and begin the process of collective reflection with the participant.
Stage Two – Whanaungatanga: The interview began with a time of getting to know one another. The word ‘Whanaungatanga’ means in Maori, ‘the creating of family or familiarity’. This involved (often, but not always): the sharing of food or drink, pleasantries, a short walk together or the sharing a joke. This process was to develop rapport and create a space suitable for collective story creation. I was intentional about creating space for this time. However, the specifics were always responsive to the environment and participant. For example, at the beginning of one interview my dicta-phone began replaying my test run where I was singing to myself, an embarrassing moment that became a chance to develop a genuine relationship and rapport with the participant.

Stage Three – Introduction: After this time, I introduced my research and myself. We would then spend some time discussing my methods and their significance. I would always be transparent about the narrative analysis and appreciate inquiry elements of the research to create a more collaborative approach. I would here suggest that all the questions were flexible and were merely prompts for more stories and reflections.

Stage four - the interview: During each interview, I asked nine guiding questions, structured around my three mains themes of analysis – identity, power and relationships (Figure 4.1). I asked these questions differently and at different times during each interview allowing for the clearest and most in depth process dependent on each participant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 4.1: Semi-structured interview outline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme One – relationships</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How have you seen cultural dialogue between NNGOs and SNGOs in your work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is more important: relationships, or results?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What examples could you share of a difficulty or a success in communication between your NNGO and a SNGO partner?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme Two – Power</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What issues of power have you seen in your work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Does the government affect your decisions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Are your relationships equal/fair?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme Three – Identity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Who influences decision of programme design, implementation and closure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What are your guiding principles and are they influential?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Where does NNGO legitimacy come from?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Stage Five – conclusion and follow up:** A sense of an open-ended process always arrived at the conclusion of the interview. I was clear I would continue this research and inquiry as I hoped each participant would. I asked if they were interested in continuing to help. This led to four participants, through email and further interviews, helping me formulate my themes of analysis after I had collated all the data.

**4.5.2 Analysis**

Firstly, I transcribed all interviews, noting units of ante-narrative and examples of interesting performance and word-choice. I clustered this data into the main sections of power, identity and relationships, with units often occurring in more than one section. These sections were then further categorised into subsections according to themes that emerged throughout the process. I then met or talked with several interview participants again to discuss and confirm these subsections. I then gathered the data into clusters of information, and after a consideration of the relevant literature, I ordered these into cohesive thematic subsections.

The semi-structured interviews have been analysed with a combination of narrative analysis techniques derived from Boje’s (2001) work in studying organisations through narrative, and with standard qualitative use of clustering (Marshall, 2011; Mikkelsen, 2005). Firstly, I engaged in deconstruction analyses, a form of discourse analysis integrated into the ante-narrative method. Deconstruction accepts that a narrative is never static, the terms used, and ideas communicated exist within a wider network of ideas and embedded meaning. I explored the interviews through the multiplicity of the terms and ideas conveyed, and analysed these in depth. Secondly, I used Inter-textual analyses. Inter-textual analysis explores the polyphonic nature of a given story. In interviews, the participants often refer to different motivations and different ideas that represent several actors in their decisions and perceptions. I explored whom these voices represented and why they were important, this process highlighted a key research finding, that of multiplicity. Thirdly, I endeavoured to discover Microstoria, the smaller and often unseen narratives. The research highlighted Microstoria in listening to the anecdotes and memories often not revealed in overarching grand narrative approaches. Lastly, I used story network analysis where I considered all ante-narratives in relation to each other. I finally present my data through collecting and combining the smaller stories within my themes presented. These methods are apparent not
in detail, rather collectively they informed the information that I presented in its order and analysis.

While interviewing participants it became apparent that a strict narrative approach would not be suitable for this research. Participants did not present narratives in full. Rather, I gathered the pieces of stories and explored them within thematic clusters. I will present the analysis along these thematic line rather than exploring individual stories as units. Furthermore, I do not present a collective grand narrative rather a comprehensive analysis of the snippets and smaller stories as they connect to relevant themes presented.

4.5.3 The participants

The participants in this research project were staff members of New Zealand based Development NGOs. I had ten participants, four of whom collaborated with me in reviewing my themes of analysis. I recruited these participants with a three-stage process. Firstly, I used the CID membership list to gain a list of all those organisations involved in Development work in New Zealand. A second stage was approaching these groups again to see who was interested in being part of the research. I then carried out interviews with those who showed interest. I conducted the interviews in Auckland and Wellington, the main centres that are home to most New Zealand NGOs. These participants represent a range of people involved in this work. There were five key factors in the diversity of participants as shown by table 4.1. A further outline of participant details in included in appendix C, names and affiliation to specific NGOs have not been included to protect the participants’ privacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount of participants in each category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seniority</td>
<td>Programme officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>less than one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faith</td>
<td>secular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>less than 20 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>faith based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Programme Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>less than ten years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>over ten years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>over ten years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>over ten staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6 Ethics

Development literature has clearly documented the need for an ethical inquiry into development research. It is important because often development research will simply use the participants for their information. The researcher, who appropriates their stories, uses all their ideas, legitimacy, and knowledge while the researched receives no benefit. My research redressed this situation in three main ways. Firstly, a primary focus of my research is to create a positive and useful report for the participants. By using appreciative inquiry, I hope to evaluate how we are and can in the future create more effective and fair development relationships. I will in the future present this research to the participants in a digestible form so they can use it to improve their own practice. Appreciative inquiry makes sure that research is not negative regarding the organisation’s work. Rather it is constructively critical appreciating the positive aspects of an organisation, while considering solutions to varied challenges. Secondly, inequality often pervades the dynamic between researchers and researched. In this research, I was interviewing my peers as other staff members of Development NGOs. I am from within the participants’ field and workplaces; this redresses some issues of power. This can of course bring some issues. I have an obvious conflict of interest in defending this industry and my colleagues. With my methodology however, a conflict of interest that might lead me to bring out only the positives is an accepted part of my methodological approach. I was looking for stories that celebrate the work of Development relationships with the purpose of improvement. Lastly, I received Ethics approval by Victoria University to conduct this research.

4.7 Limitations of this research

This research is limited in two key ways. Firstly, I adopted a purely qualitative approach. Although it is the most appropriate means of creating depth of analysis in this search for identity in NNGOs, a quantitative component to this research would have been advantageous. Using a mixed methods approach would have placed the stories within concrete statistical containers to create results that would have been communicable to a broader audience. Secondly, this research is limited in its use of one perspective as I only interviewed staff of organisations in New Zealand. A further study should endeavour to explore one case study of partnership in depth to analyse the models and limitations and relationships in Development.
4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the reasoning behind my chosen methods to explore the idea of relationships and identity in NNGOs. The next three chapters focus on the results of this research, with analysis and discussion based on three overarching themes of identity, relationships and power. Through my analysis, I have created a logical thematic overview of these ideas and integrated the work of other development academics with the data from interviews. I have not explicitly referred to the methods used in gathering the data, the literature or my own thoughts; rather it is an integrated exploration of ideas. Using appreciative inquiry and narrative analysis are both common in the studies of organisations within the private sector, this research is innovative in using these approaches in regards to Development organisations.
Chapter 5 – Schizophrenic Identities

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the identity of NNGOs through the perspectives of their employees. After reviewing the development literature and interviewing several staff members of NNGOs, one overwhelming fact is clear: NNGOs are confused about who they are. In this thesis, I frame Identity as the combination of features that combine to form the perceived self, the features of a self that set it apart from all others. Identity is perceived and enacted internally and externally. NNGO’s identity can be a combination of different perceptions. Officially, it can be their policies and mission statements. However, actions actualise identity, and for NNGOs, their functional capacities create their identities.

One of this thesis’s key findings is that NNGOs are schizophrenic; they exist and practice in many worlds, with different personas and agendas, in each, their nature is fluid. I use the term schizophrenic to describe their identities not pejoratively, but in the Deleuzean and Lacanian sense, which has been drawn on by human geographers often in describing these types of agents (Bebbington, 2004; Doel, 1993; Price, 2000). The post-structural philosophies of Lacan and Deleuze add important depth to understanding these organisational identities. Deleuze felt a schizophrenic identity was a clearer description of ourselves, “The schizophrenic is closest to the beating heart of reality” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1979, p. 87). For Lacan our identities are formed as complex conglomerations of our perceptions of those around us (Eecke, 1999; Lacan, 1936). Deleuze also talks of our identities as a habitat for all our varied combinations with each person containing whole geographies (Stivale, 2003). This stream of thought about identity construction shows that, in reality, institutions and humans have primarily multiplicitous and fragmented and relational identities (Doel, 2000). This sense of multiplicity and schizophrenic identity is the most appropriate description of contemporary NNGOs.

NNGOs are schizophrenic in that their identities are multifaceted and fluid, they exist within many networks and their understanding of self varies within all these worlds. NNGOs find themselves with a constituency in the North and with beneficiaries in the South, and this structure can lead to a complex and often-conflicting identity. In this chapter, I will explore this concept throughout research interviews while reflecting on this
idea as it appears throughout development literature. I will explore the complex and dynamic identities that form these organisations through the stories of their staff. This relates directly to my first research objective:

**Objective One:** To explore NNGO staff perspectives of their organisations’ identities

Although this entire thesis is an exploration of identity, in this first analysis chapter I look specifically at my participants’ personal perspectives of their organisations’ communication and experience of identity. The next two chapters provide depth to this discussion. Firstly, with an analysis of power in chapter 6, this culminates in a revelation of the primacy of relational power. Secondly, chapter 7 explores the mechanics of this relational reality, which is a primary source of identity. In this chapter, I provide an explicit questioning of identity for NNGOs. Firstly, I will look at the multiple identities within their organisations, according to their goals and missions, their size and their ability to learn and be flexible. I will then explore the much-argued concept of legitimacy, which directly influences NNGO identity. In this section, I will look at several ways in which NNGOs create and communicate a legitimate reason for their own existence and the challenges they have faced in achieving this, and its importance to their identity.

### 5.2 Multiple identities

#### 5.2.1 Strategic and practiced identities

The way NNGOs focus their funding geographically and thematically reflects their priorities and therefore their overall identity. The need for clear goals to guide an organisation’s priorities seems obvious. However, their absence is highlighted within critiques of the effectiveness of the NGO Development paradigm (Berthélemy, 2006; Burnside & Dollar, 2000; Collier & Dollar, 2002; Roy & Chowdhury, 2009; Van Der Heijden, 1987). These strategic priorities present a technical identity to donors and to an NNGO’s support base. However, they are often vague, and in reality, the practice of development in the field primarily creates an NNGO’s identity. I will explore this tension in this first section.

NGOs will often have a broad mission statement that guides their allocation of funding, while, in reality, the process is often far more arbitrary. The goals are often so broad it is difficult for them to offer much guidance. Several participants talked of the concerted effort
within their organisations to achieve clear goals. Participant 8, for example, made clear that “with so many competing interests you have to be clear about what we really do, we focus on the vulnerable child and sustainable solutions”. Participant 8 further conceded, even with an organisational mandate to be driven by clear goals, these goals are so broad that it is only in reporting that they are clarified, to the extent that their organisation has to develop its own index for measuring outcomes. This adhoc allocation has been identified as one of the main problems with NGO effectiveness (Bebbington, 2005; Burnside & Dollar, 2000; Collier & Dollar, 2002; Roy & Chowdhury, 2009). An effect of this is that within programme teams in NGOs, programmatic development co-ordinators are isolated as they work within certain regional or thematic foci without an overall connection to their colleagues or organisational frameworks. Several of my interview participants commented on this problem: participant 1 said this could develop a “silo mentality”, where staff focus solely on one project or theme, forgetting the overall principles of the organisation. Participant 5 said, “We have never known where we should focus our efforts, which makes us vulnerable”. This problem highlights the importance of oversight roles in a programmes team, and clearly shows the existence of a fragmented identity.

This lack of guidance can also lead to problems in NGO accountability. Burger and Owens (2010) claim that because of this, there is often a large discrepancy between what NGOs do and say. Participant 7 reflected this by saying, “it's not that what we do isn't good development, it's just that it generally isn't that connected to our overall strategy. The strategy is important for our overall identity, but it is usually ignored in practice where we just continue doing what we have always done, delivering good development that is responsive to the context”. Participant 6 also admitted, “It is difficult to tell our supporters clearly and honestly what we do, because sometimes we are not sure.” This can also leave NGOs vulnerable to a political bias or back donor influence (Berthélemy, 2006; Van Der Heijden, 1987). Participant 3, reflecting on government funding, said, “If we don't know what our core focus as an NGO is, what is it we are trying to achieve, we become responsive to the whims of donors”. A lack of guidance can also leave NGOs susceptible to going for the “low hanging fruit” of Development where the smaller, possibly unseen Development opportunities are ignored to focus on the large scale and obvious projects (Edwards, 1999c).

A corresponding challenge in this search for a holistic overall strategy is the changing nature of development work. NNGOs often highlight the symbols of ‘poverty’ and its elimination as
broad thematic strategies for NNGOs. Throughout the 1990s, there was an ideological imperative to have aid focus on poverty reduction and hence a prioritisation of the poorest places (Overton & Storey, 2004). However, in the contemporary context, NGOs are increasingly focusing their efforts regionally. In New Zealand, this has been a clear trend with aid moving more and more towards the Pacific (Challies, et al., 2011; OECD, 2005; Oxfam, 2009). This is a reflection of the allocation of government funding and an effort to appeal to New Zealanders’ sense of place. It also, however, has a theoretical basis in aid effectiveness, where the focus of Aid in simply the poorest regions is not effective as this can lead to a clustering of Development work and workers in areas that become overwhelmed (Koch, et al., 2009). Several participants talked of the move towards the Pacific in their programmes, such as Participant 10 saying: “we are actively looking for projects to support in Polynesia, even when there are few that work the way we do”. There were also inherent problems in this approach, one identified by participant 9, is that “some partners are in the right place for New Zealand aid to be delivered, and are being overwhelmed with funds that they do not have the capacity to use”. Establishing clear guidelines for funding, although desirable, is difficult within changing funding environments and Southern partners whose contexts are changing constantly.

This phenomenon of vague and often irrelevant goals is a key contributor to the schizophrenia within NGOs. However, this lack of clear principles is not always problematic. Several participants highlighted the advantages of vague guiding principles, such as participant 2 saying, “Vague principles allow for collaboration between several partners that may include many things without causing tension”. While several identified vague principles are essential in retaining true partnership, as participant 6 saying, “The principles are intentionally vague; there is a distinction between whether principles are up for negotiation in New Zealand and whether they are up for negotiation with our partners”. Participant 4 mused that their organisation’s vague principles allow its Development approach to be “human centred”. The ambiguity of NGOs’ guidance may have positive or negative effects. However, it is clearly a common identifier, highlighting the multifaceted nature of these organisations. The related tension between an organisation’s fundraising, advocacy and Programmatic branches also clearly shows this schizophrenic nature.
5.2.2. Fundraising, marketing and programmatic identities

Marketing, programming and advocacy have become three essential pillars of today's NGOs. Within Lister's framework of NGO legitimacy, NGOs derive ‘normative’ legitimacy from their advocacy, ‘pragmatic’ and ‘symbolic’ legitimacy from their programmes and ‘cognitive’ and ‘regulatory’ legitimacy from their fundraising (Lister, 2003). In theory, all three are essential and interrelated. To achieve true advocacy goals NGOs need financial independence (Nabacwa, 2010; Parks, 2008) and to have legitimacy in advocacy they need a connection to effective programmatic work. To deliver effective programmes, however, they need secured funding. Despite their interconnection in theory, in practice they are more often than not disconnected and conflicting, while advocacy leads to legitimacy with their support base, the funds they receive compromises their ability to challenge their support base (Parks, 2008; Reith, 2010).

The risks of the current funding environment for NGOs have made the need for proactive marketing essential, as clearly said in an article in the Economist: “In the now-crowded relief market, campaigning groups must jostle for attention: increasingly, NGOs compete and spend a lot of time and money marketing themselves. Bigger ones typically spend 10% of their funds on marketing and fundraising. The focus of such NGOs can easily shift from finding solutions and helping needy recipients to pleasing their donors…” (The Economist, 2006). There is robust debate about whether this fundraising shift has actually decreased or increased the effectiveness of NGOs in their work. Some, such as Okted and Weisberg (2000) and Aldashe and Verdier (2010), claim the competition increases the funds given overall, while others claim it distorts NGOs by making them have an excessive focus on fundraising (Bebbington, 2005; Chau & Huysentruyt, 2006; Rose-Ackerman, 1982).

Several interviewees identified the tension between different departments in their NGOs. A fundraising focus leads to the programmes team having to “fight for programmes that are any good” (participant 4). However, a far more common phenomenon was a marginalisation of the fundraising teams, or an adoption of Machiavellian marketing techniques: “we often say we will do the Development work, and you [the fundraisers] do what you need to get money for it” (participant 5). The backgrounds of different staff can also contribute to creating fractured identities. As participant 7 said, “in the programmes team we are all trained Development practitioners, we know good Development, Fundraisers are hired to get
us funds, that’s their skill set, we don’t often have time to explain to them all the nuances of our work, just like they don’t have time to tell us every detail of their marketing strategy”. The sentiment that fundraising is a ‘necessary evil’ was prevalent, many interviewees confessing that often NNGO programme staff ignore fundraising until it affects their work. This sentiment is backed up in quantitative studies by Okten and Weisbrod (2000), who found that while NGOs work hard at gaining funds, their focus and economic priority is more clearly identified as Development impact.

Child sponsorship, development gift campaigns, and similar schemes have often been identified as a prime example of the often misleading means of marketing (Elliott, 1987). These have a high appeal to funders, yet do not equate to a true representation of the programmes delivery. Participant 8 identified this problem, saying, “we tell people we can do [project] for $25. While this is true, we do not tell them that the administration, travel and all other costs are far more. The reason that they won’t give us anymore is because we have lied to them for so long, it’s our fault”. This common feature of Development fundraising was widely acknowledged by the participants, with participant 10 saying: “if we decide not to do it, when every other guy is using that strategy, we will be alone and we will lose support”. The way most NGOs have dealt with this tension has been to develop a fractured identity, where for fundraising they are a certain agency and in the field are quite different. Surprisingly, this has not been overly problematic; NNGOs continue to acquire funds and continue to do their programmatic work. Often it is not seen as such a drastic problem, simply good marketing: “we have all the details of our work open to the public, but in fundraising you have to pick and choose, of course we will identify the programmes that will be more appealing to the public” (participant 3). Participant 8 reflected the same sentiment: “it’s an obvious choice, I would never get someone to support buying a new computer system for a partner’s office, but a tractor and a water tank will always get support”.

However, the motivation behind this thesis, a call for NNGO transparency and legitimacy, has made this fractured and somewhat dishonest identity untenable. As participant 9 said, “this is now challenged by people’s desire for more transparency and buy in. More and more people want to have a clear view across our organisation. People have this idea that it costs nothing, now they need to know this isn’t true”. Many participants within interviews felt that the fragmentation between fundraising and programming created difficulties in being a transparent and accountable organisation. Participant 10 lamented this dilemma, saying, “we
have told people for so long that we can solve poverty for a dollar a day, which has never been true. The things we have to do to solve poverty, like changing the rules of trade, allowing the South to have independence in their development seem so counterintuitive after years of the dollar a day story”. Participant 8 reflected a similar sentiment saying, “We have been selling people little bits of Development, telling them you can purchase a water tank, this doesn't make any sense, but it does make money”. The call for a greater focus on advocacy for NNGOs means fundraising must reflect the true and effective solutions to poverty, advocacy and campaigns must have connection with practice and programmes (Aikman, 2010). Most participants identified fragmentation as a major challenge for NNGOs in recent times, and many felt the old fundraising models that do not tell the full story are no longer possible.

5.3 Legitimate identity

Legitimacy is a highly debated concept in Development (Logister, 2007; Ossewaarde, 2008; Parks, 2008; Sutton, et al., 2007; Thomas, et al., 2008). Legitimacy is having justification to take action for a certain group of people. This is extremely important for NNGOs who claim to act on behalf of the distant other. In a search for identity, NNGOs must first explain why they should exist. Edwards defines legitimacy as “having the right to be and do something in society... and that it enjoys the support of a constituency” (Edwards, 1999b). Legitimacy is also a scarce resource for contemporary NNGOs and is essential as an element in their effective and genuine identities. Development academics often consider the schizophrenic nature of NNGOs as a cause for their lack of legitimacy (Hailey, 2000; Harris, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2010). With donors in the North and beneficiaries in the South, NNGOs bridge a dualism that is a constant structural problem in their legitimacy (Lister, 2003) as they try to decide exactly who they represent. In this section, I will analyse the claims of legitimacy that are relevant for NNGO staff, and how these add to their identity.

5.3.1 Legitimacy from the South

One of the first and most often mentioned sources for NNGO legitimacy is their connection to their Southern counterparts (Dichter, 1999; Nunnenkamp, et al., 2009). This is often evident in the language used; terms such as “local communities”, “partners”, “grassroots” or even “The South” are symbolic indications of NNGOs’ legitimacy. These words highlight their connection and proximity to those who are in poverty. Fowler (1997) and Lister (2003)
both call this “symbolic legitimacy” and find it the most common form of legitimacy NNGOs strive to attain. Participant 9 in reference to legitimacy used the word Africa five times in three short sentences, always with a sense of connection and ownership. Participant 4 made clear that “what we are trying to do is represent the needs of those who are suffering to the rest of the world, although we don’t aim to speak for them, we are hoping that through us their voice will be heard”. This insistence reflects the need for legitimacy to be derived from representation (Collingwood, 2005; Edwards, 1999b; Lister, 2003; Nyamugasira, 1998; Pearce, 1997). Legitimacy is the right to represent a certain group, and NNGOs strive to prove they are able to represent those in poverty. NNGOs will often cite their strategic decisions (Koch, et al., 2009), their campaigns and their company structures as being influenced by their partners. For example, NNGOs’ partners have influenced the trend in adopting a climate change campaign, as participant 1 stated, because climate change affects “the poorest first and worst”. There is also in this an element of what Lister calls “Cognitive legitimacy” (Lister, 2003; Ossewaarde, 2008), that in being closely connected to the poor NNGOs will inevitably be able to deliver aid more effectively and seamlessly (Nunnenkamp, et al., 2009). Most interviewees were clear that their legitimacy, as well as their strategies and their processes, result from their partnerships with “the South”.

5.3.2. Legitimacy from the North

Despite the insistence on the South’s influence, Northern NGOs cannot escape their roots. Most of them in New Zealand began during the post-world war 2 era when civil society NGOs became a force in developing a peaceful world (Challies, et al., 2011). This connection to a historical movement creates a significant piece of the NNGO identity. It is also another significant source of legitimacy. While this source of legitimacy was far less evident through NNGOs’ admission, it did arise through complex understandings of self. This movement of people in the twentieth century is what built the support for many NNGOs. Participant 7 reflects on the identity-forming nature of this history by saying: “fifty years ago, people got together and decided they want to be part of making the world a better place. I have only been working here five years, they are our organisation far more than I ever will be, and they still support us today”. However, this ideological support is often lacking in contemporary NNGOs. Edwards (1999) states that NNGOs have lacked a true constituency in the North since the cold war, as their goals and foci have remained true to their original constituencies rather than being reflective of the public that supports them today.
The rise of advocacy as an essential element of NNGO work reflects, in part, the need for NNGOs to have legitimacy grounded in the political environment of contemporary Northern populations. (Aikman, 2010; Anderson, 2000; Brainard & Siplon, 2002; Nelson, 2000; Parks, 2008; Siddiquee & Faroqi, 2009). Whether with a democratising goal, an appeal to trade justice, or climate change, NNGOs have always been seen by their constituents as the third party force that will challenge the forces of government and market to create good development. It is in this that many NNGOs derive their Northern legitimacy (Bebbington & R., 1997; Fisher, 1998; Fowler, 2000b; Lindenberg & Dobel, 1999; Mitlin, et al., 2007; Ossewaarde, 2008). Participant 1 explains: “More so, our identity is from being a strong campaigning organisation we consider the supporters people who don’t just give us money but they do advocacy or engage in our campaigns, and they are more engaged”. It is from the idea of being the agency of a movement that NGOs derive their aspirational legitimacy. As said by participant 10, “I look at young people today and their passion for justice, and I hope that is who we are”. Throughout their history NNGOs have been the institutional edge of a movement of people; they represent and act on behalf of concerned citizens in the North.

Conversely, a further legitimacy is derived not from challenging the government and market but co-operating with them (Bebbington, 2005; Dichter, 1999). The increasing reliance on government funding has created the need for legitimacy in using taxpayer’s money wisely. As participant 9 said, “We receive a lot of taxpayer money and we have to be accountable for that”. There is implied in this a regulatory legitimacy (Lister, 2003; Ossewaarde, 2008), that NNGOs are good deliverers of aid simply because they are effective and accountable organisations. This legitimacy is also present in public support, where the New Zealand public simply wanted to see good results and outcomes much like the government, rather than any specific focuses or campaigns. This was expressed by Participant 1, saying: “Our stakeholders matter, but to be honest the general public are much like MFAT and they want to see results”

**5.3.3. Legitimacy from the cause**

Public understanding considers ending poverty the grand cause of Development. Indeed, campaigns such as ‘make poverty history’ have utilised this idea to gain support. Although the idea of ending poverty is iconic within Development’s constituency, very few NGOs will ever claim this possibility; many will simply say “reducing poverty” or “relieving
poverty” (Lindenberg & Dobel, 1999). Many participants did refer to clear global sentiments of urgency and the need to be working towards the goals of development, such as Participant 9 repeatedly referring to the “outrage” and the “obscenity” that is poverty. This type of legitimacy is documented by the literature as normative legitimacy (Grillo, 1997; Lister, 2003; Ossewaarde, 2008).

A symbolic cliché of this sentiment is that NGO workers are “working themselves out of a job”. Some authors suggest this is possible, S NGOs now have the capacity to gain their own funding, and N NGOs have simply retained and entrenched their roles (Dichter, 1999). I confronted my interviewees with this aspiration. Some responded with an adamant belief in the idea, “It would be great if we could be put out of business. I believe it is possible. Yet, one more well will not solve it. The justice issues will lift the tens of millions out of poverty. We are embedded with the poor and we won’t stop” (participant 9). However, most responded with cynicism, such as participant 2 saying “…White liberal pure speak – we work towards ending poverty. We just want each thing to be ok”. Participant 4 said similarly, “In one sense ‘work yourselves out of job’ is rubbish. It sounds cool, but the work of justice cannot be achieved by any society, the nature of the work will change, the quest for justice is an eternal quest. But we work to a situation where more voice can be heard”. N NGOs find their purpose and support in an ideological pursuit against poverty; they live in this movement and rely on it for their legitimacy and their finances.

Legitimacy is an increasing concern for N NGOs as they strive to convince their supporters and their partners they are the appropriate channel for donor funding and Development support. This is a quest for meaningful existence. In today’s difficult environment N NGOs need a source of legitimacy that they can rely on for resilience. Claims to legitimacy come from many places, as this section has shown: from their partners in the South, from the constituencies at home and their commitment to the overall cause.
5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the perceived identities of NNGOs. Employees of NNGOs work within the frameworks of their organisations; however, it is in practice that they develop a perception of their working identity. While other staff work on fundraising and marketing the programmatic staff deliver development in their own way, these three essential functions of an NNGO are growing further apart, with a corresponding fragmenting of identity. Although often seen as problematic for NNGOs, their schizophrenic identities can have advantages. It allows them fluidity and a greater ability to be committed to relationship rather than principle in Development. It allows them to be a bridge that is connected and able to translate Development between worlds. A lot of this confusion has its roots in the discrepancies between North and South and a far broader and historical scale.

The challenge of legitimacy, that each NNGO must increasingly show justification for their role in the aid chain, has increased the need for a transparent identity with integrity. NNGOs find this legitimacy through their partnerships, through their abilities and through their commitment to an ideological movement. The further challenges of reflexivity have created NNGOs with complex identities that are aware of their past, their context and their own place within Development.

An essential ingredient in this complexity is the challenges of power relationships in Development. NNGOs presenting themselves as agents challenging power structures, while for some they are perpetuating their own power. Power is an essential ingredient in any exploration of NNGO identity. I will explore the complex power dynamics within NNGO-SNGO relationships in the next chapter.
Chapter 6 – Power and Identity

6.1. Introduction

Power is an essential element in shaping NNGO identity. While NNGOs may have aspirational identities, these will always be responsive to whomever and whatever influences their work in reality. The need to analyse power is an accepted aspect of any research into Development NGOs and their modality (Bebbington, 2004; Cahill, 2008; Kelsall & Mercer, 2003; Lister, 2000; Mohan & Hickey, 2003; Oller, 2006). The imbalance of power between North and South is also key motivation for NNGO work and personally motivates many NNGO staff. This imbalance however is also a pervasive and dangerous influence in their work. The focus of this chapter is the NNGO attempt to find a balance between depending on power structures, while actively criticising them. This chapter explicitly answers my second research objective:

Objective Two: To analyse the sharing of power in SNGO-NNGO relationships

In this chapter, I will explore power for NNGOs as it affects them through resources, discourse and relationships. I will look at the experience and performance of power in different contexts and relationships. This chapter will be an exploration of these three types of power in the North, and in the South with a concluding reflection on the formative effect of this on NNGO identity. Firstly, it is important to consider the different meanings of the term power; in the next section, I will outline the threefold framework for understanding the source of power that has guided my analysis.

6.2 The differing perspectives and practices of power

Power is a complex concept to understand especially in the fluid and multifaceted work of Development NGOs. Chapter 2 discussed that within development literature there are several ways to understand power (Brigg, 2002; Cahill, 2008; Lister, 2000). In my research, I found that different frameworks of power were never discrete or complete. In their work, NNGO staff experience and understand all forms of power to be active, formative and often
in conflict with one another. In this chapter, I will analyse these staff experiences in reference to a threefold division of the perceptions of the source of power: that of power in things, power in discourse, and power in relationships (Allen, 2003; Cahill, 2008; Surrey, 1986).

‘Power in things’ refers to the Weberian system of power; that whosoever holds the most resources will wield the most power (Allen, 2003; Reith, 2010). If one group has resources another needs, they are able to enact power over the other party and influence their decisions. This type of power framework, although considered one of the issues Development aims to break down, is dominant within Development practice. Amanda Cahill (2008) in her analysis of power in Development describes resourced power’s dominance saying, “Despite the limitations of the ‘power in things’ perspective. It has informed Development practice through the implicit assumption that for people to become empowered to pursue their own well-being, they require increased access to resources such as money or positions in institutions perceived to hold power”. (Cahill, 2008, p. 297). Resources are a constant source of control in Development as revealed by my participants’ experiences in this chapter. I will refer to this framework as ‘resourced power’.

The ‘Power as discourse’ perspective is highly influenced by the philosophy of Michel Foucault (2001). It claims that power is everywhere. It exists in the way we structure our societies and languages. Wielding such influence over processes and language can lead to power over others in this post-structural sense (Brigg, 2002; Rossi, 2004; Ziai, 2009). Discursive power is a perspective that “envisions power as everywhere, through the discourses and practices that structure daily life. In this view, power is not inherent within powerful subjects, but is dispersed throughout a complex web of discourses, practices and relationships that position some subjects as more powerful than others” (Cahill, 2008, p. 298). Power is not a substance but a particular type of relationship between groups (Cahill, 2008; Kelsall & Mercer, 2003; Oller, 2006) and especially the means in which resources are used to exert influence, rather than ownership over the resources themselves (Oller, 2006). I will refer to this framework as ‘discursive power’.

‘Relational power’ is power that different groups create through mobilising and creating actions collectively (Cahill, 2008; Gaventa, 2006; Lister, 2000; Shutt, 2006; Surrey, 1986; Wallace, et al., 2007). Traditional understandings of power have seen agency and community
as two separate functions of humanity. However, relational power sees that agency is often derived from our relationships and our communities (Surrey, 1986). “The empowerment to act is viewed as arising from interaction within mutually empathic and mutually empowering relationships” (Surrey, 1986). This is an important type of power in Development as it is in collectivising and partnering that civil society is able to mitigate immanent development driven by the forces of the state and market (De Herdt & Bastiaensen, 2004; Salamon & Anheier, 1997; Thérien, 1999; Valentinov, 2008). When two or more parties work together, they can exert a power that is inherent in forming relationships (Surrey, 1986). This understanding of power is highly relevant to the experience of NNGOs whose solidarity often informs their work with their Southern partners. I will refer to this framework as relational power.

6.3 Power within the North

NNGO’s Northern positionality is a clear influence on their identity and practice. The power inherent in this positioning has several effects on their identity and their ability to form productive relationships with their partners. I will explore in this section the effect of the Northern structures of power, looking at how the resourced, discursive and relational understandings of power shape identity for NNGOs. The recent changes to funding mechanisms for NNGOs in New Zealand will be the primary focus of this analysis of power, because, it was at the forefront of NNGO staff concerns at the time of this research, it has also shown the influence that the government wields over NNGOs and their concurrent shaping of identity.

6.3.1 Resourced power within the North

The influence that Northern Donors have over SNGOs is reflective of one major contributor to power within Development – money. Participant 8 recalled being at a strategy meeting at his NNGO and being told to “shut up” after he reminded his colleagues that, “We’ll never deliver this, you guys can sit here in your nice room and dream up anything nice you want, but we don’t have the money”. As this example reflects, despite Development practitioners hopes and plans to the contrary, financing is still a major influence of decisions for NNGOs (Ahmad, 2004; Dichter, 1999; Harris, 2008; Lister, 2000; Oller, 2006; Sizoo, 1996). Without funding, their programmatic work is severely limited. The influence is a clear example of the ownership of resources creating power.
With a reliance on donor funding, a question over the political independence of NNGO work and allocation presents itself. This concept is counterintuitive as NGOs were hailed as the great counter to government influence in development (Koch, et al., 2009). They often grew out of a distinct disapproval of government (Lindenberg & Dobel, 1999). Dichter, bemoaned the beginning of this trend saying that “The non in non-governmental used to be decidedly operative” (Dichter, 1999). Increasing attention has been paid to the influence that government donors are having on the work of NNGOs (Aldashev & Verdier, 2010; Antrobus, 1987; Bebbington & R., 1997; Berthélemy, 2006; Clark, 1995; Hellinger, 1987; Koch, et al., 2009; Lister, 2003; Morfit, 2011; Nunnenkamp, et al., 2009; Parks, 2008). The danger of this increasing influence was expressed by several participants, such as participant 10, saying, “We have to make sure we hold onto our own values regardless of the funding” and participant 3 warning that “If you’re just towing the party line of your government it’s not development, it’s diplomacy in drag”.

Government influence over NNGO policy risks Development being a means for governments to carry out their own strategies and agendas through NNGOs. This clearly shows the power that donors have in the aid chain and creates risks for the independence of NNGOs and their own ability to mitigate power dynamics in their work. This issue was especially relevant for New Zealand based NNGOs at the time of interviewing because in 2010, the New Zealand Government dramatically changed the way they funded NGO work. Most relevant is the change from the Kaihono hei Oranga Hapori o te Ao | Partnerships for International Community Development (KOHA) scheme to the new Sustainable Development Fund (SDF). Chapter 4 has already explored the changes in detail, but here I will investigate these changes through the words of those I interviewed as it related to the influence of power in their identity.

At the time of interviewing, the changes had only just occurred, and many participants were willing to wait and see their effects: “We haven’t actually seen the full effect because we have only just applied for funding” (participant 1). However, substantive changes to the scheme were already a cause for concern. When asked directly whether these changes would alter their choices in Development programmes, interviewees mostly remained defiant, claiming their priorities would not change. Although many participants conceded, a change in focus or at least a change in the language used in reporting might be a necessity. Participant 2 highlighted this tension by saying, “3 years ago, we would think, that’s what the community
wants, yep, we’ll fund it, and then we could probably get government funding. Now, it is like ok, maybe this one fits, we’ll just skip that bit about farmers rights and advocacy. We’ll shuffle, then, what do we do with this one just about human rights?” This need to avoid some aspects of their work that may not fit the donor's requirements, shows that NNGOs are feeling pressured by donors. Although determined not to drop programmes just because they could not receive government grants, participants were aware that they were now in an impossible position; “What If we don’t get government funding? How many projects won’t be viable? And how far will our own funding go? What can we do? It’s a huge change” (participant 7). The change in funding has scared NNGOs and highlighted the pervasive power in things, in this case funding.

6.3.2 Discursive Power in the North

The 2010 reform of New Zealand’s ODA show how funding can be a way to wield influence. Often it was the way these changes happened that created and reflected a greater power imbalance. These controls reflect a power over the structures and discourse of Development. By controlling the means and discourse of development, Northern donors have retained their powerful position. One clear theme emerging from participants’ reflections is that it is the means in which a group distributes and controls resources that shape power relationships. Controlling the process is a way to enact discursive power in Development, and many NNGOs feel this has been the primary means the donor government has influenced their decisions (Cornwall, Harrison, & Whitehead, 2007; Mahmud, 1999; Mosse, 2005). One example of this is the timeframes given to adopt the 2010 changes, such as participant 3 saying, “The outcomes they are wanting are these things we have to cover anyway, so you report in your own way but include these things. But, this would take months of email conversations, the fast turnaround is really tight, instant, 6 month reports”. Most NNGOs feel that good Development takes years to eventuate, such as participant 10 who said, “The government wants to see the economic benefits of our projects within three years. The problem is, in some of our projects we are now seeing economic development, but only after twenty years of community and movement building, gender work and building up the infrastructure to help the community be able to be sufficient”. This emphasis on contracted timeframes reflects the need for government to see outputs rather than relational growth. This change shows the attempt of donors to subtly manipulate and influence NNGO work through the reporting procedures. The language and process that NNGOs and donors have
been slowly adopting reflects a shift towards a managerial and professional culture (Aldashev & Verdier, 2009; Madon, 1999; Susan M. Roberts, Jones Iii, & Fröhling, 2005). This shift causes a change in power balance, where those who have control over this language can control the outcomes.

Another example of this power was the change in focus from partnership to results, as explained by participant 4, saying, “The new changes are about ends and results, KOHA was about partnerships, and this recognised that good partnerships were essential to good Development, it was designed by NGOs and that’s why. SDF is just about results. The forms ask you about relationships, but when we ask questions: can we do this? Or that? All they want is the results” This focus on results is a clear concern for many within the NNGO community. Reporting on results is a renewed priority for government funding that raises issues for the NNGO modality and the adaption of NNGOs to this new funding mechanism demonstrates the power balance between donors and NNGOs. This change further reflects an undermining of relational power by the power of structures. In the next section, I will explore how the work of NNGOs has previously built and relied on relational power and how these changes have threatened this framework.

6.3.3 Relational power in the North

The idea of partnership pervades Development work (Ahmad, 2004; Edwards, et al., 1999; McNamara & Morse, 2004; Overton & Storey, 2004; Wallace, et al., 2007; Willetts, 2000). It is through relationships and a networked approach that NNGOs define their identities. Working together has been a common way for civil society to find a power base in their work and contend with the far greater resources and structures at the disposal of states and the market (Agg, 2006; Hudock, 1999; Tvedt, 2002). The Government’s approach to their relationships with NNGOs is an example of using resources and discourse to undermine the relational power of civil society. An overwhelming feeling in NNGOs was that the old scheme KOHA had helped develop a common ethos of partnership within the Development community. The changes had undermined what most professionals consider best practice, as expressed by participant 2, when they said: “KOHA has shaped a lot of the way NGOs have partnerships, KOHA has created a common thread for the NGO approach to partnership; it was focused on partnership”. However, it is not this change technically that is important, it is the change it will bring to NNGOs ability to conduct their work practically and
relationally. Participant 1 referred to this when saying, “It is not that we shouldn’t be asking our partners to show results, it is the nature of the measurement”. Participant 2 expressed a collective feeling of many NNGOs, saying, “…the sudden change in funding and the way we found out about SDF weeks before the first deadline. We are submitting a lot of proposals just weeks before the due date. Meanwhile, the rules, rumours and requirements are changing week by week. We are very uncomfortable, uncomfortable about the process, very rushed, there has been no time to visit and consult, even though we are not doing programmes from scratch, we are repackaging existing work, we are throwing together proposals with minimal consultation, calling or emailing. It is not the same as going there and enacting partnership”.

The funding change from the partnership based KOHA scheme to the more results based SDF, has created a power shift. According to an understanding of resourced power, the government always had the resources and therefore, always had that power. However, KOHA was a scheme that distributed power and created a dialogue between NNGO and donor. It is through the SDF fund and its more prescriptive process that the government has enacted their resourced power by undermining the relational power of NNGOs. This is leading to an increased antagonism and suspicion between the government and NNGOs. Incidentally, most interview participants chose to have their views on this matter reflected anonymously, as they were frightened of potential government backlash from their criticism. A key example of relational power within Development is the way NNGOs gather to advocate their concerns to government. Along with changes in NNGO funding schemes in 2010, was the crushing debilitation of the Council for International Development. New Zealand NNGOs have a long history of working collaboratively with each other in any work with the New Zealand government and their partner organisations. This networked approach has always been an identifier in their work.

The power balances within the North derive a significant Challenge to NNGO’s autonomous identities. However, in practice their relationships with the South actualise their identities. In the next section, I will explore understandings of power and its enactment in the Southern context where NNGOs conduct their programmatic work. It is the Southern context that NNGOs also form an essential aspect of their identity and their functions as they seek to disrupt imbalances of power.
6.4 Power in the South

Within the South, there is a great disparity of wealth and part of the perceived NNGO mandate is to mitigate this power imbalance. This increased disparity can reflect, the nature of a changing world as described by Edwards (1999): “Increasingly NGOs will confront a patchwork quilt of poverty, inequality and violence both within and between societies, rather than solid and geographically distinct blocs of rich and poor”. NNGOs are trying to empower communities yet, they are highly aware those they have access to may be the inherent powerful interests, including their most direct Southern NGO partners. However, the predilection of Development practitioners and authors to see the South as a homogenous group has often caused a perpetuation of their inherent inequalities (Dema, 2008; Edwards, et al., 1999; Mosse, 2005). In this section, I will explore how the perceptions and performance of power affects NNGOs in their work and identity in a Southern context.

Resourced power is often a defining feature of relationship between North and South, as NNGOs still wield a considerable financial advantage over their partners. When asked where they thought their power came from participant 5 simply said, “Where does our power come from, um …money... At the end of the day we are providing the money for their work and if push came to shove we could withdraw that money”. This has been widely explored in the literature about NGO Development partnerships. While a transfer of funds is seen as still the primary purpose of NNGOs existence (Ahmad, 2004; Harris, 2008; Malhorta, 2000; Oller, 2006; Silk, 2004), it is also the most difficult factor in making partnerships fair or equal (Dichter, 1999; Lister, 2000; Sizoo, 1996). NNGO staff also find a perpetuation of the assumption that the North holds the power, due to their ability to control funding decisions, even when this may not be the case. Participant 6 reflected this fear saying, “Maybe each time I leave they have a big bitch about us, ‘we pretend to like their stupid Development ideas, but really we just want their money’. It scares me”.

Several participants’ stories reflect the difficult perception of power in their relationships, where certain symbols presented a wealthy image and created unhelpful perceptions of influence. In one case, participant 9 recalled this story, “I was in Vanuatu. And I was going up to Santo for one night, with an enormous bag for just one night. When I went to the school, the principle introduces me talking about how ‘they’ usually come with such big bags. [Participant 9] just comes with a small ‘basket’ that shows he understands. But it was
utter bullshit I had my big bag in my room, he noticed my bag size but he would never have mentioned if I had a big bag, the big bag would represent I’m wealthy, I need high maintenance, I have power”. In another case shoes were the symbol of power, “I was rushing to catch a flight to Thailand to meet some of our partners, and had no idea how I should dress, I thought, these guys are the leaders of their community I should probably dress nice. So, I stopped at Hannah’s on the way to the airport and bought a new pair of dress shoes, when I arrived at the meeting they were all wearing jandals and talking about how white people always wear expensive shoes. All I could think about was how I could quickly scuff up my new shoes” (participant 8).

While participants considered the perception of power imbalance as inhibiting genuine relationship between North and South, it is a perception that can be hard to ignore. Participant 6 reflected, “Everywhere you go, people say, have you come here to preach to us? Have you come here to teach us? Have you come here to help us? I want so say, no, I have come here to learn from you, but that is not true! They are right!” The irony reflected in this statement highlighted a key tension in NNGO work. They are constantly shying away from their partners perceiving them as the powerful ones, however, they also realise they wield symbolic power, and often, they are not interested in being less powerful. While NNGOs claim that SNGOs need to in control of their own development, they also bring assumptions about what good development should be. Their assumptions, because of their power can become direct influences over implementation. This occurs even when the assumptions in practice, are erroneous. Participant 8 reflected this saying, “Some people wanted to give a gift to a community we worked with in the Solomon Islands, we asked them what they would like, and they said a church bell. I thought this was ridiculous and reflected their colonial past and the influence of the church, but when they explained to me that the church bell was their way of community organising, of getting kids to school on time and their cyclone warning system”. While, resisting the urge to be the powerful players in the relationship, many of those I interviewed reflected the power that SNGOs had themselves, “sometimes if we send over technical staff, they are useless, because they are so used to machines and technology, that can’t do anything by hand anymore, the locals are just better at it” (participant 5).

The Southern context has always been an important symbol and place of practice for Northern NGOS. In the South, power imbalances become a prevalent motivation and
distraction from the work of NNGOs. It is interesting that it is from the South that the greatest challenge to NNGO power has arisen, as SNGOs wield an ability to fundraise and an ability to control the discourse of development more than ever before. The tension between traditionally having the most influence and ceding that control is a challenge for NNGOs. However, the relational bias of civil society grows the power of NNGOs and SNGOs together as they strive to partner and work in solidarity to address the harmful effects of power enacted through money and discourse. This balancing act and a move towards relational power are fundamental to NNGO identity.

6.5 Identity forming power relationships

The imbalances of power are the creative force and the constant fear of NNGO workers and academics. It is also definitive in the identity of NNGOs (Price, 2000). It is between places of power, that NNGOs work and that they find their identity. In the last section of this chapter, I will explore how power is formative in the identity of NNGOs. An imbalance of power is identity forming for NNGOs, as the neo-colonial relationship between the North and South is the essential formative feature of the modern world. Development NGOs are very much a part of this encounter (Mahmud, 1999). Within academic exploration of NNGOs the idea of power imbalance and the obsession with dissolving and confronting difference is an essential endeavour (Aikman, 2010; Bebbington, 2004; Doel, 1993; Mahmud, 1999; Price, 2000). The recognition of this power imbalance is mostly through the understanding of resourced power. The North has a greater range of resources as its contribution to Development partnerships, creating an imbalance. Many interview participants recognised this power differential, and many said that being aware of this was often the most important step in solving the problem. Participant 8 conceded, “We are more powerful, let’s get used to that”. Another, participant 2, said, “We know the relationships are not equal, but we can try to make sure they are just”. The goal of justice evokes an aspirational shift in power, which is implicit in much of Development work. To achieve this NNGOs position themselves between North and South, and act as a mediator of power. This role is indicative of the tension between all three perspectives of power. NNGOs rely on their resources to achieve this; they are also constantly deconstructing and reconstructing the discourse of Development and their work is primarily relational.
6.5.1 Existing in-between places of power

NNGOs have often placed themselves as the group working between North and South attempting to dissipate power through structures in fair and equitable ways. Despite their hopes of transnationalism, the conditions and assumptions of the Northern political hemisphere surround the identity and practice of NNGOs. Within this context NNGOs carry a connection to both the political and economic processes of the North (Perreault, 2003); and global advocacy movements (Edwards, 1999a). This connection will always expose both themselves and whomever they work with to the process and cultures of the North, with both negative and positive affects (Bebbington, 2004; Gauri & Galef, 2005; Massey, 1991). This connection brings also inherent power structures whether seen in resources, discourse or relationships.

Despite this, NNGOs work out of their contexts with a heavy priority on their programmatic work in the South. This positioning can lead them be torn between the discourse of the North and their relationships with their partners. Participant 2 said that a major factor in their partner’s motivation was the plethora of other donors they had to appease. An NGO from New Zealand is often not the major donor for a Southern NGO: “Influence? – it varies so much, often its other donors” as they recalled such a moment “oh, so we’ve changed from gender as the focus to disaster preparedness because the bigger donor wants that”. NGO staff often revealed that NGO strategic priorities change due to the wishes of larger donors. New Zealand NGOs are often smaller donors and their own influence is not as powerful as it might be assumed. These examples highlight the NGO position as a mediator between the larger processes of the Development industry and their partners.

Their position is in mobilising power through relationships to challenge the discourse of the North. The wielding of resourced and discursive power by the New Zealand government during the 2010 reform has also highlighted the conflict of position for NGOs. These changes have disempowered NGOs exposing them to the risk of becoming agents of the government rather than agents for good Development. NGOs clearly feel that the recent changes go against what they have been working towards in their Development partnerships. The way NGOs respond to this change will be a key issue in analysing the power imbalance between donors and NGOs. The changes the government have made may become an important influence over the work and identity of NGOs. Several interviewees
raised this problem, highlighting that the SDF may simply allow NGOs to deliver government contracts rather than the government supporting their autonomous work, “It is more difficult now because of the pressure from our donors, we’re moving far more towards contract management, because of changes in Wellington” (participant 1). NNGOs reflect a feeling that the prescriptive desires of the New Zealand government are now a main influence over aid allocation. Their concern is that that NNGOs will be managing government contracts that emphasise diplomatic and geopolitical concerns rather than best Development practice.

Another concern will be the move towards a focus on the Pacific, where the model of results based Development will be especially difficult. As participant 10 stated, “We have always been looking for more partners in the pacific, it is just, we want to work with partners we can trust and we know have the capacity to deliver, often in the pacific they are not there yet”. This reflects the NGO environment in the pacific that still needs further capacity. In this context SNGOs may be overwhelmed by the results based funding they will receive as NNGOs redirect their programmes to gain government funding. Participant 7 reflected this by saying, “What they needed most in the pacific is organisational growth so they are able to manage their own projects. This outcome-output focus puts a real squeeze on what we can achieve in capacity building in such tight time frames; we can’t achieve much in three years”. A change to results based funding might undermine the groundwork needed in many partners to begin to achieve results; many SNGOs need support in capacity building before they could handle an increase in programmatic funding. This challenge of capacity goes to the heart of NGO positioning; they feel their role is to enable their Southern partners to contend with development delivered by the state and the market. They put themselves in the middle of these processes to act as mediators and translators of development; the example of capacity in the Pacific shows a clear way this translation works, in mediating the wishes of Development donors at large to make sense and to work in practice on the ground in the South.

6.5.2 Using power to make change

Despite the constant reference to dissolving the North’s power, Many NNGO staff considered power an important tool in Development. This enactment of power is especially useful in addressing the local power structures that are in place, participant 5 said, “We do
have the power, but it is how we put our power and knowledge to use, is how we can address that”. NNGO personnel find themselves in a difficult, yet, useful position as they recognise these imbalances. It is with this recognition that NNGOs embark on one of the great ironies in Development that as one participant put it they must, “disempower to empower” (participant 6). NNGO personnel often recognise that their Development work is not just in redressing power between North and South but attempting to deliver aid that transforms local power structures also, “We want to devolve power but not let others capture it” (participant 5). One story of participant 7 reflects this difficulty, discussing his interaction with community leaders: “Often they are these grumpy old men, people with mana, or power saying to us ‘We know our community way better than you, you want give us money let us choose.’ In the end, they wanted us to pay the salaries of their local church ministers. We said to them, we don’t want to pay the salaries of your local ministers because in 5 years’ time we will still be needing to do that. We want you to be able to pay them yourselves, this process of empowering them, though ironic, because it was us wanting to do the empowering of them, and them seemingly not wanting to be empowered”. This irony is recognised in the literature as a key concern for NNGOs (Barnett & Land, 2007; Jordan, 2000; Kilby, 2006; Mosse, 2005; Oller, 2006).

The obvious risk in this process is in the NNGOs simply re-enacting their own power, it is often reflected that it is in giving, that those from the North, rather than the South are empowered (Barnett & Land, 2007; Silk, 2004). Participant 8 saw this risk, “When other staff members came along, they say they didn’t know how much I massage the cultures... when you become skilled at this, you can use it as power, and if you want, it could be used to manipulate”. Often however, NNGO employees also recognise this irony is due to their acceptance of having something to offer, possibly a cultural value, such as in this comment from participant 4: “...at the moment we are the powerful interests and the only reasons we are ok with that is because we trust our own decisions. We care so much, partly because an important outcome is to have benefits from what we are doing to reach the poorest people and partly because it’s a cultural thing. We come from a culture where it is much more difficult for powerful interests to capture decision making authority in a community”. Although it is a source of shame or an accepted evil for many NNGO staff, most recognise that a power imbalance exists as a problem, and is something they strive to mitigate. This recognition and this process of mitigation are essential to NNGO identity.
6.5.3 The emphasis of a transition of power

Within this complex power sharing between SNGOs and NNGOs, there was an overwhelming feeling of transition. It is recognised within development literature from the mainstream (Kelsall & Mercer, 2003; Myers, 1999; J. D. Sachs, 2005) and the radical critiques (Burnside & Dollar, 2000; Edwards & Hulme, 1996; Fisher, 1997; Mohan & Hickey, 2003; White, 1996) that Development at best, is a process of transformation.

Many interview participants highlighted the common tautology of transformational or transformative Development being an essential theme in their work. For some it was a goal reflected in decision-making, “We want to develop the relationship to a point where they can disagree, and they are not scared to disagree. We are trying to go in a process, of us having the decision making power to them having autonomy, we want to say to them ok now we want you to make the decisions” (participant 7). Others look at the need to move towards a reciprocal learning approach, “We don’t want the old extractive paternalistic model. We are moving more and more towards seeing stuff they can teach us, we are all in need in transformation, for example we need to educate donors about development issues, both sides of the transaction need to be transformed” (participant 3). Others referred to the broader idea of engaging in “transforming wider power structures” (participant 9).

Participant 5 shared a story that exemplified this goal “We were talking with one of the projects beneficiaries about the sustainability of the programme and she told us, when she gets to the point where she gets some disposable income they wanted to invest in the project. I want to become a donor to the project I am involved in”. It is clear that the goal for most NNGO staff is to see Development partnerships transition from unequal relationships to those that share power.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the complexities of power that surround the relationships that form a functional identity for NNGOs. I have explored these relationships in their contexts in the North and South, and how power understood through the wielding of resources, the influence of societal structures and the mobilisation of networks have all influenced and interacted in their work. While working towards transforming power structures to create a world free from inequality NNGOs often find that they, themselves are participating in unequal means of distributing funds and ideas around the world. One
surprising realisation for NGOs is that they are also sometimes a powerless group (Lister, 2000). While they require the funding of Northern Donors, they also require the networks and legitimacy of their Southern Donors. It is clear that the power of civil society Development is one developed collectively rather than one that is used over each other, without the different elements of the aid chain; all parties would be able to achieve less (Brown, 1990; Turner, 2011). This relational power has become a main influence on NGO’s identity as they deal with power structures in their work. It is in the next chapter I will explore the mechanics of the collective approach to civil society Development and the complex issues that arise in this relationship.
Chapter 7 – Fluid Friendships

7.1. Introduction

It is through relationships that NNGOs find their functional and dominant identity. As explored previously, all their relationships create diverse identities; however, the partnership between North and South is primarily formative for contemporary NNGOs. Relationships are core to good development. The prevalence of relationships in the identity of NNGOs has been a recurrent theme throughout this thesis. It is evident in their understanding and practice of power, and in their sense of solidarity that is increasingly important in their legitimacy. In this chapter, I will explore this theme in depth. In practice, relationships rather than results or principles form the identity of NNGOs. This functional identity is especially prevalent for my participants whose day-to-day work involves relating to their partners in the south.

I will explore in this analysis chapter the aspects of relationship between NNGOs and SNGOs. Firstly by looking at the challenges of giving this priority, and then the flexibility that is definitive in their approach to relationships and lastly in the position NNGOs often find themselves as a bridge between worlds, as standing in a relational space contesting and creating Development. This chapter is a direct analysis of my third thesis objective.

Objective Three: To investigate NNGO staff stories of SNGO-NNGO relationships.

7.2. Formation and prioritisation of Relationship

In this section, I will explore the initiation, maintenance and prioritisation of relationships in NNGO practice. This exploration will directly reference how these functional concerns influence the NNGO understanding of their identity. During this section, I refer to Partnership as the formalised relationship between NNGOs and SNGOs. It is in partnership that the informal relationships behind development become policy. The way these formal and informal relationships are maintained creates an identity for NNGOs, that is often more important than their reliance on outcomes or principles to drive their work and identity. My interview participants reflected this importance, their thoughts about the priority of relationship are analysed in this section.
7.2.1. The priority of relationships

The priority put on relationships has been a perpetual concern of NNGOs during their history. While, the concept of partnership itself is highly debated (Harris, 2008; Johnson & Wilson, 2006), civil society Development considers it a universal norm. It is often considered a main goal of Development work especially within NNGOs (Aveling, 2010; Fowler, 2000a; Harris, 2008; Harrison, 2007; Hinton & Groves, 2004; Suzuki, 1998; Whaites, 1999). NNGOs often claim partnership as an important element of their identity. NNGOs refer to partnership to identify themselves as groups that have legitimate connection to poverty and an effective and fair means of conducting their work. While partnerships exist within policy and contracts, one important consideration in its adoption is whether a Development relationship is instrumental to achieving outcomes or a fundamental Development concern. As mentioned in the previous chapter, moves from the government to prioritise the measuring of outcomes over building relationships has lead NNGOs to question their own priority of relationship, and subsequently this part of their identity.

Some participants were sceptical about an emphasis on relationships, as participant 9 claimed “Relationships or results? It has to be somewhere between the two, if you say it’s just relationships, your coping out. We want to know how a child’s health is improving. Why? Because it’s flaming important, it’s not enough to say the community loves us more after fifteen years, give me break, What are you measuring, have you just sat under a tree and sung kumba-ya for fifteen years?” However, this staff member’s cynicism was quickly countered with an approach that seeks a balance between relationships and results, “But also results can be self-defeating, you may help 17,000 thousand farmers improve maize yield but done nothing for environment, the governance, market access, policies, other threats” (participant 9). Other participants were on the other extreme, “Our approach is human centred. Human, rather than process, policy, or back donor needs, technicalities or dogma, it is a human centred approach. We refuse to focus on formula or process” (participant 4). In practice, a human centred approach meant the relationships came first, and results are the consequence of effective relationships.

Other participants also reflected the causal link between relationships and results, such as, participant 1, who said, “If you just think it is instrumental, it will not be a successful partnership. Part of Development is in the nurturing of Development” Another participant
revealed a different perspective that relationships were the beginning of good Development, however, as the relationships develop this becomes more difficult “The Partnership model is better in theory than it is in practice. – It is really good because we have a strong relationship with the people, a relationship that precedes the project, but in the future it may be the opposite, but, the relationship pre-exists.” (participant 6). Naoki Suzuki (1998) highlights this tension as a difference between having organisation centred or programme centred approaches. He argues focusing too much on organisational relationships can lead to self-perpetuation and a focus on programme results can lead to self-destruction. It appears that a functional NNGO will exist within this dichotomy.

7.2.2. The importance of personal interactions

Organisational relationships are generally the primary concern when discussing the prevalence of partnership. However, often the personal relationships between practitioners themselves are considerably more significant within NGO relationships (Girgis, 2007; Johnson & Wilson, 2006). While the study of Development NNGOs has often ignored the influence of personal interactions (Hinton & Groves, 2004; Lister, 2000; Lukaszczyk & Williamson, 2010), it has been clearly established that personal interactions are an essential factor in creating effective Development relationships (Dichter, 1999; Fukuyama, 2001; Girgis, 2007; Hailey, 2001; Hinton & Groves, 2004; Lister, 2000; Mawdsley, et al., 2005). It is especially important for Development modalities that work with partners of a smaller scale. Participant 1 compared programmes that work with larger Southern organisations and an approach that works directly with communities, saying, “You have to be more sensitive, you can’t say to your partner, you’re not doing enough. “Yes we are that’s not how we work” a lot more sensitivity is needed”. Participant 5 suggested that a personal connection was important to mitigate the manipulation common in Development relationships, “My deep desire is to meet as humans, if there is in you the desire to manipulate you won’t shake hands, use this as a sounding board”. Although in policy, NNGOs will generally not mention the need for informal relationship building rituals, these acts are clearly important. The adoption of ritualised behaviour is common in NGOs as a means of creating a commonality between diverse cultures, such as saying a prayer or meeting for a meal, or having time set aside for personal conversation, all highly personal and intimate acts that are proven to increase the effectiveness of Development relationships (Hinton & Groves, 2004; Suzuki, 1998; Harris, 2008).
A risk in personalising Development relationships is clearly the danger of manipulation. This was described in one story by participant 6 “Sometimes, the personal relationships can get in the way [...] one of our local managers sent an email saying he was struggling a lot financially and wasn’t able to pay for his kids education. He sent this email with an obvious implication: he needs to be paid more, well it’s a no brainer, he clearly isn’t being paid enough. But, the only reason he can do that is because he knows us personally, he is aware because of the power over the community we have and he knows what we can do. I had to say to him ‘we can back you, you but you must take it to your community yourself’. Once we said that he didn’t go back to his community, its tough, when you know your friend is struggling”. An approach to dealing with the risks of overly personal interactions is to integrate the need for personal relationship building into the overall approach to Development. Mawdsley et al (2005) have gone as far as suggesting that NGOs should recognise face-to-face personal interaction as a formal mechanism. Other authors have reflected on the roots of Development in the concepts of generosity and moral choice. They argue that Development through civil society is a modality deeply rooted in personal choice and relationships (Barnett & Land, 2007; Elster, 2006; Silk, 2004) and its practice will and should reflect this. NNGO employees are rooted in the personal, moral and relational aspects of NGO modalities. Their work reflects this as they prioritised fair and equal relationships. In practice, the personal interactions of staff with their equivalents in the South create an organisation’s identity.

7.2.3. The initiation and maintenance of relationships

The initiation of relationships is an important indicator of NNGO identity. If they chose to work with SNGOs only in the Pacific, they are a Pacific orientated organisation. If they work with only SNGOs that have programmes for vulnerable children, they tend to have this focus themselves. In reality, however, the relationships and personal interactions of Development are more often the beginnings of partnership. While NNGOs have lofty policies about how to choose a partner, more often than not, they initiate a partnership through a chance occurrence. “Even though we have strategic policy about where we want to work and with whom, sometimes it is just that we meet someone at a conference or we studied together, or we were part of something together and our work just seems to match up” (participant 7). This phenomenon is also discussed in development literature as being a dominant way that relationships are formed (Mawdsley, et al., 2005). Although, many participants remember this as “the way things were done in the past”, the past is still with us. Many participants
said that these old relationships were still the majority of the partners they engaged with “I know we have a plan for making new partnerships, but we haven’t actually started anything new since I’ve been here” (participant 3). Participant 4 reflected the same position, “Who knows when this work was first started or how they decided, I haven’t started any new projects.”

A similar ambiguity exists about ending or changing relationships. There is an acceptance that NNGOs should eventually cede control to their SNGO partner (Chambers, 1995; Edwards, 1999c; Harrison, 2007), and this is often how NNGOs plan their strategic relationships. Participant 5, from a relatively new and small NGO talked about the ambitions of having exit plans “In theory we aim to leave as soon as possible. We have discussed this with our partners and the term they decided on was having a ‘happy departure’, this was the result of a conversation with them, not wanting to leave in a relational sense but get to a point where they didn’t need us and that would be what we achieved together”. The ambitions often, however, fail to come to fruition, as explained by participant 7 of a larger and older organisation “we want desperately to have an example where we have finished a partnership and we have succeeded, but it just doesn’t seem to happen. A partner recently has been in talks with us about getting more funding to make themselves self-sufficient, we had a plan that was for us to withdraw funding in three years, and they would be sustainable, and then there was an cyclone and everything changed”.

Within the critique of NNGOs there is a suggestion that there is inability to let go (Simbi & Thom, 2000). However, some have also suggested that despite the desire to have exit strategies and an honest strategy for ceding control, it may be more appropriate to retain involvement (Harrison, 2007). The work of Development is more complicated than simply finishing a project and an on-going relationship may be conducive to sustainable Development outcomes. Participant 5 extolled a more systematic approach “we would like to get to a point where once every quarter they tell us how they are getting on and we do the same. Practically we are not far along the road enough, having departures in stages, as each centre reaches financial sustainability”. This last idea was echoed by several participants, such as participant 7 saying, “we try to have a goal of leaving once the work is done, but, what seems to work better is to keep with that organisation and they move on to the next community”. Participant 9 expressed a similar sentiment, “we have our [organisation’s programme] and once that is complete we move to a neighbouring area so that we keep
working with both and we can use the expertise we have built in this area to help the next [programme]”. Letting go is important for the measurement of Development effectiveness, however it appears that in practice, relationship comes first. Relationships more often move into different stages, for example, from funding to solidarity, rather than ending altogether. The resistance to let go is one of many ways that NNGOs adapt rather than conclude. The formation of partnership in policy is a strong reflection of an organisation’s identity. In practice, their flexibility shows the fragmented identity they often wield. In the next section, I will explore the balance NNGOs face between keeping responsive to changing environments and keeping to their confirmed strategies.

7.3 Flexibility in practice

The flexibility in NGO practice is a key finding of this thesis, and is especially observable within their relationships. This practical elasticity leads to the flexible and fragmented identities of NNGOs. This flexibility can be problematic as it can lead to opportunism in both NNGOs and SNGOs. This flexibility also appears to be a required element of NGO work as the nature of aid and development circumstances are constantly changing. A key concern of the flexible nature of NGO work is reporting these complex situations accurately and fairly. This tension of reporting and reality is a key contributor to the NGO identity. In this section, I will explore the reasons and implications of the flexible approaches that NGOs adopt and how these affect their relationships and ultimately, their identity.

7.3.1. Flexible Approaches in relationships and identity

Ambiguity about project timeframes and the prevalence of informal and personal interaction highlights a common thread of flexibility and opportunism in both NGOs and SNGOs, and in their partnership. The similarity of this approach was one of the most interesting themes in my interviews. The environment that NGOs work in is between the structures of Log-frames, strategy and reports; and the nuances of people’s development at a community level. Participant 10 remembered a time that represented this tension “we had to write a report to explain how the project had matched with its initial strategy and it was almost impossible. A financial crisis, a death of a leading community member and a natural disaster had completely changed what the programme could and needed to do”. This scenario is common for NGO relationships; that in practice their reliance on people rather than process leaves them vulnerable to the complexity of people’s lives. It is also this human centred approach
that allows them to be flexible and adapt to the needs at the grassroots and to work within realistic and achievable outcomes.

NGOs ability to withstand environmental variances creates one of their greatest contributions in Development, that of innovation. Primarily driven by social entrepreneurs (Meyer, 1995) NGOs are responsive to their context and create programmes that reflect reality rather than ideology. This flexibility in NGOs is often cited as a key advantage in their approach (Elliott, 1987; Fisher, 1997; O’Reilly, 2011), and is the main source of their ability to constantly learn (Dicklitch & Rice, 2004). Many participants celebrated flexibility in this sense, “[organisation] predominantly does not have one model of partnership, Development is messy, contexts changes, and opportunities arise, and things happen our partners are used to working in that environment.” (Participant 1) For some NNGOs this flexibility is enshrined in policy, “Our approach is distinct according to context, the closer you are to the relief end, the work is rapid and prescriptive – as you move down you begin more consultancy, in Development work we can spend up to two years in assessment, learning the context” (participant 9). Being flexible is one of the ways NNGO continue learning alongside their partner as in this example from participant 5, “ in our yearly debrief, we learned that everybody gets sick in the rainy season and economic activity is really low, and this is why income fluctuates so much seasonally. Out of this dialogue was the idea that we wanted to offer people malaria treatment”. Flexibility is an essential value for many within NNGOs. While they will have strategies and principles to guide their work, it is often in flexible responses that the more supposedly rigid values of NGOs are developed and contested (Mowles, 2008). This flexible nature is a definitive and celebrated aspect of NNGOs.

7.3.2 The prevalence and risks of opportunism

Although extolled as a great virtue, flexibility has its risks. Naoki Suzuki (1998) highlights the risk of flexibility in an organisation as it can lead to opportunism. Where NGOs find themselves adapting to environmental changes they can lose focus of their goals and simply look for the most available funding and projects. Opportunism can be dangerous as it can undermine the beneficiaries of the Development work for the sake of the generally middle class SNGO practitioners (Hudock, 1999). However, Suzuki also highlights that a lack of flexibility can restrict a NNGOs ability to respond. (Suzuki, 1998). Many participants reflected the sometimes-frustrating flexibility displayed by their partners “in the programme
design it is easy for us to agree. Because we go in there seeing their body of work and we want to support this, but when in implementation things change, and then in reporting it can be very difficult to match what happened with what we planned” (participant 1). At its most frustrating, it can appear as just opportunism “we are aware that we are not always the largest donor. Sometimes we will make a strategic plan with a partner and find a few years down the road they have adopted completely contradictory goals, this is sometimes because other big donors want to fund that work and they need to change their approach to get their money” (participant 4).

Despite its emphasis as a critique of SNGOs, this opportunism can equally affect NNGOs. One example of this is that aid allocation to programmes that are targeting HIV/AIDS without a clear signal that this is the greatest development need locally, however it is the greatest funding opportunity (Aveling, 2010; Morfit, 2011). During one interview, the participant revealed this NNGO opportunism as a parallel to that of SNGOs where they seamlessly went from discussing opportunism in their partner to discussing their own flexibility to donor demands. Participant 7 conceded their own opportunism when saying, “We are always responsive, to what needs to happen in our programmes and to what we can realistically make work, the real art is in matching the two but there are compromises along the way”.

**7.3.2. Fitting the complexity of development into a ‘box’**

A constant challenge for NNGOs is to create an identity that is responsive in its programmatic work, yet, is clear and has long-term plans in its funding and reporting. Government and private donors alike need to see how their money is spent. One of the greatest difficulties for NNGO work is containing this contextual and flexible work within discrete and formulaic reporting processes. Somewhat ironically, often the principles of partnership when measured through formal indicators can be a restriction on the relationships between NNGO and SNGO, when reality and reporting do not match (Harrison, 2007). For some relationships, the process of funding proposals, evaluation and reporting can be a disempowering act. In Vandra Harris’ work meeting all the funders’ requirements has been described by one practitioner as “humiliating” (Harris, 2008). The process of having to justify all your ideas, methods and results to funders often with a different cultural framework has a high risk of creating this humiliation. Many participants
reflected the difficulty of matching reports to reality “By giving the forms you skew the story, you skew what is important to them, what they see, what they own or what they are proud of” (participant 3). Participant 2 said, “The real success that is happening is impossible to capture through an email or a report”. Participant 1 shared a story where “in their report they had said they were no gender implications in their work, but when I was there they were telling me about how a volunteer had to stay the night in the office because they were scared of their husband”.

This issue of reporting is a key concern for NNGO staff and although difficult, many participants considered the ability to fit the fluidity of Development work into prescribed timeframes and reports a main part of the NNGO role and an essential element to their functional identity. Participant 7 explained, “well, that’s our job, we have people there working in their communities changing lives, we don’t have that glamorous role our job is to write reports, shmooze with the donors and get support for that work, we’re just the admin staff really, translating the work of Development to whoever needs to hear it”. This art of translation is the NNGO’s greatest skill and it is here where the find their legitimacy. NNGOs are constantly trying to maintain an integrated identity between the extremes of formula and flexibility. In one sense, NNGOs are purely reactive organisations that work wherever there is need or funding. One the other hand they deliver carefully planned intentional programmes that ignore the reality of Development at the grassroots. In reality, NNGOs find their identity in balancing these roles and being a bridge between worlds. In the next section, I will explore the role of bridge building that NNGOs fulfil.

7.4. NNGOs as advocates, mediators and translators

As mentioned in the previous chapter on power, it is the relationships between places, which forge contemporary NNGO identities. NNGO staff act as advocates of SNGOs to the Development industry. NNGOs act as places of cultural dialogue between North and South. This role as a mediator and translator is definitive to NNGOs. The relational power found through partnership allows NNGOs and SNGOs together to affect the variances of development and allow local communities to influence and own the development process. In this next section, I will explore how NNGOs act as mediator, advocate and translator and how these roles form their identity.
7.4.1 Being an advocate to the Development industry

Massaging real life development into reports is indicative of the main role of NNGO workers, that they are bridges between worlds. One important bridge that NNGO staff considered themselves forming was between those at the grassroots and the larger scale machinations of the Development world. Although NNGOs are embedded in the discourse of development it is their role at the grassroots that allows them to challenge and adapt this discourse (Dicklitch & Rice, 2004; Ebrahim, 2001). This came in many forms. Often it was in helping partners understand the reporting procedures of the North, as Participant 2 stated, “in one of my best partnerships, the staff are really interested and wants to know what formats we need. We don’t just say to him “Fill in this form”. We discuss it and then he can use this knowledge with his other donors”. Other participants talked of their role as being an advocate for their partners to other more prescriptive donors: “The partner is not in a position to say to other donors ‘we want autonomy’ but we can say to other donors that these people have the right to not be micromanaged” (participant 10). Participant 4 discussed this role more theoretically, “we are not their only influence, our work is also being in partnership with other donors, improving their communication, and making sure we have a positive effect on the whole process. The Partner shouldn’t have to talk to five donors; we try to keep it easy, clear and transparent, by getting the donors to work together”.

International agreements about development, such as the Paris declaration or Accra Accord have extolled donor harmonisation as one of the key principles in good Development. In reality, however, it can still be a major problem, as reflected by participant 3 “I remember learning all about harmonisation at university and now I see what a big problem it is. Donors don’t talk together at all and it makes things really hard on our partners. If you ask why we don’t talk together you just get laughed at”. The lack of collaboration between Northern donors is often seen as a significant barrier to Development outcomes being achieved and the locals having ownership over the process (Kakande, 2004). There are often several other actors influencing a partners decisions. NNGO workers are often aware of these and actively worked with these other groups, whether they were local government, other donors, and market or state forces. Often the tension between different donors was apparent even within their own organisations: “Sometimes you felt like you were an advocate to the national office on behalf of the community based organisation” (participant 1). This issue can be one advantage that NNGO workers claim they bring to the development process, participant 4
claiming, “you have to translate language and styles, we are working with community
organisers at the grassroots, they are not Development practitioners, they are not trained in
Development speak.” This bridge building ability is not only valued by the SNGO partner
but often donors and governments look to NNGOs for their skills as a unofficial diplomatic
channel because they are known for their connections on the ground (Lukaszczyk &
Williamson, 2010).

7.4.2. Recognising difference and creating dialogue

In their role of building bridges, NNGO employees often find they are in the microcosm of
North-South cultural dialogue. The performance of Development work is in the field, with
interactions between partners from different backgrounds and perspectives. A functional
factor of NNGO identity is the development of cultural dialogue between the different
cultures that may not share the same values, processes, epistemologies or language. A key
aspect in the cultural dialogue of Development relationships is building trust. Simple actions
can create this trust (Harris, 2008). In my interviews, practitioners were highly aware of the
need to build a trusting relationship. This was cultivated with humour in one case “My role
is in interpreting on both sides, poking fun at the palingi, have them roaring in laughter as I
make fun of the whitey” (Participant 8). Another participant referred to the power of simply
joking around with their partners “I find humour to be a great tool, it breaks down barriers,
but, it must be done gently.” Participant 5 said, “In my role I am in the classic position of
bridging the two worlds, I need cultural understanding, a tolerance of cultural things, and
the ability to interpret what is going on”.

Cultural dialogue is only one aspect where NNGOs stand between the North and the South
in their work. The difference between North and South in culture, economics and
epistemologies are present in the NNGO workplace. Dealing with these differences carefully
and productively has become an essential part of the NNGO ethos and identity. NNGO staff
made it clear that there was a distinction between the SNGO and NNGO in their identities,
participant 1 explained, “We partner with organisations we have shared values with. We
support what they do. We are not trying to turn them into mini versions of [ourselves], we
support their work, which may fit into a larger plan of ours, which may add value to our
work, but it is not about us. They are not the agents that we use to deliver our ideas”.

80
In their role between North and South, they are attempting to mitigate far more than the simple confusion in writing a report. Often the far larger scale machinations of the global economy are encroaching on the way of life for those in the South. NNGOs are working with Southern partners to mitigate these challenges. Participant 7 shared a story that reflected this concern, “we have this one project with a women’s group that is in a community where for centuries they have lived off the land, with the forest being their home and their provider, but now the pressure from logging companies is causing them all to sell off the forest. My instinct would be to say that we should just leave this group alone and let them do their thing, they don’t need ‘Development’, but if we can’t just leave them alone, big business and economic pressure is already there from ‘us’ our lifestyle is gonna affect them one way or another. It is our job to make sure we can bring some good from our part of the world to them. Development is coming no matter what, that is the reality, we can help them own the development that happens”.

There is sometimes in Development a temptation to perceive the NNGO role as dissolving the difference between North and South to create a sense of equality. Furthermore, dissolving the difference between North and South has become an obsession for some in Development (Bebbington, 2004; Doel, 1993). However, for most practitioners, it is more important to recognise that as they come from different backgrounds they have different skills and different capacities for work. NNGOs remember this as a reason for their role (Harrison, 2007; Turner, 2011). They are working to achieve a collective goal and must realise what each party has to offer this common purpose. Participant 5 reflected this concern, “of course we would like there to be no difference between us, but there is, and we use that. I was privileged to have an education that has made me good at report writing, someone in one of our partners has an education that has made him good at working with improving agriculture, I am not ashamed to use our different skills.” The difference between North and South is an occupational reality for NNGO work. While dissolving this difference seems to be a goal for many within Development, NNGO employees seem more cautious in their approach, working with difference and working towards common goals. Their greatest point of difference as a deliverer of Development is their connection to the grassroots’ movements of communities. This has become a key factor of NNGO identity and an important strength in their work. The next section of this chapter will explore the conception of this movement from the perspective of NNGO practitioners.
7.4.3. Identifying through solidarity

The convergence of the North and South and the dissolving differences between SNGOs and NNGOs appears to be the most important contemporary factor in SNGO-NNGO relationships. The idea of being a channel of Northern finances to Southern poverty has become untenable and it is this changing reality where NNGOs work. This is not however, a challenge to the role of NNGOs, many seem to celebrate this changing environment as an exciting opportunity. NNGOs began in the spirit of a movement and it appears in contemporary NNGOs are moving more towards a model of representing a movement. Participant 7 put this clearly, when he recalled a partner saying to him “we don’t want to be in this situation where it is about you sending us funding and us writing you reports, we want a relationship of solidarity, not funding”. One example of this growing trend is that increasing amount of NNGOs working as members of broader networks or federations not simply based in the North. Within development literature the blurring of lines between North and South and the increasingly transnational existence of all NGOs is a defining feature of Development civil society (Bebbington, 2004; Dichter, 1999; Edwards, 1999b; Perreault, 2003; Price, 2000).

NGOs work within a new geography. This new environment includes divisions of wealth and poverty that transcend national borders and NGOs work towards equity in this new reality. It is within this environment and this spirit of solidarity that NNGOs envision their role and their identity. Although many NNGOs appear hesitant about reducing the use of the terms, North and South, as participant 8 highlighted “It is really important that we acknowledge the reality that things are different for us, we live in privilege, if we just ignore it, it won’t go away.” Despite their insistence on these different backgrounds, NNGOs recognise they work in relationship towards common goals, often also with common practice as Participant 4 said: “We do very similar things. They work with a community to solve poverty; we work with a community to solve poverty. It just so happens that they are managing projects and we are raising funds, a lot of principles need to be same, of participation, of equity, fair governance, transparency, harmonisation even, we always forget these things we tell them, when we really it’s the same thing”. In what some have termed in associational revolution (Fisher, 1997) the work of civil society around the world has become a force to provide alternative development that is people centred. It is in their greatest aspirations that NNGOs and SNGOs alike are striving towards this identity. It is in
solidarity NGOs must act as this increases and has mutual impact if it is happening in all places at once (Pishchikova, 2006). As geographical borders no longer confine the balance between rich and poor, the funding imperative of NNGOs becomes less important. Poverty and wealth exist in the North and South and the movement for fair and just Development knows no borders. Working in this environment as organisations based on friendship gives the movement that constitutes NNGOs hope for their future role.

7.5 Conclusion

Whatever differences exist between the worlds of development in North and South it appears complex friendships dominate the relationships between NGOs from either sphere. These relationships are the greatest source of NNGO power, legitimacy and identity. While the reporting and procedure of good Development tries to make the process appear smooth, empirical and mathematical, the nuances of human interaction still dominate NNGO work. Naoki Suzuki identifies three common dichotomies that NGOs balance between: complexity and homogeneity; flexibility and consistency; and programme centred and organisation centred approaches. The balance of dichotomies pervades relationships between NGOs.

In this chapter, I have explored these friendships and the complexity they hide, highlighting the prominence of relationships, the informal process behind their maintenance and the movement that they represent. This movement began NNGOs and it seems NNGOs are returning to this movement in a changing world. It is in this solidarity NNGOs are finding a new relational identity. This identity is reflective of what they consider a key aspect of their work that is standing in friendship with partners to change the world. They stand together between the communities of the North and South to help local communities own and mitigate development. The subsequent and final chapter summarises all findings and draws conclusions where I look at some emerging themes that exist within my analysis of identity, power and relationships and explore the future of NNGOs as they struggle with who they are and who their friends are.
Chapter 8 – Conclusion

8.1 Introduction to conclusion

In this final chapter of my thesis, I will discuss findings that emerged throughout the different themes of analysis. The overall aim of this research was to examine the ways in which the relationships between Northern Non-Governmental Organisations (NNGOs) and Southern Non-Governmental Organisations (SNGOs) construct identity for NNGOs based in New Zealand. I will review how the three research objectives - identity, power and relationships - contribute to my overall goal of exploring the identities of NNGOs based in New Zealand. I will then explain several findings that were apparent throughout the analysis. Lastly, I will suggest areas of further research and conclude the research as a whole.

8.2 Review

8.2.1 Objective 1 - Schizophrenic identities

In chapter five, I explored the way NNGO staff understand the identity of their organisations. The literature reveals that a ‘crisis of legitimacy’ is causing an overhaul of these identities. As the title of this chapter, ‘Schizophrenic identities’ indicates the identities of these organisations are increasingly fragmented in response to this crisis. This fragmentation is a key finding of this thesis; increasingly NNGO identity is splintering, as they need to present legitimacy to their donors, partners and vast networks. This schizophrenia is not debilitating, however, their identities are functional and legitimate within this fragmentation, it allows flexibility and a responsiveness to communicate and deliver development appropriately at all times.

8.2.2 Objective 2 - The identity forming nature of power

In chapter six of this thesis, I explored power imbalances within NNGO work and their influence on NNGO identity. I explored power through three perspectives of the source of power: power in things; a post-structural recognition of discursive power; and power within relationships. This chapter explores these perspectives and their enactment in the North and the South. Understanding the accumulation of power in relationships and networks creates a motivation for NNGOs means of practice, they work with partners to create viable development alternatives and mutual empowerment. Meanwhile the discursive and
resourced power of the government and NNGOs themselves provides an obstacle and a
distraction towards achieving aspirational solidarity.

8.2.3 Objective 3 - Relational identities
This last analysis chapter looked at the process and experience of relationships within the
NNGO sector and its influence on NNGO practice and identity. One main finding of this
chapter was the fluid nature of these relationships; that they are fluid in the formation and
maintenance, and often very flexible in nature. However, NNGOs also participate in formal
mechanisms of development, and there is a challenge in capturing the nature of these
relationships within the confines of reports and policies. Although there is a priority given
to organisational partnership, it appears that relationships at the individual level can be far
more important, and that SNGO-NNGO relationships are at their roots based upon complex
‘friendships’, personal interactions that are often hidden or ignored in the strategies and
reports of Development work. Standing in the middle ground NNGOs perceive themselves to
be working together with SNGOs, and present a civil society voice in solidarity against the
forces of development.

8.3 Emerging Themes

8.3.1 The destabilising and fragmenting of Northern Identity
A clear theme throughout this thesis is the tension between North and South. NNGOs have
their supporters and funders in the North and deliver their practice in the South. This
dualism has always been formative in their identity. It is in reference to the North/South
dualistic division of the world that NNGOs derive a framework to provide Development. The
North/South dichotomy is still a major influence in the differences that NGOs work with.
However, the dissolution of this dualism forces NNGOs to reform their identities in a world
where poverty and wealth exist side by side in all places. As these old dichotomies dissolve,
difference still exists. Difference between those with or without opportunity in the
Development process is continually broken down and recreated. Some of these new realities
include the connections that NNGOs have to market forces and international governance
bodies. For SNGOs, they retain a connection to the ground and the legitimate movement of
Development. These examples show the recreation and reformation of difference. NGOs
continue to exist in a world of difference and must work together between these worlds to
create fairer development outcomes. This awareness of difference has been a raison d’etre for
NNGOs and has given them a symbolic legitimacy and a key indicator of their identities. NNGOs identify as organisations representing a movement against inequality, this difference although dynamic continues to influence NNGO identity.

8.3.2 Bridge-building

The role of being a mediator and a bridge between North and South has always been formative to NNGO identity. Despite the dissolving difference of North and South, NNGO workers still primarily feel their role consists of being a bridge. NNGOs have traditionally positioned their work between their constituencies in the North and their recipients in the South. NNGOs still consider themselves to be working between geographies. Rather than being in one place, the work of Development is between conceptual places; between places of inequality, between places of wealth and poverty. NNGOs and SNGOs work within these middle grounds communicating, and translating economic and political realities to create a fairer world. NNGOs will maintain this role, voicing the needs of those in poverty to those who need, and are able, to help. While inequalities exist, they recognise there has to be people to stand on the middle ground, and work towards transformation.

8.3.3 The challenge of legitimacy

Governments hold an electoral mandate, while businesses respond to a commercial mandate. This thesis revealed the difficult search for the NNGO legitimacy. The quest for a mandate is essential for NNGOs to form comprehensive and valid identities. The definitive structural challenge for NNGOs is that they require funding from one place and deliver their services to another. NNGOs respond to this challenge in two ways. Firstly, they seem to lose their roots in their home countries, and refer to their identities as derived from their beneficiaries in the South. Another recent move is to bring more advocacy into their work, which reflexively connects to their original constituencies and brings legitimacy from global causes and campaigns. Rather than be paralysed by the North’s contribution to poverty, reflexive NNGOs support intentional Development in the South, while challenging the harm caused by immanent development driven from the North.
8.3.4 2010 reform of New Zealand's ODA

One major influence on NGO identity is that of donors. Donors provide the capital needed to practice Development in the programmatic sense and by changing the way they provide funding, they can affect the way NGOs identify themselves. The 2009-2010 changes in the way the New Zealand government funds NGO activity, has caused a considerable challenge to the way NGOs can plan and implement their programmes, relationships and form their identity. The previous KOHA and VASS mechanisms of funding tacitly supported the NGO model of partnership for the last thirty years. The changes that the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) fund will cause in NGOs in New Zealand will become apparent, in their negotiation and practice. However, several changes and challenges are initially clear. Firstly, the change of funding support from a relationship-based focus to that of results. This causes NGOs to consider what is more important, retaining their emphasis on relationships or to cede this for a greater portion of funding. Secondly, a move of focus from the broad goal of poverty elimination, to economic development will again force NGOs to consider their own goals and make a choice based on principle or funding. Lastly, the on-going shift towards funding Development in the Pacific will again challenge NGOs priorities. However, it is likely that NGOs will make concessions and adapt a working relationship with the government’s new priorities while negotiating and working towards a dialogue about the nature of effective Development.

A greater implication for NGOs is how these changes have challenged the relationship between government and civil society in the aid chain. NGOs, after a thirty-year honeymoon with the government, have been demoralised and disenfranchised from what was once a more equitable and transparent relationship. This challenge may push NGOs into being agents of governments; delivering their aid modalities to communities at the grassroots; alternatively, it may push them to downsize their programmes and increase their independence and reliance on legitimacy of principles. This challenge is clearly a key issue for the identity for New Zealand based NGOs.

8.3.5 Rebuilding a movement

Many of my interviewees revealed that their organisations were inspired by a ‘movement’, which still primarily identifies their institutions. These NGOs still have their roots in these
movements; however, the movement has changed. New movements have arisen, others have died, and meanwhile the institutions have remained. A key question for NNGOs is how will they adapt to today's environment of activism. Will they focus on advocacy; will they engage with the market and governments; will they promote grassroots activism; or simply fundraise in one place and implement Development elsewhere. The formation of NNGO identity is as a formalised representation of a movement against poverty and inequality; it is a key symbolic factor in their identities. As with many issues explored in this thesis, NNGOs actively balance the dichotomy between movement and institution. It is important that they are responsive to their constituencies, and allow for advocacy and activism to give them energy and drive, while being responsible and politically shrewd enough to be effective in their programmes.

8.4 Further Research

This research has been a broad review of the way relationships form the identity of NNGOs. There are three main areas I believe further research would expand and enhance the revelations of this research.

Firstly, because of the qualitative and broad nature of this inquiry, it will be difficult for many to enact any changes in policy or practice from my data. NNGOs often need quantitative research to justify the research to their funders. One area where this would be relevant is in the long-term benefit of relationship building as a means of creating the social infrastructure for more results based Development outcomes. Many participants highlighted this problem, as they are aware of the pressure to show outcomes on a much shorter timeframe. It would be interesting to observe how outcomes develop over time with the prioritisation of relationship.

Secondly, this research focused on one institutional relationship in the aid chain from a New Zealand context. A similar inquiry would be required for the different connections in the New Zealand Aid chain. A study could research the relational dynamics between the New Zealand Government and New Zealand NGOs, with a comparison of views and practices before and after the changes of 2010. Similarly, further study is provoked here into the relationship between New Zealand NGOs and their constituencies. A variety of angles could show this, as a marketing phenomenon or a social phenomenon; a comparison of these two would also be interesting.
Lastly, this thesis focuses on the attitudes of NNGO staff in their relationships and identity. This research sees ideas from NNGO staff perspectives; I would suggest further research should look at the same issue from the perspective of SNGOs. Furthermore, research that looks at the elusive space between NNGO and SNGO is required; possibly an in-depth inquiry into one partnership would provide a qualitative understanding of these relationships.

8.5 Conclusion - The future for NNGOs

When most NNGOs began, they were a collection of communities in countries like New Zealand with common goals. Churches, political groups, academics or humanitarians gathered and decided they wanted to contribute to the world’s engagement with development. Whether driven by a theological imperative, a human rights agenda, or a means of creating peace or democracy, they were always a movement of people. These movements coalesced and matured, institutionalised and formalised their meetings and structures, developed funding streams, and became what we know as NNGOs today. This remains the identity of NNGOs in most New Zealander’s minds, as their agents of good will in a broken world. Over time, NNGOs have changed; their institutional identities have fragmented. They now maintain this New Zealand based movement identity, alongside an identity as a support and voice for their SNGO partners, and an identity as an effective agent for government Development aid. NNGO identity is fragmented; it is not however, broken.

Despite the many challenges NNGOs face, they remain at their roots a collection of people working with their friends in other places towards common goals. All the challenges and dichotomies that surround the work of NNGOs become a distraction from their core business of providing alternatives to mainstream development. As their contexts change, relationships between NGOs in the North and in the South continue to be definitive. Their interactions are between friends that are working together. Through the conflicts and complications of all friendships, they stick together and work towards an equitable world. Relationships are definitive in the identity of NNGOs. Their relational identity and legitimacy will become more important as they respond to the challenges of retaining their connection to a broader movement and dealing with the issues of power. NNGOs have remained grounded, having a connection to the worlds of wealth and people living in
poverty. It is in this reality that they must be the agents of solidarity between North and South.

New Zealand Development NGOs face many challenges. Due to the changing environment internationally, in their funding, in their constituency and in their beneficiaries, NGOs must adapt or lose relevance. This thesis has explored the identity forming process through relationships that provide legitimacy and purpose. NGOs are in a time of crisis, a crisis of funding, of legitimacy and ultimately of identity. This thesis has explored the way their position in the aid chain, as a bridge between North and South, has given their work meaning. Their position in the middle ground ideologically and geographically has given them their greatest challenges and their greatest achievements. Through my interviews and review of literature, I believe it is in holding strong in this fluid middle ground that they will make the greatest contribution. In this ‘in-between’ space they are able mitigate development that marginalises people and creates division, while creating alternative Development that gives voice to communities in North and South.
References


OECD. (2010). Development Assistance Committee (DAC) PEER REVIEW 2010. OECD.


Willetts, P. (2000). From Consultative Arrangements to Partnership: The Changing Status of NGOs in Diplomacy at the UN. *Global Governance, 6*


Appendices

Appendix A - Information sheet for semi-structured interviews

Title of project: Developing relationships: the relational space between North and South in Civil Society development.

Researcher: Andrew Johnston: School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

I would like to invite you to participate in a semi-structured interview about your work in development, especially in regards to working with other organisations in the South. During this interview I hope to discuss with you, your own experiences of development work how you feel relationships are managed and created in your work, how you feel power is shown through these relationships. I am a Masters student in Development Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. As part of this degree, I am undertaking a research project leading to a thesis. The aim of my research is to develop an understanding of the identity of Northern NGOs explored through the way they relate to their partners overseas.

Responses collected will form the basis of my research project. Opinions derived from this interview will be presented either confidentially or attributed to you as you choose from several options on the consent form. No other person beside my supervisor, Dr Andrew McGregor, and I will listen to the tape recording of the interviews. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences and deposited in the University Library. It is intended that one or more articles will be submitted for publication in scholarly journals. This research project has been approved by the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee.

What is involved?

- The interviews are designed to take 30-40 minutes and can take place at a mutually agreed time and place. You will be interviewed by Andrew Johnston. You will be required to sign the attached consent form prior to the semi-structured interviews.
- Your participation is voluntary. You are welcome to withdraw your data from this research any time before the 31st of October.
- You will be asked several semi-structured questions in each interview regarding the teaching of the curriculum and its design. You do not have to answer all questions.
- The interview will be tape-recorded and transcribed. The recording will be used to complement the notes taken during the interview.
- All raw data collected during the interview will be accessed by the principal investigator and research supervisor only. These will be destroyed after completion of the Thesis.

Please feel free to contact the researcher or research supervisor if you have any questions or would like to receive further information about this study.

Principal Investigator:
Andrew Johnston
Masters of Development Studies student – Victoria University of Wellington
andrewfjohnston@gmail.com

Research Supervisor:
Dr Andrew McGregor
Senior Lecture, Development Studies
andrew.mcgregor@vuw.ac.nz
Appendix B - Consent form for semi-structured interviews with the NGO staff

Title of project: Developing relationships: the relational space between North and South in Civil Society development.
Researcher: Andrew Johnston: School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

- I have read and understood the attached ‘Information sheet for semi-structured interviews’. I have had an opportunity to ask any questions I may have about the study and about participating in the interview and have had them answered to my satisfaction.
- I agree to participate in these semi-structured interviews and understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information I have provided) from this project any time before the 31st of October, without having to give reasons.
- I understand that the interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed, and that only the researcher and his supervisor will have access to this material. Any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and his Supervisor.
- I understand that all written material and taped interviews will be stored in a locked filing cabinet or as password protected electronic documents and then destroyed after 5 years.
- I understand that any opinions attributed to me in written reports will be checked for my approval prior to final inclusion.
- I understand that the data I provide will not be used for any other purpose or released to others without my written consent.

I ____________________________ (full name) hereby consent to take part in this study by being interviewed.

Signature:________________________    Date:__________________

Interview conducted by:________________________

Signature:________________________    Date:__________________

I would like opinions presented in the research results to be attributed to me as:
“An informant” ☐

☐ “A staff member of ____________”
   (I will note these are the opinions of a staff member, not the organisations)

☐ “My name ________”
Appendix C - The participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Seniority</th>
<th>Organisation's size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>Directorial</td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 10</td>
<td>Directorial</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>