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**‘Never a dull day’: Civil society and sustainable development in the Eastern Caribbean**

By

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This thesis focuses on the everyday experiences of civil society actors working in the field of sustainable development in the Eastern Caribbean islands of Barbados and Grenada. Civil society occupies a difficult place in development discourse; once heralded as the answer to development challenges it has since been heavily critiqued as a static, Western import ill-suited to local realities and, consequently, as an ineffective and depoliticised development actor. Yet civil society organisations remain central to the global development industry with significant amounts of money flowing through them. Rather than seeking to evaluate civil society’s role in development, this thesis articulates an understanding of civil society that is based on the lives, experiences and perspectives of the people who make and shape civil society.

Through interviews and participant observation with a variety of civil society actors in Barbados and Grenada, this research identifies three key elements that make up everyday civil society experience and the wider social processes that contribute to civil society organising. These are firstly, the importance of social relations for civil society and how these social relations challenge dominant knowledge claims about the transnationality of civil society. Secondly, this research highlights how money is crucial for civil society action, but contends that financial arrangements also present an opportunity to shift notions of responsibility within development processes. Thirdly, this research argues that being seen as legitimate is essential for civil society organising and legitimacy can only be understood through complex everyday relations.

This thesis concludes that using these everyday experiences promotes a more relational approach to understanding civil society and contends that a relational ontology would allow civil society to be understood as a space of complex interactions, flux and potential, rather than one based on static framings, fixed hierarchies and Western constructs.

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# 1. Introduction

‘I heard a partial interview with Harry Belafonte this morning, I actually interviewed him in 1982 when I was a journalist, someone asked him how he became an activist. He said…he didn't become an activist he was always an activist. So there you go he was faced with poverty for a long time… I grew up with a single parent, my Mum and all the things that come with poverty and the discrimination against women I actually witnessed from a young age. Additionally I myself had my own struggles as someone who was afflicted with polio at a young age. That was something I had to deal with because we're not very open to difference. People who look different or walk different, so I always had to be fine to navigate and manage my way in this thing called society… My mother helped me to develop a sense of social justice because my mother took up wherever she saw injustice. We had the Mongoose Gang in Grenada, they beat up people, part of the regime and my Mum took them on one time on behalf of a guy they were about to beat him up…There was a lot of anger in me, anger about injustice and so I was involved in organisations. I would go into those from a very young age wanting to see a political change…’

 Pip, Founder Grenadian CSO, 27th February 2016

‘I'm here most mornings like from 7am. When I used to live closer I used to be here at 6am but now I live much further I get here at 7am. I come in, I will normally go through my emails, pay attention to whose sending me things because there's so many meetings to attend and things to follow, because I also do a lot of work outside of [this organisation]… But I love it. I need this to function. I can't function by just doing one thing. I have to do enough things to function. If I have one thing I'm bored. I would come in here and doodle, I would put my computer on and I would find something else to do, so if I have multiple tasks to do I function better. I need an adrenaline rush. One thing bores me so I'm not a kind of person who could have gone in and done one task in a job description and just done that, too bored, too bored. I have to do five, six, seven different things at the same time to function….’

 Lincoln, Founder Barbadian CSO, 13th October 2015

‘For us we say it’s faith. I mean I come from a perspective that says somebody wants me to do this work. I don't have the tools, I am willing, I need tools. If you want me to do it Lord here I am, provide the tools…’

 Pam, Founder Grenadian CSO, 1st February 2016

These excerpts from my conversations with Pip, Lincoln and Pam, all long-standing Caribbean civil society actors, encapsulate the motivations behind this thesis. When reading about civil society within the international development industry it felt as if the concept had become a little stale, over-saturated and fatigued. It had been the ‘magic bullet’ but now there was heavy criticism and uncertainty about civil society’s role in the changing development landscape. The majority of literature on civil society concentrates on institutional forms, governance processes and on measuring its effectiveness. In all of this there seems little room to remember that civil society is an inherently human endeavour, it’s about people, who are wonderfully irrational, diverse and unpredictable. As Pip, Lincoln and Pam demonstrate civil society work takes on a variety of meanings for different people and becomes embedded and entangled in their personal lives (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2012b; 2016). These quotes show how each person’s perspectives and their very personal motivations and biographies shape civil society activity, as in Pip’s and Pam’s quotes. Lincoln explains how the nature of civil society work suits him and provides him with the variable structure he needs to gain satisfaction. These perspectives are far removed from the questions usually asked about civil society and development, for example whether civil society is an effective service provider or if it has become an arena for the elite. It is perhaps easy to forget that civil society is made by diverse people whose experiences shape the sector more widely. This neglect is particularly acute within the international development sector, where theories of change tend to focus on institutional processes at the expense of more personal understandings. This was evident in the collaborative nature of this PhD, which involved working with an intergovernmental development agency that hopes to strengthen civil society, the Commonwealth Foundation (CF).

This thesis deliberately aims to bring the experiences of civil society actors to the fore and see if these can add anything to the way that civil society is thought about in the development industry. I must acknowledge my own preferences for taking this approach to thinking about civil society, bored by many of the methods for evaluating civil society, and unwilling to add to the body of work that is about an outsider going in and criticising civil society in a context they cannot always fully comprehend. I am also theoretically drawn to the substantial body of work that reminds us that civil society as it has evolved within the development industry is based on Western theorisations of what civil society should be, neglecting alternative renderings of the sector (Lewis 2002; Mamdani 1996). It is also important to recognise the temporal need to think about civil society differently. Civil society within development discourse and practice is at a critical juncture, it remains an important development actor, yet it is potentially threatened by prolonged critiques of the sector, reductions in funding, closing down of civic space and preferences for a coalitional approach to solving development’s problems (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Department for International Development 2016; Edwards 2014). It is this combination of factors that guided the development of this research project and ultimately the production of this thesis.

The thesis is about the experiences of civil society actors in the Eastern Caribbean islands of Barbados and Grenada, which were selected as field sites in conjunction with the Commonwealth Foundation. The Foundation has a substantial history of work and ongoing engagement in the Caribbean and were keen to understand more about how civil society operates there in the field of sustainable development. The thesis begins by interrogating the dominant ways in which civil society has evolved within development discourses, contending that it is based on static models that do not capture the richness or complexity of civil society and framings that do not encourage it to be conceptualised beyond the dominant Western experience. It moves on to make a case for exploring civil society through the lens of the everyday experiences of civil society actors, engaging with the broader literature on everyday life to understand the everyday as an arena for exploring wider social processes. Using this framework, the thesis uses ethnographically inspired methods of interviewing and participant observation to explore the everyday experiences of a variety of civil society actors in Barbados and Grenada. I use the language civil society actor and civil society group throughout the thesis to incorporate the diversity of collective formations and titles utilised by the people I met.

Analysis of the data collected draws out key themes from civil society actors’ everyday experiences, and attempts to understand how these everyday experiences reflect wider social processes. It begins by outlining civil society activity in Barbados and Grenada in the sustainable development field, articulating how sustainable development is constructed through their work. Having set the scene, the next three chapters explore different experiences, how these shape civil society work and what this means for development processes. The first of these considers the social relations that contribute to civil society work, and how these are re-articulating the normative definitions of transnationalism that saturate the civil society literature. The second empirical chapter examines an important material good, money, and argues that the ways in which civil society actors are obtaining and using money is shifting senses of responsibility within development processes. The final empirical chapter explores how civil society actors project legitimate subjectivities through their work.

A key theme running throughout these chapters is a sense that everyday experiences contest the dominant knowledge claims made about civil society in development discourses. These everyday experiences and the contestations they produce demonstrate the need to think about civil society differently, away from often static and fixed knowledge claims. The concluding chapter of the thesis makes the case for using relational thinking to conceptualise civil society, viewing this as a way to articulate the complex relations that sustain civil society work and offering a way of thinking about civil society that diverges away from a universal model. This thesis argues that thinking relationally about civil society will allow development scholarship to incorporate more multi-layered and ambiguous versions of civil society when trying to make sense of civil society within development processes, taking into account contextual factors and emphasising social networks, diverse spatialities and mobilities, material goods and civil society actors’ identities and subjectivities. This is about offering ways to conceptualise civil society activity away from the dominant Western theories, and recognising the importance of thinking about civil society as a human enterprise, which does not necessarily correspond to normative expectations, predictions or values. This thesis then contributes to the body of work that considers relational ontologies important for understanding social and political change, this time taking civil society activity as its area of interrogation.

‘I'm not trying to single out the World Bank, but talk about governance or inclusiveness, I know that their meaning of that and mine is not the same. I know that, I am very certain of that and I, God forgive me, I know it is not that I am arrogant but just our perspectives are different and what is inclusiveness at that level is not quite what I understand or what I mean or the constituents we work with [mean] when they say they want an opportunity to participate in decisions that are affecting their lives. It’s not quite the same, it’s not quite the same as this meaning that comes from an institution like that…’

 Pam, Founder Grenadian CSO, 1st February 2016

**A note on terminology**

As will become clear through this thesis associational life takes many diverse forms and organisational typologies. This is reflected in how different participants in the research identified and talked about the work that they do. For this reason, I have chosen to predominantly use the term civil society group or civil society organisation (CSO) in this thesis to incorporate these diverse institutional formations. I have also chosen to use the term civil society actor to refer to the research participants who were key figures in civil society. When quoting a participant, I have used the same term as they did to articulate their involvement in civil society, for example, founder, director etc. The (sometimes problematic) terms Global North and South are also used here and aim to reflect the implications of colonialism and accentuate the potential for the South to resist dominant forces and knowledge claims (Wolvers et al 2015).

# 2. Civil society at an impasse?

## 2.1 Introduction

History is full of examples of human desire for ‘collective action in search of the ‘good’ (or better) society’ to live in, from the Peasants Revolt of 1381 to vibrant associational life in 13th century China (Edwards 2009:1; 2014). Varying forms of collective action and associational life have been termed civil society, and the evolution and progression of civil society around the world has become an important objective for the global development industry[[1]](#footnote-1). Civil society, both as an object to be strengthened and as a vehicle through which development is enacted, has become popular in development studies, discourses and practice since the 1980s and 1990s. The Accra Agenda for Action in 2008, following-on from the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, stressed the need to strengthen engagement with civil society organisations (CSOs) to promote effective and inclusive development (Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development 2008). The 2017 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also endorse CSOs as part of multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve development goals (United Nations 2015). Civil society organisations have also become a valuable resource for international donor agencies, with for example, £1.4bn or 25% of the Department for International Development’s (DFID) bilateral aid budget going to CSOs in 2014/15 (DFID 2016). Within much development discourse civil society is regularly equated with civil society organisations and the positive role these organisations can play in development processes, as exemplified by Justine Greening, the UK’s former International Development Secretary:

‘We couldn’t do the work we want to do at the Department for International Development (DFID)…without civil society organisations from across the world…Last year almost a fifth of DFID’s bilateral budget was spent through civil society organisations…I want to create a relationship with civil society which is much more strategic than it is at the moment, has more depth to it - and is more efficient - so we can deliver even more for the world’s poorest.’

 Greening (2015)

Greening’s successor, Priti Patel, reinforced the importance of civil society groups for the United Kingdom’s development industry in her foreword to DFID’s 2016 Civil Society Partnership Review:

‘This review marks the beginning of my efforts to work in partnership alongside UK CSOs…as together we build a post-Brexit Britain that is generous, outward-looking and fully engaged on the world stage.’

 Patel (2016:6)

Despite this continued positive emphasis on the role of civil society within the development arena, civil society and civil society organisations, also remain the subject of much conjecture and controversy, with concerns about the relevance of dominant framings of civil society, particularly within a rapidly changing global development context, as Michael Edwards (2014:123-124) comments:

‘…The approach of the civil society building industry that has proliferated since 1989 - with some exceptions - resembles a crude attempt to manipulate associational life in line with Western, and specifically North-American, liberal-democratic norms…The aid industry resembles a bulldozer driven by someone convinced they are heading in the right direction, but following a map made for another country at another time.’

As Edwards (2014) articulates there is concern about the way in which civil society has been conceptualised by the global development industry, in particular the way that dominant models of civil society rest on Westernised framings (see also Lewis 2002). There is also a temporal element to Edward’s concerns with the versions of civil society resting on theorisations from ‘another time’. This temporality is of particular relevance here because civil society organisations are now coming under greater threat from a number of challenges, including concerns about failures to live up to expectations, questions about their effectiveness in comparison to other (newer) development actors, changes in aid architecture and constrained civil society space, as Green & Pandya (2016) argue on the global media platform openDemocracy:

‘Civil society organisations (CSOs) worldwide are under significant pressure as restrictions on foreign funding, barriers to registration, intervention in CSOs’ internal affairs, and other forms of harassment have proliferated.’

Informal discussions with the collaborative partner in this research project, the Commonwealth Foundation and reviews of their policy documents, highlighted some of these concerns, including how to build the capacity of CSOs to engage with available governance opportunities, ensuring the legitimacy and credibility of the organisations they work with, how they articulate the importance of civil society for development, and their own role in strengthening civil society (Commonwealth Foundation 2016). It could then be said that civil society is at impasse, still regarded as an important development actor, yet under threat from multiple sources, with international donors floundering in how they conceptualise civil society and how to articulate their own role in building civil society.

With these concerns in mind this chapter charts the course of how civil society within the global development landscape has reached this point, from its evolution to the complexities of contemporary civil society, through four phases. Firstly, it examines how civil society has (problematically) conceptually evolved within development discourses. Secondly, the chapter considers how civil society’s role in development has crystallised. The chapter then examines the multiple critiques of civil society. Finally, the chapter explores how civil society, despite these critiques has endured, but now comes under different threats to its sustainability. The chapter concludes that throughout these phases civil society has been understood through models which are heavily influenced by Western thought and framings, leaving little room for other versions of civil society that place less emphasis on static models, binaries and rigid boundaries.

## 2.2 Phase 1: The evolution and production of civil society in the global development industry

Civil society has become a prominent aspect of the global development landscape, but one that is predicated on very particular versions of civil society and dominant knowledge claims about what civil society should be. The dominant framings of civil society within the global development industry have taken much from Western[[2]](#footnote-2) theorisations of civil society, and these conceptualisations represent the dominant discourse(s) of the concept (Edwards 2014). The influence of the World Bank’s good governance agenda must also be recognised as a significant factor in the evolution of civil society within development discourses and practice (Abrahamsen 2004). This section of the chapter considers these two intertwined avenues for the production of civil society within the global development landscape, starting with the influence of particular Western theorisations of the concept before moving on to civil society within the good governance agenda.

### 2.2.1 Conceptualising civil society

Civil society represents one of the most elastic, ambiguous and debated terms within political thought and there is no one model of an ideal civil society (Alapagga 2004; Edwards 2011; 2014; Hall 1995; Khilnani 2001). It is important to be aware, however, that the dominant framings of civil society have grown out of very particular material, political and social conditions, potentially creating a mythical element to the idea of civil society that is rooted in European history (Comaroff & Comaroff 1999; Van Rooy 1998b). Numerous scholars have theorised what civil society might mean, including Cicero, who envisioned civil society as the organisation of public power that made civilisation possible (Ehrenberg 2011; 2017), Locke (2014), who viewed civil society as a realm of safety and security and Kant, who understood civil society as a space for the development of universal moral principles (Ehrenberg 2011; 2017). More recently Gramsci (1971) articulated civil society as an arena that contained a wide variety of organisations and ideologies that could both challenge and also further the interests of the dominant order (Lewis 2002). Under such conditions civil society has the potential to become a space for self-reinforcing inequality and privilege (Femia 2001; Van Rooy 1998b). In contrast to this Habermas (1989) viewed civil society as the public sphere through which deliberative discussions could take place, enhancing the democratic values of society. The public sphere was understood as an arena in which citizens could come together and discuss common concerns, with deliberative democratic processes producing decision-making that resulted in a consensual arrangement aimed at the common good (Edwards 2014).

All of these conceptualisations promote the separation, yet recognise the interconnectedness, of the state, the market, the family and civil society, with a tripartite Hegelian-inspired model of civil society accentuated, as exemplified in diagram 1 (Harriss 2001; Jeffrey 2007).

**The family**

**Civil society**

**The market**

**The state**

Diagram 1: A model of civil society (Hammett, Kabalisa & Lea-Howarth2016; Van Rooy 1998b).

Civil society in development discourse is heavily influenced by the work of Alexis De Tocqueville (1840) and later Robert Putnam (2000) (Jeffrey 2007). Their theorisations also consider the state, market and civil society as separate entities, and view civil society through the membership of voluntary associations, which are crucial in the formation of social capital and a stable democracy (Ehrenberg 2011). De Tocqueville’s work (1840) places associational life at the forefront of civil society thinking, contending that civil society is built through the development of voluntary associations and it is through these associational contacts that civic and democratic life is enhanced. De Tocqueville’s work is perhaps best known through its influence on Robert Putnam’s much later scholarship on civil society and social capital. Putnam (1995) also views civil society as association based, contending that civicness and democratic values can be generated through associational membership. Putnam’s (1993; 1995; 2000) body of work makes normative connections between social capital, a vibrant civil society, processes of democratisation and a strong democracy.

For de Tocqueville and Putnam the evolution of civil society is explicitly linked to either the rise of democracy or to the crisis (and desired revival) of democracy, but in each of these, democracy is understood in Eurocentric terms as liberal, aggregative democracy, intertwined with citizenship as individual rights and freedoms (Putnam 1995; Wank 1995). By the early 2000s civil society was being heralded as the golden bullet to consolidate democratic transitions and revitalise existing democracies (Avritzer 2002; Dagnino 2011). This was based on examples coming from the Eastern European transition from socialism to liberal democracy and also Putnam’s work on democratic development in post-communist Italy, and later in North America. Drawing comparison between twenty regional governments in 1970s Northern and Southern Italy, Putnam (1993) contends that the development of particular civic minded values and behaviours is produced by engagement in voluntary associations and this strengthens democracy, with wider membership of voluntary bodies correlating with greater regional governmental success.

Entangled with the connection between civil society and democracy lies Putnam’s theorisations of social capital (Edwards 2014). Contrary to other social capital theorists, Bourdieu in particular, Putnam views social capital as civicness, as something that could be generated through associational membership and therefore open to development through particular policy initiatives, with entire societies exhibiting high or low social capital (Fukuyama 2001; Portes 1998; Putnam 1995). Putnam’s social capital narrative has permeated both domestic and international policy circles and the World Bank in particular (Bebbington 2004b; Fine 1999; 2002; 2007; 2008; Mosse 2013). In these articulations social capital is a resource available to all rational actors, existing in the relations amongst people and has the potential to transform human capital and individual attainment (Coleman 1998; Fine 1999). Social capital benefits both the individual and the collective and is something that can be actively built upon and invested in (Lin 1999). The evolution of social capital will therefore promote civil society as individuals work together for the common good (Banks & Hulme 2012; Lin 1999).

This dominant narrative of social capital has been critiqued on numerous levels (Bebbington 2004b; 2007; Fine 2002; 2007; 2008; Harriss 2001). The concept has been accused of being empty, with Fine (2008:262) suggesting that ‘social capital does not exist other than as a created fiction of the imagination’. In critiquing one of the primary drivers of contemporary social capital discourse, scholars have contested Putnam’s body of work that makes normative associations between a vibrant civil society, a strong democracy and processes of democratisation. These connections are debatable and have been questioned on a number of levels, including the neglect of the importance of political institutions in fostering democracy (Encaracion 2003), underestimating the role of pre-existing political structures (Tarrow 1996) and the exclusion of less obvious forms of collective being that may be found in domestic, temporary or interstitial settings (Watson 2004).

### 2.2.2 Civil society and the good governance agenda

Despite these debates and critiques it is this version of civil society and the connected idea of social capital that has become prevalent in development discourse and is an integral part of the good governance agenda during its evolution in the 1990s and 2000s. The good governance agenda initially referred to the way in which the World Bank conceptualises relations between the state, the market and civil society in recipient countries. The term governance was first used in the 1989 World Bank Report ‘From crisis to sustainable growth - sub Saharan Africa’ (World Bank 1989). Governance incorporated the institutional reform required to produce effective development, especially in Africa, where the negative consequences of structural adjustment were being keenly felt. The term and the addition of the prefix ‘good’ became used more frequently in the early 1990s, following the 1992 report ‘Governance and Development’ (World Bank 1992). This, along with the 1991 World Development Report ‘Rethinking the state’ (World Bank 1991) outlined a desire to rehabilitate the state following periods of structural adjustment, with the rejuvenated state promoting economic liberalisation and with it liberal democratisation (Abrahamsen 2004). Alongside a revived state, good governance frees and celebrates civil society, accentuating processes such as participation, decentralisation and democratisation to drive development (Abrahamsen 2004; Porter 2003).

Despite an increased role for NGOs in the 1970s and more frequent use of the term civil society (Banks & Hulme 2012), the Bank had previously excluded civil society from policy making, but the good governance agenda placed increased emphasis on the role civil society can play in promoting democratic rights and pro-poor development (Das 2015; Jeffrey 2007). Good governance promotes visions of stable and co-operative civil society-state relations and within these the role of civil society in enhancing democratic values, fitting in neatly with Putnam’s hypothesis (Banks, Hulme & Edwards2015; Roy 2008). This time it was poor governance that was understood to be at the heart of underdevelopment, and the push for good governance placed the state and civil society in symbiotic relations, with a strong civil society understood as a key link between economic liberalisation and liberal democratisation (Hearn 2000; Jeffrey 2007). The good governance agenda presumes that civil society and the state are mutually constituted, if the state functions effectively, then civil society must also do so and vice-versa (Roy 2008; Skocpol & Fiorina 1999; Van Rooy & Robinson 1998). Theoretically, civil society also has the ability to constrain abusive state power, and represents an inherently democratic space for empowering citizens (Edwards 2014). Jeffrey’s (2007) work in Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrates how civil society, and more specifically NGOs, were positioned as the vehicle for the transition from socialism to liberal democracy, shaping the formation of associational life.

Within the good governance agenda civil society is often categorised as the institutional space between the family and the state (Jeffrey 2007; Mercer & Green 2013). This has led to the development of a universal policy template for civil society, with civil society often conceptualised through the presence of institutional scales. Mercer & Green (2013) describe a global policy template for civil society conceived through bounded descriptions, separating local, national and regional civil society and consolidating particular institutional constellations in the Global South (Mercer, Page & Evans2009). They articulate the preoccupation of development institutions to imagine civil society through nested scalar hierarchies, symbolising ladders and Russian dolls (Bulkeley 2005; Mercer & Green 2013), with multiple community groups sitting at the bottom of the pyramid, on top of which sit national and regional umbrella organisations. These scales prescribe a separation between civil society groups, but they also imagine very particular connections between the different layers. The policy template for civil society also emphasises hierarchies and disconnections between Northern and Southern NGOs and international NGOs and grassroots groups (Bebbington 2004a; Degnbol-Martinussen & Engberg-Pedersen 1999; Fowler 2000).

The dominance of this institutional policy template influences how international development institutions operate, with those mandated to strengthening civil society sometimes putting their resources into building civil society at a particular scale (Africa 2013; Maina 1998; Patron 1998; Van Rooy 1998a). This is often justified in terms of influence and power, with donor institutions articulating their choices based on their assessment of civil society groups ability to engage in democratic processes at particular scales. For instance, international donors may recognise the need to fund the development of a national umbrella group in a particular country because they believe that the numerous local groups already present are unable to gain traction in a national level policy arena because they are too fragmented. The reasoning behind the development of a national umbrella is to bring representatives of these groups together enabling them to potentially represent a singular civil society perspective and increase their credibility within governance processes (CF 2017; United Nations Development Programme 2017).

Work within the development field has articulated the role of civil society for economic liberalism, democratisation and subsequent development. The desire for good governance, including the building of strong institutions and greater associational life, has also been part of the discourse of post-conflict interventions in Eastern Europe and the Middle East (Bolton & Jeffrey 2008; Jeffrey 2007). In each of these discourses the ideal normative civil society is positioned as an active participant in public affairs and as an avenue for empowering its citizens from the grassroots up. This chapter will now turn to explore these two narratives of civil society in greater detail.

## 2.3 Phase 2: Civil society’s role in development: Participation, decentralisation and democratisation

The combined forces of the de Tocquevillian idea of civil society as associational life, the connections this associational life may have with democracy and the influence of the good governance agenda in promoting links between civil society, economic liberalisation and liberal democratisation has dictated the way that the idea of civil society has entered the development arena (Edwards & Hulme 1995a; Jeffrey 2007; Kamruzzaman 2013). Civil society has become synonymous with voluntary associations and through the good governance agenda is understood to have a dual role in development processes. This section of the chapter will explore these two contentions in detail, firstly examining the way that civil society is conceptualised and operationalised as an avenue for development through democratisation and secondly, how civil society has become valued as a development actor through its connections to participation and decentralisation.

Civil society is intimately connected with processes of democratisation, projecting a pluralist model of politics with increased citizen participation in decision making and a more even spread of power (Edwards & Hulme 1995a; Hadenius & Uggla 1996; Mercer 2002; Van Rooy & Robinson 1998). Alongside Putnam’s work this assumption is also connected to the hypothesis that civil society enhanced democratisation in Eastern Europe, which was causally associated with development and intimately linked to geopolitical positions that favour the rise of liberal democracy (Carothers & Brechenmacher 2014; Petrova 2007). The rise of new social movements in Latin America also helped to theorise causal connections between civil society, democracy and development and civil society was also viewed as an agent for democratisation in post-conflict societies (Jeffrey 2007; McSweeney 2014). Civil society was therefore seen as a way of assisting democracy abroad without having to get involved in the messiness of party politics (Carothers 1999).

Aid as democracy promotion was (and still is) aimed at consolidating liberal democracies, supporting democratic transition and guiding newly formed democracies (Hearn 2000; Jeffrey 2007; Nagel & Staeheli 2015). Civil society’s role in increasing democratic processes, whilst complex, has been conceptualised in two ways (Mitra 2017). Firstly civil society was presumed to represent marginalised voices, civil rights and localised interests (Fowler 1993; Frantz 1987). Secondly civil society was seen as an arena through which citizens could be educated about behaving in a democratic manner (Hadenius & Uggla 1996). This second viewpoint explicitly links the development of particular social behaviours, and social capital, with the development of civil society and in turn sees democracy and development as reliant on social capital (Coleman 1988; Putnam 1995). The deconstruction of this linear relationship produced a strand of development work that emphasised the importance of developing social capital as the foundation for civil society, which would then contribute to democratic processes and development (Fukuyama 2001; Mosse 2013; Murray Li 2013). This reflects Putnam’s (1993; 1995; 2000) causal narrative of declining social capital and democratic values in the West, and institutions such as the World Bank operationalised the building of democracy through programmes that focused on the developing of community social capital (Mosse 2013; Murray Li 2013). Murray Li (2013) recounts how social development experts at the World Bank endeavoured to build different types of social capital in rural Indonesia, to promote economic growth, conflict resolution and alleviate poverty, without engaging with the inequitable structures constraining development.

The second function of civil society in development is understood through its ability to provide alternative forms of development, including filling the gaps in state-led service provision. This understanding coincided with increased market liberalisation, the end of the cold war and the changing role of the state, promoting the potential of non-state groups as social actors (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Edwards & Hulme 1995a; Hyden 1997). In response to the perceived failure and loss of confidence in the state, civil society groups were understood as efficient and effective alternatives to state-led development (Bebbington 2004a; Bebbington, Hickey & Mitlin 2008; Chandhoke 2007; Hyden 1997; Mitlin, Hickey & Bebbington 2007). Civil society organisations were also seen as an effective partner for international donors, bypassing the potentially corrupt bureaucratic state machinery and producing development that could be seen as value for money (Howell & Peace 2002; Roy 2008). This was not then purely about contributing to democratisation, this was about civil society as innovative, flexible and effective development actors in their own right (Banks, Hulme & Edwards2015; McIlwaine 1998a).

This version of civil society highlights participation and decentralisation as important concepts. Civil society was seen as a space through which people centred, less paternalistic, bottom-up, grassroots versions of development could be built and enacted, an arena for processes of social justice and transformation (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Bebbington 2004a; Degnbol-Martinussen & Engberg-Pedersen 1999; Frantz 1987; Van Rooy & Robinson 1998). This coincided with the more participatory turn in development discourse, articulating a critique of top-down development processes and the desire to shift the balance of power within development processes away from the elite few (Hickey & Mohan 2004; Kamruzzaman 2013) and encouraging communities to be increasingly involved and take ownership of their own development (Biggs & Neame 1995; Chambers 1997; Roy 2008; Sen 1999). This more participatory approach reflects the idea of civil society as a public sphere and promotes versions of democracy and civil society that are based on ideas of more substantive citizen participation and engagement in a wider range of formal and informal political practices and the development of a wider and deeper public sphere (Della Porta 2013; Gaventa 2006; Habermas 1989).

In development discourses civil society is understood through a focus on associational activity, civility and deepening democracy (often imagined through terms such as voice and participation) and processes of democratisation (McIlwaine 1998a; Obadare 2012). Civil society therefore provided options for those fed up with the state and the risks of the market to offer development opportunities (Edwards & Hulme 1992; Encarnacion 2002; McSweeney 2014). All of these narratives have seen a burgeoning in civil society organisations around the globe, increased aid funding flowing through non-state actors and an associated increase in scholarly interest in this area (Banks, Hulme & Edwards2015; Frantz 1987). Civil society held the promise of transformation without having to engage in confrontational or antagonistic politics, offering a safe and sanitary avenue for international donors (Jeffrey 2007; Harriss 2001). Donors therefore tried to build and strengthen civil society from the outside, often based on theories of civil society founded on Western conceptualisations (Van Rooy 1998b). This was sometimes conceived through the language of capacity building, with international donors attempting to build CSOs ability to undertake participatory development, interact more effectively with the state and, more recently, develop their ability to adhere to particular management regimes (Bebbington & Riddell 1995). High expectations have therefore been placed on civil society within the development landscape. The following section of this chapter will examine the next phase of the civil society story, how these expectations have been critiqued, both conceptually and within development practice.

## 2.4 Phase 3: Meeting expectations? Conceptual and practice-oriented critiques of civil society in development

The promotion of civil society as a crucial development actor, and one that can both enhance processes of democratisation and produce alternative, more effective forms of development has been examined and critiqued from many angles. Two aspects of civil society critique are of particular interest here, firstly conceptually and secondly from a more practice-based perspective. Conceptual critiques focus on the evolution of civil society from Western experiences and the inability of these models to reflect varying global experiences. In particular, these bodies of work question the limitations of civil society framings that exclude diverse civil society-state relations, informality and uncivil relations. Practice-based critiques question the promise of civil society as a development actor, in particular, claims are made about the ability of civil society to be both political and grassroots. Each of these critical agendas will be examined in turn.

### 2.4.1 Critiquing conceptualisations of civil society

#### 2.4.1.1 The separation of the state and civil society

The dominant framework of civil society described previously accentuates particular forms of social relations, especially relations with the state and the presumed characteristics of associational life. This has led to concerns about the relevance of these conceptualisations for understanding civil society in non-Western contexts.

In the associational school of thought there is a presumed separation of the state and civil society, which presupposes a certain type of relationship between the two, that of autonomy and struggle, a situation that does not always reflect the actual realities (Chabal & Daloz 1999; Jeffrey 2007; Konings 2009; Lewis 2011). This neglects alternative conceptualisations of the workings of the state in post-colonial contexts. Colonial rule and its consequences often constrained the development of civil society as it is thought about in the West. Konings (2009) outlines how the colonial fracturing of Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon, and its subsequent reunification, promoted the development of a civil society in Anglophone Cameroon that was based on ethno-regional ties and an explicit politics of belonging to either Anglophone or autochthous groups. In contrast, Sogge (1997) views colonialism as restrictive to Mozambican civil society, with colonial rule limiting the formation of forms of associational life such as trade unions. Obadare (2009) contends that the post-military state in Nigeria acts in very similar ways to the previous authoritarian state, which means that citizens use ridicule as part of civil society to deconstruct the surreal workings of the state. This connects to the argument that civil society must realise itself in diverse ways when the state functions differently, and accentuates the difficulty of transplanting a model of civil society when states vary widely in how they function.

More recent processes of state reorganisation, such as structural adjustment and the good governance agenda, may influence how and why activists do and do not mobilise and the organisational formations this takes (Lewis 2002; Oxhorn 2004). Sogge (1997) contends that repressive structural adjustment policies in Mozambique, where power is predominantly exercised outside of the country, de-motivated associational life as this was not perceived as an avenue for change in this context. This loss of will to engage in associational life is seen as an effect of the rise of the neo-plural state in Latin America by Oxhorn (2004). The market orientation of the state reduced citizen engagement with democratic processes, lessened the people’s capacity to participate in civil society and fragmented the voluntary sector. These examples demonstrate the limited explanatory power of the tripartite model of civil society, with the state and civil society often intersecting and changing state formations influencing the way civil society operates.

The blurring of boundaries between the state and civil society can also be understood through the work-life histories of non-governmental workers. Lewis (2011; 2013) shows how the model of separate state and civil society is reproduced through institutional practices, which allow the state and civil society to work in synergy with one and other, and to some extent legitimise their individual roles. Through these partnerships discursive and practical differences are maintained. This is juxtaposed by the tensions inherent within this separation, with non-governmental workers regularly crossing the boundaries by working for the state and the third sector. This fluidity between civil society activists and the state shows the less formalised relations that may exist between civil society and the state, exemplifying the remaking of boundaries and the micro-politics of state-civil society interactions, for example patronage relations (Lewis 2013). Movement between the sectors is governed by income possibilities and career progression for individuals, but also reflects the complex, informal and sometimes very personal connections that blur the boundaries between civil society and the state (Lewis 2011; 2013).

These different examples bring into question the dichotomous separation of civil society and the state, but it is not only the separation that it is important, it is also the diverse connections between the two spheres that is neglected by dominant conceptualisations of civil society-state relations. The dominant understanding of civil society rests on certain ideas of citizenship, individual rights and a consensual relationship with the state, which Chatterjee (2004) and Bénit-Gbaffou (2012) contend limits civil society to a narrow section of the urban socio-economic elites in the Global South, ignoring the interconnections between the state and civil society and neglecting other forms of engagement between the two, for example co-operation, bargaining or mutual exchange (Jeffrey 2007; Konings 2009). Bénit-Gbaffou (2012) articulates the connections between the local branch of the African National Congress (ANC), civil society and low-income communities in Johannesburg. Agreeing with Chatterjee (2004) she theorises that residents in low-income communities use informal channels, such as party branches to access the state. These party branches also provide channels for civil society activists to access knowledge and resources, demonstrating the interconnections between enactments of citizenship and the blurred boundaries of political and civil society (Bénit-Gbaffou 2012; Chatterjee 2004).

Analysis of citizenship practices within informal settings reinforces the limitations of formalised understandings of civil society-state relations. Literature on experiences of living in ‘informality’ shows that those whose lives are dominated by informality engage with the state on much more blurred terms, through for example local politicians and councillors rather than formal civil society organisations, with both emancipatory and disenfranchising effects (Bénit-Gbaffou 2012; Chatterjee 2004; Martin 2014). This also resonates with the idea of invented and invited spaces of citizenship described by Mirfatab & Wills (2005) who use an anti-eviction campaign in South Africa to look beyond the ‘usual’ spaces of citizenship activity and civil society to explore more informal and creative modes of expression. They outline how informal citizenship practices, such as recovering water and electricity supplies, mass mobilisations and reoccupying tenancies are used by the poor in response to housing evictions due to their exclusion from and un-responsiveness of formalised interactions with the state. Examples such as these challenge the dominant way the state interacts with its citizen, and the formal separation of the state and civil society.

#### 2.4.2.2 Informal associational life

It is not only diverse civil society-state relations that challenge dominant conceptualisations of civil society. Another school of thought contends that civil society has limited explanatory power in non-Western contexts because it does not adequately address the complexities of diverse associational life, which may take a more informal character and include associations based on ethnic divides (Lewis 2002). One of the major points of contention when discussing the concept of civil society in a non-Western context is around kinship and associational life based on ethnic ties, with ethno-regional associations a rejected aspect of many civil society discourses (Konings 2009). Disagreeing with Gellner (1995), Lewis (2002) argues that kinship can provide its own public spheres and Adekson (2004) contends that the realities of civil society should not be judged on Western terms and the inclusion of primordial groups is important. Returning to Koning’s (2009) study of civil society in Cameroon shows the importance of ethno-regional connections in the formation of civil society. Civil society groups in Cameroon tended to form though the reinforcement of Anglophone identity or by articulating their associational nature through belonging to an authochthonous community. Anglophone groups attempt to mobilise around subordinated Anglophone identity concerns, reinforcing their (Anglophone) identity and solidarity. The rise of civil society groups based on autochthonous connections reflects the simultaneous cleavages in communities in the region based on ethnic heritage. Autochthonous groups in South Western Cameroon express themselves through challenges to their longstanding domination by other groups. This example shows the complexity of ethnic associations and how they may shape associational life and civil society formation.

As well as the composition of civil society groups, informality can extend to the activities that are part of civil society. The above example of citizenship practices used by civil society groups in formal settings gives some sense of this, but it is also important to recognise that smaller more prosaic practices also contribute to the informality of associational life. With some resonance to Havel (1978), Obadare (2009) contends that humour plays an important role in the public domain and is a crucial part of civil society. Humour is described as an aspect of infra-politics, the quieter and less visible forms of political contestation that provide much of the cultural underpinnings for more discernible forms of action. This resonates with the idea of implicit activisms and ordinary everyday relations that are crucial to more visible forms of public action (Askins 2015; Horton & Kraftl 2009; Staeheli et al 2012). These ‘smaller’ activisms also have value in their own right, with Horton & Kraftl (2009) outlining the notion of practices of care as activisms in response to the closure of SureStart centres. This again articulates the need to think beyond formal channels of civil society activity, and the need to be able to consider forms of activism that are less visible, more unexpected and possibly occurring outside of the public domain. The dominant models of civil society do not allow us to conceive of a civil society that is private, out of sight or disorganised. All of these bodies of work articulate the importance of aspects of civil society that are built through more informal, hidden and less obvious social relations (Obadare 2009; Singerman 2006).

#### 2.4.2.3 Incivility

The visions of civil society that permeate development discourses also embed a particular type of civility to civil society. Understanding civil society as integral to liberal democracy implies the literal civility of civil society ensuring that civil society can only be understood in terms of the type of civic-minded behaviours and the development of positive social capital associated with democratic processes (Konings 2009; Obadare 2012). The connection of civil society to liberal democracy emphasises certain forms of collective action and individualised understandings of citizenship, immediately coupling civility and democracy, narrowing the space available to think about a civil society that also encompasses spaces and moments of incivility (Jeffrey 2008; Jeffrey & Staeheli 2015; Kopecky & Mudde 2003). Jeffrey (2007) argues that versions of civility are driven by social behaviours, often constructed by elites and international actors. Using the example of Bosnia and Herzegovina he contends that the NGO registration process classes what a ‘civil’ organisation can look like, and this civility is intimately linked to meeting the standards of registration, alongside other more quotidian practices such as the use of business cards (Jeffrey 2008). This also pushes civil society groups into consensual ‘civilised’ relations with the state, as encouraged by liberal democratic processes and the good governance agenda. This neglects other theories of democracy, such radical democracy where civil society is viewed as something that can be ‘uncivil’ and that desire for contestation is inherently human (Adekson 2004; Jeffrey 2008; Mouffe 2000; Watson 2004). These normative definitions of civility constrain understandings of civil society, with civil society having the potential to be a space of civility and incivility, containing radical as well as benign groups and organisations with both civil and uncivil elements (Adekson 2004; Carothers 1999). Kopecky & Mudde (2003) use Hamas as an example of this and argue for the inclusion of activities that may be deemed uncivil, such as protest, into civil society (Kopecky & Mudde 2003:2).

Mamdani (1996) goes further in questioning the civility of civil society, viewing the creation of civil society in Africa by the colonial state as a racial entity and a space where the rights of free association were the rights of citizens under direct rule, something inherently uncivil. This also resonates with the idea of civil society being hijacked by ‘uncivil’ elements such as an authoritarian state and also reflects the potential for civil society to become entangled with the particular ideologies of the state or as a vehicle for a particular political philosophy, aspects of which may be deemed uncivil (Chabal & Daloz 1999; Encarnacion 2002; 2003; Fyfe 2005; Ishkanian 2014). These ideas show that the civil aspect of civil society is something that is presumed and yet challenged in a variety of ways.

In using psychoanalytic ideas to understand development discourse, as advocated by Kapoor (2014a; 2014b) the dominant conceptualisation of civil society articulates ideas of distinct spheres and particular associations. There is generally little appreciation that civil society may not be very amenable to being constructed, particularly within the narrow remit of Western meanings of civil society and democracy (Howell & Pearce 2002). By constructing civil society in a Western image, does development hide cultural difference, the culpability of colonialism, and the instability and violence present in many societies? Comaroff & Comaroff (1999) argue that the push to develop an organisationally based civil society in Africa reflects the reconstruction of the capitalist order and the desire to ‘globalise everything’. By constructing a globalised version of civil society solutions for civil society strengthening are perceived to be technical, for example capacity building, but what does this term imply and what does the focus on technical solutions avoid? Is the template of civil society, described by Mercer & Green (2013) aiming to be a ‘universal truth’, removing geographical and cultural difference (Hulme 2010)? The desire to develop a certain type of civil society could be seen as a desire for control, and to derive certain benefits from this type of development (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; Jenkins 2011). With these concerns in mind, it remains important to engage with the literature on how effectively civil society organisations meet their normative ideals of increasing democracy, and the role they play as agents of development. It is to these topics that this discussion will now turn.

### 2.4.2 Practice-based critiques: Are civil society organisations effective development actors?

The optimistic agendas promoted conceptually and in development practice, sometimes described as viewing civil society as the ‘magic bullet’ (Edwards & Hulme 1995a:5), have inevitably led to counter-critiques, with for example Banks, Hulme & Edwards (2015:707) claiming that ‘the comparative advantage [of NGOs] was based on ideological grounds rather than evidence’. There has been much discussion and debate about whether civil society organisations, and NGOs more specifically, are effective development actors, the complexities associated with evaluating their performance and their ability to ‘scale up’ their work (Edwards & Hulme 1992; 1995a; 1995b). If we divide their activities into the two core expectations detailed above, enhancing democracy and carrying out forms of social development, then the literature articulates that CSOs are thought to be more effective at the latter than the former, with Mercer (2002) contending that the connections between NGOs and democratisation are not clear (see also Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Edwards & Hulme 1995b; Jeffrey 2007). Aid has however allowed NGOs to expand services to marginalised groups (Bandyopadhyay 2013; Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Mukute & Taylor 2013) and studies detail the positive impact they can have on development outcomes, with Townsend & Townsend (2004:274) concluding that ‘the action of NGOs on balance is good in the short term’ and Mohan (2002) conceding that NGOs have had micro-level successes, with for example, Abraham (2014) claiming that CSO activity that focused on the facilitation of a local sangha (a membership based village group) allowed locals to engage more effectively with local government, raising their collective demands and making their voices heard.

Much of the literature however, highlights how civil society fails to live up to its expectations, with two key themes arising, firstly that civil society is dominated by the elite and secondly that it has become a depoliticised space. This section will explore each of these critiques in turn.

#### 2.4.2.1 International aid and an ‘elite’ civil society

Civil society has become drawn into the aid industry, and in the eyes of some observers subsumed by it (Banks & Hulme 2012; Beauclerk 2011; Edwards & Hulme 1995a). One significant topic for discussion has been the impact of foreign aid on NGOs and civil society more widely. Literature details the negative influence of international funding, including the development of patron-client ties between the civil society organisation and the donor (Henderson 2002), a lack of autonomy and the dominance of accountability to donors (Gabay 2014; Hearn 2007; Korolczuk 2014), the discrediting of civil society organisations associated with international funders (Ljubownikow & Crotty 2014) and the separation of formal organisations from the communities who are the objects of their endeavours (Fagan 2005; Mercer & Green 2013). Mohan (2002) shows how CSOs in Ghana tend to create clientalism amongst local villagers, diverting attention away from the structural causes of poverty. Civil society has also been accused of being a sphere through which international bodies can reproduce their hegemonic discourses, and as arenas of power and control for donors (Jeffrey 2007). Civil society organisations are conceptualised at the bottom of the aid chain, they are reliant on foreign aid and the whims of donors, with increasing pressure to be upwardly rather than downwardly accountable (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Hashemi 1995). This places NGO accountability firmly in the domain of donors, and civil society as a subservient part of the aid industry, with the subjectivities of civil society actors shaped by the representations of their sector within the global development industry as they become entangled within it (Amagoh 2015; Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2012b; Beauclerk 2011; Smith & Yanacopulos 2004).

International aid is also connected to the ‘NGOisation’ of civil society (Choudry & Kapoor 2013; Edwards & Hulme 1995a; McIlwaine 1998a). NGOs are conceptualised as formal organisations with paid staff and professional structures whilst their membership base in the community, unpaid staff and informal status are the distinguishing features of grassroots groups (Banks, Hulme & Edwards2015; Mercer 2002). The political economy of the development industry, driven by funding targets and donor demands and the desire to quantify social phenomena, makes implications about the type of knowledge systems valued in development and possibly in society at large (Fowler 2012; Obadare 2012). In this case there is a tendency to reduce civil society to what can be measured, and organisations can at least be numerically defined. Increasing the number of NGOs is therefore seen as a way of strengthening civil society (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015). There are significant criticisms of equating the density of civil society organisations with its strength but few shed light on alternative ways of evaluating civil society or engage in the philosophical debate of whether civil society should even be measured (Fowler 2012; Obadare 2012).

Foreign aid is also thought to drive the professionalisation agenda, divorcing civil society organisations from their communities, neglecting nascent community driven organisations and making it an exclusive space for the urban educated elite (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Bolton & Jeffrey 2008; Choudry & Kapoor 2013; Das 2015; Mawdsley et al 2002). Professionalisation is understood as a way to survive within the competitive civil society sector providing increased chances of access to donor funds, yet simultaneously eroding the ideals central to civil society, such as grassroots participation and empowerment (Banks & Hulme 2012). NGOs have also been accused of being more focused on providing employment for elites than more altruistic agendas (Tembo 2001 cited in Townsend & Townsend 2004), with Lewis (2011) articulating the rumour that NGO workers in Bangladesh receive higher salaries than public servants, which is perhaps one reason alongside a more flexible organisational culture, for the preference of young graduates for NGO work over the public sector. CSOs build their cultural capital through the accumulation of professional qualities (and individuals), including language skills, in particularly English, and knowledge of donor funding processes (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; Jeffrey 2007; 2008). This professionalism has become increasingly connected to neoliberalism, with accountability and efficiency seen as markers of CSO success (Baillie Smith & Laurie 2011; Bondi & Laurie 2005; Jenkins 2011). Processes of professionalisation have also been connected to the types of narratives found in development and the way that it is enacted. Laurie, Andolina & Radcliffe (2003; 2005) contend that versions of indigeneity have become professionalised in the Andes through internationally funded training courses to develop ‘indigenous professionals’, drawing activists into the professional sphere, whilst Jenkins (2011) and Narayanaswamy (2016) argue that professionalisation has shaped the way that feminist narratives are situated in development practices in Peru and India.

Civil society groups have been criticised for being dominated by elite individuals, lacking internal democratic processes and for competing amongst themselves for scarce funds, with NGO staff seen as self-serving and disconnected from the poorest people (Barr & Fafchamps 2006; Hsu 2012). As well as altering the organisational structures and effectiveness of civil society organisations, aid funding also shapes the geography of civil society (Bebbington 2004a; Hsu, Hsu & Hasmath 2017). Aid money tends to create development hotspots with concentrations of CSOs, often but not always in capital cities, potentially geographically distant from their constituent communities (Bebbington 2004a; Kleibl & Munck 2017; Porter 2003). In his work in the Andes Bebbington (2004a) describes how NGOs are clustered geographically and their interventions do not reflect the poverty found in Peru. In El Salvador McIlwaine (1998b) shows how the geographical spread of civil society organisations is shaped by particular historical contexts, including conflict, migration and crime and violence. Foreign funding has also been connected to the decline of CSOs in some areas, with organisations in receipt of foreign funding deregulated or their activities limited to depoliticised service provision. In this way the presence of CSOs reflects and reproduces aspects of the global development industry as money and knowledge flows through them. Similarly, Staeheli, Marshall & Maynard (2015; 2016) argue that circulations of ideas and knowledge at international youth citizenship conferences produce formations of citizenship that are simultaneously contextual, beyond the boundaries of the nation state and part of broader political and economic ideas. The geographies, as well as the format of civil society interventions, are therefore shaped by international agencies and agendas.

#### 2.4.2.2 Depoliticised civil society

This elitism is at odds with the role civil society is supposed to play in the political arena, with regular accusations that civil society has become depoliticised, and civil society seen as consensual and democratically limited (Beauclerk 2011; Chatterjee 2004; Ferguson 1994; Howell & Pearce 2002; Nagel & Staeheli 2015; 2016), reduced to a collection of voluntary agencies concerned with service provision, and a ‘cog in the neoliberal wheel’ (Chandhoke 2007; Edwards 2014; Godsater & Soderbaum 2017; Mercer & Green 2013:107). There is an assumption in the literature that civil society groups cannot be both professional and political and that they must choose one avenue over the other, with NGOs accused of having little impact on the structural causes of poverty by focusing on service provision and the notion that poverty is a problem that can be solved through correct interventions (Banks & Hulme 2012; McSweeney 2014). The tendency towards service delivery is exemplified by Brass (2012) who claims that ninety-percent of Kenyan NGOs are involved in service delivery, whilst Arhin (2016) contends that Ghanaian NGOs are becoming more focused on service delivery with increased uncertainty over financial resources. Jenkins (2011) shows how ideas of professionalism intersect with depoliticisation in Peru, but also contends that this is not solely the result of international processes, with depoliticisation in this context shaped by the constraining influence of the Shining Path, which forced voluntary organisations to suspend the more politicised elements of their work in local communities and become more involved in service delivery. This connects to the dichotomy articulated between big and little ‘d’ development, and the view that civil society groups have drifted towards intentional development at the expense of immanent development that potentially addresses the root causes of poverty and social injustice (Banks & Hulme 2012; Biggs & Neame 1995; Mawdsley et al 2002).

Civil society organisations are often hoped to be microcosms of the values of civil society itself. They are supposed to be accountable, incorporate horizontal decision-making and offer open membership (Hyden 1997; Tandon 1995). These optimistic expectations have been consistently critiqued by research into organisational processes. Studies have shown that CSOs can be internally undemocratic, hierarchical and leadership based, excluding the poorest from their activities (Das 2015; Mercer 1999; 2002). One of the major causes for concern has been the separation of civil society organisations from grassroots constituents (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015). This separation also promotes the beneficiaries of civil society’s development as passive agents, with civil society as a realm of governmentality instead of hoped for participation and empowerment, reflecting a more Gramscian concern about the potential of civil society (McSweeney 2014).

Civil society organisations have also been accused of co-option by the state limiting their ability to keep the state in check or holding it to account (Rommens 2017), as in Kamruzzaman’s (2013) study of civil society participation in poverty reduction policy in Bangladesh, where organisations were critical in reinforcing, rather than rejecting, prescriptions of development that were incompatible with the Bangladeshi situation. In this case, civil society organisations are seen as bolstering rather than opposing the state, by becoming providers of services they are strengthening the state by increasing its efficiency and helping government form ties with the grassroots. This also resonates with examples in Kyrgyzstan where the good governance agenda superseded the interests of the CSOs constituents. Through engagement with governance agendas that promoted particular definitions of domestic violence the CSOs did not fully engage with the experiences of the women they were supporting (Kim & Campbell 2013). This co-option is thought not only to depoliticise civil society as development actors, but also has a potentially harmful effect on the state, contributing to what has been labelled a ‘hollowing out’ of the state and reducing its capacity (McSweeney 2014). NGOs have been accused of making the state less responsive to its citizens and the interest in civil society has the potential to reduce confidence in the state (De Waal 1997; Young 1999). By taking responsibility from the state, non-state actors can contribute to state machinery that is less responsive to its citizens, with contracts and therefore responsibility for services held by non-state actors that are not fully regulated or managed by the state.

This echoes other studies that problematise the role of civil society within the good governance framework. In principle civil society organisations are understood as equal partners within this process, with a democratic state reflecting a democratic civil society and vice-versa (Robinson 1995). A number of studies have examined the realities of good governance processes and have articulated concerns over unequal relations. Mercer (2003) details the limited involvement of civil society groups in good governance in Tanzania. Her research shows how civil society organisations remain unequal actors in policy formation, despite the language of partnership, with donors viewing CSOs as incapable, disorganised and fragmented. Hearn (2007) outlines the impact of donor funding on civil society in South Africa. Following the fall of apartheid international funding aimed to consolidate liberal democratic processes. In Hearn’s (2007) view this aid altered the debate on democracy, with civil society becoming more focused on accentuating the nuances of procedural democracy at the expense of challenging the state on its more exploitative economic practices. This resonates to some extent with Bradshaw & Linnekar’s (2003) evaluation of civil society involvement in poverty reduction strategies in Nicaragua. They show that civil society are also unequal participants in policy dialogue, struggling to influence policy direction, yet through this process CSOs are able to produce an alternative poverty reduction strategy, offering donors a different story of development in Nicaragua and allowing the group to maintain their progressive credentials.

Despite the apparent hegemonic feel of these Western development agendas and associated funding mechanisms, it must also be recognised that the terminology and meanings have often been embraced by organisations in the Global South (McIlwaine 1998a; Mercer & Green 2013). Analyses of international intervention in civil society practices have often highlighted the complexities associated with this kind of support, and how interactions between civil society groups and international donors can often frame civil society practices (Nagel & Staeheli 2016). The literature on civil society and development has been dominated by a focus on NGOs as development actors and by substantial critiques of the role of civil society in this context. Critical engagement has contended that civil society has been rendered technical (Murray Li 2013) and is part of the anti-politics machine that has mechanised and depoliticised development processes (Ferguson 1994). This process of ‘rendering civil society technical’ has reduced it to very particular organisational forms, normative expectations and strengthening through technical processes, neglecting the diversity found in civil society.

## 2.5 Phase 4: Continued yet threatened engagement: Civil society sustainability

A particular version of civil society has been produced by the global development industry, initially conceptualised as the magic bullet to solve development’s problems. It has subsequently been heavily critiqued for its inability to live up to these normative expectations and there are concerns about the relevance of this model for civil society in the Global South. Much of the literature is heavily critical of the way civil society is realised in the global development industry, but despite this substantial flows of development finance are still going into civil society and CSOs are seen as an integral aspect of the development industry. Acknowledgement of these conceptual difficulties and practice-based critiques of their ongoing role in development has led to searching for other ways of thinking about civil society, and in broadening interest in organisational forms beyond that of NGOs. The more recent sense of threat to the civil society sector has also placed greater emphasis on understanding civil society through the lens of sustainability. This section will consider each of these in turn.

### 2.5.1 What counts as civil society?

More recent scholarship has seen further shifts in the way we think about civil society, partly in response to the numerous critiques levelled at the sector and also in response to the changing development landscape. The limitations of the NGOisation of civil society has encouraged a focus on not only on the organisational formations within civil society but also an understanding of civil society as a space in which different forms of associational life can flourish (Banks & Hulme 2012). A branch of civil society scholarship has moved away from purely focusing on NGOs to acknowledging the wider associational forms civil society can take, with greater focus on the diversity of organisational forms that contribute to civil society including social enterprises (Cieslik 2016; Galvin & Iannotti 2015; Roberts 2010), networks and collaborations (Appe 2016; Bebbington & Kothari 2006; Fouksman 2017; Yumasdelani & Jakinow 2017), digital activism, Diaspora groups and south-south partnerships (Mawdsley 2017; Mercer, Page & Evans 2009). Clarke & Ware (2015), for example consider the role that faith-based organisations can play in development, and articulate increasingly broad conceptualisations of civil society that incorporate such groups. Faith-based organisations have tended to be neglected in mainstream development discourse, possibly because they are more organic in nature and secondly because their work is often positioned outside of dominant development processes. They are becoming increasingly recognised as development actors, with religion becoming a more visible element in understanding development processes (Clarke & Ware 2015). Post 9/11 the idea of civil society has also been used as a means of security with Islamic NGOs experiencing increased regulation, but simultaneously recognised as development actors, often through a connected discourse of development and security (Howell & Lind 2009).

Within the realm of alternative versions of civil society and connected to more networked accounts of civil society, the idea of a global civil society remains contested yet has gained traction since the 1990s, reflecting the globality of ideas of human rights and social, economic and environmental justice (Worth & Buckley 2009), the interconnectedness of ‘politics from below’, and the increasing layering of political institutions, individuals, groups and states in the global system (Kaldor 2003). It also places greater emphasis on horizontal organising and deliberative democratic processes, embodying consensus and discussion (Baillie Smith 2008). The concept of a global civil society removes the idea of interaction between civil society and the nation-state, rather it considers civil society activity that engages with social and economic concerns that are relevant the world-over (Keane 2011). This widening of what might constitute civil society and therefore legitimate development actors has encouraged considerations of what these ‘newer’ actors may have to offer development processes, with less critical attention paid to the positions they may reinforce.

### 2.5.2 Civil society sustainability

Alongside the conceptual broadening of what might count as civil society, civil society scholarship has also branched out into exploring civil society sustainability. More recent engagement with civil society accepts that civil society actors are an integral part of the development landscape but has concentrated more on understanding the sustainability of these types of organisations, and less tangibly the wider civil society space they occupy. This is in part in response to the shrinking donor funding, the changes in the global economy, increased emphasis on terrorism and security and also in response to the closing down of civil society space around the world (Appe 2016; Hayman 2016; Pratt 2016; Wood 2016). CIVICUS (2017) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2017) have both promoted the importance of civil society sustainability and attempted to measure civil society sustainability through the use of national scale indices. Whilst providing an overview, these metrics do not allow a deeper understanding of sustainability in this context, yet this focus on sustainability moves away from evaluating civil society based on particular expectations, and instead concentrates on how the sector can bolster itself in the face of multiple stresses. These can broadly be divided into two areas of concern, firstly the ability of civil society to sustain itself in an increasingly controlled environment in which space for civil society is becoming more tightly restricted (CIVICUS 2017) and secondly how organisations can continue their work with reduced levels of international funding. I will address each of these in turn.

The closing down of civil society space around the world has meant that some organisations have closed, some have strategically altered their activities often into a seemingly less political domain and some have reduced their organisational visibility. There are numerous ways in which civil society activity is being restricted around the world, from restrictions on donor funding to bans on political advocacy to constitutional reforms minimising group formation (Carothers & Brechenmacher 2014; Christensen & Weinstein 2013; Karim 2017). These restrictions of associational life are also seen by some as a rejection of previous attempts at democracy assistance and perhaps more implicitly liberal democracy itself (Carothers & Brechenmacher 2014). This closing down of civic space has been made tangible and quantifiable through the closure of organisations, particularly those associated with foreign funding, but the literature is also concerned with the less visible manifestations of narrowing opportunities for civil society. Civil society groups and their actions are publically denounced and delegitimised, with Carothers & Brechenmacher (2014) detailing how civil society groups in Sudan have been the victims of public smear campaigns. Government authorities have also reacted strongly to civic actions, for example public protests and campaigns for an independent media (Carothers & Brechenmacher 2014:16).

Moving on to the second concern of reduced financial resources, particularly from ‘traditional’ international donors, civil society groups are now engaging with more diverse financial processes, utilising different forms of funding in their work, including donations from corporate sponsors (Mendonca, Alves & Nogueira 2016) and adopting a social enterprise model (Cieslik 2016; Galvin & Iannotti 2015; Hailey & Salway 2016). John Keane (2011) in his essay ‘Eleven theses on markets and civil society’ contends that historically the development of markets drove the development of civil society and this has become more relevant in recent times with the rise of new more market-based development actors, such as social enterprises and philanthrocapitalists and the shift to marketisation of state-based social provision (Keane 2011; Zadek 2011).

These changes accentuate the need to reconsider the tripartite framing of civil society, the state and the market and the implied separation of these spheres this model brings with it. The separation between the market and civil society is being challenged with civil society actors becoming market forces in their own right (Edwards 2014; Eikenberry & Kluver 2004; Weerawardena, McDonald & Mort 2010). The ability of civil society organisations to utilise market forces to aid their work is evident, particularly in instances where the organisation requires the market to get a particular product at scale and cost effectively (Edwards 2014; Eikenberry 2009). This approach suggests that civil society can work together with the market to solve societal problems, including examples of civil society groups working in partnership with corporate bodies to address pertinent concerns, with Zadek (2011) citing examples including the World Wildlife Foundation partnering with global corporations such as Coca Cola to conserve the world’s water resources and GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance where civil society organisations sit on the board of this public-private partnership, potentially influencing policy and accountability. This is controversial with some civil society groups and scholars questioning the merits of this close engagement with market forces, contending that the proximity of civil society to and potential reliance on the market does not allow civil society to hold the market to account for their potentially detrimental activities (Dauvergue & LeBaron 2014). The involvement of the market in civil society activities is predominantly conceived as an area of concern, a source of sullying civil society’s ethical appeal, with less attention paid to how civil society actors manage these dilemmas and the benefits that some strategic engagement with the market might bring.

Related to both of these is the notion that sustainability is complex, made up of internal and external relations. Civil society organisations are under pressure to demonstrate their legitimacy, transparency and accountability in efforts to aid their sustainability. At the same time sustainability can be understood through the examination of the environment in which civil society exists and the relationships they form (Arhin 2016; Fowler 2016; Hayman 2016). This environment can be aided by civil society organisations themselves and those on the outside, such as donors and governments (Claessen & de Lange 2016; Wood 2016). This section has shown that more recent scholarship in development has incorporated wider understandings of what type of organisation may count as civil society, and also considered civil society in the context of sustainability. This contrasts to some extent with the earlier literature that accentuated and then critiqued the effectiveness of CSOs as development actors, a commentary often based on normative conceptualisations of civil society that had developed from a Westernised tripartite framing.

## 2.6 Conclusion: Civil society at an impasse?

Civil society currently finds itself at an impasse. It has been the magic bullet and then heavily critiqued, yet it still endures as a key actor in development processes. This is accompanied by a rapidly changing context in which civil society organisations (and international donors) operate, with concerns over the applicability of existing conceptual framings of civil society and increasing threats from multiple sources. This chapter has charted the story of civil society in the global development landscape from its evolution, through to its heyday, subsequent critiques and its contemporary stalemate. The evolution of civil society within development discourse has been heavily influenced by the good governance agenda and by de Tocquevillian inspired versions of civil society as associational life intimately connected to democratic processes. These theories premise the separation of civil society, the state and the market, vertical hierarchical relations and distinctions between Northern and Southern civil society organisations**.** It seems as if the discourse is suffused with binaries and boundaries to help us understand civil society.

Feminist and post-colonial scholars have critiqued this discourse from many angles. These bodies of work highlight that dominant versions of civil society have often neglected the contextual, informal and uncivil aspects of civil society. Many of the theoretical approaches discussed above suggest that civil society is a well-defined, static and discrete entity in the real world. This loses the idea that it is actually something quite flexible, in a continual state of flux and unfinished. The dominant Western versions of civil society have developed from the privileging of certain types of associations, particular democratic processes and a desire for a certain type of civility. These sanitised versions of civil society lend themselves to imagining civil society that is built on neoliberal economic and political assumptions (McIlwaine 1998a).

It has been claimed that dominant framings of civil society do not always work for the diverse geographies of civil society activity (Edwards 2014; Lewis 2002). There have been attempts to move civil society theorising away from its more dominant Western geographical and Enlightenment informed roots that have neglected ideas of informal and unexpected relations (Lewis 2002; Obadare 2009; 2012; 2014). Within the context of civil society, it is probably hard to avoid what Mamdani (1996:17) terms ‘history by analogy’, taking the idea of civil society and applying it, as is, outside of the historical context it emerged from. Key to understanding civil society is to interrogate, recognise and acknowledge the drivers behind privileging a certain type of civil society and, at the same time to search for civil society in its ‘actual formation, rather than as a promised agenda for change’ (Mamdani 1996:19). The idea of civil society should not be rejected outright based on problematic Western framings, rather it should be used as a term that is open and speaks to some shared ideological foundations of human culture (Lewis 2002; Sass & Dryzek 2014; Springer 2011). More recent thinking on the civil society and development, particularly through work-life history approaches, and aspects of the sustainability literature, has hinted at the collapsing of some of the dominant boundaries (Edwards 2014; Lewis 2011; 2013). These boundaries and the new relationships that cross and bypass these borders therefore represent a site for exploration (Lewis 2011; 2013).

Civil society and international donors are in a predicament. Donors are unsure of how to build civil society, recognising that dominant discourses do not perhaps conceptualise what they sense through their work. Dominant framings based on Westernised models of associational life, social capital and liberal democracy do not reflect the realities of civil society in diverse places. These framings project fixed sectoral boundaries, institutional templates and vertical hierarchies. Simultaneously civil society is coming under greater threat from multiple sources. Perhaps then this expedites the need to consider alternative ways of thinking about civil society. Key questions that arise from this literature review are: Is there scope for understanding civil society outside of the realm of these dominant models and normative expectations? Are there opportunities to think about civil society in ‘its actual formation’ (Mamdani 1996:19)? And if so how can we try and do this? The next chapter of this thesis will consider how these ideas can be conceptually framed.

# 3. Being civil society[[3]](#footnote-3)

## 3.1 Introduction

‘The essential aims of life are present naturally in every person. In everyone there is some longing for humanity's rightful dignity, for moral integrity, for free expression of being…’

 Havel (1978)

The first chapter of this thesis considered the dominant theoretical approaches to civil society and how the concept has been mobilised within development discourse and practice. Civil society is one of the most contentious terms in political thought and as explored in the preceding chapter the term civil society has been mobilised in very particular ways in international development discourses and practice. The chapter highlighted the dominance of Eurocentric understandings of civil society, built on normative expectations of furthering democratisation and participation, and a reliance on a rigid separation between civil society, the state and the market. These dominant understandings have been critiqued through feminist and post-colonial inspired thinking, accentuating the need to consider context, informality and incivility in civil society scholarship.

Within development discourses civil society has been both lauded and critiqued, with much of the literature accentuating vertical dependency relations, unequal partnerships and Western framings of civil society. The conceptualisations of civil society to date have often utilised fixed static boundaries at the expense of more complex relations. As Edwards (2014) and Lewis (2011; 2013) comment, these boundaries may be starting to collapse and it is important to think about how research into civil society can help to understand the shifts in these relationships in richer detail. This dovetails with Mamdani’s (1996:19) plea to consider civil society in ‘its actual formation’ and as Bebbington (2004a:728) comments ‘to utilise more analytical and empirical care in exploring…variation across space and resisting the normative temptation to be either gratuitously critical or excessively optimistic about NGOs’. In this dominant quest to assess and evaluate civil society, less attention has been paid to the individual lives, perspectives and relationships that make up civil society, but as I argue here it is paying attention to lived experiences that may have the potential to understand the complexities of civil society away from its dominant binaries and normative expectations. This chapter aims to provide a theoretical framework on to which to base such a piece of research. It argues that framing civil society through the lens of lived experiences has the potential to explore the shifting nature of sectoral boundaries, and examine the complexities of civil society experience that are not dominated by normative ideals of democracy or the presence of purely vertical relations.

This chapter presents the case for using the two intertwined concepts of lived experiences and everyday life to think with when investigating civil society, contending that thinking with these concepts foregrounds particular approaches for exploring, analysing and understanding civil society. Lived experience premises first-hand accounts and impressions of civil society work from the actors involved, aiming to understand about people’s everyday worlds and experiences of these worlds and how, in this case, civil society, comes to be, through these experiences (Ash & Simpson 2016; Kallio 2017). Drawing on ideas of the everyday also helps to frame these lived experiences. The focus of this research was about how civil society actors experience civil society work on a day-to-day basis. It was about the ordinary, routine and ‘normal’ aspects of their work. I would like to suggest here that the term civil society should be reclaimed as a way of giving meaning to the stories of the everyday lives of the people who create, shape and embody civil society. Used in this way, the idea of civil society can be understood as intersecting discourses, emotions, identities and practices and can add to the body of scholarly work that nurtures and values everyday life and lived experience as a lens through which to view wider social processes. Civil society, as a concept, has perhaps become fatigued, often reified and de-humanised. This chapter aims to add to the body of work that believes it is time to explore the stories of the people who make up civil society and it is through their everyday lives and experiences that civil society can be understood. In doing so it provides a theoretical platform from which to view the remainder of this thesis.

The chapter will continue as follows. Firstly, it provides a brief overview of the concepts lived experience and everyday life. Secondly, it will open up discussion about what thinking with these concepts may bring to the fore when contemplating civil society action. It will outline four key themes central to thinking about civil society through the lens of everyday experience, including structure and agency, the way everyday experience is constructed through others and finally, how everyday experience can be seen as an arena for change. Having outlined these key aspects, the chapter will conclude by advancing an embryonic theoretical platform that aims to ground an approach to civil society that actively thinks with lived experiences and everyday life.

## 3.2 Reframing civil society

It is important to differentiate between the myth of civil society, its use in international development discourse and the opportunity to use civil society as a term that may be ‘useful to think and… act with’ because it helps makes sense of a diverse array of collective opportunities (Lewis 2002:570). Using the term to ‘think and act with’ views civil society not as a culturally distinct value, but something that is underpinned by intrinsic human desires, such as the desire to participate, the value of collective action and the importance of communication whilst still acknowledging the contextual nature of forms of civil society (Lewis 2002; Sass & Dryzek 2014; Springer 2011). The civil society literature highlights the difficulty of searching for a fixed definition of such an ambiguous concept, but there are fundamental aspects that emerge from the literature that provide a guide as to what might constitute civil society. Notions of associational life and collective action, of opportunities for developing a ‘good (or better) society’, of platforms for marginalised voices and of societal activity that is distinct from the state resonate throughout much of these wide and diverse literatures (Edwards 2014).

In reasserting the notion that civil society is about people, for the remainder of this chapter, I am referring to the lived experiences of those who give civil society shape, through their roles as activists, workers or volunteers with self-defined civil society organisations[[4]](#footnote-4). Following this line of thought, this chapter continues with a review of the conceptual aspects associated with the everyday experience of civil society, followed by discussions highlighting four important aspects of lived experience relevant for civil society scholarship. For ease of writing, these areas are addressed separately but it is understood that there is no such division in ‘real life’ (Highmore 2011). These discussions come together to ask: What are the everyday experiences of those who shape civil society?

## 3.3 Exploring civil society through everyday experiences

In arguing for an understanding of civil society that is rooted in the experiences of the people who are part of it, it is first important to explore notions of everyday experiences and its various meanings in more detail. This is not an attempt to debate the theoretical manifestations of these concepts, rather this section of the chapter aims to make a claim about the usefulness of the idea of everyday experiences in the study of civil society, in doing so drawing on elements from across the theoretical spectrum that appear to resonate with the idea of civil society discussed above. In bringing together ideas of civil society and everyday experience, the term everyday is used here in its broadest form, from the idea of lived experience, following for example Katz (2004) who considers work, chores and play in children’s everyday lives.

There have been various ways that everyday experiences have been considered. Scholars in varying disciplines have recognised that the everyday is more than mundane and repetitive, articulating it as a realm of interest, activity and potentiality[[5]](#footnote-5) (Buttimer 1976; Lukács 1971), with Lefebvre (2008) contending that the everyday life of the worker was consumed by capitalism, and only through this everyday life could a deeper understanding of this system be achieved (Goonewardena 2008). This resonates with the near complete infiltration of totalitarianism into everyday life described by Havel (1978), and his articulation that it is only through attention to the everyday lives of ordinary people (citing the greengrocer) that the ideological domination of this philosophy could be understood. Ideas of everyday experience also circulate within critiques of capitalism centred on ideas of social reproduction (Katz 2004). The capitalist mode of production can be embodied through the social sphere, and Katz’s (2004) study examining children’s everyday lives in the context of global economic restructuring reveals the common effects of global capitalism in different geographical locations, and also that the outcomes of these externally imposed socio-economic changes are not pre-determined. Processes of social reproduction can therefore result in uneven everyday experiences, with these everyday experiences feeding back into the cycle of social reproduction (Katz 2008).

Lefebvre (2008) articulates that everyday experience, as well as potentially embodying the rigours of capitalism, is not benign and is also a field for the growth of what he termed the ‘non-everyday’ (‘specialised’ activities such as revolution). In using the metaphor of a productive landscape Lefebvre (as explained by Goonewardena 2008) saw everyday experience as the rich soil from which these non-everyday activities could grow. In the context of a capitalist mode of production everyday life is therefore seen as an ample arena for social change and as a space that reflects how people live. Lefebvre himself (2008:2) asks: ‘can a critical analysis of everyday life serve as a guiding thread for a knowledge of society as a whole?’

There has been a tendency for studies of the everyday to focus on various fragmented activities, for example washing, playing or working (Lefebvre 2008), with each of these activities an intersection of desires and routines, inseparable from each other (Highmore 2011). These practices and the experiences associated with them should be seen in the context of the social relations in which they occur, and understood through the deep social structures within them (Scott 2009). An understanding of everyday experience is crucial to comprehending the wider social world (Scott 2009*:*9) and although studies of everyday life may focus on practices that are often hidden, for example domestic chores, these concealed spaces reflect perspectives on wider social processes through their habits, routines and values (Pink 2004). The potentially negative connotations associated with everyday experience, the repetition, the stasis and the dullness have been challenged (Bennett & Watson 2002) and feminist and post-colonial scholars in particular have highlighted the potential of the everyday and the lived experience of women in various settings (Bennett 2011; Hume 2004; Pink 2004) to reveal the dominance of certain knowledge claims and complex power relations (Nayak & Jeffrey 2013; Ronneburger 2008).

Ethnographic engagement with civil society challenges assumptions about the isolation, clarity and detachment of civil society organisations, highlighting that organisations are an open ended process shaped by global, local and national complexities, challenging the pre-conception that there is a single answer to why civil society organisations form and how they operate (Hilhorst 2003). Kuzmanovic (2012) highlights the difference between the civil society conceptualised in national and international policy documents and the one she experienced in Turkey, exemplifying the variety of contexts through which civil society is created and evolves. Ethnographic work also articulates the complexities of civil society, such as its changing forms, sometimes-contradictory values (Hilhorst 2003), contested power relations (Garmany 2015) and the role of administrative realities in NGO practices (Hoehn 2013). In using everyday experience as a way into civil society, Baillie Smith & Jenkins (2012b) use work (life) histories to highlight the shifting nature of the cosmopolitan practices of NGO workers in India and Lewis (2011; 2013) shows the blurring of boundaries between working in civil society and government employment in Bangladesh and the Philippines. These two examples demonstrate how a life history approach enables understanding of the development of certain practices, for example policy-making (Lewis 2008) and how knowledge and practice are constructed through particular experiences and relations (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2012b; 2016). As well as the personal, this focus on individual narratives can also explore how thoughts, values and practices circulate (Bebbington & Kothari 2006).

These approaches all endorse an understanding of civil society organisations that emphasises a move away from an institutional account of their effectiveness in relation to normative ideals, their strength or quantity or their role in policy dialogue (Baille Smith & Jenkins 2012b; Jenkins 2015; Long 2001; Obadare 2011). It is the experiences of the people who create, shape and embody civil society that are the focus (Obadare 2011), accentuating ideas of hiddenness (Havel 1978), context (Clark & Jones 2013), multiplicity (Fraser 1990; Willems 2014), connectivity (Featherstone 2008), contestation (Fraser 1990) and fluidity (Howell et al 2008). This approach is also guided by two specific calls, about NGOs and activism respectively, but which can be extended and have relevance for thinking about civil society. Firstly, by Baillie Smith & Jenkins (2012b:643) who conceptualise ‘NGOs as made up of individuals, with… histories, commitments and allegiances’ and secondly, Chatterton & Pickerill (2010:481) who advocate for ‘detailed empirical accounts of the messy, gritty and real everyday rhythms as activists…enact life beyond the capitalist status quo’.

Geographical engagement with everyday experience has traversed various domains, including but not limited to, citizenship (Staeheli et al 2012), encounters with difference (Valentine & Waite 2012), geopolitics (Dittmer & Gray 2010; Sidaway 2009), the state (Painter 2006) and development (Riggs 2007). These examples demonstrate the applicability and usefulness of everyday experience as a conceptual framework for exploring the interplay between structure and agency, and as a lens through which to view wider social processes. From these discussions it is possible to summarise four theoretical positions of everyday life that may be relevant to an understanding of everyday life and civil society: 1) Everyday life reflects, shapes and is shaped by overarching structures and discourses, and resistance to these (Lefebvre 2008; Scott 2009) 2) Everyday life accentuates agency (Katz 2004; 2008; Staeheli et al 2012) 3) Everyday experiences are constructed through others (Jordan 2002; Rustin 2013) 4) Everyday life is an arena of potency and change, highlighting blurred boundaries and multiple subjectivities (de Certeau 1984; Lefebvre 2008; Lewis 2011; 2013; Nayak & Jeffrey 2013). These literatures, although not always directly drawn from studies of civil society, are useful to help guide us to potential areas of interest when exploring the everyday life of those who are part of civil society. As mentioned previously these areas are not distinct or exhaustive and everyday life as it plays out is the accumulation of many intersecting forces (Highmore 2011). This chapter continues by interrogating each of these four theoretical positions in more detail.

### 3.3.1Everyday life reflects, shapes and is shaped by overarching structures and discourses

Consideration of everyday experiences is entangled with the role that overarching societal structures and discourses can play in shaping those experiences. For Giddens (1984), structure provides conditions in which actions can take place, while Foucault (1990) shows how discourses can become internalised and imposed by people on themselves (Scott 2009), revealing new modes of social control and order (Bennett & Watson 2002). Scott (2009) articulates how the micro-scale processes of daily life reflect things happening at the macro-scale, something inherent in Lefebvre’s (2008) theorising of everyday life. Whilst Lefebvre’s work is primarily concerned with the ways in which capitalist modes of production infiltrate everyday life, and therefore make it a pertinent arena of study, more recent work shows that there are numerous examples of the role of structures and discourses on everyday experiences, from studies on the structural nature of violence (Moser & McIlwaine 2014; Rodgers & O’Neill 2012) to ‘new’ forms of governance that encourage certain modes of engagement (Johnston 2012). The intersections between discourses of neoliberalism and everyday experience have become important in civil society scholarship (Bondi & Laurie 2005; Jenkins 2009) and will be used here as an example to open up the idea of a lived experience of civil society that is influenced by ‘grander’ narratives, but also an understanding of the everyday implications of such structures: how they are felt and embodied and how people respond to them.

Neoliberalism can be described as an ‘umbrella term for the diverse ideologies, policies and practices associated with liberalising global markets and expanding…..capitalist power relations into areas of social, political and biophysical life’ (Sparke 2005:1). This extension of neoliberalism from a purely economic model to a mode of being is demonstrated by studies on the way neoliberalism has permeated many aspects of everyday life, from the acceptance of certain emotional subjectivities (D’Aoust 2012) to understandings of feminist ideology (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2012b), although the effects of neoliberalism are also acknowledged as geographically varied, contingent and uneven (Bondi & Laurie 2005). The aspect I would like to explore here is the idea of the neoliberal professional. This is distinguished from professionalisation, which may be more associated with the processes of rationalisation (Ritzer 1975), by concentrating on the very neoliberal traits of a minimalist state, decentralised planning and the self-governing citizen (Bondi & Laurie 2005:396).

This neoliberal professionalism can be viewed with particular reference to these ideological characteristics and the ways these are embodied in the everyday lives of civil society actors. The retreat of the state inevitably leaves a vacuum for other institutions and civil society is often connected with the provision of services, for example health and social care for people with HIV (Richardson 2005), the construction of toilet blocks in informal settlements (McFarlane 2012) or support for situations of domestic violence (Ishkanian 2014). The style of this service provision is governed by the institutional norms of non-state funders. Donors in the international development field may place great importance on certain tasks of civil society organisations at the expense of substantive discussions with beneficiaries, nurturing of recipients’ agency or engagement with more progressive politics (Dolhinow 2005; Hoehn 2013; Ishkanian 2014). Everyday experiences may therefore be dominated by logframes, budgeting and accountability processes (Edwards & Hulme 1995a). Within the international development arena decentralisation has shifted the focus from the expatriate expert to the local expert, a role explicitly concerned with social development and the building of locally rooted social capital (Laurie, Andolina & Radcliffe 2005). The building of locally embedded experts accentuates the need for networks, meeting and knowledge exchanges, shaping everyday experience through traits associated with neoliberalism (Dolhinow 2005; Laurie, Andolina & Radcliffe 2005:480-482).

Despite a potentially hegemonic feel, those who are part of civil society also engage with issues of professionalisation in uneven and unexpected ways (Bondi & Laurie 2005). This accentuates the possibility that everyday life has as a space of potentiality, agency and resistance to dominant structures (Katz 2004; Lefebvre 2008), with Freud, for example characterising everyday life as a realm in which there is constant tension between ‘what we want to do and what we can and should do’ (cited in Scott 2009:11). Everyday life can then both reproduce and subvert these dominant structures and is not then solely the product of dominant relations; there is also room for something more creative, adaptive and even antagonistic (de Certeau 1984). It is to the agentic nature of everyday experience that this discussion will now turn.

### 3.3.2 Everyday life accentuates agency

Whilst it is important to emphasise the influence such macro-processes may have on the everyday life of civil society actors, it is also important to consider the agency these actors have in responding to and resisting such processes. This is particularly pertinent in the scholarship of Lefebvre (2008) and de Certeau (1984), who both see potential in the ordinary actions of daily life to interrogate and challenge dominant discourses and in Gidden’s (1984) view have the potential to change societal structures. Lefebvre (2008) outlines how everyday life may provide fertile ground for the seeds of revolution, whilst de Certeau (1984) highlights how ordinary everyday actions can challenge hegemonic relations, for example through the breaking of minor rules, such as using public space for different purposes than it was intended. Similarly Staeheli et al (2012) use the example of migration and citizenship to articulate how the order imposed by, for example, legal aspects of citizenship, are subverted through practices embedded in everyday life. Katz (2004) also captures the agentic qualities of the everyday in her articulations of resistance and reworking as different responses to the dominance of a capitalist mode of production. She uses the example of women in East Harlem to demonstrate how processes of reworking aim to reorder and undermine the constraints placed on these women by capitalism. This involves recognition of the skills, types of knowledge and organisational forms that are privileged by the dominant forces and can be seen as a strategic intervention to draw others into this hegemonic space, but also as a conscious, active response to build a civil society that incorporates more people from different backgrounds. In her work with children in Sudan growing up in a period of time experiencing a transition to a capitalist mode of production Katz (2004:22) comments:

‘If capitalism roosts in the routine, so the possibilities for its disruption; the chance for diversion speckles well-worn paths…Children’s everyday practices…make clear that the outcomes of externally imposed socioeconomic change is not determined…’

Returning to the example of the neoliberal professional discussed in the previous section it can argued that the tenets of neoliberal professionalism are being reproduced through the global development industry, but that they may also be reworked by those who are part of civil society. Jenkins (2005) contends that despite being described as experts, grassroots activists do not endorse this identity completely and Chatterton & Pickerill (2010) also describe how some activists may embrace a more professional demeanour strategically, to engage with officials, sustain their causes and to make activism more acceptable in mainstream discourse. Despite these examples Bondi & Laurie (2005:398) comment ‘how resistance to neoliberalism might be fostered remain important and troublingly difficult questions…’ providing examples of how activists can be drawn into service provision and the damaging effects of new managerialism on development actors (Mawdsley, Townsend & Porter 2005). There are also examples of everyday practices that actively subvert these neoliberal agendas through their daily practices, with AbouAssi (2012; 2014) describing how some civil society groups may reject donor funding because of the (neoliberal) accountability processes that accompany it. Here organisations actively reject the practices associated with neoliberal accountability and efficiency, instead turning to other forms of funding.

This strategic engagement with neoliberal discourse articulates how agency is potentially brought to the fore through thinking with the everyday. Looking deeper into the everyday practices and processes associated with civil society organising accentuates the role and agency of individuals in creating civil society spaces, although Green (2016) comments that the role of individual leaders is often neglected from civil society and development scholarship. In contrast to this Cumbers, Routledge & Nativel (2008) conceptualise the ‘imagineer’, who are seen as key individuals for sustaining global justice networks through their work connecting movement hubs and grassroots participants. They embody the social relations through which the network mobilises its communicative, financial and knowledge-based resources and operationalise the network across geographic space. This focus on the role of particular actors echoes Cleaver’s (2012) conceptualisations of the importance of ‘bricoleurs’ in natural resource management. Bricoleurs are understood as important individuals for shaping institutions, often in creative ways, working across a number of interfaces and by forming relations with different stakeholders. Funder & Marani (2015:104) see environmental officers as bricoleurs in the way that they creatively problem-solve with whatever means are available to them and ‘negotiate their complex position between local communities and the central state’. All of these examples demonstrate the agency embedded in the everyday experiences of civil society actors in the making of civil society. Returning to the intersection of structure and agency these studies also acknowledge the limitations that particular actors may face in their quest for change by considering how individual action is also shaped by institutional and networked arrangements (Cleaver 2001; Cleaver & de Koning 2015; Cumbers, Routledge & Nativel 2008). Everyday experience provides scope for seeing how structures and discourses shape our lives, but also how these may be responded to, resisted and reworked, emphasising an active agentic quality about the everyday.

### 3.3.3 Everyday experiences are constructed through and with others

As well as the attention given to individual action and the agency that is part of everyday experience, thinking with the everyday also conceptually extends to considering who else is involved in particular actions and the different social relations that shape and are part of everyday experience. Everyday experience is a peopled experience, other people stimulate our experiences and likewise our responses shape their social worlds (Jordan 2002; Scott 2009; Rustin 2013). These relations can be divided into those that are more intense and localised and those that resonate across space (Cumbers, Routledge & Nativel 2008; Massey 2005; Routledge 2008).

There is sometimes a tendency to assume that everyday life occurs in a narrow territorial area, for example the home, the workplace or the pub (Bennett & Watson 2002; Holloway & Hubbard 2001). Social relations formed in place can be important for civil society action, emphasised by literature that articulates the formation of civil society through very localised social relations. Fraser (1990) in her feminist critique of Habermas’ public sphere articulates the need to acknowledge the importance of private spaces for associational life. She uses the example of North American women forging access to political life through alternative channels and the use of the private domains of domesticity and motherhood as springboards for public life as a way of showing the relevance of private space in developing political engagement. Howard (2011) and Havel (1978) also emphasise the development of associational life based in the home as a precursor to some of the civil society groups and more visible forms of collective action in the former Communist Eastern Europe. Based on ethnographic research in Egypt, Singerman (2006) argues that the family is crucial to all spheres of life, including civil society, and that to understand shifts in power in the Middle East and elsewhere, civil society must include relations that are formed in very localised, often private spaces, such as the home and the family.

In contrast to these localised social relations thinking with lived experience also encourages a view of the world that is founded on connections, relations and absences (both in the present and historically) and more spatially extensive social relations (Massey 2005; Massey et al 2009). This shift moves everyday action away from being something that exists in a particular place to a focus on the intertwined and unequal influences that configure our world. Featherstone (2008) argues that local politics, through accounts of 18th century sailors, to factory workers in East Kilbride to the contemporary climate justice network, is always made through relations across space, developing a progressive agenda in place by incorporating ideas from further afield. Tracing contestation and resistance (and possibly consensus) enriches our understanding of political activity (and to some extent confounds place based notions of politics) as demonstrated by Kothari (2012) in her study of translocal practices of resistance by anti-colonial leaders exiled in the Seychelles. Examples of increased NGO regulation following the ‘long war on terror’ (Howell et al 2008), the delegitimising of Western funded NGOs in Russia (Ljubownikow & Crotty 2014) and the transnational activities of the World Social Forum (Worth & Buckley 2009) all demonstrate how the processes by which everyday forms of politics are remade through spatial relations and how political action may be tied to broader aspects of global change (Springer 2011). Baillie-Smith & Jenkins (2012b:650) show how civil society activists in India can act as conduits for global discourses, citing the example of an activist learning about human rights based approaches to development in the UK, and then taking this back and modifying it to use ‘in their own place’. Recent examples of the more interstitial spaces of political activity often incorporate the use of technology and social media, whilst recognising the fluidity of the boundary between the virtual/real worlds (Hammett 2014; Meek 2012).

This emphasis on connectivity has to go beyond ‘just’ recognition however, and everyday experience provides an opportunity to interrogate the history behind these connections and an opportunity to consider the ways in which events in one place reverberate in another from a different perspective. This interconnectivity can be seen in geographies of everyday consumption and production (e.g. Cook et al 2004; 2006), but this also resonates with the idea that civil society action in one place may be intimately connected to events in another, not solely through visible practices, but also through historical and political narratives. Using the example of post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina, Jeffrey (2007:251) demonstrates that how places are imagined elsewhere ‘creates political and spatial realities’ and influences how CSOs operate day-to-day. The ‘in transition’ geopolitical imaginary of Bosnia-Herzegovina influences the way that CSOs have to work, particularly the ways they have to engage with funding bodies and regulatory mechanisms. There is a reflection from my own work that illustrates this point. Following the protests that formed part of ‘the Arab spring’, conversations were had in the offices of the collaborative partner in London about their role in strengthening civil society in Sri Lanka. There was much concern about not wanting to encourage or be seen to encourage civil society in Sri Lanka to mobilise in a similar way and consideration given to different ways of working to ensure that this would not be the case. This demonstrates how events in one place unfold in another but may also shape events elsewhere, and the responsibilities different people hold for how those reverberations may unfold. Studying everyday experience highlights the diverse social relations in place and through space that make up everyday life and brings this diversity to the fore (Holloway & Hubbard 2001; Rustin 2013).

### 3.3.4 Everyday life highlights blurred boundaries and multiple subjectivities

This chapter has so far articulated the importance of studying everyday life because it has the potential to reveal the influence of structures and discourses and how these are resisted and reworked, and the importance of varied social relations. Thinking that privileges everyday experience also has the potential to guide us to an exploration of the hidden spaces of engagement and the practices, emotions and subjectivities that are part of civil society action: here I am going to examine the way identities are an everyday part of civil society action and how performances of subjectivity can contribute to change, resistance and struggle.

There is a need to understand in more depth the identities and subjectivities that are part of everyday life. Lefebvre (1991) discusses how identities are intertwined with the power of the state, and in a bourgeois society subject positions are split into the contradictory private and public man, with the negotiation of these subjectivities part of political life. In his chapter entitled ‘Walking in the City’ de Certeau (1984) contends that the ordinary walker exemplifies a voyeuristic identity through his everyday action, challenging larger power structures through this embodied subject position. In the realm of civil society and activist subjectivities, Chatterton & Pickerill (2010) articulate the importance of particular identities, contending that activist identities are more nuanced than the traditional romanticised militant activist subjectivity allows. Instead activists craft a more pragmatic identity through their everyday practices, through for example, the doing of projects. Lazar (2012) also articulates the importance of identity to civil society action, in her case trade unionism. Trade unionists in South America build particular identities to make their participation in trade unionism acceptable and to denote a sense of importance about the work they do (Lazar 2012; 2013). Subjectivities are not static but formed and interrogated through everyday experiences, contributing to the way that activism and civil society more widely is constructed.

The body of work on activist subjectivities demonstrates that activist identities and performances are ingrained in everyday practices and often used selectively and strategically as a form of resistance and change (Jenkins 2015; McKinnon 2008). Women protesting mining in Peru, for example, express particular aspects of femininity, using water, Mother Earth and concern for future generations to articulate their role in the anti-mining campaign (Jenkins 2015:7). The use of strategic subjectivities is also exemplified by Baillie Smith & Jenkins (2012b), who in their work with activists in India articulate a form of ‘instrumental cosmopolitanism’, where activists simultaneously engage with the spaces of neoliberal global development and critique its limitations (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2012b:654). A focus on the practices of the everyday workings of political activity reveals the subjective and strategic nature of being an activist, and that the use of different identities is likely to be a routine and usual aspect of being part of civil society, often mobilised to achieve desired outcomes (Chatterton & Pickerill 2010). Strategic subjectivity is also reflected in work by Chatterton & Pickerill (2010) describing activists’ attempts to reject certain labels and by Lazar (2013) in her work on trade unions in Argentina, where unionists identifying themselves at times as ‘containers’ for their delegates’ problems, replacing the idea of a static activist/non-activist binary with malleable identities, chosen appropriately to suit the situation (Chatterton & Pickerill 2010). Baillie Smith & Jenkins (2012b) also acknowledge that activists in India have to negotiate a more professionalised identity in their NGO work, but retain their more activist side within their own domestic spaces. This articulates the difficulty of living in between these two spaces and therefore sees practices of activism as contradictory. This demonstrates that political activity often operates beyond the activism/everyday life dialectic, and the blurring of boundaries between the two both through flexible subjectivities formed through everyday practices. These changeable identities and subjectivities allow activists to engage in global and local spaces (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2012b), to become more ‘acceptable’ (Chatterton & Pickerill 2010; Yarrow 2008) and to promote their ideas (Lazar 2013), all of which contributes to the social changes they are attempting to pursue. Subjectivities are crucial to effective civil society action, but have shifted away from singular portrayals of an activist to more complex understanding that root the formation of multiple subjectivities in quotidian practices (Chatterton & Pickerill 2010).

These varied subjectivities articulate how an emphasis on everyday life can blur the presumed boundaries that order our social world. We have seen previously how Fraser (1990) challenges the public/private dichotomy by altering the subjectivity of the home and giving it political relevance. Lewis (2011; 2013) shows how the boundaries between the state and civil society are muddied through interactions that take place in the everyday. For civil society actors in Bangladesh it is the quotidian actions and experiences, such as moving jobs, which reshape the identities of civil society and state actors (Lewis 2011; 2013). Likewise Baillie Smith & Jenkins (2012b) and Chatterton & Pickerill (2010) respectively show how activists blur the boundaries between the global and the local, through the selective use of cosmopolitan practices, and reduced differentiation between being an activist and a non-activist through the rejection of exclusive labels. Everyday experiences demonstrate the complexity of subjectivities within civil society organising, but also show that these subjectivities are spaces of change with multiple subjectivities contesting existing boundaries and challenging the rigidity of different aspects of civil society organising.

In exploring civil society, the idea of everyday experience can be used as an analytical concept, as a way of exploring how people are in the world, how they relate to each other and how change is (or is not) brought about. This approach emphasises the daily lives of civil society actors, aiming to study the subjective realities of civil society from their perspective and everyday settings can provide the opportunity to analyse and interrogate more general social processes (Bennett & Watson 2002; Scott 2009). By privileging everyday experiences there is the potential to see how underlying forces shape civil society action, how actors respond and challenge these forces, the relationships that are important and how identities are crafted. Everyday experience has become an important area of study (Bennett & Watson 2002; de Certeau 1984; Felski 1999; Gardiner 2000; Lefebvre 2008; Scott 2009) as Lefebvre (2008:14) articulates ‘daily life harbours a hidden wealth in its apparent poverty’.

As shown in the previous chapter conceptual disagreements or critical institutional assessments often dominate the civil society literature, but shifting away from this body of work is emerging scholarship that pays greater attention to the lives of the people that create, shape and embody civil society. This theoretical direction falls under the remit of an ‘actor-oriented’ approach, which privileges the practices of those inhabiting certain social landscapes, how these actors are connected and how people engage with the situations they encounter (Long 2001). The few studies that have done this highlight the mobile nature of the cosmopolitan practices of NGO workers in India (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2012b), the blurring of boundaries between working in civil society and government employment in the Philippines (Lewis 2013) and how knowledge and practice are constructed through particular experiences and relations (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011). As well as the personal, this focus on individual narratives can also explore how thoughts, values and practices flow, highlighting the mobility of people, ideas and capital (Bebbington & Kothari 2006). Thinking about civil society through everyday experience has the potential to encourage us to look at how structures and discourses permeate, and maybe resisted by, civil society, to place the agency of civil society actors and the relations they embody at the forefront of our thinking and to understand civil society as an arena for the blurring of boundaries and multiple identities and subjectivities. Everyday experience, as I have argued here, has the potential to look at civil society in a different way.

## 3.4 Conclusion: Actively thinking civil society through everyday experience

Although there is no single approach to understanding everyday experiences, this chapter has considered four prominent ideas that arise from thinking about the social world through these lenses; structure and agency, relationships with others and hidden aspects of engagement, contending that these are key areas of concern for understanding civil society. The first chapter of this thesis argued that there is a need to (re)affirm an understanding of civil society that is less reliant on evaluating effectiveness and normative ideals and expectations, such as improving democracy, inherent civility or certain forms of associational life (Edwards 2014; Kopecky & Mudde 2003). Actively using everyday experience to think with has the potential to do this and alter the focus of civil society research, away from assessments of effectiveness, to a renewed concentration on the people, relationships, practices and subjectivities that constitute the complex arrangements of people and things that form civil society. This thinking privileges an actor-focused account of civil society work and views civil society as something that can be contextual, expansive and always changing. This brings up questions such as: What do these particular approaches to thinking about everyday experience mean for the way we engage with civil society? And how does this emphasis shape the way research on civil society is conducted?

This chapter has argued for an understanding of civil society that emphasises a move away from institutional descriptions to a story of the people who embody civil society and their everyday lives, contending that a focus on the everyday has the potential to refresh ideas of civil society (Baille Smith & Jenkins 2012b; Jenkins 2015; Obadare 2012). It is the everyday that gives civil society its meaning and the everyday that is shaped by and also reflects wider social structures and discourses, the agency, subjectivities and relations of individual actors. Engaging with the everyday has implications for both academic thought and development practice in relation to civil society. A sharper focus on the everyday life of civil society in the academic arena has the potential to contribute to the bridging of the western/non-western schools of thought that have so often dominated civil society thinking[[6]](#footnote-6). It also brings out the possibility for a more interdisciplinary framing of civil society[[7]](#footnote-7), and mediates finding ways, as commented on by Ishkanian (2014), of bringing disciplines such as international development and social policy into dialogue with each other. An everyday understanding of civil society also resonates with recent scholarly work in the international development field that calls for a (re) turn to aspects of emotions in understanding development processes (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2012a; 2016; Kapoor 2014a; 2014b). These literatures perhaps highlight that there is a desire to delve a little deeper into the development arena and explore what it really means to be part of our world, as Kapoor (2014a:1117) articulates there is a desire to ‘explain the gap between development’s scientific commitments and its irrational practices’.

The question is how to bring to light the important aspects of civil society actors’ everyday experiences, of their routine and everyday lives as civil society actors, whilst considering how these intersect with wider socio-cultural contexts. The remainder of this thesis will focus on this challenge, with each chapter outlining the intricacies of civil society experience, and questioning what these experiences tell us about how civil society is conceptualised. The next chapter of the thesis will address the methodological implications of adopting a theoretical framework that accentuates everyday experiences.

# 4. Research design

## 4.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework on which this research is based highlights the importance of understanding civil society through stories and experiences, attempting to develop actor focused accounts of civil society groups and their everyday experiences. Self-defined civil society organisations (CSOs), operating at multiple and sometimes overlapping scales, are part of the civil society landscape and the research utilised these varied forms of associational life as a way into thinking about civil society. Whilst acknowledging that organisations are not the only aspect of civil society, and concerns that articulate the dangers of conflating civil society organisations with civil society more broadly (Obadare 2012), civil society groups do provide a tangible and visible manifestation of civil society. Defined civil society groups also provide a way of accessing individual civil society actors, whilst it is important to acknowledge that not all activists are part of a particular group. In the context of the collaborative nature of this project, which is described in more detail later, the focus on CSOs also provides a mutually relevant framework through which to research civil society.

Although still privileging the organisational aspect of civil society, this research is based on an understanding of civil society groups that emphasises a move away from an institutional account of their effectiveness in relation to normative ideals, their strength or quantity or their role in policy dialogue, to a narrative about the people who are part of these organisations and their everyday experiences (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2012b; 2016; Jenkins 2015; McKinnon 2007; 2008). Here organisations are seen as the outcomes of what people do and the products of their activities, premising agency, whilst also recognising the wider circumstances in which these organisations operate. The focus therefore was the lives and experiences of the people who create, shape and embody civil society through their organisational activities. This privileged the idea of searching for civil society in its ‘actual formation, rather than as a promised agenda for change’ (Mamdani 1996:19).

In other words, this study aimed to provide an actor focused account of what it is like to be part of civil society groups, with particular emphasis on everyday experiences. Through this approach it was hoped that this research could assist in revealing complex, vibrant, diverse and contextual pictures of associational life(s) that are not overshadowed by a Western/non-Western binary, normative expectations or dominant international development discourses.

One of the core features of this research is the collaborative nature of the work. This research was conducted in collaboration with the Commonwealth Foundation (CF), an intergovernmental organisation based in London, who position themselves as ‘uniquely situated at the interface between government and civil society’ and aim to ‘develop the capacity of civil society….to contribute to more effective, responsive and accountable governance’(CF 2017). The initial funding proposal submitted to the ESRC was developed collaboratively with the Foundation, and the way they positioned themselves contributed to the rationale for the research, encouraging questions associated with ideas of building the capacity of civil society from the ‘outside’, and how civil society operates.

These differing perspectives, alongside my own theoretical preferences, played out in the development of the research aims and questions. To aid this process I met with key members of the Foundation both face to face and over Skype and was invited to their annual strategic review in January 2015. Through this process, the research aims and questions that focused solely on the experiences of civil society actors were developed and agreed, with the removal of research questions that asked about how the Foundation operationalised their involvement with civil society. The Foundation were also crucial in the choice of field sites, articulating a desire for the research to take place in a location in which they felt they had active working relations with civil society groups. After significant discussion about different options for field sites, the Caribbean region was deemed to be an appropriate research site and one that the Foundation felt happy to facilitate my entry into. The Foundation work across three cross-cutting areas, sustainable development and environmental sustainability, cultural respect and understanding and gender equality. It was agreed that a focus on civil society groups working in one of these areas would be relevant for the collaborative partnership and sustainable development was chosen, partly due to its relevance in the region and because it dovetailed with the activities the Foundation were supporting in the region at the time. Whilst the concept of sustainable development is vague and has altered since its original inception, this research took sustainable development to mean some form of development that has some concern for environmental resources, often intertwined with social and economic circumstances (World Commission on Environment & Development 1987). The next chapter of this thesis will go into greater detail about the ways in which civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada envisage and enact sustainable development.

The Foundation funded the costs of flights to and from the field and accommodation whilst I was there. They also acted as an initial gatekeeper, introducing me to their implementing partner in Barbados. They were named as collaborative partners in all of the information given to participants about the research. A few participants had heard of them as an international institution, and on one occasion a participant voiced her interest in the research due to the Foundation’s involvement. The majority of the participants however, had not heard of or been involved with the Foundation. Once I left the field and when I returned to analyse and write up the data, I was at a much greater distance from the Foundation, and they played a limited role in influencing the data analysis or the key themes identified. This distance has however played a part in the dissemination and impact of this work, something that will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

## 4.2 Research aims

The aim of this research was:

To develop an ethnographically inspired understanding of civil society groups in the sustainable development sector in the Caribbean through the working lives of civil society actors and their everyday practices.

This was addressed through the following research questions:

1. What are the everyday experiences of civil society work for civil society actors in the Caribbean?
2. What are civil society actors’ experiences of working with:
3. the state?
4. the market?
5. international donor agencies?
6. other actors?
7. What implications does this have for the way we conceptualise civil society?

## 4.3 Research design: Making choices: where, which and who?

Sampling choices for the research took place on three levels, firstly the selection of field sites, secondly the selection of organisations and thirdly the choice of research participant(s) within each organisation. This section will initially consider why two field sites were selected and then introduce these two sites, considering their historical, political, and developmental features. It will then move on to consider the other two aspects of the sampling process, selecting organisations and participants.

## 4.4 Why two field sites?

The choice to utilise two field sites was encouraged by literature on the value of multiple geographically distinct case studies. Although rooted in positivist traditions, comparative research in the social sciences has been expressed in multiple forms, from comparison of nation states in political science (Delano & Gamben 2014; Ragazzi 2014; Watts & Bassett 1986) to the more recent turn to comparative urbanism in human geography (Koch 2015; Lees 2012; Robinson 2016; Tan 2007) to anthropological comparisons of cultural practices in the UK and overseas (Detienne 2008; Handler 2009; Strathern 1992). The basic premise of comparative research is the exploration of more than one activity, place or object, aiming to develop theories that can be articulated across these different events (Ward, K. 2010), or as Robinson (2016:3) comments ‘thinking…through elsewhere’. A more interpretive stance towards comparison would view it as a way of opening up and reinterpreting the category being compared (Hart 2006; Lazar 2012; Newman 1999; Robinson 2016), in this case civil society. Scholarship in this more interpretive vein argues for the value of comparison and the use of multiple geographically separate sites, with Pickerill (2015) contending that her comparison of eco-living in six countries allowed her to go beyond the national context as a feature of her research. Lazar (2012) also argues that comparative research in Bolivia and Argentina aided her in developing greater insights into citizenship practices in particular political contexts.

The comparative approach used in this study facilitated the exploration of civil society in two particular contexts, with the inquiry process attempting to explore both similarities and differences between these settings (Lazar 2012). The use of two field sites in this study aimed to engage in a slightly ‘gentler’ mode of comparison, as Strathern (2002:xvi) comments it is about ‘putting data alongside each other and getting the two sets of data to talk to each other’. Taking this perspective gathering data from civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada is seen as a way of understanding what kinds of experiences and practices make up civil society in the Caribbean. Using two islands helps this process by exposing the similarities and differences within these different, although also similar, contexts (Koch 2015; Lazar 2012). This study does not claim to be a counter-topography (Katz 2004) or a disjunctive comparison (Koch 2015; Lazar 2012), rather it has engaged with two places, with many similarities, but also differences, to explore the stories of civil society in the Caribbean. The study views the use of two field sites as an opportunity to draw out similarities and differences in these stories in an effort to develop ideas about civil society that may articulate across different places, whilst still embedding these ideas in the contextual nature of the Eastern Caribbean. This research therefore explored the everyday experiences of civil society actors in two geographically separate yet interconnected places which also share some similarities, without assuming that these sites are equivalent or that these similarities are the mainstay of civil society. The comparative approach undertaken here has attempted to give insights into the key processes that are part of civil society work, whilst also recognising contextual differences between Barbados and Grenada.

## 4.5 Where? A contextual understanding of Barbados and Grenada

The Caribbean islands ofBarbados and Grenada were selected as the field sites for researching civil society in this study. As previously stated, the Commonwealth Foundation, the collaborative partner in the research, was crucial to the selection of these field sites. They have a particular interest in small island states, as many such states are located within their jurisdiction. Having selected the Caribbean as the region of focus, Barbados was selected as the first fieldwork site, as this is where the Foundation’s implementing partner in the region, the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC), are based. The CPDC is a coalition of Caribbean non-governmental organisations who specifically focus on interrogating policy initiatives and building the capacity of other civil society groups to do likewise. The purpose of connecting with the CPDC was to enable a smooth introduction to the region and to facilitate contact with different civil society groups. I met with staff from the CPDC informally on a couple of occasions, and they were able to give me an idea of the civil society landscape in the region and facilitate initial contacts with other civil society groups. I was also able to make links with the regional network the CPDC were forming, assisted by the Commonwealth Foundation. Fieldwork in Barbados was undertaken over a four-month period starting in September 2016. Grenada was selected as the second site for fieldwork. I felt that the use of two field sites would, as described previously, be an appropriate way of exploring civil society more widely than may have been possible through engagement with civil society groups solely based in Barbados. The selection of Grenada as a second field site was made through positive engagement with civil society contacts there, facilitated by the CPDC, alongside an awareness that Grenada is also a member of the Commonwealth and located in the Eastern Caribbean region. Research took place in Grenada from January to April 2016.

Both Barbados and Grenada are classified as Small Island Developing states (SIDs). This categorisation highlights their difficulties in producing economies of scale, the vulnerability of their environments and dependence on external resources (United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation 2017). SIDs framing produces a discursive shift by accentuating the very particular needs of this quite heterogeneous group of states (Wong 2011). Islands, such as Barbados and Grenada, should not be seen as distant or unimportant objects of novelty, rather as their history of slavery, colonialism and contemporary development shows they should be understood as ‘sites through which power struggles unfold’ with ‘islands capturing shifts in the contestation of power’ (Mountz 2015:637). As Geoffrey Baldacchino (2007:166) comments, citing Kofi Annan, ‘islands are the frontline zones where many of the problems associated with the environment and development are unfolding’.

The following maps show the wider Caribbean region and the Eastern Caribbean sub-region.



***Map 1*:** **The wider Caribbean region (Source: National Library of Medicine, 2017)**

Sourced from: https://openi.nlm.nih.gov/imgs/512/303/2672166/PMC2672166\_pone.0005333.g001.png

***Map 2*: The Eastern Caribbean (Source: A Legendary Adventure, 2012)**

Sourced from: https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=map+of+eastern+caribbean&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjT1pH6ttvSAhVmBMAKHdeAD1IQsAQIGQ&biw=1520&bih=903&dpr=1#imgrc=4DkDOf3KgAOfyM:&spf=192

## 4.6 Barbados and Grenada: Historical development to the present day

### 4.6.1 Migration and slavery

Barbados and Grenada are both located in the geographically Eastern Caribbean in the Lesser Antilles group of islands. Grenada is part of the Windward Isles and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), whilst Barbados is often understood as an outlier to these groups, both politically and culturally, as well as geographically. Grenada, a tri-island archipelago of 133 sq. miles and 110,694 people (July 2015 est. CIA Factbook 2016b) is comprised of mainland Grenada, and sister isles Carriacou and Petit Martinique. Barbados is a single island of 166 sq. miles and 291, 495 people (July 2016 est. CIA Factbook 2016a). Both are members of the Commonwealth. Barbados’ population is predominantly of African descent, but 4% of the population is ‘white or Euro Bajan’, comprised of the descendants of the planter class and a smaller group of people descended from Irish and Scottish indentured labourers, derogatively known as ‘redlegs’, who face significant discrimination in Barbadian society (Lambert 2001). Grenada’s population is also predominantly of African heritage, but 1.6% of the population is of East Indian descent, their heritage dating back to indentured Indian labourers brought to the Caribbean following the abolition of slavery (Commonwealth Secretariat 2015a; 2015b). On both islands race, intertwined with class, plays a significant role in social stratification (Beckles 2006; Brizan 1984; Steele 2003).

The movement and migration of different peoples has dominated both Barbados and Grenada’s histories and continues to play an important role in the development of both islands, as in much of the Caribbean region (Beckles 2006; Brizan 1984;; Knight & Palmer 1989). Barbados has been subjected to numerous battles over its natural resources, with the South American Caribs capturing the island from the more indigenous Arawaks before European colonisation. Spanish colonisers invaded in the 16th century, but never settled and the island was claimed by the British in 1625 and subsequently settled by British colonists. They brought with them Irish and Scottish indentured labourers, comprised of vagrants, prisoners of war and voluntary servants to work in the indigo, tobacco, ginger and cotton fields (Beckles 1982; Galenson 1982; Handler 2016; Heuman 2006). The introduction of sugar as a crop and the development of the sugar industry in Barbados in the middle of the 17th century changed the landscape entirely, with the island’s relatively flat terrain allowing the development of numerous sugar plantations. The great demands of agricultural production were met through the Atlantic slave trade, with African slaves coming predominantly from the Bight of Biafra in West Africa, gradually changing the ethnic composition of Barbadian society (Beckles 1984; Watson 2009). Drawn into the Atlantic economy by increasingly wealthy London merchants, and with a self-reproducing slave population, Barbados became known as the ‘sugar machine of the Indies’ (Beckles 1982:6; Galenson 1982; Inniss 2006). The conditions of the slave trade and increasing slave consciousness underpinned many violent conflicts between the slaves and the colonising powers, the most famous being Bussa’s rebellion in 1816 (Beckles 2006). This was the largest scale rebellion in Barbados’ history and although Bussa’s attempt ultimately failed, alongside rebellions in Demerara and Jamaica, it had a significant effect on public perceptions of slavery in the United Kingdom, contributing to the abolition movement.

Numerous battles between French colonisers and the more indigenous Amerinidian population followed Grenada’s ‘discovery’ by Christopher Columbus in 1498 (Brizan 1984). The French took control of Grenada in the 17th century, developing a substantial network of sugar plantations on the island and bringing with them significant numbers of enslaved Africans. The British seized Grenada in 1762 and between 1795 and 1796 they had to fend off a rebellion led by Julien Fedon, which incorporated both French resistance to British rule, revolt against slavery and ideological elements of the French revolution (Brizan 1984; Sookram 2007; Steele 2003). At its peak Fedon’s forces controlled all of Grenada except the capital St. George’s (Brizan 1984; Sookram 2007; Steele 2003). The end of the rebellion saw the dismantling of French power and influence in Grenada (Steele 1974; 2003). With restricted civil liberties many French colonists migrated to Trinidad taking their slaves and capital with them (Steele 1974). After emancipation many slaves left plantations to cultivate the interior and large-scale plantations were divided and sold. Unsuccessful attempts to revive the ailing sugar economy with indentured labour failed and by 1870 many sugar estates were abandoned, with planters turning their attention to cocoa cultivation (Brizan 1984; Steele 1974). Around 1850 nutmeg was introduced to Grenada, and with its high value and demand, became the crop of choice for cultivation (Grenada National Trust 1967; Steele 1974; World Bank 2013).

### 4.6.2 Rebellions, independence and a revolution

The UK’s Abolition of Slavery Act in 1833 did not initially produce an improved quality of life for former slaves in Barbados and Grenada (Steele 2003). The apprenticeship many slaves served after emancipation was often harsher than slavery and the living conditions on the islands deteriorated as agricultural production declined and economies faltered (Heuman 2006). The Haitian Revolution in 1804 and the Cuban revolution of 1902 challenged hegemonic beliefs about the possibility of independent rule and black sovereignty in the Caribbean (Hart 1998; Heuman 2006). This was accompanied by increasing pan-Africanism and challenges to the exclusive nature of governance in many Caribbean colonies (Cox 1988; Heuman 2006). The aftermath of World War I provided fertile ground for the anti-imperial and anti-colonial struggles, signalling the end of Empire as it had previously been imagined (Knight & Palmer 1989). In Barbados the war magnified the disparity between the white elite and the black proletariat, with black war veterans unrecognised for their war efforts, and their anger was channelled into political protest (Browne 2012). The combination of economic depression, the rise of black consciousness, increased unionisation, and growing pan-African sentiments led to social and political upheaval in 1930s Barbados, resulting in the labour rebellion in 1937. Throughout the first half of the 20th century the increasing prominence of Caribbean radical thinkers and intellectuals and the labour rights movement drove the working class struggle against oppression (Hart 1998; Knight & Palmer 1989; Puri 2010; Worrell 2014). These transnational uprisings exemplified what Gilroy (1993) has termed the black Atlantic, a hybrid anti-capitalist political space induced by the experience and inheritance of the African slave trade.

The 20th century also saw the development of national political consciousness across the Caribbean, and Barbados and Grenada were no exceptions, with universal suffrage gained in both countries through radical constitutional reform in 1951 (Sookram 2007; Steele 2003). On both islands the current political systems are remnants of British colonial rule and both exhibit aspects of British political structures, with centralised and hierarchical administrative systems, elections and a multi-party model, although these are sometimes exemplified in diverse ways (Bishop 2011; Dominguez 1993; Payne 1993; Payne & Sutton 2001). In Barbados the 1940s witnessed the formation of the Barbados Progressive League, later to become the Barbados Labour Party, as a political outlet for the 1937 labour rebellions. In 1955 a split within the party produced the main opposition party, the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) (Commonwealth Secretariat 2015a; Payne & Sutton 2001). Independence from Britain was achieved in 1966, with the initial years following independence marked by shifts of power between the two main parties. The DLP and prime minister Freudal Stuart won the most recent elections in 2013 (Commonwealth Secretariat 2015a).

Independence was achieved in Grenada in 1974, but one of the island’s (and possibly the region’s) most significant contemporary political events was to occur only five years later when the opposition New Jewel Movement, led by Maurice Bishop and Bernard Coard, deposed the increasingly autocratic Prime Minister Eric Gairy in a bloodless coup (Brizan 1984; Grugel 1995; Heuman 2006; Puri 2010; Steele 2003). This led to the formation of the socialist-inspired People Revolutionary Government (PRG), and alongside Cuba and Nicaragua formed part of the interconnected triad of socialist revolutions in the region. The PRG developed state-run agriculture and industry, enhanced social welfare and encouraged a more participatory style of development (Brizan 1984; Payne, Sutton & Thorndike 1984). They also deepened ties with other socialist states and received Cuban assistance to develop the international airport (Payne, Sutton & Thorndike 1984; Puri 2014; Steele 2003). Ideological fractures within the PRG became evident and in October 1983 Bernard Coard launched a military coup resulting in the assassination of Bishop and seven of his supporters, with a number of civilians also killed in the violence. Coard established the Revolutionary Military Council, but this was to last only six days before the United States along with other OECS countries invaded Grenada and deposed Coard (Steele 2003; Puri 2014). Elections were held again in December 1984 and Grenada has since returned to a parliamentary system of democracy dominated in the more recent past by the New National Party (NNP) and Keith Mitchell, the incumbent Prime Minister (Commonwealth Secretariat 2015b).

### 4.6.3 Economic, social and environmental development

The development of Barbados and Grenada can be framed by their symbiotic economic and environmental vulnerability. Sugar cane was introduced as a crop to Barbados in the 1640s (Menard 2006). The industry grew until Barbadian sugar became one of the world’s most profitable enterprises. However, from 1900 onwards, with mechanisation and increased production, desire for economies of scale, price reduction, the rise of sugar beet and an increasingly educated population who associated cane cropping with slavery, the sugar industry in Barbados became increasingly vulnerable (De Boer & Bellamy 1998; O’Connell 2012; Richardson-Ngwenya 2010). Increased competition from large-scale sugar producers in Brazil and Thailand and the loss of preferential trading arrangements, particularly the EU sugar reform in 2006 and subsequent loss of EU subsidies to the Caribbean, decimated the industry even further (Richardson-Ngwenya 2010). The decline in the industry is evident in the dramatic changes in sector employment (down from 30,000 workers in the 1950s to 3,000 in 1999) and a devastating drop in the sugar industry’s gross domestic product (GDP) contribution from 21% in 1960 to 1.5% in 2005 (Museum of London undated; Richardson-Ngwenya 2010).

A similar situation is found in Grenada, where nutmeg has traditionally been a major source of foreign exchange and employment. Grenada is the second largest producer of nutmeg in the world after Indonesia and the downturn in the banana and cocoa market in the 1980s and 1990s placed greater importance on the nutmeg trade (Singh, Sankat & Mujjar 2003). Heavy reliance on nutmeg production made the Grenadian agricultural sector particularly vulnerable, a situation exacerbated by Hurricane Ivan in 2004 and compounded by Hurricane Emily in 2005. The hurricanes damaged 85% of Grenada’s nutmeg trees, with 60% completely destroyed (World Bank 2005). Prior to Hurricanes Ivan and Emily there were 6579 small-scale nutmeg farmers, falling to 2500 afterwards (European Union 2010). Recovery in the agricultural sector following these adverse weather events was slow partly due to the length of time these staple crops take to mature, compounded by a lack of capacity within the ministry of agriculture and the advancing age of many nutmeg farmers (World Bank 2005). Despite some evidence of recovery in the banana, cocoa and nutmeg industries since 2005, the overall decline in agricultural production within the Grenadian economy has reduced its contribution to GDP from 24% in 1980 to 3.5% in 2013 (Whitehead & Straughn 2013).

As indicated above the economy and development of these small island states is susceptible to a number of hazards and efforts to diversify these economies have been ongoing since the 1970s. The Caribbean region is characterised by highly dependent economies, low economic growth, fluctuating economic volatility and high debt to GDP ratios associated with its exposure to external economic forces, the fragile tourism industry and its environmental vulnerability and isolation (Commonwealth Secretariat 2015a; 2015b; Lewis 1993; Wiltshire 2015; World Bank 2016). For both countries it has been a significant challenge to adjust their vulnerable agriculturally dominated economies to changing external economic circumstances. Despite its high population density and import-dependence (Bishop & Payne 2012), Barbados is often viewed as a success story in the region. It is one of the wealthiest countries in the Caribbean, defined as a high-income country by the World Bank, and has had success in diversifying its economy into light manufacturing, offshore financing and service industries, especially tourism (CIA Factbook 2016a; Richardson-Ngwenya & Momsen 2011). The so-called ‘Barbados Model’, combining economic diversification, employment opportunities and social welfare provision, has been used as an example for other small island nations (CEPAL 2001). An article by Ralph Gonsalves, the Prime Minister of St. Vincent articulates an optimistic view of this model, but it is unclear whether this advice has been adopted by other small island nations in the Caribbean (Gonsalves 2014). Despite the positive outlook of the Barbados model the low skilled nature of much employment and high levels of youth unemployment remain a concern for Barbados, alongside ongoing urban poverty and the marginalisation of vulnerable groups such as migrants, people with disabilities and sex workers (Wiltshire 2015).

Grenada, ranked as a middle-income country by the World Bank, highlights the multi-sectoral fragility of many small island Caribbean nations. The challenges of economic diversification, significant unemployment, estimated at 33.5% and poverty levels of around 30% of the population, with significant differences between rural and urban populations, demonstrating the ongoing development challenges associated with the region (Caribbean Development Bank 2008; 2016a; CIA Factbook 2016b; Downes 2010). St. George’s University, an American offshore university, generates substantial foreign exchange and efforts to develop the tourist trade (particularly away from the cruise ship industry) have been aided by development of the international airport initiated by the Peoples’ Revolutionary Government (Inter-American Development Bank 2013; Puri 2014). The economies of Grenada and Barbados fluctuated between recession and growth throughout the 2000s until 2009 when the impacts of the global recession were keenly felt, particularly in the tourism and offshore financial sectors, with Grenada entering a period of IMF-supported structural adjustment in 2014. Out-migration from Grenada remains a significant feature of the islands’ contemporary development, with Grenada’s net migration estimated at -3.13 (CIA Factbook 2016b). The Diaspora communities from both Grenada and Barbados play a significant role in the islands’ development through remittances, politics, tourism and philanthropic practices (Hosein, Franklin & Jospeh 2006; Mullings 2012; Nurse 2015). More recently both governments have launched more formal initiatives aimed at Diaspora skills transfer and investment (Government of Grenada 2011; Nurse 2015).

Despite this economic fragility both islands have achieved high levels of human development as measured by the human development index, with Barbados marginally above Grenada (UNDP 2016a; 2016b). Although these achievements should be celebrated, concerns remain over the unevenness of this development, precarious and high unemployment, cultural erosion and growing social inequalities (Bishop 2010). The rural urban divide is of particular concern, especially in Grenada where rural households can be easily excluded from the mainstream economy and find it difficult to move out of poverty due to illiteracy, lack of entrepreneurial skills and limited access to credit and markets (Antoine, Taylor & Church 2014). This contrasts with Barbados where urban poverty is a more pressing concern (UNDP 2011). The Barbados Country Assessment of Living Conditions articulates the connections between large female-headed households, informal employment, insecure land tenure and poverty (UNDP 2011; Wiltshire 2015).

Development in Barbados and Grenada is further constrained by environmental vulnerability, echoing concerns about the wide-ranging environmental issues within the broader Caribbean region. The Caribbean Environment Programme (2017) includes climate change, sustainable energy, declining biodiversity, pollution, fisheries management and sanitation, amongst others as key areas of concern for the region. Both Barbados and Grenada are susceptible to a range of hazards, with Grenada particularly vulnerable to tropical storms and hurricanes, and their consequent effects (Wiltshire 2015). This vulnerability is likely to be exacerbated by the ongoing impact of climate change on the region, particularly through increased frequency of extreme weather events, uncertain rainfall and rising sea levels (Baptiste & Kinlocke 2016; Baptiste & Rhiney 2016; Bishop 2010; Bishop & Payne 2012; Popke, Curtis & Gamble 2016). In September 2004 Hurricane Ivan struck Grenada and was estimated to have caused $800 million of damage, twice Grenada’s annual GDP. The severity of the hurricane caused significant damage to housing, public and health infrastructure, tourist infrastructure and environmental and agricultural damage (World Bank 2005). Development in the Caribbean has therefore long been characterised as a negotiation between participation in global economic markets and the preservation of delicate resources (Bishop 2013; Payne & Sutton 2001; Richardson-Ngwenya 2010; 2013). Bishop (2010:101) for example highlights that the liberalising political economy has led to the development of a tourism industry that is ‘often externally controlled, highly dependent on external capital, and not particularly congruent with island society and ecology’. On both islands state responses to these conundrums have resulted in strategic development plans that highlight the importance of enabling competitiveness and creating an environment for private sector growth, incorporating green growth and preserving the natural ecology whilst promoting socially just and caring societies (Antoine, Taylor & Church 2014; Government of Barbados 2013a).

## 4.7 Which groups?

Having agreed on Barbados and Grenada as field sites for the research decisions also had to be made about which aspects of the nebulous concept of civil society to focus on. I have already stated that the research focuses on civil society actors who are part of civil society groups, but this broad category requires defining in the context of the study.

This research aimed to gather data from individuals from a wide variety of civil society organisations, incorporating groups of different forms and guises and different types of engagement with the idea of sustainable development. This was aided by an initial mapping of civil society. Here the idea of mapping promoted engagement with a variety of civil society groups working across different scales, aiming to get a sense of the civil society activity associated with developmental concerns in Barbados and Grenada. The idea of mapping used here was not meant to produce a concrete, quantitative or cartographic account of civil society organisations, rather it was used as a way of thinking that encouraged me to seek out different types of organisations, each with varying activities and purpose. This idea of mapping also accentuated the role of the researcher in these relations, and the part I played in following certain connections over others (Sheehan 2011). This gave me greater freedom to explore the role of the researcher, and how I became, in some instances, a resource for civil society groups. Within this broad idea of mapping civil society, and trying to get a sense of the variety of civil society stories that were present in a particular place, the research design also incorporated opportunities for developing richer and more fine-grained detail about civil society life.

Using a purposive sampling process relevant groups were found through searching internet databases, Facebook, newspapers, recommendations from the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) and snowball sampling of interviewees. This combination of sampling methods aimed to gain a broad sense of the different civil society groups based in Barbados and Grenada, rather than relying solely on the personal connections of snowball sampling (Browne 2005) or the perhaps limited links accessible through the CPDC. Groups were contacted via email in the first instance, and in the majority of cases this was successful. Where there was no response the initial email was followed up with a telephone call. This resulted in semi-structured single encounter interviews with representatives from a number of different civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada and occasional invitations to observe relevant activities.

The second feature of the methodology is of ‘zooming-in’ on particular individuals and organisations to focus on the details of the lived experience of civil society through repeat interviews and participant observation. I am using the term case study to differentiate a more prolonged and in-depth engagement with these groups, which differed from the more fleeting encounters with other groups. The formation of these case studies differed in Barbados and Grenada, reflecting the current civil society landscape on each island. In Barbados four individuals, Lincoln, Jacob, Colin and Kelvin, and their associated groups, allowed me to use them as more in-depth case studies for the research. I had a more prolonged engagement with these individuals usually in the form of repeat interviews, participant observation and informal conversations. These case study examples were drawn from organisations operating at national, local and grassroots scales, although the boundaries of these scales are in many cases arbitrary and problematic. In Grenada three organisations became case study groups, with my engagement with Alyson’s group very similar to my interactions in Barbados, incorporating four interviews and periods of participant observation. My more in-depth encounters with the other two groups in Grenada were slightly different. I became involved with the national civil society forum in Grenada. I had previously interviewed the chair of this forum and met her for informal conversations on multiple occasions. She invited me to attend workshops the forum was conducting, and asked for my help with some of their activities, drawing me into a more observant participant role. Becoming a more active part of this group made it harder to conduct subsequent formal interviews, because it felt as though we had gone beyond this step in our relationship. I also got to know one of my other interviewees Pip very well, and interviewed him formally for nearly three hours, and then had multiple informal conversations with him. He lived near to where I was staying in Grenada and we would often travel to workshops and events together.

Informal conversations were also conducted with institutions connected to civil society groups, for example academic or corporate sector institutions. Sometimes I would be connected to these civil society allies by interviewees or introduced during periods of participant observation with the civil society group. The table below outlines in detail the types of organisations that took part in the research and their level of engagement with it. It also outlines the different encounters involved in this research.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Location** | **Organisation typology and number of organisations** | **Type of research encounter** |
| **Barbados****Wider Caribbean but based in Barbados** | **Case study organisations:***Jacob’s Nature Group*: group working with young people and the environment in one area (1)*Lincoln’s Urban Renewal Group:* group working with deprived communities in urban areas, and contributing to national policy (1)*Colin’s Food Security Group*: group working on community-based food security initiatives (1)*Kelvin’s Natural Products Group*: group working to promote natural products locally and nationally (1)**Other research encounters:** International NGOs (2)Other Barbadian civil society groups, working across multiple scales, with varying organisational formations (11)Civil society allies, including philanthropic organisations and academic institutions (3) *Caribbean civil society network*: the network consists of civil society representatives from around the Caribbean region, working together to facilitate civil society engagement at a regional scale (1) | 3 repeat interviews3 repeat interviewsParticipant observation4 repeat interviewsObservant participation3 repeat interviewsParticipant observation2 semi-structured interviews12 semi-structured interviews (one participant was interviewed twice)3 informal conversations Semi-structured interviews with 2 network membersParticipant observation at regional civil society workshopTotal: 32 interview encounters across 21 groups |
| **Grenada**  | **Case study organisations:** *National civil society forum*: group made up of civil society members discussing national level concerns (1)*Alyson’s sustainable living group*: group focused on the development of sustainable community based living initiatives (1)*Pip’s environmental group:* group concerned with local and global environmental campaigns(1)**Other research encounters:** International NGOs (2)Other Grenadian civil society groups, working across multiple scales, with varying organisational formations (17)Civil society allies including government officials and the corporate sector (2) | 1 semi-structured interviewObservant participationInformal conversations4 repeat interviewsParticipant observation1 semi-structured interviewParticipant observationInformal conversations2 semi-structured interviews17 semi-structured interviews2 informal conversations Total: 27 interview encounters across 24 groups |
|  |  | Total interview encounters across all participant groups (including conversations with allies) (45): 59 |

 Table 1: Research encounters (with pseudonyms in italic where appropriate)

## 4.8 Who?

The people who took part in the research were very often the founders or directors of the civil society groups contacted. This situation evolved partly through deliberate sampling, in that this research was keen to understand the stories of those people who shape civil society, and people who are key members of civil society groups are going to be the people who are often making decisions about civil society activity. This does not deny the importance of other people who are involved with civil society groups on a more informal or irregular basis, and recognises that their perspectives of civil society may differ substantially from civil society leaders, but this research project was keen to focus on people who are heavily invested within civil society action. The involvement of civil society leaders was also practical, in the sense that one or two individuals, who are supported on an ad hoc basis by other more transient members, dominate many groups in the Caribbean. This group structure inevitably led to civil society founders taking part in the research, as they are the primary human resource for their organisation. In some of the interviews the founders of the organisation would bring along another representative of the group, often another key member of the group.

## 4.9 Theoretical foundations for the research: Ethnographically inspired approaches

Academic writing on civil society has often engaged in an institutional account of civil society, considering for example the prerequisite conditions for the formation of ‘a civil society’ (Gellner 1995), the separation of civil society, political society and the state (Chatterjee 2004) and the role of civil society in democratic processes (Lewis 2002). Critical engagement with this diverse body of literature on civil society demonstrates that there is a need to endorse an understanding of civil society that moves away from institutional descriptions to a story of people and their everyday lives (Baille Smith & Jenkins 2012b; 2016; Hilhorst 2003; Jenkins 2015). These theoretical concerns are intimately connected with how this research was approached and the methodological decision-making that took place. If, as argued previously, there is a desire to understand how civil society ‘actually works on a day-to-day basis’ then a research approach that allows this to happen had to be utilised.

An ethnographic approach to research privileges engagement with peoples’ everyday worlds (Horschelmann & Stenning 2008) and attempts to understand parts of the world as they are experienced and understood by those who live in them (Megoran 2006). Ethnographic approaches have generally been less well utilised when exploring the political realm (Megoran 2006), but there is now a substantial body of work that does so, highlighting the importance of understanding the day-to-day intricacies and nitty-gritty of politics (Auyero 2006). This has included ethnographic approaches to understanding the state (Ferguson & Gupta 2002; Jones, Pykett & Whitehead 2013; Painter 2010), citizenship (Lazar & Nuijten 2013; Staeheli et al 2012) and geopolitical events (Horschelmann & Stenning 2008; Megoran 2006) as well as civil society (Hilhorst 2003; Hoehn 2010). Using ethnographic approaches shows the variety of contexts through which civil society is created, the complexities of civil society, such as its changing forms and sometimes-contradictory values (Fischer 2009), the division between activist priorities and bureaucratic realities (Hoehn 2010) and the political yet also apolitical nature of civil society work (Hilhorst 2003).

The use of ethnographically inspired approaches in this research underpins the focus on the everyday lives of civil society actors, attempting to move away from evaluating the institutional effectiveness of civil society organisations. This was not an attempt to produce an ethnography of civil society or of a particular civil society organisation, rather to use ethnographically inspired approaches to privilege thinking about the day-to-day, ordinary lived experiences of civil society actors (Bold 2012). This ethnographically inspired approach encouraged me to use interviews and participant observation as ways of gaining insights into the stories, experiences and perspectives of civil society actors and as a way of making sense of and analysing their social worlds (Bold 2012).

## 4.10 Research tools: Telling stories of the everyday

I will now discuss the methodological tools I used for the research in more detail, although I do not believe that the boundaries between the individual tools are as clear as they may seem when documented and there appears to be a certain degree of fluidity between the tools used (Crang & Cook 2007). Each of the methods is used in conjunction with the others and in combination I believe they can be considered part of an overarching ethnographically inspired approach to this research. The key themes running through the uses of these methods within this research project are based on an interpretive stance, ideas around the construction of knowledge and the multiple subject positions of the researcher, participants and collaborators.

### 4.10.1 Interviews

Interviewing was the primary research method utilised in this study. Despite the limitations and challenges such as being time and labour intensive, constructed through power relations and reliant on interviewees willingness to participate (Holloway & Jefferson 2000), here interviews were seen as useful ways to elicit how people understand events, discourses, times and places (Arksey & Knight 1999; Dunn 2010; Hammett, Twyman & Graham 2015; Holloway & Jefferson 2000), how it is to embody particular practices (Hitchings 2012), as an opportunity to share a version of experiences and knowledge (Longhurst 2010; Wiles, Rosenberg & Kearns 2005) and as a way to understand how individual stories and knowledge can be embedded within collective histories (Richardson-Ngwenya 2013). In this context interviews were seen as a way for civil society actors to tell me stories of their day-to-day experiences of civil society work. There has been some debate about whether interviews and talk allow us to explore day-to-day experiences, but as Hitchings (2012) articulates talking to people is a way into understanding their experiences. Two types of interviews were utilised. All of the civil society actors were involved in semi-structured interviews, often in a single encounter. The majority of the interviews opened with a broad question about their journey and their story of involvement in civil society work to date, taking a work-life history approach, foregrounding the work element, in this case civil society, but recognising that this is not separate from other aspects of life, for example family, faith and other jobs (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2016). This often then led on to the more thematic elements the participants and I wanted to explore, but was premised on the participants explaining their own version of events. In preparation for the interviews I had prepared some thematic guidelines of topics that I believed may be pertinent to the interview, often drawn from the literature, and I often asked participants to tell me stories about their work within civil society based around these themes, whilst bearing in mind that these stories are always going to be partial and are embedded in the social context in which they are told. In order to elicit stories of day-to-day civil society I would ask people to tell me about their work, for example their experiences of funding processes, how they set up their organisation, what they did yesterday or how they had met a certain person. This would sometimes involve seeking out more detail from the participants, asking them to expand on particular stories or clarifying details for me (Arksey & Knight 1999; Cloke et al 2004).

This process attempted to give an element of structural similarity to all of the interviews, whilst also allowing space for topics of importance to the participants within the interview. I also tried to be led by the participants, and pick up on their cues for important topics of conversation. All of the participants gave written or verbal consent to be interviewed and received an information sheet prior to the interview. They were able to withdraw from the study at any time. The interviews lasted from between 45 minutes to over 2 hours. All interviews were conducted in English, with the vast majority of participants of Caribbean origin, with a few from the UK, America and Europe. Although there is a (different) creole English dialect spoken in both Barbados and Grenada participants were able and willing to chat with me in an English that we could both understand, occasionally using creole words and sentence structure without altering my ability to interpret meaning. I became aware of the changing nature of language on occasions when someone well known to the interviewee, for example a friend or colleague, interrupted the interview and I was able to witness how the language used between them became very different and quite impenetrable to me. When the interviewee returned to our conversation they would immediately and quite naturally return to ‘standard’ English, demonstrating how language varies with interactional context (Crang & Cook 2007). Each interview also acted as an opportunity for participant observation (Sin 2003) and was accompanied by field notes on my reflections on the interviews (Nairn, Munro & Smith 2005; Willis 2006). The majority of the participants also gave consent to be audio taped with 3 declining. I also tended not to audio-record informal conversations due to the often impromptu nature of these experiences. In both of these instances, written notes were made during and after the interview. The majority of interviews were transcribed in the field.

The location of the interview encounters was important and was very often selected by the participants. The initial reason for this was to aid convenience for the participants, but the locations in which the interview took place became an important part of their civil society story and on reflection allowed me to understand more about Caribbean civil society and Caribbean life more widely. The location of the interviews varied hugely, with surprisingly few conducted in formal office settings. These locations played a part in constructing and situating our identities as interviewer and participant, and played a part in the production of material during the interview (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2016; Hammett, Twyman & Graham 2015; Hester & Francis 1994; McDowell 1998; Sin 2003). I met some participants in their own home, where their living room would double as their office, demonstrating the informal and hidden nature of much civil society action, occurring in a private rather than public space (Fraser 1990). I became their guest in some of these situations, offered drinks and snacks and introduced to their family. One participant used the location he chose for our interview to comment on the lack of local government initiatives in his area and the effect this has on civil society activity: ‘We don't have a community centre in [town name]. To have this interview you come to my home…A physical meeting place we don't have that’ (Keith, Founder Grenadian CSO, 23rd February 2016). On other occasions, I met interviewees at a location connected to their work, for example an organic food stall, on a boat and in a bird hide. These encounters often included engagement with their work, where conversation was often accompanied by an activity, for example walking, eating and sailing, giving me greater insight into civil society in the Caribbean. The majority of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, with a few conducted over Skype when the interviewee was overseas. The interviews conducted over Skype (8) were usually more problematic than those conducted face-to-face, involving practical issues such as a poor Internet connection, but I also felt less able to build a rapport and fully engage with the interviewee in such instances compared to those carried out face-to-face.

Secondly repeat interviewing (three or more encounters) was used with the case study organisations, with up to four interviews conducted with some participants, and spaced over the period of the fieldwork. Repeat interviewing was used as a way of exploring in more depth the emergent themes arising from the interviews, developing rapport with participants and gaining a deeper knowledge of their stories and histories. Repeat interviewing allows the interviewer and interviewee greater time to think through the ‘contradictory, inconsistent and taken-for-granted aspects of their everyday lives’ (Crang & Cook 2007:76). All of the (recorded) interviews were transcribed very soon after completing the interview. Generally, this gave me an opportunity to reflect on the data I was gathering and a chance to see some key themes emerging. In this way the research was an iterative process where the data gathered from one encounter had the potential to shape the content of the next (Holloway & Jefferson 2000).

### 4.10.2 Participant observation and observant participation

These interviews were also complemented with participant observation in a variety of settings. This was seen as a way of looking at civil society from a different angle and taking another perspective on day-to-day routines and activities. In this context interviewing and participant observation were used together to build a more comprehensive understanding of civil society rather than as ways of checking the accuracy of information gained from one method through the other (Cloke et al 2004; Crang & Cook 2007; Hammett, Twyman & Graham 2015; Kearns 2010; van Donge 2006). Participant observation took place in a number of civil society spaces. Many of the people I interviewed invited me to their activities, for example workshops, meetings or gatherings. This occurred with organisations operating at regional, national and local scales. In all of these activities I was introduced to other group members as a researcher by my interviewee, and very often given the opportunity to briefly introduce my work to the group. This was complimented by observation work that took place throughout the fieldwork period, through general immersion in civil society through my own engagement in the civil society sphere, the media and observation of the more public aspects of civil society, for example environmental marches or exhibitions. These provided opportunities for informal conversations and observations of the work of Caribbean civil society. Here the participant observer aspect of the research is not seen purely as observational but as interactional, with the researcher taking part (to some extent) in organisational life.

I also negotiated a period of more in-depth observant participation with two civil society groups, one in Barbados and one in Grenada. In Barbados I worked with Colin’s community-based food security group, whose primary activity was organic farming and in Grenada I became involved in the national civil society forum. In both of these cases I moved into a more active role, taking part in their activities and becoming more drawn into the workings of the group, with activities ranging from planting crops to developing a project proposal. These opportunities allowed me to learn more about the everyday working of civil society and complimented the more narrative approach the interviews privileged, allowing me to learn about the organisation through involvement in the day-to-day (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011; Kawulich 2006) enabling me to see things as they happened, to open up areas of inquiry and establish topics for later discussions (Bernard 2006). The observant participation aspect of data collection also required a change in my own subject position. Whilst I remained very much a researcher and was always open about my primary reason for being with the group, I also had to draw on my other skills and knowledge. Working with the national civil society forum in Grenada I helped out with project proposals, contributed to discussions and reviewed policy documents, again incorporating activities that were not just research activities. Data collection was in the form of a field diary, with an immediate, but condensed form collected ‘in the field’ and then expanded on later to include more detailed impressions and a section of interpretation, analysis and self-reflection (Crang & Cook 2007; Flick 2009; Laurier 2010).

### 4.10.3 Summary of data collection methods

The table below details the methods of data collection and analysis used to address each research question.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Research questions** | **Method(s) used to address the research questions** | **Form of data collection and analysis** |
| 1. What are the everyday experiences of civil society work for civil society actors in the Caribbean?2. What are civil society actors’ experiences of working with: 1. the state?
2. the market?
3. international donor agencies
4. other actors

3. What implications does this have for the way we conceptualise civil society? | For all questions: Case studies with 7 civil society groups incorporating 2 semi-structured interviews and 17 repeat interviews. Single encounter semi-structured interviews (35).Participant observation across multiple civil society spaces.Observant participation – 1 group in Barbados; 1 group in Grenada. Informal conversations with civil society allies (5).  | Transcripts and reflections on interviews thematically analysed. Field diary thematically analysed.  |

Table 2: Mapping data collection and methods of analysis onto research questions

The amount of data collected was partially determined by time in the field, but also by a sense of theoretical saturation. Although the narratives I heard were each very personal and unique by the end of my time at each field site, I did have a sense of familiarity about some of the stories I was being told and the recurrent themes different interviewees were describing through their experiences.

## 4.11 Analysis

The data collected through this research process, in the form of transcriptions and field notes was analysed through manual coding, incorporating inductive and a priori codes to identify categories and sub-categories of ideas of importance and the relationship between them (Cope 2010; Jackson 2001). Data analysis and data collection were an iterative and interwoven process, with some emergent themes becoming apparent in the field and shaping subsequent and repeat interviews (Flick 2009; Gibbs 2007). A very preliminary and informal analysis began in the field as the data was being transcribed and reflected on, with more formal and in-depth analysis occurring once I had returned to the UK. Once the transcriptions were complete each one, along with the field notes was re-read, to get a sense of it as ‘a whole’ (Holloway & Jefferson 2000). The analysis took an approach influenced by the principles of grounded theory, allowing the codes to emerge from the data, with an awareness of the interpretive role of the researcher and their theoretical background in identifying significant categories.

To begin with each transcript was re-read and then annotated with codes given to the text. Reading occurred across the material, to explore common themes found across the data (Jackson 2001). Analysis of the field notes was conducted alongside analysis of the transcripts, using a similar process. Coding was a mixture of in vivo and descriptive codes and initial codes based on my own first impressions. At this stage they consisted of keywords or phrases noted in the margins next to the relevant piece of material. The codes used were also a combination of prior and a priori codes, acknowledging my own positionality within the analysing process. Sometimes I used memos to document details and questions related to some of the codes as a way of keeping track of my initial thought processes around these ideas. Codes included actors, relationships, practices, roles, and emotions. Once this initial coding process was complete I would re-read the data and ask myself questions such as ‘what is the participant trying to tell me?’, ‘what do they mean by that?’ and also questions of myself ‘what am I reading into this?’ (Saldana 2009:18).

These codes were then grouped into categories of similar codes. I would then return to the data by re-reading the transcripts and re-listening to the recordings to engage more deeply with these categories and explore the meaning behind them in more detail. This allowed the development of themes. These themes were continually reviewed to develop greater understanding, and often involved the development of further subcategories that had not previously emerged from the data. For me, writing and analysis were hard to separate, with my own writing intertwined with ongoing analysis of the data.

The initial findings of the research were compiled into a summary and sent to all the participants in the research. This had been requested by some participants, but I also felt it may be a useful way to elicit questions and queries about the material and thoughts on the initial findings. Some of the participants responded with questions about the material and queries that I was able to answer over email, but which also provided me with some avenues through which to further interrogate my own data. For example, one participant asked me about the difference between larger and smaller organisations, something which I had not fully considered in my preliminary data analysis. The other type of response I received from participants was positive, in that they felt that I had captured aspects of their work accurately and also asking me if they could use the summaries in their own work. I obviously agreed to this, and I am curious to know how they are using the summary material sent to them. Through this ongoing contact with participants the field sites are no longer a physical location that I visited and came away from following data collection but I remain connected to them for a more sustained period over the research process.

## 4.12 Multi-sited positionalities

Within development studies and social science more broadly positionality and reflexivity are understood as crucial for articulating the role of the researcher in the research process (Dowling 2010; England 1994; Koyabashi 1994), and recognising that the knowledge produced by research is only ever going to be partial (Haraway 1991). Research based on an interpretative philosophical position accentuates the need to conceptualise the researcher as an active participant in the research process, continually shaping and framing the research process and the outputs from it (England 1994; Katz 1992; McDowell 1992; Rose 1997). Taking this stance, I would argue that I as the researcher have been present and active in all aspects of this research. The way that this research was initially framed, the research design and methods chosen and the way that the data collected has been analysed and interpreted have all been shaped and influenced by own particular interests, dispositions, sexuality, ethnicity and personality (Cupples 2002; Moser 2008; Mullings 1999).

Theories of positionality also acknowledge the need to place these individual characteristics within the wider context of the research, for example in this case a pertinent concern may be the role of race, with a white researcher doing research about predominantly, although not exclusively, black civil society in previously colonised countries, where racial hierarchies remain. This racial distinction is mediated by more personal factors, which contest the more automatic response of a continuation of exploitative colonial relations through the research process. These dilemmas will be discussed in more detail in the ethics section of this chapter. In thinking about positionality here I want to move away from my personal biographical details to a more relational way of thinking about positionality by examining the relationships between different actors and myself that formed within the research process. These can be used as a way of exploring how the researcher is embedded throughout the research process and to argue that positionality is always formed relationally, through particular histories, geographies and temporalities (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2016).

Although the site for this research was the Caribbean, the collaborative nature of the PhD complicates the ways that positionality can be thought about. Drawing on the idea of mapping civil society presented earlier accentuates the flows, connections and disconnections between groups and theories of positionality provide an opportunity to explore the role of the researcher in these fragmented webs and how they form relations with different people within these networks. Going beyond more conventional frameworks of positionality that highlight the importance of considering gender, ethnicity or age, relational approaches to positionality draw attention to the relationships the researcher forms throughout the research process, how the researcher and other actors may constitute each other during the research, and how relationships are crafted between different people (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2016; Frosch 2010; Sheehan 2011). As the researcher’s different relationships become more visible through thinking relationally, the researcher does not stand outside the subject of their research, they are inevitably part of the action through the relations they build, accentuating the agency of the researcher as an active participant in the research (Sheehan 2011). It is also these relationships that shape the subjectivities of the researcher and creates their multiple identities (Frosch 2010).

### 4.12.1 In the Caribbean: Researcher as an asset

Numerous times during my fieldwork in the Caribbean I was asked to provide some sort of assistance to the civil society group I had been interviewing. This extended beyond the observant participant role with two of my case study organisations I discussed earlier, where I actively took part in the group’s activities, to requests from people I had interviewed to help them out in a particular way. It often felt like they positioned this as an act of reciprocity. They had taken time to meet with me, so could I help them out with something in return? I was often glad to, again as an act of reciprocity and thanks on my part. These actions contrast with some of the binaries found in the dominant literature on human geography research processes, where there has been a tendency to view research as either fully participatory or not at all. It also unsettles some of the boundaries of insider/outsider (Delyser 2001) and activist-scholar/non-activist-scholar that permeate some of the positionality literature.

Participatory geographies foreground the need to bring academic work into the public sphere, through for example, addressing wider audiences, being involved in policy negotiations or through active involvement with struggles and campaigns (Fuller & Askins 2010; Massey 2008). This latter type of engagement, termed activist geographies by Ward (2007), involving working directly with marginalised groups and those involved in struggle has become a dominant theme in participatory geographies, often termed scholar-activism (Chatterton 2006; Mrs. Kinpaisby 2008). In this school of thought academics should be resisting *with* others rather than *for* them (Routledge 2002), practising research that collaborates with resisting others and contributes to their cause.

My actions here were quite different, I did not fully attempt to resist with the organisations that took part in my research, but was guided by the requests they made to me, employing an ethic of reciprocity in my interactions (Gillan & Pickerill 2012). This did not involve making value judgements about whether I agreed with or valued the work the organisation did, all requests were responded to in similar ways. Most often organisations would ask for my advice on other organisations or funding opportunities, for example one organisation asked me if I could find out about similar organisations operating in the UK who they could get in touch with, and another asked me about funding opportunities that I knew about. The information sheet I gave to participants before the interview contained details of the collaborative nature of the research, and the mention of my involvement with an international donor agency seemed to encourage participants to seek my views on funding they could apply for. In both of those cases I went away and did some research and emailed them back some advice.

These actions are therefore not framed as scholar activism, rather I see them as small interactions that may help that organisation develop, drawing on relational ideas of care, ethics and reciprocity. Rheingold (1993:59) comments that ‘reciprocity is a kind of gift economy in which people do things for another out of a spirit of building something between them rather than with a spreadsheet calculated quid pro-quo’. These small acts of reciprocity can be understood through ethics of care, where care assumes responsibility for (some) of the unmet needs of, in this case a particular civil society group, and recognition that I could potentially act in some way to meet those needs (Frosch 2010; 2011; Smith 2000). The receivers of this type of care, in this case civil society groups, also have agency about how these care acts are received and should not be viewed as passive participants in this process (Tronto 1994). This ethics of care is not uncomplicated. It reveals relations of power and unequal opportunities (Tronto 1994:145). In Grenada in particular, outsiders were seen as more knowledgeable as one of the participants Liam commented in our interview ‘Grenadians have a tradition of bringing in foreigners to do things because they are seen to be better, so foreigners are brought in unnecessarily because Grenadians are quite capable of generating ideas themselves. That’s a weakness in Grenadian society’ (Liam, Founder Grenadian CSO, 3rd March 2016). In this context my positioning as a civil society asset could be understood as contributing to these perceptions of power lying outside of Grenada, reflecting a dependency-type relationship.

In all of these examples civil society actors recognised the critical geographies of my usefulness. My explicit connections to the Commonwealth Foundation had potential for funding, and my mobility and ‘Britishness’ provided a chance to find out about civil society in other places and geographically disparate organisations that might enhance their work. Scholarship on the ethics of care and reciprocity has highlighted the role of proximity and distance in caring practices (Smith 2000). Here it was my physical proximity that facilitated these actions, but also my distantness that could be utilised. These civil society actors also had an idea in their minds of what I should be able to do and be helpful with and of what knowledge and skills I should have, positioning me both as researcher but also as a potential asset and ally, in this sense these relationships constructed a particular researcher subjectivity (Frosch 2010).

### 4.12.2 In London: Researching ‘for’

Working collaboratively with the Commonwealth Foundation in this project also constructed a different subject position from that of PhD student. Collaborative partnerships are increasingly celebrated within academic research, potentially offering opportunities for academia to influence societal change. Literature on collaboration tends to assume that it produces positive results, with less attention paid to the intimate processes of building collaborative relationships, particularly in situations when it may be hard to find common moral and political ground between the university and the collaborative partner (Flinders, Cunningham & Wood 2014; Pain 2004; Reed et al 2014).

Knowledge is often described in a positivist light, where knowledge is a fact that can be transferred from one agent to another (Fazey et al 2014). This has concentrated knowledge exchange on the appropriate communication and dissemination of knowledge, with particular to the mechanisms for evaluating whether knowledge exchange has been effective (Mitton et al2007) and the personnel, networks and governance structures required for decisive knowledge exchange (Cheng, Choi & Eldomiaty2006; Sorensen, Rivkin & Fleming2006).

The dominant knowledge exchange literature to date has tended to neglect the processes of doing research and forming knowledge, of building relations and working with people who have different frames of reference, goals and values (Everly et al 2012; Fazey et al 2014). Viewing knowledge as a social process, dependent on the context in which it is situated and related to perceptions and worldviews, scholars are starting to critique existing knowledge exchange literature (Everly et al 2012; Fazey et al 2014; Reed et al 2014). Knowledge cannot be seen to exist in isolation from the world around it, with Reed et al (2014) encouraging researchers to become knowledge brokers by developing sustained, trusting and empathetic relationships with those who might use their research. In viewing knowledge in this relational sense, as something that is associated with people and social circumstances, knowledge exchange becomes a process that is built into the wider research process from the beginning.

Collaborative research, based primarily as this project was, on a knowledge exchange process should not be viewed as an unproblematic process. Within this PhD the collaborative partners were involved in developing the research aims and questions, assisting with access to ‘the field’, but their involvement with this research process did not extend greatly beyond this, they were expecting a research output from me that could potentially help them in their work. The collaborative aspect of the project was therefore not as I had hoped, featuring open discussions about the research or what the institution wanted to know, rather I was positioned as an outsider being engaged with on what felt like a consultancy basis, to complete a project for the organisation. I often felt deliberately kept on the outside, with the Foundation perhaps fearful that I would interrogate their own work in my research. In this sense knowledge exchange within this project did fall into the style critiqued by scholars as such as Reed et al (2014). There were boundaries put up about the way that the research sat within organisational processes, limiting the types of knowledge that could be constructed. The tension within this process did give me greater insight into the organisational precarity felt by those working in the global development industry and the influence that wider political and governance structures may have on the ability of collaborative organisations to fully engage in research processes.

Researching *for* rather than *with* the Commonwealth Foundation promoted different interactions at the field sites. The consultancy aspect of our relationship allowed me a certain degree of freedom that a more in depth collaborative relationship may not have encouraged. I felt that I was able to reach out to a greater diversity of civil society groups, to be guided by participants on pertinent research themes and dislocate the research from emphasising the role of international agencies within the civil society landscape. My connections with the Foundation did also encourage some participants to take part in the research, with the institutional links giving a sense of kudos, and possibly obligation, to the research. Researching *for* rather than *with* however, had detrimental effects on my ability to make the research useful to the Foundation, something I will discuss more in the limitations sections of this chapter.

## 4.13 Ethics

The University of Sheffield ethics board approved this research project. Here I wish to reflect on two particularly pertinent ethical concerns related to this research, firstly issues of anonymity and confidentiality and secondly the reproduction of dominant systems of knowledge.

Concerns about anonymity and confidentiality were of prime importance in this research. The relatively small populations in Barbados and Grenada, where even descriptions of an organisation or their location are likely to reveal the participant’s identity even if their name is altered, accentuate this. Some participants were more concerned with anonymity and confidentiality than others, but I made every effort to maintain both of these whilst writing up the research and during my time in the field. Some participants would ask me who else I had spoken to, at which point I would explain the need for anonymity, others would ask how other organisations were operating, again I would politely decline to discuss these details. On occasions participants would tell me something that they wished to be kept ‘off the record’ which I have taken to mean that they would prefer it not to be used explicitly in research publications. In efforts to maintain anonymity and confidentiality I have used pseudonyms in this thesis and also altered location names, group descriptions and other identifying details to aid the preservation of organisational anonymity within the research, whilst acknowledging that if you knew the civil society sector in Barbados and Grenada well you may guess at the identity of some of the respondents.

The second ethical issue I wanted to discuss in detail here is that of representational authority (Howitt & Stevens 2010; Katz 1992). As a white British person from a UK university I am aware that I hold a privileged position and that I embody the very system of knowledge production that I am also trying to interrogate. This is also reflected in collaboration with a partner organisation that is founded on colonial relations and the colonial roots of geographical scholarship. The power relations in which this research is situated cannot be removed, representational authority will remain problematic, and geographical research can be both within and against colonial projects (Pickerill 2009; Sidaway 2000). This research process also reflects the dominant forms of knowledge production about the Caribbean, which tend to happen outside of the Caribbean, reinforcing what Sheller (2003;197, 199) calls a ‘European colonial project’ and continued consumption of the region. I cannot undo my ethnicity and academic affiliations but the design of this research does aim to critically evaluate attempts to build civil society ‘from the outside’, and also bring to bear an understanding of civil society in a Caribbean context to the work of these institutions. Listening to their priorities perhaps goes a little way towards challenging dominant discourses on civil society, but I still remain the vehicle that gives voice to these stories, whereas it could be argued that these voices should speak for themselves (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2016; Pickerill 2009). These idealised aims do not however remove me from the research process, and although there is a desire for the research to tell the story of civil society in the Caribbean, this story is inevitably going to be filtered through me. I may never be equipped to do this research in an unproblematic way, but I needed to recognise and understand my position of power as part of the research and reflected on it through field diaries. I have made attempts to produce materials from the research that are accessible to the participants and undertaken small acts of reciprocity where asked, but neither of these negate the power relations in which this research was undertaken.

This research is about whether a conceptualisation of civil society that is based on a more everyday (even human) understanding can synthesise with more institutional accounts of civil society that often dominate international development discourse. In the language of co-production, it is about co-constructing the idea of what civil society is in the Caribbean with civil society individuals and groups there and exploring whether this type of knowledge can contribute to the work of an international development organisation based in the UK, as if to ask whether this version of civil society will travel. This emphasis on co-construction of knowledge has led me to consider the way the research can contribute to the amplification of these less dominant understandings and how these can be expressed, but also recognise the power relations inherent in any type of research (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2016; Pickerill 2009).

## 4.14 Limitations

This section will reflect on a couple of potentially contradictory limitations of this research, each based on reflections from different people involved in the process. Firstly, it will outline limitations connected to the methods employed and then secondly the section will address the limitations of this type of study reflecting on some of the critiques from participants and collaborators. As I briefly suggested in the ethics section of this chapter I have an underlying sense that the methods I employed in the research sit rather contradictorily with the way in which I was trying to understand civil society. I had toyed with the use of solicited diaries of a research method to gain understanding of civil society actors’ everyday lives and practices, but rejected this on the grounds of practical compliance with this research method. The use of diaries within the social science research has grown particularly in relation to the desire to understand everyday, personal and lived experiences (Latham 2010) and it is the ability of diaries to emphasise the things that are of everyday importance to the diary writers, without (at least) the physical presence of the researcher that could have been useful here. Examples of diary writing include exploring women’s experiences of domestic violence (Meth 2003), understanding everyday experiences of street traders in Hanoi (Eidse & Turner 2014) and in exploring love and the home (Morrison 2012). Advocates of this method argue that diaries define the boundaries of shared knowledge, encourage participants to use their own language, allow longitudinal data collection, allow greater openness than in a face-to-face encounter and can provide a space for self-reflection (Alaszewski 2006; Latham 2010; Meth 2003). In this case the use of diaries combined with interviews may have revealed greater detail about civil society lives and practices.

An even greater contradiction can be seen in the theoretical foundations of the research methodology. My desire for the research was to premise the voices of civil society actors, but by using interviews and participant observation to do so, I have potentially continued reproducing the dominant way civil society has been viewed – through the eyes of others. In this vein I have questioned whether I should have paid greater attention to research theory and methods that would have engaged more wholeheartedly in ways in which the stories of activists in the Global South can be told in more creative and participatory ways, and how these ideas can enter the public domain through more informal avenues, for example through participatory videos where activists may have more control over the way their stories are produced and received. A deeper and more sustained concentration on life history methods may also have encouraged a more emancipatory aspect to the research (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2016; Yarrow 2008). These more participatory forms would have also potentially been accompanied by their own challenges, for example preserving anonymity and demonstrating validity to the collaborative partners.

My own questioning of the research limitations is contrary to those expressed by some of the participants in my research. As detailed above each participant was sent a summary of the initial research findings and the responses to the research findings were overwhelming positive. The questions and queries were predominantly concerning the methods used and the type of data I had been able to generate, with some participants interested in a more quantitative analysis of civil society activity, for example how much they add to society and how much voluntary work is worth economically. These are very different from the piece of research I conducted and would have required a reframing of the theory underpinning the research process, demonstrating the need for researchers to understand what type of research may be most valuable to participants as well as being driven by the literature.

## 4.15 Conclusion

There is an immense body of work on efforts to strengthen civil society, and much written about the sector’s role in society. Missing from much of the civil society literature to date are detailed insights of what it is like to be part of civil society. This gap, along with the collaborative process, provided a direction for this research, which aimed to create intimate knowledge of civil society in the Caribbean through an actor focused account of being part of civil society groups, with particular emphasis on people’s working lives and everyday experiences. To accomplish this aim, this research utilised an ethnographically inspired approach, incorporating semi-structured and repeat interviews, participant observation and observant participation in Barbados and Grenada. This approach nurtured engagement with the day-to-day experiences of civil society work and valued civil society actors’ perspectives in understanding how civil society operates. This research recognised the active role of the researcher at every stage of the research and the way that the positionality of the researcher is multi-sited and their multiple subjectivities constructed through their relationships with others. This poses ethical questions about the undertaking of such research, and reveals the variety of power relations implicit in such a project. The next four chapters of this thesis provide empirical accounts of the main findings of this research, starting with an attempt to map civil society activity in the field of sustainable development in Barbados and Grenada.

# 5. Mapping civil society in Barbados and Grenada

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to enhance understanding of contemporary civil society in Barbados and Grenada, providing detail of the civil society ‘universe’ in which this research took place. The preceding chapter outlined some of the pertinent contextual elements of these two islands, highlighting conflict, migration and economic and environmental fragility as key aspects of Barbadian and Grenadian society. This chapter thinks about how civil society presents itself on these islands and details the diverse range of civil society activities in Barbados and Grenada in the context of sustainable development. Initially the chapter will draw on secondary data to consider how civil society has developed in the Caribbean. It will then move on to provide an empirically driven contextual understanding of civil society and sustainable development in contemporary Barbados and Grenada.

Firstly, the chapter will provide some historical background to the development of contemporary civil society in this part of the Caribbean by delving into accounts of friendly societies, women’s movements and trade unions as longstanding forms of associational life in the region. The second section of the chapter considers scholarship on contemporary civil society in the Caribbean. Finally, the chapter outlines the civil society universe in which this research took place. This provides a sense of the different types of civil society activity associated with sustainable development in Barbados and Grenada, interrogating what sustainability may mean in the Caribbean context. It contends that civil society’s concerns feature different aspects of sustainable development, articulated through ideas of mediating global processes, valuing landscapes and improving wellbeing. Outlining the types of work civil society do provides a foundation from which to explore the intricacies of this type of work and interrogate how civil society operates, which are detailed in the next three chapters.

## 5.2 The development of civil society in the Caribbean

This section of the chapter will trace the development of some of the key forms of associational life in the Caribbean, highlighting in particular friendly societies and philanthropy, inclusive politics and Black Power, women’s movements and the rise of trade unionism. Historical processes shaped early forms of civic engagement. In the Caribbean, self-help groups, labour movements and faith associations all developed to challenge the exploitative practices of slavery and colonial rule (Hinds-Harrison 2014). These varied forms of associational life provide a foundation for thinking about civil society in the Caribbean today and also direct attention away from the notion that civil society in the Caribbean is purely a foreign import, directly associated with the global development industry (Gabay 2014).

Friendly societies are thought to be one of the earliest and most long-standing forms of associational life in the Caribbean (Moloney 2013). Beginning in the 19th century, these communal savings and credit associations developed to support community needs and remain visible in Caribbean life today (Webson 2010; Williams-Pulfer 2016). The growth of these organisations in the Caribbean is thought to be directly linked to the arrival of free Africans, bringing with them the culture of communal savings clubs and burial societies embedded in West African life (Stoffle et al2014). These savings clubs, called meeting turns in Barbados and sou-sous in Grenada, provided rotating credit to their members as well as acting as a social and collective space (Stoffle et al 2014; Williams-Pulfer 2016). In Barbados Landships are a unique form of friendly society, in which as well as collective savings, members dress up in naval uniforms, and perform dances (or manoeuvres) to tuk-tuk music (Pugh 2016; Scher 2016). Although Landships have declined in popularity in Barbados, other friendly societies and optimist clubs (community groups working towards improving the opportunities for young people from their communities) remain a visible part of community life, sponsoring, for example, beach clean-ups and infrastructure development. Preceding the development of friendly societies, charitable trusts functioned as providers of forms of social welfare, particularly among the plantocracy in Barbados. Based on the English model of philanthropic giving English colonisers in Barbados would use charitable trusts to elevate their social status and attempt to alter social mores. These trusts tended to benefit poor white people by developing infrastructure and welfare services, with the exception of Codrington College, which aimed to educate and Christianise the slave population (Marshall 2005).

One of the key aspects of friendly societies was the opportunity for women to become more involved in community life. Their roles in friendly societies and mothers’ clubs gave women space to start advocating on behalf of all women (Williams-Pulfer 2016), with the 1930s seeing a rise in black feminist activism in the region, often connected to the wider labour and political struggles. Women became more deeply embedded as crucial members of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the Pan African Association (PAA) in Jamaica, following involvement in pre-cursor organisations from the early 20th century (Mohammed 1998; Reddock 1998; 2007). By the mid-20th century women’s organisations were more connected to socialist political parties and independence struggles, as well as campaigning for worker’s rights, such as paid maternity leave (Mohammed 1998; Reddock 2007). The re-emergence of women’s movements in the 1960s and 1970s was associated with renewed political consciousness, Black Power and demands for inclusion in society. This also prompted civil society action more widely, as one of my participants Lincoln explains:

‘…I think too in the Caribbean we were inspired a lot by the civil rights in 70s. 60s and 70s, coming out of that era, it was the Bob Marley era, the era of Rastafarianism, so you have a lot of movements that at that time, conscious movements that inspired people in terms of consciousness…In the 60s and 70s was the Black Power movement, a lot of movements were happening across the globe, for so many different reasons, social uprisings were happening and the emergence of civil society, well in that time they kind of followed the same thread and it was believed great change was happening…’

 Lincoln, Founder Barbadian CSO, 13th October 2015

This changing societal landscape is intimately connected to the rise of women’s movements in the Caribbean, alongside the ascendancy of the international women’s movements in the 1960s and 1970s (Ellis 2003). Debate remains about the construction of a singular women’s movement within the Caribbean, with women’s organisations tending to be fragmented and unevenly disbursed across the region (Ellis 2003:82). Women’s groups remained associated with leftist political parties, as one of my participants, Pam, explained about the Grenadian context. Here she connects the rise in women’s organisations (and other forms of associational life in Grenada) with the socialist-inspired revolution:

‘…Really the organisation started out of the ashes of the Grenada revolution because post 1983 there were very few NGOs. The revolution had in fact allowed for people's engagement and people's participation and a whole series of civil society viewpoints to emerge like co-operatives and women's organisations and youth organisations…’

 Pam, Founder Grenadian CSO, 1st February 2016

The direct linkages between political parties and women’s organisations became more strained over time, with some groups actively breaking away from these parties due to issues of patriarchy and inequity (Ellis 2003; Reddock 2007; Steele 2003;). Alongside these more local organisations there was also the evolution of women’s’ organisations at the national level, although uneven in activities and membership, including the Barbados Women’s Alliance and the Grenada’s National Organisation of Women, and at a regional scale, with the development of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) in the 1980s (Ellis 2003). In developing their own brand of Caribbean feminism CAFRA organised many regional conferences and events, but were also criticised for neglecting the racial tensions present in the region, particularly the under-representation of women of Indian heritage amongst their members and became increasingly fragmented and dormant by the 1990s (Reddock 2007).

Labour organisations have also played a key role in Caribbean political and social experiences with the benevolent societies described earlier thought to have nurtured early forms of labour organisations and the trade union movement (Knight & Palmer 1989; Reddock 1998; Stoffle et al 2014). Initially illegal, the first legal trade unions in the Anglophone Caribbean were formed in Jamaica and Trinidad in the late 19th century (Hart 1999). Following a period of decline, the 1930s saw a period of significant labour unrest across the wider Caribbean region and increased connections with the anti-colonial movement (Brizan1984; Featherstone 2012; Hart 1999). British labour unions were also involved in strengthening the trade union movement in the Caribbean, with many formally or informally affiliated to the British Trade Union Congress, and assisted by the British Labour Party (Basdeo 1982). General and industrial trade unions formed in Barbados and Grenada, and still feature in the contemporary civil society landscape today (Nurse 2004). They sit on the national Non-State Actors panel in both Barbados and Grenada, and during my time in Grenada the national civil society group worked closely with trade unionists to oppose real estate development of a park located at the edge of a major public beach.

These three brief examples illustrate the development of different forms of collective organising in the Caribbean. The forms of associational life explored here articulate three suggestions, firstly that civil society groups in the Caribbean have a long established and diverse history. Secondly that these groups are often connected to organisations and events elsewhere in the world and thirdly that the formation of these groups and the political and social conditions surrounding their evolution may continue to shape civil society action in contemporary Caribbean society. It is to this latter point that I now turn.

## 5.3 Civil society in the contemporary Caribbean

Caribbean civil society operates at a variety of scales, constituencies and domains (CPDC 2017), but thinking on civil society in the Caribbean region has a tendency to be combined with, and then neglected within Latin American scholarship (e.g. Butcher & de Tagtachian 2016). Webson (2010) comments that very little has been documented about the diversity of associational life in the region, which seems particularly acute for the smaller island states in the Caribbean, such as Barbados and Grenada.

Over time civil society organisations have come to be seen as important development actors in the region, with increasing external funding provided to organisations in the 1970s and 1980s when the relatively recently independent region was seen as a priority for the governments and non-governmental institutions of the USA, UK and Canada (Webson 2010). These eras witnessed a proliferation of NGOs and during this time the Caribbean Conference of Churches played a key role in mobilising international funding and bringing together activists from around the region (Lewis 1994; Webson 2010). The next two decades saw a decline in the numbers of NGOs, possibly related to diminishing resources to the regions, but more recent work claims a revival of collective action driven by technological advances and support from Caribbean partners inside and outside the region (Webson 2010). The European Union’s Cotonou Agreement, signed in 2000, highlights the continued desire of outside agencies to engage with civil society organisations in the Caribbean, precipitating the development of Non-State Actors’ panels in many countries. These panels are designed to promote the participation of non-state actors in national development processes (Barbados Association of NGOs (BANGO) 2017a; European Commission 2017).

With the growth of CSOs from the 1970s onwards, civil society in the Caribbean, as elsewhere in the world, has come under increasing scrutiny over their role in development and wider society. The relation between civil society and the state in the Caribbean has been examined, with concern voiced over the co-option of civil society by the state (Girwan 2012; Moloney 2013). Gray (1994) contends that the state has a tendency to permeate social space in the Caribbean, producing a clientalist relation between society and the state through the provision of welfare services. This closes the space available for civil society influence. Whilst some states may view civil society organisations as a threat to the status quo, there are limited examples of overt oppression, with Osei (2010) arguing that the Caribbean state takes a rather nonchalant view of civil society. This is exemplified by the periods when the state actively requires civil society to contribute to public services, particularly in the Caribbean model of local governance without local government where community-based groups play a significant role (Schonburgh 2009).

As well as examining the relations between civil society and the state, scholars have also considered the internal dynamics of civil society groups operating in the Caribbean and evaluated their strengths and weaknesses. Groups are regularly accused of lacking capacity to manage projects efficiently (Peters & McDonald 2010), an inability to manage their finances effectively (James 2014; Bishop, Heron & Payne 2013) and are deemed not to be fully representative of community need (Ward, P. 2010). Pugh & Potter (2001) and Pugh & Richardson (2005) detail the complexities of community involvement in participatory planning in the Eastern Caribbean, concluding that there is a tendency for powerful individuals to control community planning processes, reinforcing elite power structures. In their evaluation of civil society activity in Grenada in the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan, Peters & McDonald (2010) report that CSOs were able to respond quickly and flexibly but were constrained in their limited project management experience and in their difficulties of retaining staff. These capacity development issues are articulated elsewhere, with Hinds-Harrison (2014) outlining Caribbean CSOs inability to engage effectively with digital technology and Girwan (2010) commenting that the technification of trade policy alongside civil society’s understanding of such policy severely restricted their ability to influence regional trade negotiations.

More recent engagement with civil society has been in the context of increasing regional integration and the role of civil society in the governance of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) (Bishop, Heron & Payne 2013; Bowen 2013; Girwan 2010; 2012; Montoute 2016). This was precipitated by the publication of ‘Time for Action’ in 1993, which outlined the potential for civil society within a regional integration process, and with the signing of the CARICOM Charter for Civil Society in 1997 (BANGO 2017b; CARICOM 2017). Montoute (2016) argues that civil society participation in the development of trade policy would reduce the emphasis of the private sector and trade unions in CARICOM. Her evaluation of civil society’s role in developing the European Partnership Agreement (EPA) details the difficulties civil society organisations have at this regional level, their work constrained by power imbalances, lack of technical knowledge and ideological differences. This echoes Girwan (2010; 2012) who contends that civil society involvement in the EPA was used to legitimise the outcome, which civil society groups found difficult to renegotiate due to their lack of a substantial political base. Civil society groups have also been critiqued for their involvement with regional integration mechanisms such as the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), with Bowen (2013) arguing that civil society groups deliver services, build communities and promote sustainable development but are hindered by weak organisational capacity and leadership from fully participating in regional governance.

In contrast to these areas of scholarship this project was interested in hearing civil society from a narrative, experiential perspective rather than making judgements about the effectiveness of civil society organisations. This project was interested in civil society engagement with sustainable development, broadly defined. This raises two questions. Firstly what does civil society look like in this context? And secondly what does sustainable development incorporate and mean in this context? Based on the analysis of empirical research undertaken in Barbados and Grenada the final section of this chapter will attempt to address both of these questions.

## 5.4 Mapping the civil society ‘universe’: Civil society and sustainable development in contemporary Barbados and Grenada

### 5.4.1 What does civil society look like in this context?

Civil society organisations contribute to the political and developmental environment on both islands, with organisations working at regional, national and the local level across a wide range of intersecting concerns. There are three aspects of this civil society universe that I would like to highlight here, firstly, the diversity of organisational forms that exist, secondly how these organisations are regulated and finally their relations with the state.

#### 5.4.1.1 Organisational formations and typologies

While these civil society organisations do not always sit well within bounded typologies, I will attempt to describe the civil society universe in Barbados and Grenada to provide an understanding of the different types of organisational forms that exist. However, such organisational forms are not static. People work in local, national and regional civil society groups, groups merge with each other and sometimes a group is comprised of one very hard working individual. It is also important not to equate, for example, one community-based group with another, as they may have very different working practices and ideologies. The majority of groups in Barbados and Grenada are small, community-based groups, whose work is focused in a particular geographical area. Representatives of these groups comprised the majority of participants in this research.

Whilst I have stated that relatively small community-based groups dominate the civil society landscape in Barbados and Grenada, there is still significant diversity between these groups, the activities they undertake and how they operate. Alongside these community-based groups more established CSOs operate at both the local and national level, for example working on civil society activities in a particular locale, contributing to national policy forums and advocating to the government. Some civil society groups actively position themselves as organisations that will support other civil society groups, build their capacity and advocate for the sector more widely. There are also a few regional and transnational groups operating in this context in the Caribbean, for example the Caribbean Policy Development Centre. These ‘indigenous’ groups are accompanied by a few international NGOs operating in the development sector in Grenada and Barbados, with these institutions often working in partnership with domestic organisations in the region.

The global policy template for civil society described by Mercer & Green (2013) premises the formation of topographically nested, donor-supported regional and national umbrella civil society groups, which provide capacity building support to geographically discrete networks of local groups. This exact spatial logic does not exist in the same way in Barbados and Grenada, either in policy terms or through on-the-ground spatial organising, but there are none-the-less similarities. The collaborative partner in this research, the Commonwealth Foundation, currently funds a regional civil society working group comprised of representative groups from across the Caribbean. Members of the working group are required to meet particular criteria and must have a formal group structure to participate. The purpose of this working group is to act as mechanism for civil society to engage with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and to build the capacity of Caribbean civil society to engage in policy advocacy (Commonwealth Foundation 2016). The European Commission, through the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and its associated funding mechanisms, has developed Non-State Actors panels in both Barbados and Grenada. These panels work at a national level and comprise of actors from a broad spectrum of civil society groups, aiming to promote civil society engagement in national development and policy dialogue (European Commission 2017). In Grenada the Committee of Social Partners also provides civil society with a national level forum to advocate for policy change and engage in dialogue with the state. In both Barbados and Grenada national civil society groups exist but neither is solely reliant on international donors for their funding or existence. These organisational formations share some of the characteristics of the global policy template, in particular their reliance on formalised structures and territorially bounded groups and the development of particular mechanisms through which civil society can and should engage with the state.

#### 5.4.1.2 Regulation

Civil society groups are likely to be registered and incorporated, but most operate predominantly on a sub-national scale (Bowen 2013) with civil society organisations in Barbados and Grenada recognised as legal entities through the Charities Act and Companies Act respectively (Towle, Moody & Randall 2010). These acts require the registration of all profit and non-profit companies, with articles of incorporation required for registration. The Barbados Charities Act also incorporates features through which organisations must provide financial reporting to the government, a process that was just being introduced during my time in Grenada in early 2016.

Discussions with research participants highlighted the ease of registering their organisation, although some concerns were raised by the new financial audits that were being introduced in Grenada and the constraining effect this process may have on some organisations. This was voiced by one of the participants, Rachel, who articulated her concern for smaller CSOs who may not be able to comply with this financial auditing. Here she comments on how these attempts towards increasing professionalisation and financial accountability may alter the civil society landscape, potentially narrowing the space and opportunities available to nascent community-based organisations, but simultaneously endeavouring to make these types of groups more visible within development processes (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; Bolton & Jeffrey 2008; Choudry & Kapoor 2013; Laurie, Andolina & Radcliffe 2003; 2005).

‘That’s what the government are bringing in. The government recently have changed the rules for NGOs. Before NGOs ran on their own because we're non-government but now the government want to know what you're doing. You have to submit an annual report to them and finances based on what you've done, what you're doing and how you're doing it. That’s recent, that’s been in the last year or two. I guess they want to know whose bringing money in and where from. They think money has been coming into NGOs that are not actually NGOs so the government wants to stop that happening and regulate that.’

 Rachel, Director Grenadian CSO, 15th February 2016

Rachel goes on to comment that more established organisations such as the one she works for have little problem with these new regulations, it is smaller organisations whose work may be impeded, potentially creating a civil society landscape that is dominated by established groups with non-governmental structures, reflecting concerns about the NGOisation of civil society (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; Bolton & Jeffrey 2008; Choudry & Kapoor 2013).

‘The new regulations don't impact too much on what we do…Already some smaller NGOs have folded because they don't have the capacity to do the financials and the reports or resources to do that.’

 Rachel, Director Grenadian CSO, 15th February 2016

Rachel echoes concerns in the literature about the professionalisation agenda within civil society constructing an elite, highly educated yet increasingly polarised civil society, with increasing differentiation between formal NGOs and less formal community-based organisations (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Choudry & Kapoor 2013; Jenkins 2009; Mawdsley et al 2002; Narayanaswamy 2016). She also reflects that these accountability structures are not solely connected to professionalisation but also about the increasing regulation of non-governmental activity by the state, reinforcing concerns about the civil society sector in other parts of the world (Dupuy, Ron & Prakash 2015; 2016).

Civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada typically have few permanent paid staff and generally have fluctuating staffing levels. Sometimes the founders of these groups will also have other forms of employment. Kim, the co-ordinator of an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) working in the region, reflected on her perceptions of NGOs in Grenada:

‘NGOs here, their staff are like part-time. There's always a high turnover too because the funds they generate from a project is used to pay and if there's no project it is not sustainable…They may have 1 or 2 staff full-time and then they'll have to recruit based on the nature of the job so there is no continuity… It creates a burden on the director to be doing everything, micro-managing, over worked…I think our NGOs are a little informal…the groups themselves they are community-based organisations, once they become formalised I think they have more strength and power in implementation… I think now a lot of donor agencies have shifted how they do business and I think there are more rules, regulations and you know the NGOs are finding it harder to align themselves with what is required. Before I mean they would just write a proposal, get the money, implement, but now I think there are more stringent measures being put in place, they have a little difficulty.’

 Kim, Co-ordinator INGO Grenada, 26th January 2016

Kim presumes that community-based organisations are too informal to be effective, reinforcing the social hierarchies that are often used to differentiate between different civil society groups (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; Jenkins 2009). These hierarchies are also reproduced through other avenues. Attempts to formalise and professionalise community-based groups plays out practically through the different ways in which other institutions work to build the capacity of community groups. This incorporates workshops organised by multi-lateral donors, concentrating on financial management and reporting, timely project management and grant writing. This move towards professionalism, standardisation and accreditation of community-based organisations is also being enacted through academic channels in Barbados. In conjunction with prominent civil society leaders and a local philanthropic organisation a higher education institution has developed a professional diploma for civil society organisations incorporating resource mobilisation and project management with the explicit goal of enhancing the ability and confidence of civil society to take part in policy development. One participant, Tina, told me about this training course and compared the tutor’s experiences of NGO work with those of the students:

‘[The tutor said] you guys don't do this full time? And they've had to remind themselves of the time, because they are the people who have made it as a 9 to 5 in the NGO sector area, but I dare say 90% or 99.9% of us are (pause)… so I work in a law firm and I have this great big plan and it squeezes out on some Saturdays.’

 Tina, Founder Barbadian CSO, 12th December 2015

These quotes demonstrate the informal nature of many civil society groups in the region. The disjuncture between these groups and the civil society sector imagined by those, such as Kim and the NGO course tutor, who are attempting, through their own engagement with the sector to make it more professional, is also articulated. Kim directly links informality with ineffectiveness, reproducing a version of what it means to be effective that stresses the ability of CSOs to engage with neoliberal, donor-led versions of accountability and efficiency (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; Mawdsley et al 2002). Here Kim also connects this version of professionalisation with the ability of civil society groups to sustain their work, critiquing the fatigue and burn out informal groups may experience.

#### 5.4.1.3 Civil society-state relations

Many civil society groups, as Rachel alluded to above, work closely with the state. This work comes in various guises, complicating the insider-outsider dichotomy and the separation of civil society and state relations (Hammett, Kabalisa & Lea-Howarth 2016). Whilst some civil society actors were actively involved in national forums, others used more informal connections to work with governmental bodies. In discussion with civil society actors about their connections with the state it became apparent that sometimes ‘invited’ spaces were more problematic than ‘invented’ spaces (Miraftab & Wills 2005). One participant, Keith, has been invited to be the civil society representative on Grenada’s 2030 development plan:

 ‘Well the 2030 [plan] I'm the [civil society] representative in this so my function on this is to basically ensure that the plan takes in our concern in the next few years…I'm there ensuring once a document comes through I look at them, take them out to my…organisations but they are not well organised so when there's a case and an issue sometimes I speak for myself, my knowledge and not from the base you know…I feel sometimes that’s a limitation, a big limitation that I am there making an input based on my knowledge of what I think what I perceive the problem to be right but you can run into some problems with this sort of approach. Your perception, it’s a perception…I know it misses out on some critical nuances, very critical, especially for 2030 plan.’

 Keith, Founder Grenadian CSO, 23rd February 2016

Here Keith problematises his involvement as a civil society representative on a national forum. He feels unable to represent the entirety of civil society opinions. This contrasts with Colin and Liam’s engagement with the state, where they have used their social connections to engage with the state on a far more informal or invented basis. The types of relations local civil society groups have with the state highlights the importance of going beyond these formal spaces of engagement, or invited spaces (Miraftab & Wills 2005), to consider the more informal or invented spaces through which local civil society groups engage with the state, as Liam and Colin explain:

‘The second way we hit the jackpot was contacting the chief environmental health officer here, who robustly came down on our side. Now his hands are tied in actually dictating to us what to do because he is of the government but he most certainly knows what is needed, what protocols we should be using, how to lobby. Thanks to him largely we have had a significant input into a new law which is now about being enacted...’

 Liam, Founder Grenadian CSO, 3rd March 2016

‘Again you have to know people but at the same time, I’m not going to lie, it’s a difficult area to…The persons I went to school with the younger ministers, I went to school with some of them so it’s not going to be too hard, but at the same time it’s a process…’

 Colin, Founder Barbadian CSO, 25th September 2015

This exemplifies the relevance of thinking beyond formalised understandings of relations with the state. In the quotations above Liam and Colin articulate the informal nature of their own relations with the state, which are very much outside of the formal channels described by Keith, challenging the ways in which both the state and civil society are constituted by their relations with each other (Ferguson & Gupta 2002; Lewis 2011; 2013). This does not deny the relevance of formal channels of state engagement, rather contending that there are also other relations and spaces through which civil society groups gain influence in Barbados and Grenada.

These three areas demonstrate the complex typology of associational life in Barbados and Grenada with a diversity of organisations, operating across multiple and overlapping scales, with varying organisational formations and modes of operation. All of these different groups are engaged in some form of sustainable development, and it is to these different forms of engagement that this chapter will now turn.

### 5.4.2 What does sustainable development incorporate and mean in this context?

The previous section discussed the civil society typologies that exist within the sustainable development context within Caribbean civil society. I will now move to consider how the activities of such groups can be understood, a process that gives meaning to the term sustainable development. There are multiple ways of understanding engagement with development processes, and scholars have articulated the distinct forms of action and expression that exist in the Global South, which often contest the dominance of Northern development discourse (Bayer & Deutsch Lynch 2006; Escobar 2008; Faedee 2012; Guha & Martinez-Alier 1997; Nagel & Staeheli 2016; Shiva 1989; Thomas & Swarnakar 2017). What then does sustainable development mean for civil society groups working in Barbados and Grenada, and what are the discourses through which they explain the importance of their work? This is not an attempt to define sustainability; rather it is a discursive framework to aid understanding of the nature of civil society activity in Barbados and Grenada and to give a sense of the types of activities civil society groups are involved with in this context. Civil society engagement with developmental concerns can be tentatively divided into three broad yet intertwined areas of work, firstly mediating global processes, secondly placing value on landscapes and thirdly improving wellbeing. These three areas are not disparate areas of work for civil society groups; for example, they may incorporate all three simultaneously or move between aspects as required. This resonates with Nagel & Staeheli’s (2016) research with NGOs in Lebanon, where they found that many groups address a number of concerns simultaneously and are multi-purpose in their outlook. I am using these divisions here to give a sense of the diversity and multiplicity of work in this sector, and some of the dominant discourses that underpin and drive civil society work.

## 5.5 Aspects of sustainable development

This section will consider the different ways in which civil society groups engage with and operationalise the idea of sustainable development. I argue here that there are three primary domains through which civil society engage with sustainable development. These aspects are used here to differentiate between different types of civil society work that are encompassed by this broad idea of sustainable development. This section aims to give an idea of the types of work civil society groups do in this context, and how they articulate this type of work.

### 5.5.1 Mediating global processes

As suggested earlier in this thesis development in the Caribbean region has been shaped by the continual negotiation of incorporation into a globalised and global economy, while taking into account vulnerabilities of size and location and whilst also maintaining their social, cultural and environmental landscapes (Bayer & Deutsch Lynch 2006; Bishop 2010; Bishop & Payne 2012). This articulates the challenges faced by many small island nations, as they attempt to negotiate their inherent openness and closure and place within the global-local nexus (King 2009). One aspect of the work of civil society groups concerned with sustainable development is attempts to mediate the way that Caribbean communities engage with global economic and social conditions and articulate sovereignty and nationhood within these complex systems. For Caribbean civil society groups sustainable development mirrors discourses of nationhood, using development processes to project a sense of national identity and independence from exploitative global systems. This was particularly noticeable in civil society engagement with food and energy systems, climate change and the tourist industry. Civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada focused their work on food security and, in particular, food sovereignty. This work was framed in multiple ways, through the benefits to health from growing vegetables and the consumption of organic produce, the contribution that local food may make to reducing climate change, and particularly in Barbados concern for the significant reliance the island has on imported food stuffs: ‘It is the step towards let’s say reducing the food import bill, because we import honey into Barbados from America. We are also looking to produce more ourselves’ (Kelvin, President Barbadian CSO, 24th September 2015).

Colin, the founder of another community-based Barbadian CSO concerned with food security, articulated his thought process on food imports in more detail:

Colin: ‘Have you looked at our import bill?’

Me: ‘It’s very high, I don’t know what it is…’

Colin: ‘Millions of dollars…It’s not sustainable and I think we understand that it’s not sustainable. Did we start with that discussion about growing cane and the problems with the soil…I think the average is 3% organic matter [looks through phone to find document with details on…] Imagine that you want to grow food, cane is a grass, and you want to grow food in this - are you mad? It can’t happen. The import bill…it grows every year, since 2011, so we need to address it. And it’s dropping the drops in the bucket but the reality is that individual actions count and if we can change at a community level what’s going on there, it feeds back. It trickles up, not the other way around. It doesn’t trickle down but it will trickle up. So that is the plan, that is what we are trying to be about, very succinctly.’

 Colin, Founder Barbadian CSO, 25th September 2015

In this interview excerpt Colin not only explains how he feels civil society groups can contribute to reducing the import bill, but also some of the role of colonialism and slavery in the shaping of the contemporary Barbadian landscape. Here he talks about the nutrient deficiencies left in soil from the continual growth of sugar cane, but other participants also spoke of the rejection of agricultural work in contemporary Barbados due to its association with slavery. These groups were therefore actively trying to mediate Barbados’ position in the contemporary global economy but also renegotiating cultural engagement with their landscape as Charles, the founder of another Barbadian CSO concerned with food and agriculture explained:

‘And then you will see it as very sexy because then you will understand to feed ourselves, to feed the region, to contribute to food security and the importance of agriculture in the 21st century… [We want] to empower people as well…especially within societies like Barbados, countries like Barbados which have a history of plantations, slavery, there would come negative attachments when the concept of agriculture comes into mind because it is something that was done by force.’

 Charles, Founder Barbadian CSO, 22nd October 2015

The work of these civil society groups aims to enhance national financial sustainability and economic prosperity by mediating involvement with potentially exploitative global markets (Agnew 2009; Mountz 2013), but simultaneously uses notions of food sovereignty as an alternative to globalising modes of production (Sonnino, Marsden & Morgues-Faus 2016). By actively using food and agriculture to produce greater national sovereignty and the ability of the nation-state to ‘look after itself’, this resonates with the discourse on food sovereignty articulated by organisations such as La Via Campesina, who contend that food sovereignty is ‘the right of each nation to maintain and develop its capacity to produce basic food’ (La Via Campesina 1996, cited by Sonnino, Marsden & Morgues-Faus 2016: 480), showing how food can be part of a wider politics (Del Casino 2015).

The development of the tourist industry is also a medium through which civil society groups shape sustainable development, echoing the wider love-hate relationship many Caribbean islands have with the tourism industry (Patullo 2005; Potter, Barker & Klak2004). This was particularly evident in Grenada with civil society groups driving ecotourism opportunities, partly as a way of redistributing tourist dollars away from international resorts but also through a desire to change the way the Caribbean is seen by the outside world. Alyson runs a community-based organisation concerned with sustainable living initiatives. She told me:

‘We run geotourism…I'd rather talk about visitors and friends and relations that matter. Tourism is a service industry. It is also, at the price that we pay for labour, it’s servitude, subsidised servitude…. I would hope to start seeing that people can see how we can have service for people without it being servitude, without doing the waiter thing. Come into my home and have a cup of tea and come by my kitchen table and see me cook. That’s a much more real experience than sitting down in a fancy restaurant…’

 Alyson, Founder Grenadian CSO, 5th February 2016

The image of the Caribbean for many tourists is of sun, sea and sand seen from an all-inclusive resort with very little engagement with Caribbean nationals outside of being served by them (Conway 2004; Potter, Barker & Klak 2004; Sheller 2003); here Alyson is attempting to produce a reimagining of Caribbean relations with those from outside, whilst ensuring the financial benefits of tourism remain in the national economy.

These examples all demonstrate the tensions and antagonisms inherent in practising sustainable development in the Caribbean, and exemplify the need to mediate between local and global conditions. As well as attempting to mediate the tourism industry as in Alyson’s example above, civil society groups also played a more vocal role in the rejection of particular aspects of tourist development, attempting to re-imagine tourism as a tool for social and environmental development rather than a domain of exploitation and exclusion. A pertinent example of this was highlighted during my time in Grenada. One of the key areas of concern for civil society groups was the development of a new hotel in the Grand Anse beach area of the capital St. George’s. The real estate development would mean the loss of a public park and there were concerns about restricted public access to one of the most valuable and iconic beaches on the island. Civil society groups mobilised against this development, organising petitions, meetings and vigils in the park, often using nationalist discourses as part of their campaign. The redevelopment of the park by foreign investors for the exclusionary benefit of foreign tourists was understood as an attempt to deprive Grenadians of their heritage, as a member of the Committee to Save Camerhogne Park[[8]](#footnote-8) explains in this public article:

‘The Committee to Save Camerhogne Park is…determined not be daunted by the developer’s and government's efforts to deprive Grenadians of their communal heritage, located in the area of Grand Anse Beach - Camerhogne Park. There are no alternatives to this space! The seawater, the beach, the land and the park area cannot be moved!... Camerhogne Park area is the last free, green-space on Grand Anse beach for the public, community, tourists and anyone to enjoy. It is a best spot on the beach. To lose Camerhogne Park, will be to lose the whole of Grand Anse beach to tourism. To lose the whole of Grand Anse Beach, is to lose Grenada!’

 Excerpt from an article by Grenadian civil society actor, 23rd March 2016

A key feature of the campaign was the importance of keeping the park for the use of the Grenadian people. In another publically available article the Save the Camerhogne Park Committee articulated the importance of valuing Grenadian citizens over the wealth of others, again affirming the importance of the Grenadian people:

‘The Committee to Save Camerhogne Park which is calling on the Government to abandon their plan to sell the Park, but to preserve it for Grenadians… In a related development, the Committee notes that the latest World Health Organisation (WHO) release [shows] that one in eleven persons in the world suffers from diabetes. [This] is a clear message that countries like Grenada need to provide more readily available green spaces for its citizens to recreate and ensure their health and wellness. The Save Camerhogne Committee says the WHO information strengthens the plea by more than 14,000 Grenadians who have signed the petition, calling on Prime Minister Dr. Keith Mitchell and his Government not to sell the park to an Egyptian Billionaire, but recognise its value to Health and Wellness.’

Excerpt from an article by Grenadian civil society actor, 13th April 2016

This claiming of public rights to land and articulation of the value of the Grenadian citizen was also echoed in the constitutional reform process that was also taking place during my time in Grenada. In informal conversations with civil society actors, they expressed concern about this reform process, contending that the process was inherently undemocratic. One area of contention was the potential that the wording of the new constitution may enable the selling of small islands off the coast of Grenada to private (and possibly) foreign buyers. They had witnessed this previously with an island off the South-East cost of Grenada called Calivigny point, which had been sold to a private investor and is now home to a very exclusive luxury hotel complex, with local access to the island and the fishing area around the island completely restricted.

In all of these examples civil society groups are mobilising around the tensions inherent in ideas of Caribbean sovereignty and attempting to place Caribbean nationals and landscapes before the needs of outside others. They explicitly connect the Caribbean landscape with the creation of Caribbean nations, a loss of these landscapes indicates a loss of nationhood. The attempted commodification of public land for tourism has the potential to alienate Caribbean nationals from these sites through the privatisation and enclosure of public land (Castree 2003; Potter, Barker & Klak 2004). For civil society groups the Caribbean should no longer be imagined as an area of exploitation and colonisation but as nations in which their own people come first. These examples show that environmental thought is entangled with a more political project (Del Casino 2015; Nagel & Staeheli 2016). Here civil society engagement with environmental processes aims to change the way that Caribbean nations interact with global circumstances, articulated by desires to produce robust sovereign forms of nationhood, which reject the environmental exploitation of colonialism and offer resistance to new forms of potentially alienating development. In doing so civil society groups are connecting nationhood with natural resource management, for example in food and energy systems, but they are also articulating the need for Caribbean citizens to be able to engage with their environment in just and dignified ways. In essence civil society groups are claiming the environment as their own, and articulating how particular types of engagement can and should benefit primarily Caribbean nationals over others, reducing the islands’ reliance on, and potential exploitation by, global systems. This produces a reimagining of the Caribbean environment for the benefit of the citizens of Barbados and Grenada rather than for the advantage of others.

### 5.5.2 Valuing landscapes

The mediation of global processes described above reinforces the importance of Caribbean landscapes and their role in articulating Caribbean nationhood within complex global systems. Civil society groups also work towards enhancing the value of particular landscapes. This is not solely value in an economic sense, for example through ecosystem services; rather it is a sense of value that is connected to the potential of particular landscapes for cultural, social as well as economic transformation. Civil society groups are attempting to conserve and restore the natural and built environments of Barbados and Grenada. In the context of the built environment civil society groups are working to preserve heritage buildings. These efforts are often connected to the material preservation of historic buildings, but also the opportunity for social and cultural development and the realisation of reinforcement of national pride. These buildings are seen as having economic value, in that they may attract tourists, but also as a way for Caribbean nationals to know about their history. The advent of Hurricane Ivan in Grenada destroyed or severely damaged many of the historic buildings, including the parliament and national library, in St. George’s, the capital of Grenada. Civil society groups promote the importance of restoring and preserving these buildings, with Herbert explaining to me about the investigative work his group was involved in to preserve a heritage property, York House, in Grenada:

‘The minister stated [that they could not] repair York House because it is structurally unstable, so [our group] challenged him and tell him that York House is not structurally unstable and it can be restored. We got a meeting with the chief technical officer who arranged for an independent inspection of York House with the government…and [our group]. That meeting was held on site and the unanimous decision was that York House can be restored.’

 Herbert, Founder Grenadian CSO, 2nd March 2016

The emphasis on the restoration of heritage buildings to promote national identity could be seen in the discourse around what the restoration of York House might mean to the Grenadian public. At the time of the interview Herbert gave me a leaflet his group had made entitled ‘Save York House’. On the cover was a picture of the roofless building, tress growing from its interior courtyard, with the slogan ‘Our disappearing cultural heritage’ and pleas inside to donate to the restoration of York House to assist with ‘rescuing our heritage and preserving our patrimony for future generations’.

Conservation also extends to the natural environment, with some groups advocating for the protection of sea turtles, as Rachel, the director of a small NGO explained: ‘Culturally it’s still acceptable to eat sea turtles even though they're an endangered species…In 2009 [we] had additional funding to study the hard shell species [of turtle]…Unfortunately we're still fighting to get laws changed to protect the hard shell species so they still have an open hunting season for them.’ (Rachel, Director Grenadian CSO, 15th February 2016). Civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada are also involved in attempts to reduce the Lionfish population. Lionfish are an invasive and extremely predatory species in the region, threatening fish stocks and the quality of coral reefs. The fins of the fish are poisonous and the species has not traditionally been caught or consumed in the region. Civil society groups are trying to change this, working with local fishermen to catch the fish, but also promoting them as a viable product for consumption and teaching (predominantly) women to make jewellery out of their spines, linking the natural with the social and economic.

As in the lionfish example connecting the preservation and conservation of particular landscapes with economic and social development was a concern for many civil society groups. This echoes wider scholarship on conservation and development, which emphasises the interconnections between environmental governance and modes of economic and social development (Brockington & Duffy 2010; Brockington, Igoe & Schmidt-Soltau 2006; Brown 2002; Holmes 2010; Oldekop et al 2010; Wilkie et al 2006). For civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada work connected to the conservation of natural resources ranges from the protection of sea turtles to preserving the islands’ delicate marine ecosystems and coastlines from the impacts of climate change, to changes in fish stocks, re-development of mangrove areas destroyed by tropical hurricanes, to beach clean-ups, tree planting, the development of recycling and advocating for anti-litter legislation. This emphasis on conservation was often underpinned by a desire to also see a positive change in the economic, social or cultural landscape, with the preservation of resources used to aid livelihoods and social development. The landscape was therefore being valued on multiple levels, through its ability to articulate Caribbean identity as Herbert reflected earlier and its ability to promote other aspects of development.

In much of their work civil society groups linked the preservation of these resources to the potential for economic and social development within deprived communities, with the two aims understood symbiotically. One of the most striking examples of this was the work of David’s group in Grenada. This community-based group was working to restore an area of mangrove swamp that had been decimated by Hurricane Ivan in 2004. For David this environmental improvement went hand-in-hand with developing the local community:

‘I joined the group in late 2009 and one of the main focus was pulling the community together to work on community projects to make the community more closely linked and to create livelihoods…One of the main focuses was to see if we could get this area here re-planted, all cleaned up because what had happened since the mangrove died off and the system keep getting worse. People use here as a dump site so there was huge pile of mud all across the face here with a lot of old cans, all different type of debris.’

He went on to tell me how the group was developing projects that could benefit everyone:

‘The group sticks together and they do things to impact the livelihood of the community, the community now buys in, they feel ownership of the project. So coming out of that we asked for a birding tower…with the intention that some one of us take up the initiative for a small business, with someone…here on a daily basis with a cooler with some binoculars and cans so generating some revenue…so as a group we're looking at developing here a tourism project and a livelihood project.’

 David, Director Grenadian CSO, 12th February 2016

Civil society groups are therefore working towards changing perceptions of the region’s natural resources, and rearticulating the value of Caribbean landscapes. Through the conservation and restoration of particular landscapes civil society groups are placing value on these landscapes. These values range from implicit values such as understanding Caribbean heritage to more instrumental values of using landscapes to enhance social and economic wellbeing. The notion of improving wellbeing is also important for civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada and it is to this aspect of sustainable development that I will now turn.

### 5.5.3 Improving wellbeing and personal transformation

The final domain of sustainable development that civil society groups are involved in is that of increasing human wellbeing, both individually and at a community scale. Civil society groups working in this context see improving wellbeing and nurturing personal transformation as an integral aspect of their work. Wellbeing is increasingly used within international development scholarship, but remains a vague concept (Copestake 2008). Taken simply wellbeing privileges person-centred development, and emphasises the importance of life experiences. As White (2009:3) puts it, wellbeing is about ‘doing well – feeling good and doing good – feeling well’. It is perhaps the first half of this phrase that civil society groups in the Caribbean most identify with and for some enabling others to ‘do well and feel good’ is the primary aspect of their work. For these groups it is through personal development that nationhood can be articulated. This wellbeing-oriented work incorporates youth work, poverty reduction and gender equality, and may encompass aspects of personal transformation for example increasing literacy, knowledge or economic prosperity. In all of these types of work sustainability also features, for example civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada are using vegetable growing to support youths, thinking about the built environment of the library to enhance children’s learning experiences, teaching women about the impacts of climate change or enhancing the working conditions of agricultural labourers.

The emphasis on care, wellbeing and personal transformation demonstrates how civil society groups connect the environment with human wellbeing, recognising the connection between the two, whilst placing human life experiences at the forefront of their work.

‘We’ve got a young man who didn’t go to school, he’s a little mentally challenged and just seeing him being enthusiastic about growing his own, growing and turning up everyday. So we stepped back and let him water it and deal with it. Right and let him be excited about getting to the sweet peppers and dealing with that…’

 Colin, Founder Barbadian CSO, 25th September 2015

Whilst discussing the NGO she founded to develop organic cocoa growing, Cindy told me about the impact of her group’s work on farmers’ wellbeing:

‘They're all small [farms]. Somebody has 20 acres of cocoa land, that’s a big farmer. Most people have 2 acres, 3 acres so they're small farms and could use some help, just in communication or transportation. What we do on cocoa buying days, we have a truck and we just go around and pick up people's cocoa because otherwise, once there was a Dad and his little daughter and they were carrying cocoa and they had a long hot walk and so [we] just pick them up.’

 Cindy, Founder Grenadian CSO, 13th February 2016

In contrast Fletcher’s group articulate wellbeing at a community scale. In telling me about the development of an ice making facility on one of Grenada’s sister islands Fletcher’s group has only fleeting discursive engagement with environmental concerns, they are much more interested in the island’s wellbeing, both economically and socially:

‘We're the major fishing community in Grenada but what we've realised is that the island itself does not really benefit much from fishing, because the fishermen once they fish they go to Grenada to sell their fish so most of the revenue stays in Grenada. They shop in Grenada; everything in Grenada and fishermen will be off 2 or 3 months before they come back. We're seeing you know social issues, break up in family, we decided if we were able to have an ice-making facility on the island they'll spend more time on the island and more time with their families and even the economic aspect with the shops they'll be able to sell more to the boats, so that was the really the main concept behind the project.’

 Fletcher, Founder Grenadian CSO, 14th March 2016

This emphasis on personal wellbeing, of wanting people to have a better life sustains much civil society work and guides many of their activities. Within these examples we see wellbeing playing out across the three domains articulated by White (2010). For her wellbeing is comprised firstly of a material domain, including assets and welfare, for example in Cindy’s quote above. Secondly wellbeing is developed through the relational domain, often connected to ideas of social capital, as is explained in Fletcher’s description of the importance of his group’s work to the social relations in his community. Finally, wellbeing also consists of a subjective dimension, as articulated by Colin in his description of the enthusiasm and joy of one of the young men that his group works with. The way civil society groups utilise activities that promote wellbeing therefore vary across scales, from individuals to communities, and across the different domains that make up wellbeing. Enhancing wellbeing is seen as a facet of sustainable development and something that brings human experience to the forefront of our understandings of sustainability.

This section has considered different types of civil society action under the rubric of sustainable development, contending that it incorporates elements of mediating global processes, valuing landscapes and improving wellbeing. Although I have separated these three areas of civil society action within the realm of sustainable development it is obvious that there is significant overlap. Groups may be engaging in different projects that emphasise these diverse aspects of sustainability concurrently, or all the domains may be goals of one project simultaneously. This section demonstrates that civil society engagement with developmental concerns takes on different meanings for different groups. There is not one single way to understand sustainability for civil society groups in the Caribbean, rather we see a range of activities that can broadly be divided into those aimed at nation building, those aimed at conservation and those aimed at improving wellbeing. This articulates the relational and contextual nature of sustainability, the way that meaning is made and remade through the actions and discourses of different groups and the difficulty of defining sustainable development. Rather than make an attempt at a definition I would prefer to leave understandings of sustainability open to change. As Lewis (2002) commented about civil society, approaching sustainable development as a term to think with, as a way of delving into the diverse every day actions that contribute to it, rather than attempting to define what sustainable development may or may not be.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a contextual understanding of civil society and development in Barbados and Grenada. The first part of this chapter considered the richness of Caribbean associational life from a historical perspective, including friendly societies, women’s groups and trade unions. More recent scholarship on civil society has noted the growth of non-governmental organisations in connection to overseas donors. This scholarship has often critiqued civil society in the Caribbean, for its lack of autonomy, inability to meet expectations and proximity to the state.

The second part of the chapter utilised empirical material to map out civil society in Barbados and Grenada in the context of sustainable development. Returning to the two questions I posed at the start of this part of the chapter, what does civil society look like in this context? And, what does sustainable development incorporate in this context? Firstly, civil society in Barbados and Grenada is diverse and multiple, with the majority of groups operating at a sub-national scale. Secondly, in the context of sustainable development civil society groups engage in different ways incorporating the mediation of global processes, valuing landscapes and improving wellbeing. This demonstrates that sustainable development is a fluid idea and its meaning is both relational and contextual. By outlining what civil society and sustainable development look like in this context I have aimed to set the scene for the next three of chapters of this thesis, which explore the everyday intricacies of civil society work in this domain. The next three chapters of this thesis will therefore explore how civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada go about getting this work done, their everyday experiences of this type of work and what this means for development processes.

# 6. Transnational social capital: The socio-spatialities of civil society

## 6.1 Introduction

Civil society groups in the Eastern Caribbean are engaged in many aspects of sustainable development. Their work traverses mediating global processes, conserving the region’s resources, valuing nature and improving wellbeing. The next three chapters of this thesis interrogate the intricacies of how civil society groups go about this work, highlighting the pertinent themes drawn from narrative and experiential accounts of their work. These three chapters bring together details on the everyday experiences of being part of civil society in the Eastern Caribbean, drawing out the elements that make this type of work ‘tick’, and as Scott (2009) encourages, uses everyday experiences to explore wider social processes. This is about how civil society groups sustain the work they do, get that work done and the challenges they face attempting to do so.

Each of these empirical chapters considers a distinct feature of everyday civil society experience. This first chapter examines the socio-spatial relations of civil society work and how these shape civil society. The second empirical chapter considers how money interacts with responsibility for civil society groups and the final empirical chapter explores how civil society groups gain (and sometimes lose) legitimacy. There is significant overlap between these chapters, with money entangled with social relations and both financial interactions and social connections contributing to civil society legitimacy. Read together these three chapters aim to provide a detailed account of how civil society groups attempt to sustain their work in Barbados and Grenada and the complexities that come with this.

This chapter focuses on the significance of transnational social relations for civil society work. Much attention has been paid to transnationalism within Geography and other disciplines, including the development of transnational cultures and identities (Appadurai 1996; Dunn 2008), the creation of transnational spaces through migration and citizenship practices (Kallio & Mitchell 2016; Martin & Paasi 2016; Silvey, Olsen & Truelove 2007), the construction of transnational knowledge networks (Coe & Burnell 2003; Piper & Uhlin 2004) and flows of commodities, capital and processes across national borders (Cook et al 2004; 2006; Katz 2004). Ideas of transnationalism are founded on the significance of the interconnectivity between people with reduced attention paid to state-based practices and the boundaries of the nation-state (Mitchell 1997). Within civil society scholarship transnational social relations have tended to be articulated through vertical dependency chains that place civil society groups at the bottom of transnational flows of money and power or through conceptualisations of a transnational civil society founded on horizontal connections between different non-state actors and ideas of ‘globalisation from below’ (Bebbington 2004a; Della Porta & Tarrow 2005; Falk 1998; Kaldor 2003). These articulations limit what constitutes a transnational civil society to very particular forms of social relations, neglecting the potential for other types of transnational social relations to be considered as part of civil society action.

Discussing social relations in the context of civil society immediately brings to the fore ideas of social capital. Whilst Bourdieu (1986) may differ in his understanding of social capital, the dominant discourses of social capital describe it as both aspatial and atemporal in nature, (Coleman 1988; Naughton 2014; Putnam 1995; 2000). In these articulations there is limited attention paid to the quality, forms, limitations and spatialities of actual existing social relations (Naughton 2014). Different social relations are an integral part of quotidian civil society experience, helping civil society groups to form, be resilient and consolidate their work. This chapter will focus on one particular form of these diverse social relations, those that are transnational in nature, and taking Naughton’s (2014:18) work which asks us to ‘reconsider social capital as a vehicle for telling different stories about sociospatial relations’ as a cue, it will use different stories of social relations to understand more about how transnationalism plays out in civil society activity. This chapter aims to contribute to the body of work that considers diverse geographies and spatialities crucial for civil society theorising (Mercer, Page & Evans 2009).

The chapter will begin by considering how different ideas of transnationalism have entered the civil society domain, drawing on bodies of work from social movement studies and contentious politics as well as development studies. This chapter concentrates on the social relations involved in civil society activity, whilst the next chapter of this thesis considers the circulations of money within civil society. As will be demonstrated these two are not always distinct, yet it remains important to highlight the intangible networks of social capital that are part of civil society work and consider the complex spatialities associated with this. Whilst studies of citizenship and social movements have examined the multiple spatialities that make up everyday experiences (Cumbers, Routledge & Nativel 2008; McFarlane 2009; Staeheli, Marshall & Maynard 2016), less attention has been explicitly paid to this multiplicity within the realm of civil society, neglecting more spatially sensitive theories of civil society that go beyond the confines of the local or the global (McFarlane 2006).

Having examined the literature on the way that transnationalism has been considered in the context of civil society the chapter will then move on to discussion of the empirical material. The chapter will introduce the importance of social relations and resources for civil society work in the Eastern Caribbean. This research asked how do social relations between people produce civil society action? What are the channels through which people conduct these relations and how do social relations enable and constrain civil society work (Cleaver 2005)? These discussions accentuated the importance of ordinary and everyday transnational social relations for sustaining civil society and empirical analysis contends that examining key stories of these different social relations complicates normative ideas of what constitutes transnational civil society. Exploring these connections opens up the possibilities for understanding transnationalism within civil society action beyond the usual local-to-global transitions and for making visible the relations that aid civil society beyond those formally ascribed to them. This chapter concludes that the transnational social relations that are part of civil society action offer (uneven) hope and possibilities for continued civil society action (Massey 1994; 2005; 2006; 2014).

## 6.2 Transnationalism within civil society scholarship

Within development studies the concept of transnationalism in the context of civil society has often been limited to a nebulous global civil society or through vertical dependency relations with civil society seen as the local element within the transnational development hierarchy (Bebbington 2004a; Bebbington & Kothari 2006; McFarlane 2006; Mercer, Page & Evans 2009). These two dichotomous positions have resulted in calls for more contextualised accounts of the social relations that contribute to civil society action and the varying geographies of these relations (Bebbington 2007; Mercer, Page & Evans 2009; Naughton 2014). This section will examine how the transnational social relations that contribute to civil society have been thought about to date.

The transnational nature of global development, and the industry and actors associated with it, cannot be denied, with the movement of money, people and knowledge central to many development interventions (Mosse 2013; Murray Li 2013). The transnational nature of ‘Southern’ civil society within development discourses is sometimes conceptualised through the social relations that civil society groups may have with donor organisations and non-governmental organisations based in the Global North. The nature of these relations tends to take the form of unequal relations, exacerbated by processes of professionalisation and financial accountability (Jenkins 2005; Mawdsley et al 2002), accentuating vertical dependency relations between Northern and Southern organisations (Fowler 2000). The rhetoric of partnership is often prominent in these social relationships, but evaluations of attempts at partnership working between Northern and Southern NGOs have tended to highlight the inequalities present in such relationships, with the Southern NGO invariably categorised as the poor relation in the lop-sided friendship (Gibbs et al 2000 cited by Porter 2003; Porter 2003; Reith 2010; Van Rooy & Robinson 1998). Porter’s (2003) work in Ghana highlights the frustration that many NGOs articulate at this unequal servant-master relationship, yet she also comments on how many NGOs accept these facets of clientalism in their work despite the realisation that these relations restrict the role they can play in poverty alleviation. Much of the work on international donors and civil society points to vertical relations of power, with Southern civil society very much at the bottom of, as Tvedt (1998:75) articulates, ‘a transmission belt of powerful language and of Western concepts of development’. Transnational partnerships, despite the appearance of equality, are therefore seen as potentially part of a chain of dependency inducing relationships (Fowler 2000).

The nature of these transnational relations places particular emphasis on the localness of Southern civil society groups. Local civil society is often conceived through its attachment to place and through social relations and capital that are embedded and formed in the locality. This connects with the original construction of civil society by the World Bank and through the good governance agenda, where civil society action is emphasised at the scale of the nation-state and associated with increasing decentralisation and local community participation within development processes (Abrahamsen 2004; Porter 2003; World Bank 1989). This also projects a particular territoriality to civil society, particularly community-based groups who are defined and legitimised within this transnational chain for their ability to be ‘local’, presuming that they operate through local, proximal connections, and as an avenue through which ‘the community’ can cultivate their own development projects (Jeffrey 2007; 2008; Mercer & Green 2013). This attachment to community lends civil society groups at this scale a level of credibility and it is their ‘grassrootsness’ that (partly) contributes to their legitimacy (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011).

In contrast to this verticality, scholarship on transnational and global civil society disrupts a territorially based understanding of civil society socio-spatialities by focusing on the networked nature of civil society (Keck & Sikkink 1998). Transnational civil society differs from the locally embedded NGO, described above, which are virtuous but languish at the bottom of a vertical hierarchy of power relations, entangled in complex chains of dependence (Mercer & Green 2013). The idea of transnational civil society accentuates the creation of a space of horizontal organising, the free circulation of information and involvement in global governance (Della Porta & Tarrow 2005; Holzscheiter 2016; McFarlane 2006; Pieck & Moog 2009), whilst still potentially reflecting identities connected to nation-states (Falk 1998). Davies (2008) contends that transnational civil society is comprised of groups that transcend national boundaries, but do not have global reach. The transnational networks formed by alliances of grassroots civil society groups have been viewed as opportunities for fighting both local struggles and contributing to globally progressive politics, presuming engagement with a more radical politics and a more even spread of socio-spatial relations beyond the nation-state (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; Cumbers, Routledge & Nativel 2008; Escobar 2001; Featherstone 2008; Ferguson 2006; Massey 1993; Mercer, Page & Evans 2009; Piper & Uhlin 2004; Routledge 2008). Theorisations of transnational civil society are however often critiqued for neglecting power relations, asymmetries of wealth and the significance of national borders (Doherty & Doyle 2006; Pieck & Moog 2009).

The more ambitious and ambiguous term global civil society is also prevalent in civil society literature, and is simultaneously conflicted as an ideological hope, a normative ideal and an empirical phenomenon (Chandler 2004; Dallymer 2007). Global civil society can be conceptualised as formal groups, globalist alliances and informal networks (Baker 2002). Beyond these institutional arrangements global civil society can be thought of as a product of globalisation, a consciousness movement of global citizens articulating resistance to neoliberalism and certain patterns of globalisation (Buckley 2013; Falk 1998; Kaldor 2003). These are not solely groups that are global in scale but also initiatives that have a global orientation, or as Falk (1998:100) contends ‘globalisation-from-below’, through networked actors and transnational social movements (Long 2008). This problematises the normative moral stance of global civil society, with Lipschultz (2007) arguing that global civil society is purely an extension of economic capitalism, Worth & Buckley (2009) contending it is a space for elitism, Berry & Gabay (2009) articulating parochialism within global civil society and Bergesen (2007) questioning whether a global civil society is in fact a Euro-centric model of transnationalism which excludes movements which do not fit the ‘civil’ narrative (Kaldor 2003). The spatial framing of global civil society accentuates connections between ‘global citizens’ neglecting the possibility of more vertical relations of power.

As transnationalism has become increasingly important for understanding development (Bebbington & Batterbury 2001), McFarlane (2006:35) argues that more attention needs to be paid to the ‘nature and role of transnational networks’ beyond these dominant conceptualisations. These efforts highlight the interconnected nature of civil society work and go beyond vertical dependency or flattened horizontal relations in their understandings of the way that transnationalism shapes the civil society sphere, emphasising the importance of following the varied flows and dispersions of different materials and discourses (McFarlane 2006; 2009). The transnational network has become an important development actor (Henry, Mohan & Yanacopulos 2004; McFarlane 2006: 37), with Bebbington (2004a) using a network typology for understanding NGOs and McFarlane (2009) advocating for the idea of translocal assemblages. Both articulate the need to understand development processes through the transfer and exchange of resources, materials and ideas across space, accentuating the distinct power dynamics between different sites. Bebbington & Kothari (2006:854) also demonstrate how examining development networks shows how certain patterns of knowledge and practices are sustained through space-time, arguing that to understand what NGOs do ‘it can be helpful to understand them in terms of different relationships: among individuals across different locations’. A more fluid approach to transnationalism within civil society scholarship can also be seen in the work of Baillie Smith & Jenkins (2012b) who contend that civil society activists in India employ cosmopolitan subjectivities in their work and Mercer, Page & Evans (2009) unsettle the formalised versions of transnational civil society with their explorations of the transient connections within Diasporic associations. They contrast the ephemeral relations that are part of transnational hometown associations with the rigid network framing of Diasporic civil society within policy discourse.

These bodies of work chime more readily with scholars of contentious politics, which could be described as a very particular type of civil society action, who have often used different interpretations of space to derive theories about how political change occurs (Dikec 2012). In particular, spatial theories challenge the binary between the local and the global, stressing the interconnected world we live in (Cumbers, Routledge & Nativel 2008; Massey 1994; 2005). The spatialisation of political action allows for greater recognition of the interdependence of local contestations and wider global activities, alongside acknowledgement of the less visible articulations of political activity (Davies 2012; Featherstone 2008; Kothari 2012). Rejecting a territorially dominated account of political action Featherstone (2008) argues that local politics is always made through relations across space, developing a progressive agenda in place by incorporating ideas from further afield.

Generally, scholarship on civil society within development studies, outside of the social movement arena, has less readily embraced the possibility of more fluid transnational relations, with civil society action often associated with a singular scale, and caught between a binary of locally-embedded, territorial and vertically dependent groups or a more nebulous global civil society. The spatialities and geographies in between these forms of organising need to be considered with attention paid to the multiple angles and socio-spatial topographies of civil society work. Led by Naughton’s (2014:18) proposition that ‘social capital is a lens through which to tell stories about different socio-spatial relations’, examining the social resources engaged and mobilised through civil society action provides a commentary on the socio-spatialities of civil society work. Taking Bebbington (2007) and Naughton (2014) as starting points allows us to explore how the social relations that make up civil society work challenge normative spatial constructions of civil society and how these socio-spatial relations allow some civil society groups to gain influence and power. The point here is to articulate the importance of social relations and resources in civil society work and to understand the forms and processes these relationships take, divorced from a desire to foster an environment in which this could happen. Here social relations are taken as an analytical, something to ‘think with’ about civil society and as a way to interrogate the static spatial framings that dominate civil society literature. Social capital is not conceived as a stock of civicness that can be created and accessed, rather it is thought of as the intimate set of social relations that shape civil society work. The social resources to which this chapter refers to are those between people, for example friendship, volunteering or acts of reciprocity.

## 6.3 Caribbean civil society: Beyond the local to the global

This section will consider the ways that the socio-spatial relations that make up civil society work in the Caribbean challenge the normative assumptions about transnational relations within civil society. Civil society actors place great emphasis on the importance of social relations for their day-to-day work, as Lincoln articulates:

‘Our ability to really carry out programmes is because of our network which we have built up over the last 38 years. A vast network of friends, well-wishers and supporters…’

 Lincoln, Founder Barbadian CSO, 23rd November 2015

This chapter will focus in particular on the social relations that extend beyond the proximate and the local. Whilst civil society groups in the Caribbean utilise diverse social relations some of which may be embedded in place, here I am interested in the transnational social relations that contribute to the work of seemingly local or community-based civil society groups who comprised the majority of participants in this research. The work of these groups focuses on seemingly local concerns, yet geographically distant relations are crucial to this work, going beyond the aspatiality associated with bonding, bridging and linking capital (Putnam 1993; 1995; 2000; Naughton 2014). These groups are not transnational in the sense that they are working on global issues or define themselves as part of transnational networks, yet they are utilising transnational capital to further their seemingly local causes. They are also challenging the idea that transnationalism means that they are at the bottom of a vertical chain of dependence, stressing aspects of civil society agency (McFarlane 2006). There has typically been less attention paid to the ways that local or community-based groups, whose work is often fixed in place, are also transnational and deterritorialised in nature, through relations that exhibit different forms of power and agency from the normative understandings of transnational civil society. This chapter is then interested in how seemingly place-based civil society activity is partially shaped through connections outside of and through different geographical locales, but in ways that differ from our usual understanding of transnational civil society through a focus quotidian social relations (Featherstone 2008; Massey 2005).

Attention to transnationalism is particularly important in the Caribbean context, where both contemporary and historical development is intertwined with the influence of outsiders, mobility and migration. This can be seen through the Caribbean’s colonial history, with the slave industry drawing the plantocracy and repeated waves of forced migration to the islands. More recent history highlights the importance of migration and mobility for the region, for example in the development of progressive anti-colonial politics (Skelton & Mains 2009). Many Caribbean radicals spent significant periods of time overseas, with, for example the leaders of the Grenadian revolution, Maurice Bishop and Bernard Coard, being educated and then living in London prior to their return to Grenada to form the precursor to the People’s Revolutionary Government (PRG) (Puri 2014). Movement for education and employment are important facets of Caribbean life. I was anecdotally told about the Barbadians who migrated to Panama to build the Panama Canal and the Grenadians originally from the island of Carriacou whose families now reside in Huddersfield having migrated to work in the mills. This movement has led to the development of Caribbean Diaspora communities around the world. Highlighting their mobility, a Barbadian friend once told me very seriously that he had met a fellow Bajan in Nova Scotia and not been surprised. Human attrition, mobility and migration are therefore a significant part of Caribbean life more broadly (Payne & Sutton 2001).

Whilst human mobility is important in understanding Caribbean development, the mobility associated with materials, knowledge, ideas and culture is also crucial when considering the region and its interactions with more distant places. Stuart Hall (1991) argues that the Caribbean has always been present in the UK, symbolically and materially through the sugar we cook with, the stately homes built using the profits of the slave trade and tourism advertising. Paul Gilroy (1993) articulates the double consciousness required to be both European and Black, using the metaphor of a ship crossing the (Black) Atlantic to reveal the circulation of ideas, activists and political projects, whilst scholars such as Édouard Glissant (1997) also express the importance of creole identities and articulate the syncretic uniqueness of island life (Pugh 2013). Similarly, island scholars accentuate how islands are highly mobile yet isolated and also arenas of connectivity (Baldacchino 2007; 2016; King 2009; Mountz 2015). Pugh (2013), for example, highlights how Derek Walcott’s (1974) work rejects Caribbean culture as a mimic of ‘little Africa’ or ‘little England’, seeing Caribbean carnival, folklore and religion as examples of the agency of Caribbean people to metamorphosise and create new cultural traditions. This articulates not only the importance of mobility, but also the connection it has to creativity, newness and potential (Braithwaite 1999). This emphasis on the mobility of people, ideas and culture, and the effects of mobility, remain a significant feature of Caribbean life today and inevitably shapes contemporary civil society.

The next section of the chapter will engage with the transnational nature of civil society groups in the Caribbean through the experiential accounts of the everyday social relations they foster within their work. As will be demonstrated this deviates from the dominant understanding of transnational civil society, and aims to open up the discussion about what a transnational civil society might constitute, re-articulating it as a spatial framing for thinking about civil society. It will do this by examining how transnational social relations intersect with civil society activity, and will continue by telling the stories of three types of transnational social capital utilised by civil society groups and consider how these shape civil society action. Firstly, it contends that individual mobility is integral to civil society in the Caribbean. Secondly the section will consider how connections with Diaspora groups foster a version of transnational civil society, and finally I will use the example of international volunteers as another source of transnational capital used by civil society groups.

## 6.4 Articulating social relations: What counts as transnational civil society?

### 6.4.1 Personal mobility

The social relations on which civil society relies are often embedded within pre-existing social structures, for example drawing on social resources within a religious community or through particular cultural connections and capital (Bourdieu 1986), but this does not imply that these social connections are solely based on territorial relations. These social resources, including friendships and close family relations that stimulate civil society activity, are not bound by locale, but extend beyond the boundaries of the nation-state to friends and family living overseas, with the geographies of these relations shaping how civil society action plays out in place. Personal mobility is also an important aspect of civil society work, a way of developing social and human capital and playing a role in shaping political subjectivities and building civil society activity (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; 2012b; 2016; Davies 2014; Nagel & Staeheli 2016; Staeheli, Marshall & Maynard 2016).

Urry & Sheller (2006) argue that mobility plays a key role in many aspects of our lives and that our world can be interpreted as one of objects in motion and of flows of knowledge and ideas. Work within the mobilities paradigm has incorporated the large-scale movement of people, objects and capital and more everyday local movement practice in across varying spatiotemporal scales, for example cycling (Spinney 2011), or moving home (Coulter, van Hamm & Findlay 2016). This body of work also considers forced and blocked mobilities (and immobilities), highlighting that mobility is co-constitutive of social difference, for example through gender, age and race (Buscher & Urry 2009). Mobilities therefore shape and define identities through bodily movement, communication and virtual travel (Urry 2007). Within the political context mobility has often been considered in the ways in which mobile subjects may shape political and social processes (Boccagni, Lafleur & Levitt 2016; Smith 2008). Concern with the movement of the non-human has extended considerations of how knowledge, ideas and policy flow and are actively channelled through particular relational complexes and in turn sustain and modify the original concept (Bebbington & Kothari 2006; Laurie, Andolina & Radcliffe 2003; Peck & Theodore 2012). This highlights the instability of many of these flows and the way that objects, knowledge and ideas change through circulation and the practices associated with making a thing mobile (Cochrane & Ward 2012; Larner & Laurie 2010).

For civil society actors personal mobility, including education in the Global North (Nagel & Staeheli 2016) and participation in international events (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2016; Staeheli, Marshall & Maynard 2016) shapes their engagement with civil society. Nagel & Staeheli (2016) articulate how Western education and wider student experiences shape how Lebanese NGO activists produce environmental discourses that are reminiscent of Western ideas about the civic virtues and behaviours promoted by green space, which then feature in their own environmental activism. The role of international travel in producing particular subjectivities and forms of capital can also be seen in the influence that international events have on civil society, with Nagel & Staeheli (2015) highlighting the production of young global citizens through participation in transnational citizenship conferences and Baillie Smith & Jenkins (2011; 2012b; 2016) showing how international events are often conceived as key moments in activist biographies, broadening their horizons and developing their human capital.

This resonates with the story Colin told me, of the inspiration he found to develop his organisation by studying in Canada:

‘Four years ago I went to study policy because I have a Masters in engineering but I went to study policy…Well to be straight my supervisor was an agricultural economist in Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan grows food. It’s as simple as that, it grows wheat and barley and all sorts of good things so I ended up in agriculture because that was where she was from and where the money was available…I got interested in food security because its agriculture, there’s always a food conference going on…So I tended to go to lots of conferences on food security and some of them were with some people from the Caribbean. It sparked my interest and when I came back [to Barbados] that was it, day 3, I was with a friend and she had a friend and we were in the car, we were talking about this thing and then we met every week for about 4 months just to put together the organisation.’

 Colin, Founder Barbadian CSO, 25th September 2015

Colin’s educational experience outside of Barbados is rooted in numerous geographies. Firstly, Saskatchewan University has links with the University of the West Indies, and as Colin comments, a network of students from the Caribbean. Saskatchewan is a rural heavily agricultural province in Northern Canada, with the university renowned for agriculture and food expertise. Engagement with these forms of knowledge, and with other Caribbean students there, influenced the way Colin thought about his civil society work and subsequently developed his organisation. For him the exposure to thinking about food security in particular ways was a key moment in the evolution of his civil society group, with these ideas becoming reworked as he began to operationalise food security practices in the Barbadian context (Cochrane & Ward 2012), in a similar way to the importance of international events articulated by the activists interviewed by Baillie Smith & Jenkins (2011; 2016). Other participants also spoke of the influential nature of international travel on their subsequent activism, including youth conferences and trips overseas and the loss they felt when this was no longer a viable option, as Pam explains about her experiences of connecting with other Caribbean activists outside of Grenada:

‘The women’s’ movement in the region grew out of that networking and that opportunity for sharing experiences. You might have heard of CAFRA [the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action]…that was a university without walls. It was real. I mean my own growth out of that process. I remember when we used to have those CaribPEDA [the Caribbean people’s development agency] meetings for example, when you came from a CaribPEDA meeting you knew the region...From Belize to Guyana, we came together and the richness of those discussions and those dialogues… It was in fact a university without walls. We've lost that and we've lost that largely and, it’s a chicken and egg situation, because the funding situation, but again we have lost that largely [due to] the human capacity that built not just in the leaders, in the second level and third level. We were not able and I think we should acknowledge that there was a weakness in the succession planning… It’s a real challenge but that needs to happen because I dare say the Caribbean civil society is weaker for not having. So it’s the lack of regional civil society organisations or opportunities for CSOs to come together is a deficit for the region, it is definitely a deficit.’

 Pam, Founder Grenadian CSO, 1st February 2016

This shows that personal mobility for civil society actors is highly precarious, fluid and contextual, situated within wider geopolitical and developmental processes (Nagel & Staeheli 2015; 2016). Pam highlights the importance of travelling around the Caribbean region and connecting with other activists for developing civil society in Grenada, but she also reflects that this is largely an activity from the past, with regional connections dismantled through loss of funding and impacted on by the changing context of Caribbean regionalism. The disconnections felt within the Caribbean as a region at the time of the research are reflected in Pam’s comments, with the tensions in Caribbean regional integration (Bishop & Payne 2010; Grenade & Skeete 2015) reflected in the disconnections of civil society actors on different islands and the loss of the social capital produced through these connections in previous decades. This also echoes Barbadian author George Lamming’s experience of disconnection between islands of the Caribbean at the expense of connections with (former) colonial powers, showing how relations between places can be constructed by the presence of relations with dominant others (Scott 2002).

Other participants also spoke of periods of time overseas as a catalyst for their subsequent involvement in civil society. This was articulated in many different ways, including as Colin and Pam suggested an opportunity to bring back knowledge and ideas they had gained outside of the island, but also as a way of giving back and reconnecting with the region after a time away. For some participants civil society involvement was a way of embedding themselves back in the Caribbean, and a chance to be part of island life and ecology, as David comments: ‘When the group was formed I was overseas. When I arrived in Grenada in late 2009 I was briefed on what the group intended to do. I'll say well yes I could be part of that because for me personally I like the passion of being in nature, natural resources I love that, so I joined the group in late 2009…’ (David, Director Grenadian CSO, 12th February 2016).

These connections with overseas travel build the social capital of various civil society groups, for example David’s desire to reconnect with the Caribbean provided his group with social capital in the form of his passion, skills and drive. It must be remembered that there is a politics to this mobility (Adey 2006), with overseas travel and study not available to all, and mobility often bounded within geopolitical networks of contemporary and historical connections and wider societal trends, producing particular patterns of transnational mobility (Davies 2014; Dodge & Kitchin 2005; Nagel & Staeheli 2016). The benefits gained by overseas travel are also dependent on the relative immobility of others. Returning to Colin’s example he articulates how the place-based connections of one of his friends assisted in the formation of this organisation: ‘[Claire] gives the culture, she knows the communities, because she works in culture. So she knows the communities which is one of the other reasons why it’s not been as difficult getting into the communities because she has a level of legitimacy, she knows musicians, she knows artists, so she’s already in the community’ (Colin, Founder Barbadian CSO, 25th September 2015).

Colin juxtaposes his time studying overseas with the place-based connections of another member of his group that are simultaneously required to make his work successful, drawing on both transnational and much more local relations to shape his engagement with the community he works with. This contrasts with the tendency to view transnational relations as the most significant and progressive within civil society organising, articulating the interconnections and merits of both local and the transnational social relations (Mercer, Page & Evans 2009). Spending time overseas offers the opportunity for Caribbean civil society actors to gain knowledge and ideas, but as in David’s example civil society work can also be seen as a way of returning to the community they left, with periods of time overseas stimulating a desire to contribute on their return, building the social capital of civil society. Transnational personal mobility therefore must be understood as source of capital and power for some civil society groups and a way of gaining advantage (Naughton 2014), but not one that is available to all, having the potential to aid some groups to the potential detriment of others (Massey 1994). It is also precarious and reliant on wider geopolitical circumstances, and not necessarily always available to all (Nagel & Staeheli 2016). This travel is entangled with historical and geopolitical narratives of Caribbean mobility, and represents a politics of opportunity in the development of civil society activity, with overseas mobility having the potential to aid the resources civil society actors are able to bring to the sector, but also promote particular versions of what sustainable development may encompass (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; 2012b; 2016; Nagel & Staeheli 2016).

### 6.4.2 Diaspora connections

Whilst understanding that the transnational personal mobility of civil society actors can play a part in shaping civil society action, the migration of Caribbean nationals on a more permanent, although sometimes fluid, basis also shapes Caribbean civil society. Diaspora groups are now increasingly recognised as development actors, accompanied by a sense of complexity to their role (Mullings 2012). Mercer, Page & Evans (2008; 2009) challenge assumptions about the greater power of the Diaspora compared to more localised relations in the activities of home town associations in Tanzania, Budabin (2014) articulates the difficulty Diaspora groups may have gaining political access, whilst Mohan (2006) argues that Diaspora groups in Ghana are embedded in a place-based affinity that is reluctant to challenge an overbearing state. Civil society actors in the Caribbean are actively maintaining and developing relations with Caribbean nationals in the Diaspora to support their work, going beyond financial connections to social relations to support civil society. This was particularly apparent in Grenada, perhaps related to economic differences and greater and more diverse outmigration patterns, but the deterritorialised nature of civil society was also visible in Barbados, with civil society groups drawing in ‘international friends’ without using the language of Diaspora. These transnational connections are not evenly spread around the globe, but unsurprisingly follow patterns of Caribbean migration, with connections more likely in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Australia, reinforcing ideas of transnationalism that is bounded by particular networks of mobility associated with historical geopolitical connections, rather than the assumption that transnationalism produces an even spread of connections around the world (Dodge & Kitchin 2005; Mercer, Page & Evans 2009).

The governments of many Caribbean nations are also now actively fostering relations with their Diaspora communities to engage them in primarily entrepreneurial economic development in their ‘home’ countries (Hosein, Franklin & Joseph 2006; Mullings 2012; Nurse 2015). In publicity material produced by the Government of Barbados for their annual Diaspora conference encouraging Diaspora entrepreneurship in the country, the Diaspora is discursively positioned as wealthy elites, whom the nation should be proud of and the opposition party in Grenada has identified involving the Diaspora in development as one of their twelve core principles (Government of Barbados 2013b; The Barbados Advocate 2016; The New Today 2016). Less attention however is paid to the social involvement of the Diaspora in civil society and utilising Diaspora knowledge, skills and social resources in the building of civil society. Civil society actors are using their pre-existing connections with the Diaspora to aid their cause, which may be based on geographical ties to particular places, personal connections to those who have moved overseas and more recently through the use of crowd-funded projects that directly appeal to Diaspora communities. Civil society actors felt that Diaspora engagement in their work provided it with particular status and kudos, with these social relations imbuing their work with greater cultural capital and potentially altering the group’s identity, as Felix comments regarding persuading the state to allow his group to advance a particular project: ‘If I could get that commitment…and say yes the members of the Diaspora are willing to help…I think it would go down much nicer’ (Felix, President Grenadian CSO, 2nd March 2016).

Other civil society groups also connected with the Diaspora to aid their own engagement with the state, gaining advantage through their social ties with people living overseas (Naughton 2014). On occasions civil society actors would encourage their colleagues in the Diaspora to lobby their embassies or high commissions about issues of concern, often on behalf of civil society groups in the Caribbean. Civil society groups often perceived the Diaspora as having a particular form of power and influence. They were often conceived as members of society who have done well, or the best students who had been offered scholarships abroad to study, with the less successful members of society left behind on the island. The Diaspora are therefore perceived as high-status and influential groups and individuals as Herbert explains:

‘Over the years we have had a member in New York, we have [a member] in Canada and we just have a new contact in the UK, a gentleman by the name [Walter]. [Walter]… is due here in May and we want to talk in detail with him. He is giving us some pointers in order to raise funds. But [Leonard] is one of our early contacts…and we have been in correspondence over the year [about] how he can assist the foundation…. He was instrumental in motivating us to have a website that can serve as a marketing tool. It was his idea and we managed to successfully do that and also to institute a PayPal account and it was through his initiative.’

 Herbert, Founder Grenadian CSO, 2nd March 2016

These social relations described by Herbert provided significant advantages to his group. With the assistance of an interested member of the Diaspora they had been able to develop their website and utilise a PayPal account to increase their revenue, providing access to valuable resources (Bourdieau 1986). This is not a connection between civil society groups as might be articulated in the grassroots alliances of global civil society (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; Della Porta & Tarrow 2005), rather it is a personal relationship with an individual in the Diaspora who was keen to contribute to the workings of a civil society group in Grenada. The relationship began with a letter written to a Grenadian newspaper by Walter regarding the workings of Herbert’s group. The letter questioned how connected the group were to the Grenadian Diasporas around the world, and how these communities could be of further use to Herbert’s group. In his response Herbert welcomed these suggestions and set about developing a personal relationship with Walter, utilising Walter’s ideas and knowledge about how to develop their work. In his response, again published in a national newspaper, Herbert comments on the personal and uneven nature of his group’s Diaspora connections, remarking that they had previously had very little engagement with the UK Grenadian Diaspora, as none of their group’s members had any contact with relatives or personal friends in the United Kingdom.

Diaspora contributions to civil society groups go beyond financial resources to the crafting new ideas and in some cases raising awareness of Caribbean issues overseas. In Walter’s original article to the newspaper he highlights the diverse ways in which the Diaspora may be able to help Caribbean civil society groups, with many of these ideas implicitly connected to his knowledge and familiarity with the UK, and the post-colonial connections between the UK and Grenada, for example offering to contact the Grenadian High Commissioner in London and Lewis Hamilton, who has Grenadian ancestry. Other participants also echoed Herbert’s proactivity in building relations with members of the Diaspora. Trevor, the co-founder of another Grenadian community-based group explained to me in detail the significance of the Diaspora for sustaining his group’s work, and the efforts his group have made to foster and maintain these connections:

‘[The Diaspora] has contributed significantly. In fact, we work hard in terms of developing. What we did was we developed, for example, the New York connection. Villagers who have gone to New York and live right so what we do was to develop relationships with them to see how they can support things that happen back home…. From time to time we have major activities some of them would try to come home for that activity….You get their support and still keeping your connection overseas and them as a community inside of New York. We have tried to develop several of these, some people might call them different names, the politicians might call them cells, so for example in the UK, in all the key places we think our people reside we try to make that connection. We say listen you need to stay in touch with us. In Canada, I remember one year they were dumping chairs and tables but…I say listen why you dumping when we need these back home…They said OK we can ship them and we were able to use them back here in the schools. Sometimes we got computers, all these through the connections. Even in the Caribbean, Barbados is important too. We picked up in all these countries where we figured there was lots of our people residing. We established a relationship… Facebook is also important; how we keep in touch with them. Whenever we have a death, this is what is happening and they know, they can see we post the pictures and feel part of that connection so it’s very, very important.’

 Trevor, Founder Grenadian CSO, 7th March 2016

These narratives of connecting with the Diaspora also articulate the uneven circulation of power between Diaspora groups and local civil society groups. Walter projected the potential power within the Diaspora through the connections he can make use of in the UK, which Grenadian civil society have not thought about or may not have the capital to access. Diaspora members are perceived as bringing forms of social capital with them, through their contacts, status, knowledge and skills. This can be seen in the way that civil society groups reach out to the Diaspora for support, actively making links with them, and relying on them for one of their income streams, as Trevor also comments. But local civil society groups are not solely dependent on Diaspora groups, there is also a sense from civil society groups that they function as a channel through which the Diaspora can maintain their Caribbean connections. In Trevor’s comments there is a sense that his group’s connections with the Diaspora also provide the Diaspora with important avenues to stay connected to ‘home’, and as an opportunity to build the Diaspora community overseas. The social relations go beyond purely assisting the group with financial or other types of support, the group’s Facebook page also provides an important avenue for Trevor’s group to communicate about community life to the Diaspora, maintaining some of their connections to this community. This two-way connection was also exemplified by Alyson’s comments. Her group utilised Diaspora engagement in a different way. During a participatory planning exercise with her local community Alyson also solicited the thoughts of Diaspora to incorporate their ideas into community development, as she explains here:

‘We set up the information via the Internet and the Diaspora responded and they started to remember things too and then send information and the list grew even bigger and took on a life of its own.’

 Alyson, Founder Grenadian CSO, 5th February 2016

These examples show that the Diaspora are important transnational social resources for civil society groups, producing potential advantages through lobbying the state and providing access to different resources, knowledge and skills, enhancing bonding, bridging and linking forms of capital (Szreter & Woolcock 2004). But these connections are not aspatial and are associated with uneven geographies. Civil society actors in Grenada were more deeply engaged with their Diaspora compared to groups in Barbados, possibly due to historical and contemporary political and economic circumstances. Diaspora connections are also not evenly spread geographically with groups emphasising their connections in the United States, Canada and the UK, showing how the development of different forms of social capital is situated both historically and geographically (Bebbington 2007; Schuller 2007). We can only make sense of this form of social capital through an understanding of the geopolitical narratives that surround the Caribbean Diaspora and their diverse relations with different Caribbean islands. These forms of social capital are also entangled with power (Naughton 2014), as it circulates between Diaspora members and civil society, in one sense civil society groups are reliant on Diaspora for social capital, yet there is also a sense that being involved in Caribbean civil society offers something to members of the Diaspora. This was also the case for civil society actors who had returned, often temporarily or for transient periods, to the Caribbean from living overseas. In my discussions with these individuals it was apparent that they felt they could draw on their experiences overseas to develop Caribbean civil society groups, adding their knowledge and expertise, and contributing to the development of the island, but civil society activities also provided a way of becoming (re) connected to the Caribbean and making friends and other social contacts.

### 6.4.3 International volunteers

The final set of transnational relations I would like to examine here is that of international volunteers. Whilst the literature has detailed the sometimes contradictory impacts of volunteer tourism, ‘voluntourism’, on the volunteers and their host communities (Baillie Smith et al 2013; McLennan 2014; Scheyvens 2011), there is agreement that both the concept and the industry have grown and diversified exponentially over the last two decades (Wearing & McGehee 2013). Whilst there are now a variety of definitions of voluntourism, Wearing’s (2001:1) definition resonates most easily with the type of voluntourism used by civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada, in which volunteer tourists are understood as ‘those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organised way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments, or research into aspects of society or environment’. This was the case here with some civil society groups running voluntourism programmes for between two and eight weeks to work on specific projects and develop skills associated with their work. Studies have detailed the evolution of voluntourism, the motivations and experiences of volunteers and the role of commercial operators (Wearing & McGehee 2013), but less attention has been paid to how civil society groups and non-governmental organisations make use of voluntourists in their work. Talking about the importance of international volunteers for their group Rachel articulates how her group would not survive without this source of capital:

‘Without them (volunteers) we wouldn't run basically… Most of the islands do it, I know Barbados run projects, Tobago…do the same. It’s how they get their money and keep going and how they keep going to do the actual work. So I know we couldn't do the work that we do without the volunteers. There aren’t many Grenadians that are going to come forward and volunteer for you. You need to get people who are willing to volunteer but they can't make that commitment, it’s hard work, it’s tough.’

Rachel, Director Grenadian, 15th February 2016

Rachel places international volunteers in direct contrast with local Grenadians, viewing them as a form of capital which Grenada itself can’t provide. The ease of mobility, and implicitly the wealth required to engage in international volunteering, differentiates this social capital and enables some civil society groups to actively tap into this resource for their work. There are also geographies to these connections, with civil society groups run by non-Caribbean nationals seemingly more engaged in networks of international volunteers than ‘indigenous’ organisations. One participant explained that he felt that his ‘Westerness’, knowledge of gap year tendencies and understanding of parental desire for their children to do something meaningful on their gap years enabled him to target the experiences his group was able to offer appropriately for this market. This understanding of the shifting nature of tourism was also articulated by Cindy, the founder of another organisation that utilised international volunteers as a source of social and financial capital: ‘I think people are tired of just sitting by a pool or reading a book for the whole entire week they're gone, they need some of that but they like to learn more than even work, they like to learn.’ (Cindy, Founder Grenadian CSO, 13th February 2016). Cindy’s voluntourism project is called Vacation for Change and it assists her and her colleague Lucy to run their civil society group that supports cocoa farmers in Grenada. She explained the importance of volunteers for her organisation in more detail, articulating the social resources, the contacts and support they bring over the importance of their labour or financial capital:

‘Oh Vacation for Change, that’s been great. …We had 6 French pastry chefs who contacted us. They wanted to [come] because they work with chocolate so much they wanted to see where it comes from. We didn't make that much because it was so intense with 6 people, but probably $1000. [Lucy] always thinks they're going to pick the cocoa, she said it was like babysitting, they'd run over and say Lucy “how’s this pod” and she'd be like “just crack it open and keep going”. If we go in with that mentality, [that] we're not really going to get a lot of work out it... And also if they go back, the word of mouth that’s great... Having run a business, we built our business on word of mouth and that’s so important, it really is.’

 Cindy, Founder Grenadian CSO, 13th February 2016

It is the financial, social and cultural capital that international volunteers bring with them that civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada are looking to utilise in their work. This is not just about bringing physical labour with them; it is also about promoting the cause when they return home, increasing the group’s contacts overseas and raising awareness of the concerns of the civil society group. The skills and knowledge they learn through volunteering with civil society groups leave with them and extend the way concerns pertinent to Caribbean development are thought about overseas. These transnational connections are also rooted in understandings of the Caribbean as a place of relative safety, environmental uniqueness and an island paradise, something projected by civil society groups in their promotional material and contributing to the way that patterns of transnational mobility are discursively constituted (Frello 2008; Sheller 2003), meaning that these forms of social capital are situated by their connections to the tourism industry and how different Caribbean islands are constructed by this industry. They are also situated within particular types of civil society activity, with some groups, particularly those concerned with marine resources more able to harness the potential offered by voluntourism than those groups whose work focuses elsewhere. Whilst these seem to be the most common arrangements for voluntourism, Pam also commented on the presence of a different type of international volunteer in her organisation:

‘We have currently three volunteers from the Global Ministry of the United Church in the USA and they're with us for two years so that again is a networking relationship we have for human resources.’

 Pam, Founder Grenadian CSO, 1st February 2016

Deviation away from the more usual types of voluntourism opportunities was also raised through my presence. In the methods section of this thesis I highlighted how some civil society groups in the Caribbean used me as a form of capital. This also extended to the realm of voluntourism with one group keen for me to help them develop their connections with students in the UK who may want to come and volunteer in the Caribbean as part of or after their studies, particularly those with a background in International Development. The group had recognised that the social ties they had formed with me as a researcher could potentially enable them to build greater social capital through the use of my connections with a UK university. In our initial discussions about how to facilitate this proposal the group developed an outline of what they could offer volunteers. A key aspect of this was the safe nature of volunteering in the Caribbean, the opportunity to volunteer ‘in paradise’, the chance to see a different side to the Caribbean and also the need to find alternative ways of developing due to the loss of preferential agricultural trade conditions. The opportunities for civil society groups to build transnational social capital through voluntourism are reliant to some extent on the way that the Caribbean has been discursively created as a ‘place’ and the very particular merits of volunteering there. These examples show how the ability of civil society groups to access and build their social resources through transnational connections is constructed through a myriad of different factors, including the personal histories and biographies of civil society actors, for example Pam’s faith promoting connections with volunteers from the Global Ministry of the United Church, and civil society groups run by ‘Westerners’ acknowledging that their ‘Westerness’ enables them easier access to the voluntourism market, again stressing how social capital is situated, not just historically or geographically (Bebbington 2007), but also in the personal biographies of these actors.

This sense of different forms of transnational social relations, each imbued with uneven circulations of power and entangled with historical, political and contemporary economic processes does not resonate with framings of transnational civil society described by Davies (2008) or of a wider idea of global civil society articulated through globalised grassroots alliances (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; Cumbers, Routledge & Nativel 2008). Yet neither do these descriptions fit with the idea of local civil society at the bottom of a transnational hierarchy. By exploring the social connections that contribute to civil society we can understand civil society work as both ‘intensive, yet also spatially extensive’ (Davies 2012:283). This goes beyond groups being influenced by political action elsewhere as described by Featherstone (2008; 2010; 2012) in his work on solidarity, but it is the social resources, the emotional support, the ideas and the encouragement that goes beyond the boundaries of the nation-state, articulating the prospect that local civil society groups, despite calling themselves community-based groups, sustain their work through spatially extensive connections. Civil society action is shaped by these diverse transnational connections in a variety of ways. We have seen how personal mobility can be instrumental in stimulating a desire for engagement with civil society on return to the Caribbean, how social relations with members of the Diaspora shape group identity and encourage engagement with the state and how links with international volunteers allow civil society groups to do their work, providing both labour and social contacts elsewhere. These social relations resonate to some extent with forms of bonding, bridging and linking capital, but also articulate the diversity of social relations that sustain civil society work, and a need to understand the sometimes very personal stories associated with the formation of social capital, rather than seeing social capital as a stock resource that is available to all (Naughton 2014). These social relations are also embedded within very particular geographies, including patterns of Caribbean migration and mobility, the way that the Caribbean is promoted through the tourism industry and different possibilities for civil society groups run by internationals, who are seemingly more able to access voluntourism opportunities.

This chapter has told the stories of everyday socio-spatial relations in civil society work, which have often challenged pre-existing ideas about how civil society should be thought about from a transnational perspective. There has been a tendency to down play the complex dynamic geographies of civil society groups in favour of more static understandings. The transnational nature of civil society is often considered in the vertical hierarchical models of civil society where local civil society groups are understood through their uni-directional dependency relations with international donors, or through the distinct frameworks of transnational and global civil society that limit the importance of the nation state and emphasise horizontal organising and informal relations (Davies 2008; Della Porta & Tarrow 2005; Doherty & Doyle 2006; Kaldor 2003). Exploring the socio-spatial relations associated with civil society work predominantly conducted by local and community-based groups in the Caribbean, highlights the importance of diverse transnational connections. This research therefore calls into question what the notions of transnational civil society might mean and who these conceptualisations might exclude. It also highlights how transnational relations are imbued with flows of power something global civil society scholarship is critiqued for neglecting (Naughton 2014). A focus on social relations encourages consideration of civil society as more interconnected than many community-based framings allow, beyond those that are situated within global grassroots alliances (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011). These interconnections are however geographically, historically, politically and personally situated (Bebbington 2007; Schuller 2007), with civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada exhibiting different transnational social connections, based on their differing histories of migration and mobility and personal activist biographies.

## 6.5 Conclusion: Rethinking transnational civil society

Telling the stories of the everyday social relations that contribute to civil society organising in the Caribbean contrasts with the dominant ways that transnationalism has been considered in the context of civil society. These stories of social capital show that the transnational aspects of civil society encompass the individual mobility of civil society actors, Diasporic connections and voluntourism. This provides a deterritorialised sense of domestic civil society, but one that is distinct from the notion of a global civil society or transnational civil society defined by Kaldor (2003) or Davies (2008). These relations are not of ‘grassroots globalisation’ or horizontal organising or alliances between social movements, rather they are also imbued with power, and show the diversity of transnational social relations that contribute to civil society activity. These stories also show how the everyday endeavours of civil society groups are permeated by transnationalism (Conradson & Latham 2005).

Examining these social relations shows how civil society activity and contemporary sustainable development is attached to wider historical and contemporary geopolitical transformations, in particular the role geopolitics has played in mobility and migration patterns in the Caribbean, and how spatial understandings of civil society are not just formed in the present, but also made through historical processes. Exploring the everyday narratives of the social resources used by civil society groups has shown that traditional understandings do not fully account for the transnational aspects of civil society, opening up what categories such as transnational civil society might mean and highlighting the agency involved in spatialising civil society (McFarlane, 2006; Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge, 2012). The next chapter of this thesis will build on this idea of agency to consider how circulations of money shape ideas of responsibility within civil society work.

Efforts to focus on the interconnectedness of civil society can be understood as a political process and as an attempt to produce alternative narratives of what civil society might look like (Herod & Wright 2002). The transnationalism associated with civil society within development discourse makes complexity simple, enables the formation of a universal model and something to work towards, rendering civil society technical (Ferguson 1994; Murray Li 2013). In this process the structural limits on civil society formation are neglected and these dominant versions of transnationalism do not do justice to an understanding of civil society that acknowledges the less visible relations through which most of its work is conducted and sustained. This focus on the messy social relations makes the international donor less visible and potentially reduces their importance for civil society action. Engaging with the more complex transnational social relations that are part of civil society reveals new possibilities for action, for example in this case through Diaspora relations, and contributes to explaining why some groups and ideas become more influential than others. Hearing and telling the stories of everyday social relations and privileging less coherent versions of the socio-spatialities of civil society work allows civil society to be thought of as something that is always in process, it is not fixed or static, but as something that is interstitial, fluid and unfinished. Led by Massey (2005; 2009 et al) this notion of untapped potential and connections yet to be made fosters hope for ongoing, creative and resilient civil society.

# 7. Changing responsibilities: Vulnerable entrepreneurialism?

## 7.1 Introduction

Civil society groups in the Eastern Caribbean are attempting to craft different futures through their everyday practices as they engage in the diverse processes that contribute to sustainable development. The previous chapter outlined how the social relations that are part of civil society work challenge the normative spatial logics of civil society organising. Instead of conforming to the dominant understandings of transnationalism within civil society scholarship these social relations project a sense of more personal and contextualised alliances that open up the possibilities of new relationships that contribute to civil society. Whilst the previous chapter considered the social relations implicit in everyday civil society experiences, this chapter concentrates on the flows of an important material good, money.

Money and the wider economic circuits in which it is embedded are crucial to civil society work, and form a substantial part of the day-to-day challenges of sustaining civil society activity. Money is recognised as an important component for changing the future. It can be used proactively to achieve desires and aims, but it also embodies insecurity, unpredictability and risk (Ferguson 2015; Green et al 2012). If money is seen as a crucial apparatus for the doing of development, the way that money is obtained and used asks questions about who decides what counts as development and who decides how this development should be enacted – in essence asking questions of responsibility. This chapter will firstly show how money has been conceptualised as a social process, and a lens through which to consider wider social practices. There are connections here with the previous chapter, as money is also embedded within diverse social relations, which may cross scalar and territorial boundaries. Whilst financial interactions also contribute to the diverse spatialities and geographies of civil society activity, this chapter focuses on the way in which money interacts with notions of responsibility within development practice. The chapter will then explore the literature on responsibility, money and development, arguing that dominant narratives project civil society actors as passive subjects within financial processes, with responsibility for development situated in the hands of international donors and in the Global North.

Empirical material based on the everyday experiences of Caribbean civil society actors demonstrates how civil society groups are moving away from these dominant discourses and entering into more entrepreneurial financial interactions. They do this by creating diverse networks of different funders and using innovative funding methods, which brings with it both opportunities and insecurities. By engaging in this entrepreneurial spirit civil society actors are reclaiming responsibility for development and shaping civil society action in the Eastern Caribbean.

## 7.2 Money as a social process

Traditional scholarship has associated money with homogeneity, detachment from social relations and a rational market (Leyshon & Thrift 1997; Zelizer 1997). Theorising the social nature of money is now taking greater precedent, with the importance of attending to the embedded and relational nature of economic activity and the contextual social relations and geographies that comprise financial arrangements now being articulated (Pollard 2007). This paradigmatic shift means that money is no longer seen as impersonal and homogenous; rather it is a social process, comprising of multiple forms of money each entangled in varying social relations and practices (Corbridge, Martin & Thrift 1994; Leyshon & Thrift 1997; Zelizer 1997; 2011; 2012), as Dodd (2012:294) comments ‘money…is a process through which various kinds of human association are actively created and valued’and it is an emotionally meaningful object in contemporary life. The way we understand money must therefore go beyond the realms of the economic and explore its meanings, values and social life (Desforges 2001; Dodd 2012).

Money is therefore considered an active artifact intertwined with social processes. Hornborg (2014; 2017) differentiates the agency of money as an object with money as an element of social interactions. He contends that it is not money itself that has agency but rather that money has consequences that evolve from the features that are given to it by human agents, highlighting the agency of humans to transform money, rather than the materiality of money being solely responsible for human social relations. In this vein money is thought of as constituted both in and by a number of social practices and plays a substantive role in the creation of complex social relations (Guyer 2004; Hornborg 2014; 2017; Jones & Murphy 2010; Leyshon & Thrift 1997; Pollard et al 2016; Zelizer 1997; 2011; 2012), including as I contend here, responsibilities. The chapter will now move on to explore how civil society groups are positioned in relation to development financing and how this reflects ideas of responsibility. Firstly it will consider dominant narratives that project civil society groups as passive recipients of development funding and then secondly it will examine how civil society are being reconceived as more active, entrepreneurial agents in financial interactions.

## 7.3 Civil society organisations: Passive recipients of development financing

Significant amounts of money flow through third sector organisations and civil society groups are important economic actors (O’Reilly 2011). When thinking about civil society and money, the economy has predominantly been conceptualised through ‘Western’ viewpoints by concentrating on, for example international flows, aid and remittances with less attention paid to the economic systems of development that arise from the Global South and how systems of aid are contested and negotiated (Pollard et al 2009). The geographies of development finance, and particularly the studies directed at civil society have concentrated on the flows of foreign aid and its effects (Bebbington 2004a; Mitlin, Hickey & Bebbington 2007), the regulation and delegitmisation of organisations associated with foreign funding (Dupuy, Ron & Prakash 2015), and the increased professionalisation driven by the demands of increasingly neoliberal donor-agencies (Mawdsley et al 2002). Responsibility within these financial endevours has predominantly been located in the Global North or with international donor agencies, downplaying considerations of the way that money is negotiated, collected and used, the social processes involved and the agency and entrepreneurialism of civil society actors. Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge (2012) argue that these dominant discourses project a passivity to the Southern development actor and see development as a process that is embedded within power geometries that deny and strangulate Southern actors in their claims to responsibility, potentially rearticulating development as a contemporary version of colonial hegemony (Noxolo 2006; Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge 2012; Power 2009), as Massey (2004:10; 2005) comments ‘responsibility derives from those relations through which identity is constructed’.

There has been substantial interest in the interactions between international donors and civil society, with donor funding often seen as responsible for the building of particular civil society landscapes, and the aid system is considered a powerful force shaping civil society in a number of complex ways (Aliyev 2015; Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Bloodgood & Tremblay-Boire 2017; Jammulamadaka 2012; Jakobsen & Sanovich 2010), including organisational formation, language spoken and programmatic focus (Bebbington 2004a; Kamstra & Schulpen 2015; Mawdsley et al 2002). Donor funding also changes whom civil society is responsible to, decoupling groups from the communities they work with (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; 2012b; Choudry & Kapoor 2013; Fagan 2005; Henderson 2002; Mawdsley et al 2002). Civil society organisations are conceptualised at the bottom of the aid chain, they are reliant on foreign aid and the whims of donors, with increasing pressure to be upwardly rather than downwardly accountable (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015). This places NGO accountability firmly in the domain of donors, and civil society as a subservient part of the aid industry (Amagoh 2015; Beauclerk 2011). It is claimed that this has two effects on the responsibilities of CSOs. Firstly, it makes them more responsible and accountable to donors and the mechanisms they use to demonstrate these features of their work. Secondly, it has the effect of making civil society groups less responsible to their constituents as they become drawn into the web of responsibility that promotes the international donor agency as the primary source (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015).

This minimising of civil society agency within development financing is also reflected in the imagined geographies of North and South prevalent in development discourses. The Global North and South are often imagined through contemporary and historical processes, such as colonial relations and conceptualisations of what constitutes modernity, rather than referring to concrete geographical categories (Sharp & Briggs 2006; Williams, Meth & Willis 2014). Within the spatialised discourses of the (neo) colonial imaginings of development the Global North accepts and relishes responsibility for ‘developing’ an implicitly inferior Global South (Noxolo 2006; Pickerill 2009; Power 2009). These divisions between North and South are problematic and have been critiqued for not reflecting the changing development landscape to incorporate relatively new development actors, such as China and Brazil and the responses of ‘traditional’ donors (Mawdsley 2013; 2017), yet they still remain regularly used development categories, with traditional donor countries still wielding considerable power (Mawdsley 2017).

Even when the language of Southern agency and ownership are employed power and responsibility can still reside predominantly in the Global North, reinforcing hegemonic global relations and normalising the global hierarchy (Dogra 2012; Pickerill 2009; Reith 2010). It is this paternalistic embodiment of responsibility and with it the reductive, external and asymmetrical nature of development that has been at the core of many post-colonially informed critiques of development interventions. Power (2009) for example, considers the introduction of Mozambique into the Commonwealth as an opportunity for the Commonwealth to be responsible for and over post-colonial Africa and embodied British responsibilities to development in Africa, whilst Noxolo (2006) critiques the father-child discourse in DFID’s conceptualisation of partnerships for development. Here Noxolo (2006) contends that it is the mutuality of development, the way that the ‘first world’ is constituted, sustained and reinforced by their relations with the ‘third world’, that is overlooked through DFID’s development partnerships, whilst Power (2009) argues that Britain is recognised and secures influence through its development work.

A relational approach to the geographies of responsibility has tended to place responsibility in the hands of actors from the Global North (Darling 2009; Massey 2006; Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge 2012), in an attempt to mobilise ethical actions, whether this is through the recognition of the exploitation of consumption (Cook et al 2004; 2006) or the acknowledgment of London as built through violence and oppression of distant others (Massey 2004). In a shift of emphasis post-colonially influenced scholarship on responsibility instead argues for a wider version of responsibility that does not ascribe passive subjectivity to Southern actors, where they are often viewed as powerless within financial processes, upwardly accountable and reliant on international donors, with limited agency for or control over financial capital (Mawdsley et al 2002; Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge 2012). For these scholars colonialism robbed the colonised world of responsibility and there is a need to reclaim responsible agency, which involves the rejection of unequal connections and emphasises the agency of Southern actors in forming new networks and their own histories and identities (Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge 2012:423; Raghuram, Madge & Noxolo 2009). This agency is exemplified by AbouAssi (2012; 2014) using the example of NGOs in Lebanon to show how some groups respond to shifting donor priorities by withdrawing from the relationship and concentrating on building their grassroots membership. Following this line of thought the chapter will now turn to consider how civil society is being reconceived as a more active and responsible agent within development financing.

## 7.4 Greater responsibility: A more entrepreneurial civil society within a changing development landscape

The dominance of the North/South divide and the prominence of international donors as key development actors has more recently been challenged by transformations in international aid architecture globally. This includes the increasing prominence of Southern donors and their attempts to shift discourses of aid to more horizontal relations (de Renzio & Seifert 2014; Mawdsley 2012; Quadir 2013), greater domestic challenges in donor countries in terms of economic prosperity and perceptions of aid, and the rise of the private sector as an important development actor (Blowfield & Dolan 2014; Mawdsley 2015; 2017; McEwan et al 2017). Alongside the introduction of these ‘newer’ actors, retreat of traditional donors has become a feature of the international development landscape (Hayman 2012). Aid withdrawal has been considered in the context of aid sanctions connected to particular political conditionalities and demands, for example improvement in human rights (Crawford 1997; Neumayer 2003), but more recently attention has been paid to shifting trends in aid withdrawal associated with the changing economic status of both recipient and donor countries, accentuating a tendency to reduce foreign aid to many emerging economies (Dubochet 2012; Hayman 2012).

With a concern about reduced financial resources, particularly from ‘traditional’ international donors, civil society groups have responded by looking to governments for greater financial involvement (Huyse & de Bruyn 2015) and engaging with what Mawdsley (2012) calls non-DAC donors, whilst others have dabbled in utilising social enterprise models (Cieslik 2016; Hailey & Salway 2016), corporate donors (Mendonca, Alves & Nogueira 2016) and international philanthropy (Hay & Muller 2014). This dovetails with the encouragement of entrepreneurial attitudes in development processes and indeed wider society. This spirit of entrepreneurship is intimately connected to neoliberal modes of governance, with Scharff (2015:108) claiming that ‘the neoliberal self is an entrepreneurial subject’, extending neoliberalism from an economic practice to a subjective experience (Freeman 2007; 2014; Ilcan & Rygiel 2015). The term entrepreneurial is used here to provide a sense of creativity, innovation, flexibility, self-governance and the individualisation of responsibility (Bourdieau 1998; Freeman 2014; Scharff 2015). Entrepreneurialism is also associated with interactions with the market, risk taking and the development of new ideas (Mack 2016; McFarlane 2012; Roberts 2010; Walker et al 2008).

The production of the (social) entrepreneurial subject is increasingly becoming a focus for development interventions (Dolan & Rajah 2016), for example through technical assistance (Walker et al 2008), microcredit schemes (Rankin 2001) and encouragement for civil society groups and NGOs to adopt entrepreneurial do-it-yourself attitudes (Galvin & Iannotti 2015; McFarlane 2012; Ong 2011). These studies highlight the potential of the entrepreneur to self-manage local development, with citizens taking greater responsibility for their own development, removing responsibility from the state (McFarlane 2012; Rankin 2001; Thieme 2015). This is exemplified by the drive to create youth entrepreneurs in informal economies, encouraging the improvisation and dynamism present in these circumstances to be harnessed and transformed into engagement with inclusive market based economies (Dolan & Rajak 2016; Thieme 2013; 2015; 2017). In one sense this drive towards entrepreneurship promotes the ingenuity, agency and creativity of ‘the poor’, but this optimism neglects the complexities associated with the entrepreneurial, including the potential for entrepreneurial attitudes to further depoliticise civil society and limits thinking about the social relations in which entrepreneurship takes place (Cieslik 2016; Thieme 2015; Walker et al 2008).

Whilst less attention has been paid to civil society finances away from international donor funding, one way in which civil society actors are becoming more entrepreneurial in their work is through the increased adoption of social enterprise models of working and the adoption of institutional models and cultures drawn from business management (Cieslik 2016; Edwards 2014; Eikenberry & Kluver 2004; Galvin & Iannotti 2015; Roberts 2010: Thieme 2015; Weerawardena, McDonald & Mort2010). The adoption of business-style institutional models is on one hand seen as a way of making civil society organisations financially accountable, and effective and efficient in what they do, but on the other hand comes associated with charges of elitism and this deeper entanglement with market forces is something that is both encouraged and feared with the social economy on which it is based presenting both opportunities and threats for civil society (Cieslik, 2016; Edwards, 2014; Eikenbery & Kulver 2004). One of the most pressing concerns is the danger of civil society becoming so business-like that it loses its collective ethos. Edwards (2014) articulates these concerns, but also highlights examples where civil society groups have successfully been able to utilise community banks and credit schemes to do their work, whilst maintaining their activist roots. Shifting from a non-governmental structure to a social enterprise model is also conceptualised as another form of social entrepreneurship, highlighting the individual as the agent for change, with the few influencing the many (Galvin & Iannotti 2015; McFarlane 2012; Thieme 2015). Cieslik (2016), for example, details the development of a social enterprise organisation in rural Burundi, articulating concerns that this model places responsibility for socio-economic success in the hands of individual entrepreneurs with minimal assistance from the state.

Despite the potential of these greater senses of responsibility for Southern actors, as Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge (2012) acknowledge the notion of the responsible agent is risky, with the concern that responsible agents also embody the privatisation and individualisation of responsibility engendered through neoliberal discourse (Cieslik 2016; Galvin & Iannotti 2015; Ilcan 2009; McFarlane 2012). The neoliberal discourses permeating development thinking highlight individual accountability and flexibility, the importance of entrepreneurial attitudes and increasing resilience rather than agitating for political change (Bourdieau 1998; Ilcan & Rygiel 2015; McFarlane 2012). Rethinking the idea of responsibility through a neoliberal lens then highlights the importance of self-discipline, resilience and entrepreneurship, with responsibility moving from the social to the private domain, potentially depoliticising collective responses to injustices (Bickerstaff, Simmons & Pidgeon 2008; Bosco 2007; Ilcan & Rygiel 2015; McFarlane 2012). This discourse reduces the importance of public institutions for social provision, encouraging autonomy, market-based problem solving and the individualisation of failure (Ilcan 2009; Ilcan & Rygiel 2015). The responsible entrepreneurial Southern development actor therefore embodies both opportunities and insecurities.

Dominant narratives project civil society groups as passive recipients of donor money. This is beginning to change, aligned with alterations in aid architecture and the influence of neoliberal attitudes in development processes, yet the importance of non-Western economic spaces for civil society remains less explored leaving little room for alternative understandings of money and therefore responsibility away from the dominant narratives described above. Narratives of responsibility within development discourses often reproduce divisions between the imagined geographies of the Global North and South and between international donors and civil society organisations. These narratives place responsibility in the hands of the Global North and international donors, denying the agency of Southern development actors to take responsibility for development beyond these vertical dependency relations. The flows of aid money from international donors to civil society organisations also project the idea of civil society groups being responsible to donor agencies, and conversely international donors responsible for civil society. All of these narratives neglect the agency of Southern civil society actors in creating and shaping development (Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge 2012), yet more recent changes in the development landscape highlight how responsibilities are changing, for example through the potential of social entrepreneurship (Galvin & Iannotti 2015; Roberts 2010) and the implications of donor retreat (Hayman 2012). This thesis places the quotidian experiences of civil society and their perspectives at the forefront of its analysis, accentuating the agentic potential of civil society actors and highlighting the possibilities listening to their narratives has for our understanding of civil society and development practice.

As articulated previously, the theoretical basis for contemporary evaluations of monetary systems accentuates the importance of social relations, practices and agency, and alternative, non-Western economic spaces, but this aspect of civil society financing remains less explored (see AbouAssi (2012; 2014); Bebbington (2004a), Mawdsley et al(2002) and Rumbol (2013) for exceptions), leaving little room for alternative understandings of money and therefore responsibility away from the dominant narratives described above. This research instead asked questions such as: How do civil society actors finance their work? What methods do they use for getting that money? How does money influence what they do? The following discussion aims to examine civil society financing and how this connects to entrepreneurialism and responsibility.

## 7.5 Financial insecurity: The changing development landscape in the Eastern Caribbean

It is important to begin by highlighting the pertinent aspects of the economic and development landscapes for civil society in the Eastern Caribbean, and the way that civil society actors perceive these environments. Over the last three decades, both Grenada and Barbados have transitioned from exported oriented agricultural economies with varying degrees of success (Payne & Sutton 2001; Richardson-Ngwenya 2010; 2013). Barbados’ sugar monoculture has been replaced with an economic environment that is now dominated by the service industry, with tourism and offshore finance making significant contributions to foreign direct investment (Commonwealth Secretariat 2015a). A similar situation is found in Grenada, where nutmeg has traditionally been a major source of foreign exchange and employment, with the service industry again becoming central and Grenada embarking on a period of ‘homegrown’ structural adjustment (Commonwealth Secretariat 2015b). High (Barbados) and upper middle income (Grenada) country status hide the volatility of both the Grenadian and Barbadian economy, associated with their exposure to external economic forces, environmental vulnerability and isolation (Commonwealth Secretariat 2015a; 2016b; World Bank 2016). It is within these economic contexts that civil society sees little financial assistance available locally, perceptions of diminished contributions and increasingly difficult access to global funds.

The dominant literature on civil society has a tendency to position international aid as the primary space of economic relations (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015). Civil society groups in Grenada and Barbados have previously, and to some extent continue, to receive funding from a variety of multi and bilateral donors, including Oxfam GB, the Commonwealth Foundation, Gesellshaft fur International Zusammenarbeit (GIZ, the German corporation for international co-operation), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the European Union. There was however significant concern about donor retreat from the region, particularly for civil society[[9]](#footnote-9), which civil society actors attributed to changing income status to middle and high income countries, the global recession making donor funding less available and the discursive way in which the region is no longer seen as a development priority. These ideas need to be contextualised within the changing global development landscape detailed above with particular consideration of changing aid flows connected to economic transitions in both donor and recipient countries (Overton, Murray & McGregor 2013).

February 1st 2016

I sat with Pam in her office, her desk awash with files. We had exchanged a number of emails prior to my visit in which she had expressed her thoughts on the timeliness of my research related to the changing situation financial landscape in which she currently found herself. We had been talking for over an hour before the conversation moved to money:

‘To describe what kind of adjective I can use: humongous, unimaginable, unreal. It provokes significant discussion because the Caribbean I think had given so much and continues to give so much for the developed countries. Apart from the fact we are coming out of a history of colonialism and imperialism I mean just when you think of the human resource contribution today…I don't know how to describe it…I have to admit quickly without hesitation that the support that we've got in the 70s, late 70s, up until the 90s has been significant and has done tremendous for all countries, our human resources, our physical development. And I remember saying to an organisation in the UK actually, it’s like you're punishing us because we used the resources to develop our people... But I think by and large the Caribbean has come a long way from the images that is portrayed in terms of fundraising and that’s what I call a punishment, so because we cannot find a lot of that you decide that well we don't need so OK. I know that economies are struggling, I recognise that there is a lot of poverty and vulnerability in developed countries, in the UK there is a lot of joblessness, but I do not think context of the joblessness and the vulnerability in the UK is the same for the Caribbean or the underdeveloped world or the developing countries… So against that background it has become a humongous challenge…In 2013 we had to just chop the staff because we just couldn't pay people we had a lot of work but we can't pay people and that kind of situation was really, really, really very, very difficult emotionally and socially. It was my grays [referring to her hair] from that [laughs] trust me. My grays definitely came more out of that.’

 Pam, Founder Grenadian CSO, 1st February 2016

Here Pam articulates the complexity of the interactions between international aid and civil society in the Caribbean. She begins by telling the story of the relationship between the Caribbean and the rest of the world, including colonialism and under-development and the way she sees the Caribbean and its people as inherently part of development elsewhere through human capital, echoing Hall (1991) in his assertion that the Caribbean can always be felt elsewhere. She positions the rest of the world, and in particular the United Kingdom as responsible to the Caribbean, who owe Caribbean countries something because of these historical and contemporary connections. She juxtaposes this with the dominant discourses driving development that exclude the Caribbean from their narratives. In this sense, despite the idea that the UK should have responsibility for Caribbean development, the discourses around what development might mean do not currently allow this to be enacted. She traces the impact the reduction in development financing has had on her organisation, and articulates the anxiety, emotions and even bodily changes that have occurred as her group has found it progressively more difficult to acquire funding from international sources. Her perceptions of this temporal change in international funding, with adequate support available from the 1970s through to the 1990s, but now heavily reduced were echoed by other participants, here Clare also acknowledges the development that has occurred in the Caribbean, yet feels there is still a case for development aid in the region:

‘One thing that has been developing in the Caribbean region is that many of the islands in the Caribbean have been re-classified by the World Bank from low-income countries to high income countries and that changes the donor perspective of the region and interest in funding the region. But you know we are based on the ground, we know that the GDP [gross domestic product] is improving, that doesn't mean that every community is being affected and the wealth doesn't rise across the board, so we still try to concentrate our programming and efforts in communities and countries and sectors that most need help…I would say that it’s good and bad that the country has moved from developing to developed. That's good for the country in terms of perspective from tourism and its global image but it’s…there's still the need to help, and that restricts some of the donor funding that's available.’

 Clare, Director Caribbean regional NGO based in Barbados, 7th October 2015

Clare elaborates on the temporal shift towards reduced funding to the Caribbean region, explicitly connecting these changes to alterations in Caribbean country classification. These categorisations present another way through which to imagine and differentiate between nation states, one that directly influences how development is articulated, operationalised and financed.

## 7.6 Financial diversity: Becoming entrepreneurial

 Many civil society actors echoed the feelings of insecurity and anxiety articulated by Pam, with their concerns about international funding considered alongside the development of more informal and entrepreneurial mechanisms to sustain their finances. Formalised mechanisms incorporate donor funding, which is regulated and disciplined outside of civil society, whilst I am using the term informal here to refer to those monies that are acquired in a more casual way and often disciplined and regulated by civil society. Informal financial circuits incorporate using the market to generate income, providing consultancy and administrative services, Diaspora and philanthropic donations, a ‘barter’ style economy where knowledge and labour are traded in a non-monetary way and self and family financing. These financial arrangements are not discrete but are engaged with simultaneously and alongside the more formalised circuits of international donors. The informal entrepreneurial economy is therefore seen as both intentional, with civil society actors actively seeking out different modes of finance and ubiquitous emphasising that these practices are ever-present and connected to civil society’s varying social relations and contextual landscape, often straddling the normative boundaries between the market, the family and civil society (Gibson-Graham 2008). Table 3 outlines the myriad of financial sources used by the case study organisations in Barbados and Grenada at the time of the fieldwork, showing the way that civil society groups, who operate at different scales and with varying organisational typologies engage with different types of finance. This diversity is not restricted to these particular groups rather it is something that is common to many of the research participants. Table 3 also demonstrates the simultaneity of these diverse financial interactions, with groups engaging with many different sources of finance at the same time.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Modes of finance used at the time of fieldwork** (It has to be recognised that financial circuits are always changing (Pollard 2007)) |
| **Case study group** | Formal: multi/bilateral donor | Social enterprise model | Consultancy/administration services | Local business donation/philanthropy | Diaspora/international philanthropy  | Self-financing and family & friends |
| **Barbados:** Lincoln’s group |  **\*** | **\*** | **\*** |  | **\*** |  |
| Jacob’s group | **\*** | **\*** | **\*** | **\*** |  | **\*** |
| Kelvin’s group | **\*** |  |  |  |  | **\*** |
| Colin’s group | **\*** | **\*** |  | **\*** |  | **\*** |
| **Grenada:** National forum | (\* Applying for) |  | **\*** |  |  | **\*** |
| Alyson’s group | **\*** | **\*** |  |  | **\*** | **\*** |
| Pip’s group |  |  |  |  | **\*** | **\*** |

Table 3: Modes of finance

## 7.7 An entrepreneurial spirit: Rethinking responsibility through money

This chapter has so far offered a discussion of the multiple financial circuits associated with sustaining civil society activism in the Caribbean, demonstrating a sense of insecurity associated with reductions in international development finance to the Caribbean region and a contemporary trend for civil society groups to engage in diverse financial sources within their work. It is perhaps easy to imagine that more established organisations, with staff and offices are less engaged with more informal entrepreneurial sources of funding than more nascent organisations, but this research demonstrates that organisations, regardless of scale or structure, are moving beyond international donor funding for financial support. Civil society actors are becoming increasingly entrepreneurial in their financial interactions and in doing so reclaiming responsibility for development in the process. This can be seen in the way that civil society actors create their own financial networks, producing both opportunities and vulnerabilities and insecurities (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2016).

### 7.7.1 Crafting financial networks

In order for Colin to develop his organic community farm in a deprived suburban area of Barbados he had to establish circuits for the transmission of financial capital into (and out of) his project. Initially he reached into his own pocket, just to get things started. About four months later: ‘A friend came by, told us about the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and that was how we got our first project’. Accessing this particular financial circuit required Colin to develop a project plan and budget, but he was actively assisted with this by the UNDP country co-ordinators: ‘After you’ve written it up they’ll send you an actual critique, you need to change this, this and this…So if you’ve done that… a month, two months of that you get a good draft because at the end of the day they want it to be approved’. But there are constraints on what this money can be spent on, as Colin explained: ‘Issues will turn up. In the course of it you’ve got to address issues that are outside of the mandate of whatever project it is. So for example in Sargeants Village [a deprived community in Barbados] someone might want to get an ID card. He don’t have an ID card so you’ve got to go and get an ID card because you want them to get their farmers ID and you can’t get a farmers ID until you’ve got an ID card. That’s not in the mandate of the project; helping people to get an ID card but you want them to get a farmer’s license therefore you facilitate these sorts of things.’

One of the young people involved in Colin’s project was also attending agri-preneurship training: ‘But even then he got no bus fare so his mum came to us: “You’ve sent my son on this thing and where am I going to get the bus fare to send him every day now?” So now I got to find bus fare to fund him. I can’t let go of that because if you don’t find bus fare for him then he won’t have that bus fare and he ain’t going to go.’

Colin also obtains other flows of financial capital through multiple sources, firstly through the market: ‘What we’re doing now, which is to be self-sufficient, to get some money coming in from the crops that we’re putting into the ground and we’re taking that time now to try to do that. We’re taking the next two or three months as a growing period to get to that stage and we’re taking the next month to try and build a nursery so we can sell some seedlings so we can source some revenue…So we can consolidate with that’. Secondly Colin actively seeks private sector donations: ‘Without a doubt local private sector companies, Haversack electrical they just put in the electrics for the container, you know pro-bono. I appreciated that. Sagicor [a financial services company], we told them, you know one of our recurring costs every month is irrigation so they’re going to put us in their budget for next year, they indicated they’ll try and put us in for the budget, so at least that’s a small portion of the water’. Colin was aware of Sagicor through his work with another civil society group with whom Sagicor had a longstanding relationship. ‘You’ve gotta reach out though. You have to actively; I’ve got a list I call on. You’ve gotta follow up, you’ve got to follow up. You’ve got to leave some time each week for correspondence and for callings.’ Colin finds the management of the finances ‘tedious’ and has a friend to help: ‘Liz does finance and…after I’ve done my bit I can just leave it her and not worry.’

 Colin, Founder Barbadian CSO, 26th September & 9th October 2015

Colin’s example demonstrates that civil society actors are going beyond the vertical relations and uneven geographies more usually associated with development finance and crafting their own financial networks (Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge 2012; Young 2004; 2006). Colin is constructing a number of financial networks connecting civil society, his friends, the market, the private sector and a multi-lateral donor. These engagements are considered and calculated. Whilst attending to civil society’s concerns over the loss of international financing it is clear that multi and bilateral donors remain a partial source of funding for civil society work in the Caribbean, often but not solely connected to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) small grants programme in the region, and are a way of obtaining money on a significant scale. The term network is used here, not as a point of interrogation for the use of a particular spatial grammar, rather as a way of articulating the numerous financial relations that Colin describes in his civil society work. Colin talks of his responsibility to the UNDP through his project and the connection this has with the use of particular apparatus, such as project plans and budgets. The UNDP also facilitates Colin to access these funds, making him directly accountable to them. Through his use of money Colin is also creating relations of responsibility between himself and the boy and his mother, pushing himself to find ways he can be financially responsible for the acquisition of ID cards and the boy’s bus fares as part of the project. This sense of responsibility is in direct contrast to the relations Colin is building with the UNDP, it is on a much more personal and individual level and juxtaposes what he is mandated to spend money on as part of the project, and the need to find money to help these young people. By obtaining money from the corporate sector Colin is also placing himself in a relationship of responsibility with them, with needing to demonstrate the value of his work. Responsibility therefore moves through these networks of connections, playing out in varied ways through Colin’s interactions with different people.

The sense of multiple connections does not assume horizontal relations without power differentials; rather it aims to project the diverse financial relations within which civil society work is entangled. As with any relational arrangement the economic circuits of civil society are not comprised of civil society alone, as we have seen they incorporate many other actors from different backgrounds and sectors of society. With greater nurturing of informal entrepreneurial financial practices there is also more responsibility on groups to develop accountability mechanisms both at an organisational level and across the sector more widely. These more informal financial circuits are neither in-disciplined nor unregulated, instead civil society actors are developing processes to ensure accountability to different donors and devising alternative modes of demonstrating financial responsibility. The networks also extend across national borders, incorporating Diaspora groups and crowd-sourced funds from interested individuals overseas, challenging the traditional Eurocentric North-South binary prevalent in development discourses (Mercer, Page & Evans 2009). This responsibility to others within their financial circuits extends into the actions and practices of civil society, with informal financial circuits driving civil society to develop their own forms of regulation and accountability mechanisms, as Pam and Trevor explained:

‘It [referring to the donations] comes from individuals like a past principle of a school, so it comes from professionals but it comes largely from the private institutions, the banks, the electricity companies, your credit unions…We try hard to practice what we preach so we provide them with reports I mean a letter goes every year soliciting their support but it goes with content [about the programme]…and… in addition to that we send out an unaudited financial report…So I think that has built confidence…and people say I know that programme so the private sector’s confidence is very well placed from that.’

 Pam, Founder Grenadian CSO, 1st February 2016

*‘*The accountability is very, very important because…you know what happens in several organisations you send food or money and there is not accountability and you keep it for yourself…lt is very, very important to us and that is why Facebook is also important, how do we keep in touch with them…Even myself when…I travel I make sure I arrive early if I go to New York I see the people there and say this is what we've been doing, this is what’s happening…’

 Trevor, Founder Grenadian CSO, 7th March 2016

These two examples show how civil society groups are being creative and crafting networks of accountability and responsibility that are very different from those prescribed to them through dominant methods of development finance. Pam and Trevor are not powerless in crafting their own financial networks, and have developed systems of regulation that deviate from the project plans and budgets utilised by international donors. There is agency for civil society actors in how they develop appropriate accountability mechanisms within their financial networks, challenging the often-Eurocentric nature of development financing and assumptions that civil society groups are only upwardly accountable to international donors. These relations are not about vertical dependency relations; they project a more horizontal version of accountability, in Trevor’s example through Facebook or his personal mobility. This contributes to the reimagining of development processes, and Caribbean civil society within them, as civil society actors challenge the rules associated with more formal aspects of international development (Massey 2004; Raghuram, Madge & Noxolo 2009; Young 2003). The development of these different accountability mechanisms allow civil society to be responsible to their donors in a way that is not forced on to them from ‘outside’. Both Pam and Trevor are able to use their own skills and knowledge to develop appropriate accountability mechanisms that draw on their particular abilities and frames of reference and develop avenues for accountability that feel more relevant for their civil society work.

Civil society actors create their own financial networks through which sustainable development is practiced. In making diverse financial connections civil society groups are making contacts outside of their immediate sector, drawing in new people and linking civil society with other sectors of society. This emphasises the agency, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of Southern actors in forming these networks, and subsequently remaking how Caribbean civil society is situated within development narratives (Massey 2004; Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge 2012*;* Raghuram, Madge & Noxolo 2009). This chapter will now turn to consider how creating these varied financial networks have produced both opportunities and insecurities for civil society actors (Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge 2012).

### 7.7.2 Creating opportunities

The process of reclaiming responsibility for development through the adoption of diverse economic practices and embodying an entrepreneurial spirit presents many opportunities for civil society actors. It would be easy to see the use of these diverse economies as a response to the existential threat of less donor money, considering the loss of financial opportunities described earlier or as a rejection of the hegemonic neoliberal governmentality embedded through international donor money, but the multiplicity in civil society finances can also be understood as an opportunity to change the way that development is enacted. This change is underpinned by a desire for independence, autonomy and greater responsibility. The multiplicity of civil society economies challenges the power-geometries of development systems, the parent-child model of financing and places greater responsibility for financial attainment in the hands of civil society actors (Noxolo 2006; Power 2009). This responsible agency is also driven by a belief that the development of multiple economic circuits will allow them to more effectively contribute to sustainable development, and as a way, as Gibson-Graham (2006) implore, to create acts of transformation. Civil society actors also articulate the potentially damaging impact of international donor money, and the mutuality of development financing, with the Global North utilising the Global South for its own gains. This sees finances as an extension of Western hegemony in development processes, and as a space of quiet contestation to challenge the power-geometries associated with development financing.

‘It still smacks of... it smacks of... it can be patronizing. It can be extremely patronizing, it’s almost like you know, it’s the whole Red Indian thing. Look a white man's magic and you know for some of us who have lived abroad, we said don't come, please don't come patronizing, throwing something at...throwing some shackles at people…They'll look at it and think that’s a lot of money but actually if it’s not efficient, it can do more damage, because what you get is a lot of failed projects and the next project that comes in is tarred with the same brush before its even started. Oh here we go again…’

 Timothy, Chief Executive Grenadian CSO, 2nd February 2016

Many civil society actors use money to negotiate the dominant neo-colonial doctrines implicit in international donor money and the perceived reduction of their own agency in their work, rejecting and disconnecting themselves from the inequalities embedded in international aid (Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge 2012). In Timothy’s quote we can see how he feels that international aid has denied Southern development actors of agency and subdued their creativity. He contrasts the Red Indian with the white man, racialising development aid, complicating this with this own positionality as a Grenadian who lived in the UK for a prolonged period. He shows how power flows through money, the use of the word shackles implies the way development aid can restrict and restrain civil society actors, juxtaposing the power of aid with the powerlessness of recipients, ‘we said don’t come’ (Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge 2012).

‘Now we're raising our own money to help us… and what it helps to do is to build your own capacity because you're now thinking differently, managing your organisation differently, it forces you to manage differently…If you want to be able to speak freely you must have your own power base, you must have your own income, you have to have your own independence because if people are giving you they expect you to tow their line.’

 Lincoln, Founder Barbadian CSO, 9th October 2015

‘…Self-sustainability - not to have to go back to these UNs or these funders for anything. For me that’s a process of sustainability right there. We will be able to promote our own projects and help other groups right there with their projects as well. Even on smaller level we could be doing this right now, information sharing to really not to have to depend on donor funding and to me it feels good and that is something that we want to capitalise on at this time.’

 Kit, Founder Barbadian CSO, 17th November 2015

Lincoln connects the ability of civil society groups to raise their own money with transitions of power, autonomy and responsibility. He speaks of being able to think and manage differently with their own sources of money, of being able to build his group’s capacity, and again connects international aid with strangulation of and constraints on civil society work. Kit articulates a more emotive sense of freedom in the rejection of donor funding articulating how good it feels to have more agency in his work, but also the importance of local connections if a reliance on donor funding is to be relinquished. Some civil society activists actively chose to remove themselves from the international donor system, as Alyson explained to me:

Alyson: ‘Donor money ain’t working, in fact it’s got us in deep ca-ca, so what we could do? And then we realised people would come and help, the volunteers would come and help. Volunteers is a lot better than donor money any day a lot better than donor money…Crowd-sourcing you think they can stop us’.

Me: ‘Yeah I was going to say what’s the alternative?’

Alyson: ‘Crowd-sourcing....[speaks to son]. Yeah so crowd-sourcing and getting people to organise themselves and because now people losing faith in government, in all these structures, NGOs included’.

 Alyson, Founder Grenadian CSO, 5th February 2016

This rejection of international aid makes an attempt at challenging the hegemonic power-geometries associated with this type of funding. Alyson acknowledges the difficulties within the international aid structure and in turning to an innovative mechanism such as crowd-sourcing attempts to shift power to communities to organise themselves, challenging the need for the Global North to develop an implicitly inferior Global South, reimaging Caribbean civil society and who decides how development is enacted (Dogra 2012; Massey 2004; Raghuram, Madge & Noxolo 2009). This desire to move away from institutional donor funding is often associated with greater emphasis on ‘locally’ driven mechanisms, where decisions are made about what development might entail by civil society actors themselves and actions driven by perceptions of local need, articulating the desire for responsibility that civil society actors have. This is also evident in Lincoln and Kit’s discussion above, with both articulating the importance of decision-making and organising at a local level, something that feels restricted within in the realm of international funding. Financial mechanisms also change the relationship between civil society actors, the communities they work with and the environments in which they work. By engaging with financial multiplicity civil society actors contended that they have the opportunity to become more responsible to their own communities and more representative of their needs, as Alyson comments about ‘getting people to organise’. This included being able to undertake relatively small-scale community events in response to community needs in a timely manner and by encouraging civil society actors to take community voice as a starting point for their initiatives and then seeking out varied sources of funding rather than being driven by agendas set ‘outside’. The diversity of financial arrangements also has the potential to bring civil society groups closer to those they seek to represent, as Liam explained:

‘It has recently occurred to me that having no funds may be useful because everyone expects NGOs to have lots of money to throw at cocktail parties and mini banquets and if we say look we’re doing this with no funds and no benefits to ourselves it may be that people listen to us more… [We] don’t have any funding, but you get used to that here, someone said to me… There’s an economy of the monied who have cars and go to supermarkets and then there’s the economy of the rural poor which is significant, 37%, which is based on a barter system and I certainly find with our groups we’re a barter system, trade ideas, trade strengths, trade ideas which is not a bad thing.’

 Liam, Founder Grenadian CSO, 3rd March 2016

Seeking to move away from being solely reliant on international donor money, the adoption of multiple funding mechanisms and entering into a more entrepreneurial spirit offers opportunities for civil society actors. It allows them to challenge the dominant power relations they feel are associated with international aid, the way that it restricts their activity and strangles their voice and creativity. There is a sense of injustice about the way that aid replicates the racialised hegemony of colonialism, with alternative funding mechanisms offering potential to contest these relationships, nurturing agency and freedom for civil society actors in their work, and in doing so reclaiming responsibility for both their financial security and the way that development is enacted. The creation of financial networks and the opportunities crafted by civil society actors through these relations challenges the dominant spatialities associated with international aid, contesting the dominance of North over South and of vertical accountability, reimagining the potential of Caribbean civil society within development (Madge, Raghuram & Noxolo 2009; Massey 2004; Raghuram, Madge & Noxolo 2009). This sense of responsibility challenges existing asymmetrical geometries of power within development discourse, ascribing a more active subjectivity to civil society actors (Laliberte 2015; Massey 2004; 2006; Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge 2012; Power 2009), altering their identity within development processes (Massey 2004; 2005).

### 7.7.3 Feeling vulnerable and insecure

Whilst the entrepreneurial creation of financial networks and reclaiming of responsibility by civil society actors promotes opportunities for locally led development that is perhaps more embedded in community needs, it also has the potential to increase the insecurity and vulnerability felt by Caribbean civil society actors. Insecurity is felt at varying scales, including the personal, the organisational and sectoral, and the claiming of responsibility is entangled with risk and feelings of precarity (Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge 2012; Young 2011). Viewing aspects of civil society work as vulnerable and insecure is relatively neglected within development studies, as Baillie Smith & Jenkins (2016) point out vulnerability is usually associated with the beneficiaries of development aid rather than those who are actively embedded in the development industry. Being part of the global development industry, in this case as civil society actors, produces its own vulnerabilities and insecurities (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2016), particularly in the changing financial context. Becoming more entrepreneurial and increasingly responsible for their own economic actions can strain civil society groups. The reliance on self-financing noticeable in table 1 shows the responsibility placed on prominent individuals.

The entrepreneurial spirit of creativity and flexibility that is displayed here shows the individualisation of risk and responsibility and the importance of self-governance for civil society actors (Bourdieau 1998; Freeman 2014; Harvey 2005; Ilcan 2009; McFarlane 2012). One aspect of this enterprising self is the ability to craft an individual brand with a ‘unique selling point’ (Scharff 2015) and the success of individual actors in obtaining money is often reliant on their reputations, as well as the social connections and the knowledge they have at their disposal. Within the formalised funding sector individuals have to work hard to attain the knowledge and skills required to complete funding proposals and manage financial accountability mechanisms, but within informal financial circuits this individualism is exemplified in the often self-taught knowledge and skills required to access more innovative funding methods such as crowd-funding, the private sector or the market. This also accentuates the importance of individual actors developing and maintaining their own ‘brand’ and reputation to encourage donations. This exemplifies the individualisation of responsibility embedded within neoliberal discourse, with responsibility for civil society finance moving into the private domain of the individual, with civil society actors viewing themselves as the visible product that people are investing in (Ilcan 2009; Scharff 2015) as Alyson explains here in reference to crowd-funding:

‘We realised people would come and help and crowd-sourcing [is] a lot better than getting some hand up from some charity saying what our wants are… I don't mind reporting on the use of it and I don't mind because I want to keep up our status to one day get more...I’ve got to maintain my presence, on LinkedIn, on Facebook. People have to see who I’m connected to, read my reviews and then they’ll trust us and donate.’

 Alyson, Founder Grenadian CSO, 5th February 2016

Some civil society groups, such as Alyson’s, are actively using relatively new and innovative technologies to expand the geographies of their financial inputs, with crowd-funding becoming an increasingly popular modality. Crowd-funding is a digital economy in which funds provided by a large number of individuals ‘the crowd’ is distributed to individuals and institutions (Agarwal, Catalini & Goldfarb 2011; Langley 2016; Mollick 2014). Originally started as a form of deriving startup capital for small businesses or as a way of funding cultural projects, crowd-funding is now being considered by a small number of civil society groups in my research as a viable source of funding their work. Crowd-funding brings with it possibilities to foster new social ties and the potential to broaden the reach of the organisation, bring on board new associates and supporters and to gain knowledge. It may create a more democratic form of development financing, where the civil society group is directly accountable to the donor, but could also reproduce precarious and vulnerable social relations for civil society, and insecurity of who they are, the skills they have and how they are being judged, this time seemingly on a more personal level. Rather than being about the project or the professionalism of the organisation, the success or failure of crowd-funding rests heavily on the shoulders of civil society founders. Civil society groups articulated that for crowd-funding to be successful the leader of the organisation must maintain a pristine reputation, both virtually and physically, to be able to attract donations, projecting the self as a viable business (Scharff 2015).

This entrepreneurial spirit of creating your own financial mechanisms also promotes anxiety and insecurity through the reliance on precarious contextual factors and the need to embrace possibly risky financial ventures. The potential contextual insecurity of engaging with alternative funding mechanisms arose in my discussions with Timothy, when he spoke of his group’s connections with private sector financing:

‘The thing is, places like Grenada, there's only a small pot and everybody is going to the same people… You also have a private sector dynamic that is particularly peculiar for the Caribbean, and particularly small islands whereby they’re not really operating in competitive environments and the pot that they're dipping from is only so big…We haven't got big exporters so therefore their income is generated by what happens on the island, because you lack that competitive dynamic as well, it means that that pool of money is not growing. The profitable companies are probably making the same types of profits each year, there's not really outside investment that comes in…’

 Timothy, Chief Executive Grenadian CSO, 2nd February 2016

These diverse financial processes used by civil society groups present not only personal or organisational insecurity as we have seen previously, but also have the potential to create sectoral insecurity, challenging what civil society is and should be, in essence challenging its legitimacy. The development of legitimate civil society will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter of this thesis, but in the context of financial mechanisms civil society groups can feel vulnerable if their legitimacy is challenged by the modes of funding they chose to engage in. Concern is articulated about how civil society groups should engage with diverse sources of finance and how these interactions may shape civil society work, with some groups using financial conduct as a form of questioning and delegitimising other organisations. The complex processes of delegitimising civil society groups will be considered in more detail in the next chapter, but here we can see that how civil society groups engage financially can legitimise and delegitimise their actions as Pip articulates comparing his organisation to others:

‘My organisation never got any significant money from anybody because we always had this challenge of not receiving money from any [environmental] destroyer, where as other organisations…they didn't have that problem. They could have taken money, when we told them that one time we couldn't take it, they didn’t understand…’

 Pip, Founder Grenadian CSO, 27th February 2016

Whilst most participants did not openly acknowledge any detrimental impacts of engaging with, for example the private sector, they did acknowledge that the choices behind doing so were not straightforward, creating areas of vulnerability, as Pam comments:

‘We do work sometimes with the [corporate sector]. I have to admit that we don't always share the same philosophical and ideological position as the private sector, but we do work together on certain issues… We have to be extremely flexible but we have to be focused so we are not about to just sell our souls…’

 Pam, Founder, Grenadian CSO, 1st February 2016

Financial networks are geographically, socially and temporally constructed, combining personal attributes, moral decisions, social relations and economic conditions. Becoming more entrepreneurial and diversifying funding opportunities to incorporate more informal practices places greater emphasis on civil society actors to be responsible agents in development processes. This brings with it opportunities, in particular to challenge hegemonic power geometries normally associated with development discourse and drawing more supporters into civil society work, but also insecurities and vulnerabilities (Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge 2012), particularly through maintaining their reputation and legitimacy and reliance on precarious contextual factors. These diverse sources of money therefore have the potential to present the responsible development actor with a set of insecurities and this emphasis on entrepreneurial spirit combined with donor retreat in the region produces vulnerabilities for civil society actors (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2016).

## 7.8 Conclusion: An entrepreneurial spirit and changing responsibilities: What possibilities does this offer?

Civil society finances are comprised of informal networks of money that are crafted intentionally and in an entrepreneurial spirit by civil society groups. A specific set of arrangements involving multi and bilateral donors and the state has, to some extent, been naturalised in development discourses for the production and use of money by civil society, with responsibility for development situated in the Global North and with international donors. The changing development landscape, and in particular the retreat of traditional donors from regions such as the Caribbean places greater emphasis on the need to consider how civil society groups gain money beyond these dominant sources and what these processes tell us about the role of civil society within development.

Civil society groups actively create diverse financial networks to sustain their work and money is a resource through which civil society negotiates its actions and responsibilities (Green et al 2012). By listening to the everyday experiences of civil society actors, the burden they feel to finance their work and the way obtaining money is embedded in their everyday lives this research demonstrates that civil society actors can no longer be viewed as passive subjects within financial processes, and responsibility for civil society finance does not rest solely with those in the Global North or with international agencies. This contributes to a change of identity for civil society actors, projecting them as agentic, entrepreneurial and increasingly responsible within development processes. Taking Gibson-Graham’s (2006:77) sentiment it is important to consider ‘what possibilities does this create for acts of transformation?’

As Colin’s example shows civil society actors are creating their own diverse and informal financial networks as part of their work, striving as Noxolo, Raghuram & Madge (2012) articulate to form their own networks, histories and identities. Informal funding sources are thought to offer more opportunities to work in ways that are not connected to international donor agendas, set outside of the country and even when there is not an outright rejection of international donor money civil society actors create relational arrangements to rework the way that this money drives development, placing civil society actors as responsible agents. For Timothy, Lincoln and Kit this explicitly challenges the unequal power-geometries embedded within international donor funds, and the paternalism that is felt through these methods, with informal funding seen as an opportunity to reclaim moments of power within development processes. These acts of quiet contestation confront the narratives of the ‘first world’ being constructed through its ability to effectively and successfully develop the ‘third world’ (Noxolo 2006).

There is hope in diversity, with informal financial arrangements offering opportunities for collecting supporters and develop more relevant accountability mechanisms. This offers opportunities for civil society to become more embedded in the social fabric of the country and its transnational connections. There is an affective component, a ‘feel good’ factor about self-sustainability. As Liam articulates informal financial sources also offer potential for greater responsibility to the communities and environments civil society actors seek to represent through the work they do but also through how civil society is perceived. In crafting their own financial networks civil society groups are gaining supporters, being exposed to new ideas, becoming more visible and evolving in their work*.*

Civil society actors are also concerned about the insecurities associated with informal funding and becoming ‘entrepreneurial and responsible development agents’. The informality of financial arrangements means the financial responsibility for civil society rests more heavily within the relational networks of particular civil society actors and the contextual economic and social environment of the Caribbean. These mechanisms embed civil society more substantially within the local and transnational social fabric, they are more reliant on the success of local business, the conditions of the local market or Diaspora connections. Responsibility for civil society action therefore lies with civil society groups, who create their own financial networks, but the responsible agent is also juxtaposed with insecurity and vulnerability, for example as Alyson explains, through a reliance on reputations, social networks and the utilisation of precarious contextual factors. There is a tension within the realm of financial responsibility for civil society, in one sense they are increasing their prowess as responsible entrepreneurial agents and in another there is the risk of individualisation of responsibility, reliant on projections of particular identities and reputations (Edwards 2014; Ilcan 2009).

These diverse financial arrangements have the potential to shift the (imagined) geographies of responsibility for development, with civil society actors in Barbados and Grenada becoming more entrepreneurial, creating their own networks and reclaiming responsibility for development, remaking how Caribbean civil society is conceived in development discourses (Massey 2004; Raghuram, Madge & Noxolo 2009). This connects to the wider changing development landscape where increasing attention is being paid to South-South co-operation and the rhetoric of collaborative working (Mawdsley 2017; Noxolo 2006). Whilst making claims about this shifting of responsibility from North to South, this can only ever be considered partial and, as demonstrated here potentially problematic. Even if Southern civil society actors are challenging and rejecting the dominance of the Global North and international donors, some of their other financial resources remain entangled with global processes. Being entrepreneurial and the reclaiming of responsibility by Caribbean civil society through the diverse and informal financial arrangements should not be seen as a panacea to civil society’s funding dilemmas. Rather it is part of a set of processes that need to be critically reflected on by both civil society activists and those ‘outside’, inevitably asking questions about the role and influence of donor agencies. Informality and diversity does not necessarily preclude marginalisation. Accusations of the apolitical nature of civil society caused by international donor funding are not necessarily overcome through entrepreneurship, as the reputation, identity and social resources on which these channels rely can be politically precarious. Voices marginalised through international donor money can also be sidelined through an inability to build informal sources of funding, particularly if they lack social bonds, capital and resources, which underpin the creation of many informal financial networks, potentially limiting the ways in which civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada can engage in sustainable development.

# 8. Legitimising the illegitimate: Re-conceptualising civil society legitimacy

## 8.1 Introduction

Challenges to the legitimacy of established political institutions have been at the centre of some of the political shockwaves reverberating around Europe and North America in 2016. The ‘vote leave’ campaign in the United Kingdom and Donald Trump’s presidential discourse in the United States both employed tactics that delegitimised the institutions and actions of entrenched political elites. In their winning rhetoric these established institutions were described as outdated, elite, ineffective and ultimately seen as illegitimate holders of power.

The production of legitimacy, and illegitimacy, is important for many different political institutions and this chapter focuses on the ways that legitimacy contributes to the actions of civil society organisations. The previous two chapters have considered how two everyday experiences, that of social relations and money, shape the spatialities of civil society activity and produce diverse responsibilities for civil society groups respectively. The production of a legitimate civil society is influenced by both of these features. Social capital can aid civil society legitimacy but civil society groups are also reliant on being seen as legitimate to develop their social resources. Financial interactions also shapes whether civil society activity is viewed as legitimate or not. This chapter concentrates on the idea of civil society legitimacy in more detail, considering how civil society groups negotiate legitimate identities and subjectivities as an integral part of their day-to-day work in the sustainable development field.

Civil society organisations remain important development actors (DFID 2016; OECD 2008) and civil society legitimacy is an important topic for discussion, in particular in the context of increasing challenges to the effectiveness of international aid and shifting public perceptions of its value (Walton et al 2016). Normative conceptualisations of legitimacy are often considered in relation to the state or global governance institutions but if legitimacy is recognised as paramount for the evolution and maintenance of civil society, as this chapter contends, the complexities of legitimacy for civil society groups must be acknowledged. This chapter argues that being viewed as, articulating and embodying a sense of legitimacy within development processes is an essential element of civil society work. Yet this raises questions about what legitimacy means for civil society groups, who decides what constitutes legitimate civil society activity, the processes through which legitimacy is claimed, gained and lost and how legitimacy shapes development practices.

The chapter begins by examining the different ways legitimacy has been theorised, often in relation to the state, and some of the challenges that these versions of legitimacy pose for the civil society landscape. It will then move on to consider the literature on civil society and non-governmental legitimacy, highlighting the focus on normative theorisations of legitimacy, and an emphasis on legitimacy as a static object that can be claimed through the enactment of particular processes. This analysis frames the main argument of the chapter, that legitimacy for civil society groups must be understood as multiple and a set of relational processes. Drawing on empirical data from Barbados and Grenada the chapter aims to highlight the tensions and contestations inherent in the forming, claiming and articulation of legitimacy by civil society groups. It will do this by outlining three dominant narratives through which civil society groups perform legitimacy, civility, non-partisanship and professionalism. Alongside performance, however, legitimacy must be understood as a process of compromise and negotiation in which civil society groups balance different relationships to advance their cause. Finally, this research also shows that there are moments in which civil society groups destabilise these dominant narratives. This destabilisation of legitimacy provides a mechanism through which civil society and development can be contested and potentially redefined. By examining the multiple subjectivities that civil society actors embody, and the relations surrounding their construction, this chapter aims to contribute to wider debates on the legitimacy of civil society and other non-state actors in development processes (Beetham 2013; Lister 2003; Riggirozzi & Grugel 2015; Schouten & Glasbergen 2011; Thrandardottir 2015; Van Rooy 2004).

## 8.2 Conceptualising legitimacy

Legitimacy is a highly contested idea, but one that features strongly in diverse aspects of social life (Beetham 2013; Johnson 2004). Legitimacy has been the subject of limited geographical attention (see Jeffrey, McConnell & Wilson 2015 for exceptions) and disciplines such as politics, management studies, international relations and law have been far more engaged in conceptualising what legitimacy might mean, through topics as diverse as policing, regional integration and organic labeling (Dendler & Denwick 2016; Pickering & Klinger 2016; Riggirozzi & Grugel 2015). Ideas of legitimacy can be applied to objects, rules and opinions but most often legitimacy has been considered in the context of institutions. Weber (1958) theorises three types of legitimate rule in his essay of the same title. Referring to the state, he contends that legitimacy enhances a state’s authority and argues that there are three ways to justify the rule of government, firstly legal authority based on the rule of the law, secondly traditional authority (it is legitimate because it always has been) and finally charismatic authority which is upheld by the status of the leader. More recent engagement with the idea of legitimacy foregrounds its social and collective nature and in one of the most often cited definitions of legitimacy Suchmann (1995:574) articulates:

‘Legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions.’

Suchmann’s definition draws attention to the connection of legitimacy to socially constructed values and norms, articulating the changeable nature of legitimacy (Johnson 2004). Although there are many definitions of legitimacy and it remains a contested term, the key idea linking many of these conceptualisations is the notion that legitimacy is intertwined with authority and control and acts as a form of capital, and it is through ideas of legitimacy that power is often exercised (Beetham 2013; Dendler & Denwick 2016). If legitimacy is primarily viewed as a mechanism through which power is gained and stabilised then is it crucial to understand the principles of legitimacy, the practices through which it is endorsed, and how legitimate ideas gain traction (Steffek & Hahn 2010). The relative newness of non-state institutions as social actors has challenged how legitimacy is conceived, as they cannot rely on mechanisms such as elections to gain their legitimacy (Brown & Jagadanada 2007; Riggirozzi & Grugel 2015; Steffek 2015). For non-state actors, including civil society, legitimacy is a form of capital and must be actively gained and claimed, a concern this chapter will now turn to (Biermann & Guptu 2011; Herlin 2015; Hilhorst, Weijers & van Wessel 2012; Sim 2002; Stigum Gleiss 2014).

## 8.3 Civil society, development and legitimacy

Civil society organisations have come to be seen as important development actors, at one time heralded as the magic bullet to solve all of development’s problems (Edwards & Hulme 1995a; 1996). This overzealous praise for civil society organisations (perhaps) inevitably led to the establishment of a significant body of work questioning the legitimacy of civil society and non-governmental groups (Brown & Jagadanada 2007; Walton et al 2016). This body of work arose from the disjuncture between perceptions of NGOs as ideal development actors and more critical voices, who contested their effectiveness and legitimacy, accusing civil society of having a legitimacy deficit (Walton et al 2016). This section will continue by considering firstly how a legitimate civil society has been constructed through the dominance of particular development narratives, secondly the practices undertaken by civil society actors to promote their own legitimacy claims and finally the multiple relations involved in civil society legitimacy.

### 8.3.1 Constructing a legitimate civil society

The way that civil society operates within the development sphere has been heavily influenced by the World Bank’s good governance agenda (Abrahamsen 2004; Porter 2003). Within this a legitimate version of civil society is intimately connected to Western liberal versions of democracy and Putnam’s contention that social capital builds civicness and a vibrant civil society (Bebbington 2004b; Putnam 1993; 1995; 2000). Civil society within the development sphere is therefore legitimised through narratives of civility, service provision, grassroots representativeness and as alternative development actor, connecting to the World Bank’s positioning of civil society as a sphere through which democratisation, decentralisation and participation can be promoted (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Das 2015; Jeffrey 2007; Mosse 2013). One way civil society is legitimised through development discourse is through its ability to represent marginalised voices and as an avenue through which to increase the access and involvement of communities in decision-making (Bolton & Jeffrey 2008; Fowler 1993; Jeffrey 2007). This means that civil society is partly legitimised through their ability to represent the wider public, which is seen as grassroots and as downwardly accountable (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Collingwood & Logister 2005; Ossewaarde, Nijhof & Heyse 2008; Stigum Gleiss 2014; Walton et al 2016).

The legitimacy of civil society as a development actor is also produced through their implied civility, with assumptions that civil society will hold an uncivil state to account, tacitly implying that civil society is more civil than a corrupt, undemocratic and ineffective state (Jeffrey 2007; Nagel & Staeheli 2015; Norman 2014). This also contributes to the legitimation of civil society as an effective development actor through its difference and separation from the state (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Edwards & Hulme 1995a; Lewis 2011; 2013; Mitlin, Hickey & Bebbington 2007). In this context civility can also mean the formation of associational life that promotes civic-minded behaviours and positive social capital (Putnam 2000), presuming civil society embodies positive meanings and values (Jeffrey 2008), with Lewis (2004) commenting that the direct translation for the Bengali term for civil society, shushil shamaj, is gentle society. Normative ideas of civility have the potential to include and exclude certain civil society activities and judgments about what counts as civil can shape modes of governance and political life (Jeffrey 2008). Civility is demonstrated through the beneficence of civil society groups, who undertake civil activities, rather than those that are deemed uncivil, such as protest (Adekson 2004; Kopecky & Mudde 2003), promoting non-antagonistic and consensual modes of engaging with other institutions, particularly the state (Jeffrey 2008; Nagel & Staeheli 2016). This connects with the push to create formalised, apolitical and professional forms of associational life (Jeffrey 2007; Nagel & Staeheli 2015; 2016), termed gentrified by Jeffrey (2008), which fit neatly into the global policy template of civil society in which organisations sit at nested scales interacting through appropriate (and civilised) channels with other actors (Mercer & Green 2013).

For civil society groups discourses of legitimacy produce the normalization of particular types of civil society actor. Development discourses often locate civil society as effective service providers or the voices of the marginalised, but the legitimacy of civil society is also constructed through dominant societal framings, for example the entrepreneur, the professional or the neoliberal civil society actor. One key feature of these normative forms of legitimising civil society is that of professionalisation. As has been previously argued the professionalisation of civil society has often been attributed to the interactions of civil society organisations with foreign aid, and this in turn plays a part in constructing what a legitimate civil society should look like (Abrahamsen 2004; Jeffrey 2007; 2008). Civil society organisations are made legitimate development actors through their abilities in enact tasks associated with professionalism, and entangled with neoliberal ideals, for example taking a technical approach to problem solving, developing English language capacity and the ability to complete donor-funding processes (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; Jeffrey 2007; 2008; Norman 2014). Related to the professionalisation of civil society McFarlane (2012) argues that the discourses of neoliberalism legitimise a civil society that can demonstrate its entrepreneurial value, reinforcing an imaginary of an ideal neoliberal civil society group and the skills and acumen they should possess. These normative discourses place particular expectations on the way that civil society groups operate, and deviance away from these ideals can challenge civil society legitimacy.

Other institutions can also shape the legitimacy of civil society, in particular how the state positions civil society as legitimate or illegitimate. In hostile political climates civil society groups are often legitimised through their ability to act solely as service providers, with minimal space for legitimate engagement in more progressive social and political change (Rahman 2006). The state may provide particular avenues for engagement in governance processes, for example through strategic partnerships, which act to legitimise the activities of civil society groups through these channels, and delegitimise activities outside of those offered by the state (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Batley & Rose 2011; Brass 2012). The state can also actively delegitimise civil society groups, for example those associated with foreign funding, through charges that they are promoting Western imperialism or have become removed from their grassroots constituents through their engagement with international donors (Dupuy, Ron & Prakash 2015; Lang 2013). Christensen & Weinsten (2013) show how civil society organisations associated with foreign donors have been delegitimised and shut down in Egypt, with the state articulating the threat civil society groups posed as they operate under America and Israeli influence (Christensen & Weinsten 2013:77). The challenge civil society places on state sovereignty and national cultural values are also exemplified by Walton’s (2008) study of Sri Lankan NGOs. He argues that the state delegitimised NGO activity by discursively connecting them with liberal versions of peace building that posed a danger to national security. The discursive delegitimising of civil society groups by the state is also demonstrated by Banks, Hulme & Edwards (2015) using the example of Muhammad Yunus, the founder of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, where the state mobilised narratives of corruption to damage his reputation and restrict his activities.

Different actors and institutions are involved in constructing, discursively, within policy documents and through tangible actions, what constitutes a legitimate civil society. Constructions of legitimacy can then be understood as a domain through which power impacts on civil society organisations, with legitimacy threatened when an organisation fails to respond to the environment in which it operates in a manner that is deemed acceptable by wider society (Lister 2003). Dominant versions of civil society legitimacy have been heavily influenced by Western influenced conceptualisations of civil society that have permeated the discourses of powerful development actors. These conceptualisation leave little room for constructing a legitimate civil society that is founded on non-Western forms of associational life, this includes complex forms of state-civil society interactions and aspects of incivility or informality (McIlwaine 1998a; Obadare 2012). The legitimate version of civil society prevalent in development discourses is one that rests on a narrow version of civil society, and one that has become more intimately connected to neoliberal framings that accentuate entrepreneurialism and management-style professionalism (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; McFarlane 2012). This demonstrates that civil society legitimacy can be viewed as a top-down process that reinforces particular versions of a legitimate civil society actor (Lister 2003). The next section of this chapter will contrast this with the ways in which civil society organisations are promoting their own legitimacy through their working practices.

### 8.3.2 Demonstrating and practising legitimacy

Whilst one aspect of civil society legitimacy contends that what counts as a legitimate civil society has been heavily influenced by the discourses of powerful institutions and the evolution of civil society within the development arena, another strand of thought has considered how civil society organisations practice, demonstrate and promote their legitimacy as development actors. This resonates with Jeffrey’s (2013) work on the improvised state. In his example of the post-conflict state of Bosnia Herzegovina, he argues that the state actively performs its legitimacy and shows the requirement for state institutions to behave in a way that accentuates their legitimacy to reinforce their credentials. This idea of performance can be seen through the organisational practices adopted by civil society organisations to demonstrate their legitimacy. As service providers, avenues for the development of social capital and channels for the voices of the marginalised, civil society organisations are also deemed legitimate actors through their internal organisational practices. Scholarship on the practices through which legitimacy is claimed highlight the diversity of ways through which civil society groups promote their legitimacy. This more technical approach assumes that if civil society groups enact a series of practices, they will then be legitimate (Biggs & Neame 1995; Edwards & Hulme 1995a; Tandon 1995).

Legitimacy is partially acquired through the processes an organisation engages in and these processes can drive organisational behaviour, with NGOs projecting their legitimacy in diverse ways, for example through their knowledge base or their legal status (Pallas, Gethings & Harris 2015). To outline this Ossewaarde, Nijhof & Heyse (2008) contend that international NGOs need four dimensions of legitimacy, output, normative, cognitive and regulatory legitimacy, and that all of these can be achieved and demonstrated (although with difficulty) through technical processes. Normative legitimacy refers to the ability of the organisation to demonstrate that they are working towards a cause that is perceived as ‘in the common good’, whilst cognitive legitimacy confers a need for the organisation to show that they are experts in their field, regulatory legitimacy refers to the adherence to appropriate legal procedures and output legitimacy is articulated through accountability mechanisms, effective performance and financial transparency, with organisations operating in the same field often taking up similar processes to aid their legitimacy, conforming to the social norms constructed for their particular type of organisation (Johnson 2004; Ossewaarde, Nijhof & Heyse 2008).

This multi-faceted legitimacy can be seen in relation to civil society organisations, for example through the integration of professional practices into NGO activities and the shift towards more normative neoliberal managerial mechanisms (Jenkins 2011; Mercer & Green 2013). With the demonstration of professionalism increasing the legitimacy of civil society organisations, the hallmarks of legitimacy have become accountability and efficiency markers, such as the completion of project proposals, logframes and project reports (Baillie Smith & Laurie 2011; Bondi & Laurie 2005; Jenkins 2011; Mercer & Green 2013). The development of mission statements that are consistent with established values, and the use of administrative tools to demonstrate financial transparency and accountability form part of civil society’s output legitimacy (Edwards & Hulme 1995a; Jeffrey 2008). Civil society organisations claim regulatory legitimacy through the enactment of particular legal processes, such as producing a constitution or registering with the state (Jeffrey 2007; Mercer & Green 2013), with NGO legitimacy sometimes associated with formalised procedures such as the completion of an NGO certification process (Brown & Jagadanada 2007). Civil society groups claim cognitive legitimacy by promoting themselves as experts in their particular field, often through their knowledge of their grassroots constituents and the contextualised concerns of the communities they work with (Bano 2012). For some NGOs ‘being in the field’, proximity to the grassroots and being able to demonstrate culturally appropriate ways of working maintains their legitimacy (Sim 2002; Stigum Gleiss 2014; Weeks, Packard & Paolisso 2012), with civil society organisations, for example in the post-conflict context of Bosnia-Herzegovina claiming legitimacy through their abilities to skillfully interact across ethnic divides (Shank-Puljek & Verkoven 2017).

For non-state actors relations and practices with other institutions can also help demonstrate their legitimacy, for example through legal processes such as group registration (Barnes, Laerhoven & Driessen 2016; Dupuy, Ron & Prakash 2015; Jeffrey 2007). Herlin (2015) contends that connections to the corporate sector shape NGO legitimacy, in one sense enhancing legitimacy through financial stability, in another challenging ethical credibility, but these contestations are mediated by the identity and values of the corporate sector actor. This can also be considered in relation to the state, with civil society groups potentially gaining legitimacy through their alliances with the state, but simultaneously losing legitimacy in the eyes of their beneficiary communities (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015). It is to this complexity and the multiple relations involved in civil society legitimacy that this chapter will now turn. The chapter has so far demonstrated that the legitimacy of civil society is connected to the dominant development discourses through which civil society is constructed, the actions of other institutions, particularly the state and the practices of civil society organisations themselves. The next section will critique the ways in which these versions of legitimacy have premised technical versions of legitimacy contending that it is something that can be achieved through the appropriate enactment of certain processes, neglecting the relational nature of legitimacy claims.

### 8.3.3 Multiple relations of legitimacy

It is the question of being legitimate to whom that complicates the thinking on civil society legitimacy, with scholars struggling to articulate this multiplicity and the processes of claiming legitimacy that accompanies it (Brown & Jagadanada 2007; Lister 2003), highlighting the need to consider both the top down and bottom up mechanisms through which legitimacy is made (Walton et al 2016). In both state and non-state contexts the bodies of work conducted to date have tended to accentuate a technical approach to the exploration and conceptualisation of legitimacy, inferring that legitimacy can be gained and granted through the undertaking of certain practices, procedures and activities, and projecting particular identities. This denies the complex nature of legitimacy and the way in which multiple forms of legitimacy have to be continually negotiated (Lister 2003; Pallas, Gethings & Harris 2015; Stigum Gleiss 2014). In her book ‘The Global Legitimacy Game’ Alison Van Rooy (2004) accentuates the variety of ways that international groups claim legitimacy, through their representativeness and moral authority, and as the title implies through subtler less visible forms of legitimacy, for example charismatic leadership. This multiplicity is particularly key for civil society organisations, which need to be legitimate to multiple stakeholders simultaneously, and yet have no ‘straightforward’ mechanism, such as elections, through which to claim their legitimacy.

This multiplicity also makes civil society organisations vulnerable, as they attempt to be legitimate to different audiences, who may have different and sometimes contradictory expectations, for example if NGOs are understood as agents of social change, then it is their relationship with their constituents that legitimizes them. Conversely if NGOs are primarily valued for their ability to hold the state to account then autonomy from the state can enhance their legitimacy (Stigum Gleiss 2014; Thrandardottir 2015). This has been particularly noticeable through the delegitimising of civil society groups in reference to their connections to foreign funding, and especially felt in Russia, Kenya, India and Egypt (Dupuy, Ron & Prakash 2015; 2016), highlighting difficulties CSOs have in being legitimate to communities and donors simultaneously (Shank-Puljek & Verkoven 2017). Lister (2003) maps out the ways in which organisations project legitimacy to different stakeholders, commenting that characteristics that may enhance legitimacy in the eyes of one stakeholder, may reduce legitimacy in the eyes of another. In her view organisations need to utilise different legitimacy claims strategically to work out which aspect of legitimacy matters most.

As well as neglecting the multiplicity of civil society legitimacy, literature has also tended to play down the complexities involved in the practices and processes of gaining legitimacy (Stigum Gleiss 2014). Legitimacy is often assumed to be an endpoint that can be reached by following the correct processes, but this more technical approach to claims of legitimacy neglects the way that the legitimate subject and associated subjectivities are potentially constituted by the social, political and cultural environment, through processes of renegotiation with different audiences and through the power of particular discursive formations. Understanding legitimacy as relational draws on ideas of relational subjectivity, as Simpson (2015) articulates the subject is no longer an entity upon which the world is ordered, instead the subject is made relationally*.* This more relational understanding of subjectivities is reflected in the bodies of work on activist and development actor subjectivities that demonstrates that their identities are complex, multi-layered and hybrid (Brown & Pickerill 2009; Lewis 2013; Mosse 2013). Jenkins (2015) for example, articulates how multiple subjectivities are embedded in everyday activist practices and often used selectively and strategically. Women protesting mining in Peru articulate essentialised versions of femininity to frame their involvement, using water, Mother Earth and future generations as symbolic constructions to legitimize their role in the anti-mining campaign (Jenkins 2015:7). This approach also stresses the multiplicity of legitimacy, not only in the eyes of others but also for activists being legitimate to themselves, as Pallas, Gethings & Harris (2015:1268) articulate ‘the importance of producing a legitimate sense of self, both for ‘others’ and as a mirror on oneself’.

These varying conceptualisations of legitimacy show that the idea of what legitimacy means is intimately connected to the type of institutions involved in governance and development processes. Legitimacy is often seen as a fixed point to be reached, with less attention paid to the way that legitimacy shapes and is shaped by various social groups. Legitimacy therefore needs to be understood as a contextual set of social relations, encompassing both ideas of a relational construction of legitimacy and legitimacy that is articulated through the power of discourse (Walton et al 2016). In bringing together scholarship on legitimacy and conceptualiations of subjectivity that articulates the need to consider the individual in relation to wider social and political experiences (Gooptu 2016; Kenny 2012), this research asked questions such as: What defines and should define contemporary civil society in the Caribbean? How do civil society actors produce themselves as legitimate subjects for different audiences and for themselves? How does what constitutes legitimate civil society shape its activities? And importantly, do the perceptions of what constitutes legitimate civil society actors need to be reconsidered?

## 8.4 Performing legitimacy: Being grassroots, non-partisan and professional

‘I feel it’s a class bias because I think it may be how they look at people who are in civil society, as people who could not achieve otherwise and may be they are just rabble rousers, noise makers so they're under-achievers who didn't have anything else better to do and may be they don't deserve our attention and support. That’s how I see it…’

 Lincoln, Founder Barbadian CSO, 13th October 2015

Civil society actors, as Lincoln articulates above, often start from the position of lacking legitimacy and have to negotiate multiple subjectivities to be perceived as effective and legitimate development actors. Legitimacy is an important resource for civil society work, both for the promotion of ideas and activities and for reaching out to a greater number of people, this chapter will now move on to consider how legitimate civil society subjects are made through their relationships with significant other groups, and the narratives these relationships construct (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2012b; Hilhorst, Weijers & van Wessel 2012; Jenkins 2015; Lewis 2013; Simpson 2015). This reflects the relational nature of legitimacy, and the way that legitimate subjectivities are formed through intimate social relations, as well as the cultural and political environment in which civil society is situated (Popke 2003; Rossdale 2015; Simpson 2015; Zevnik 2015). The complexity of legitimacy for civil society is the partly influenced by the multiple audiences (or stakeholders) through which their legitimacy is claimed, who each have their own meanings, values and ideas about what civil society legitimacy should be, and the inherently unstable nature of the way that each of these audiences may shift in their own understandings of what it means for civil society to be legitimate.

As we have seen in the previous chapter with civil society groups challenging each other’s financial legitimacy through the use of different funding streams, the audience is not a passive or a purely watchful audience, they are active participants in the construction of civil society legitimacy, both in the relations formed with civil society and also in the construction of the discursive framing of what civil society should be. The audience is perhaps the wrong term, but it used here to reflect the need for civil society to project legitimacy to them, but it must also be kept in mind that what I am terming the audience play a crucial role in constituting legitimacy. This section of the chapter will outline three dominant narratives of legitimacy for civil society, being grassroots, being non-partisan and being professional. These narratives can be seen within the dominant discourses on civil society within the wider international development arena, promoted by the World Bank and other powerful institutions (Abrahamsen 2004; Porter 2003). The chapter will then proceed to consider how civil society actors mediate these multiple subjectivities and the way that these negotiations shape how civil society groups practice sustainable development.

### 8.4.1 Being ‘grassroots’

‘Over the years you build up a certain amount of trust. I don't have a house I have a bad relationship with. I can knock on every door and feel comfortable and go and sit down and that had [to be] developed - it is not instant.’

 Trevor, Founder Grenadian CSO, 7th March 2016

A significant part of the formation of a legitimate civil society group, particularly those operating at a more local scale, is their claims to be closely connected to the public or communities they work with, or in some cases intimately connected to the environment they are attempting to conserve. For these groups it is through a place-based connection and grassroots links that civic legitimacy is claimed (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Bolton & Jeffrey 2008; Fowler 1993). Civil society groups are not then representing a body or an idea that is separate from them, it is the close affiliations that mean they are not just representative but are embedded in the community, public or environment over a prolonged period of time, as Trevor articulates above. It is this closeness that sets civil society apart from other development actors and it is through the intimacy of these relations that civil society can be made legitimate, both to the public or community as an audience, but also to other actors, such as the state or international donors (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Bano 2012). This is particularly the case for smaller organisations but this civicness is also projected in the discourse of larger international organisations, who articulate the legitimacy of their work through close partnerships with groups they perceive to be embedded in the local communities. It is through these partnerships that international organisations gain aspects of their legitimacy (Walton et al 2016).

The legitimacy created through connections with the community, public or environment in which civil society work is important for civil society legitimacy across the different audiences, but to be legitimate to the communities or public the group worked with civil society actors also have to embody a sense of difference from the rest of the community. They have to be able to articulate and demonstrate what it is that they have that enables and allows them to embody this particular responsibility and position of power. This difference is articulated through the skills, knowledge and experience that civil society actors may have that differentiates them from the rest of the community, for example higher education or periods of time spent overseas. This resonates with the idea of cognitive legitimacy, where organisations gain legitimacy through their ability to project themselves as knowledgeable experts (Narayamaswamy 2016), but also with a sense of civil society as a sphere dominated by elite actors (Bolton & Jeffrey 2008; Bondi & Laurie 2005; Mawdsley et al 2002). The projection of difference is about civil society actors embodying a sense of legitimacy by being able to promote themselves as ‘grassroots’ experts, knowledgeable yet remaining close to constituent communities (Jenkins 2011; Laurie, Andolina & Radcliffe 2003; 2005). This dichotomy was epitomised in my conversation with one participant, Peter, when I asked him what civil society organisations bring to development:

‘We bring the views of the ordinary people. You need to understand that NGOs are voluntary and people start NGOs because they see a problem and they want to solve it. So basically NGOs collect information, they may not have it like you write your thesis, but they have the information…[you don’t] just imagine a programme, you go and check with the community. You see what the community wants and you find a way to let the community have it. So basically we bring research, we bring views bottom up views, solutions basically, problems and solutions.’

 Peter, Founder Barbadian CSO, 26th October 2015

### 8.4.2 Non-partisan

A second significant narrative through which civil society actors are made legitimate both to the public and through their relations with the public is by their articulation of the discursive space between the political and the social, with civil society claiming it is primarily operating in a way which would be seen to be less political (Chandhoke 2007; Edwards 2014; Ferguson 1994; Mercer & Green 2013; Stigum Gleiss 2014). This does not mean a separation of civil society and the state, as will be discussed in more detail below, but a distinction between civil society activity in the social realm and involvement with partisan politics. Numerous times civil society actors would tell me that ‘we aren’t political’ meaning that they would not explicitly involve themselves in partisan politics and take great care where their objectives did overlap with that of particular political parties[[10]](#footnote-10). This included the active removal of themselves from initiatives that may have become ‘too political’ in a desire to maintain their legitimacy within the community. Civil society actors therefore legitimise their work by articulating it as purely in the social domain and create a discursive separation between what is perceived as social and that, which is seen, as political. One of the groups I spoke to was involved in organising public forums about the potential loss of green public space and beach access for real estate development in Grenada. In my conversation with the two key members of this group they articulated their concerns about being drawn into partisan politics through this campaign:

Herbert: ‘You have to be very careful because you want to keep that as low as possible but as soon as that comes out that you're taking sides…the opposition side…’

Felix: ‘It becomes political. It’s not straightforward but the thing is that I wouldn't be making any statements that would have a political…’

Herbert: ‘Keep out of the politics. We want the park for the people of Grenada, we 're not interested in the party politics or whatever.’

Herbert & Felix, Founder & President (respectively) Grenadian CSO, 2nd March 2016

Trevor, the founder of a Grenadian civil society group also spoke of his concern about civil society becoming too close to politics, and talked of the ways in which other groups became detrimentally close to politicians, particularly the dangers of becoming labeled as too close to the opposition party (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015). Reflecting on these incidents he encouraged his organisation to create a clear separation between civil and political society:

‘We don't need the government to do this. We can do this ourselves. But governments come to me, especially politicians to be begging, to be looking for handouts… I say listen we don't need handouts and I call it…a rum and corn beef politics, were you go to the shop and the politicians will come to your shop and they will buy drinks. People will drink rum and instead of helping them develop and educate them so at the end of the day they keep them at a level…’

 Trevor, Founder Grenadian CSO, 7th March 2016

Along with avoiding partisan politics, for many civil society actors legitimacy in the eyes of the state is claimed through the nature of their engagement with the state, with discourses of dialogue and consensus favoured over more antagonistic or contested forms of political interactions. The state and parts of civil society itself plays an active role in the construction of this less antagonistic version of civil society, delegitimising action that does not fall within this category (Jeffrey 2007; Kopecky & Mudde 2003; Rahman 2006). By providing channels through which civil society can shape policy the state again legitimises a particular version of civil society action, and by offering (perceived) respect through these channels constructs activity outside of them less legitimate, as Peter emphasises:

‘In terms of government… that started embracing NGOs so today there’s hardly a statutory corporation that doesn't have an NGO on it. A lot of them are also part of…national level consultations, policy matters and projects so we're into the policy-making… So we have… drifted away from being a belligerent, from being confrontational and more dialogue…so that’s how we approach problems at this point, not going on the streets and demonstrating. No, no, no we sit down with those people who have the authority and whatever and do whatever we are supposed to and sit down and reason...’

 Peter, Founder Barbadian CSO, 26th October 2015

### 8.4.3 Professional

The idea of relational legitimacy shows how civil society groups claim legitimacy through their relationships with different groups. They are legitimised by their closeness to the community or the public, but also by their difference, for example their leadership qualities. They are also legitimised through their relation with ‘politics’, discursively widening the discourse between the social and the political. These different audiences are able to invoke civil society legitimacy, for example the state promoting particular civil society groups as examples of successful and legitimate civil society. This has the potential to further entrench views on what constitutes a legitimate civil society, in this case, the crafting of dialogical relations with the state, and working within the social realm (Nagel & Staeheli 2016). These relations conform to narratives of civility, dialogue and non-partisanship, but a third narrative of civil society legitimacy is that of professionalism, and in particular the neoliberal professionalism advocated through many of the financial mechanisms connected to the international donor community. This type of funding and the mechanisms and practices associated with it are articulated in the context of the interconnected and entangled arrangement of processes of modernity, neoliberalism and professionalisation, as Kothari (2005:443) comments‘the professionalisation of international development promotes a technical process of interventions that maintain the legitimacy and authority of Western modernity and the dominance of the neoliberal agenda’.

The legitimation through professionalisation that accompanies newer neoliberal tendencies has been highlighted in the last decade (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015) and the professionalisation of development work is seen as connected to the neoliberal tendencies of the development industry, for example in the greater emphasis placed on project management and financial auditing (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2011; Larner & Laurie 2010; Mercer & Green 2013; Norman 2014). Whilst the previous chapter demonstrated a multiplicity of financial interactions for Caribbean civil society groups, it was noted that international donors remain a part of this diverse landscape. The process of acquiring money from international donors is entangled with the technologies and apparatus of governmentality mechanisms, which serve to render civil society and their activities legitimate through the way that money is collected, regulated and used (Narayanaswamy 2016), and often their performance was acknowledged to be for the consumption of the donor audience, and as we have seen in the previous chapter there is a strong desire to move away from donor funding as a sole source of civil society funding.

Legitimation through professionalism is constructed through the dominance of donor regimes, but a professional subjectivity is only partial, in that civil society actors embody this professionalism to some extent on their own terms and in ways they chose (Chatterton & Pickerill 2012; Jenkins 2011). This neoliberal/professional hybridity is reproduced and reworked in particular ways by the relational arrangements between civil society activists and donor money, but this reproduction is not always substantive and a degree of neoliberal professionalism is performative rather than authentic action, with the restriction of such knowledge and language to formal reports and occasions ostensibly to satisfy donor demands (Frewer 2013) as Alyson commented ‘we working in an NGO, hats off to us, we could probably cook books for the mafia…I mean I have no shame in saying it now because I think it needs to be understood’. (Alyson, Founder Grenadian CSO, 5th February 2016).

Alyson articluates the way that some civil society organisations see the professionalisation of their work, and acknowledge that whilst taking up some aspects of this professionalisation can legitimise their work, these technical mechanisms do not necessarily equate with organisational legitimacy, with the legitimacy gained through professionalism potentially insubstantial.

Legitimacy effects civil society’s ability to voice their ideas, be listened to and to pursue the acts of transformation that they believe will offer alternative versions of the future. This section has developed the idea that civil society actors embody multiple subjectivities simultaneously in order to be perceived as legitimate by a variety of different audiences. Legitimacy is not just about performing for those audiences; legitimacy can be understood as relational – it is built through relations with these audiences making them active participants in the construction of civil society subjects. These relations are grounded within social discourses and power relations that help to construct legitimate and sometimes contradictory versions of civil society, and embedded within wider development discourses about what constitutes a legitimate civil society (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Jeffrey 2007; 2008). Civil society actors must at once be connected to their community, yet different from them. They should be non-partisan, and have agreeable relations with the state and they should be professional and embody neoliberal subjectivities to demonstrate their financial acumen.

These dominant narratives of legitimacy are played out and shape the way development is practiced. For example, civil society groups place great emphasis on community involvement in their work, they have a tendency to prefer dialogical relations with the state and view the performance of professional skills a crucial, although contested, aspect of their work. This reflects the dominant discourses of what a legitimate civil society should look like (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015). Legitimacy is understood as concurrently developed from above by powerful social regimes associated with the development industry and wider society, such as neoliberalism and the role of the state, but also through the social relations that are crafted strategically and selectively by civil society actors. Civil society groups carefully negotiate these different narratives of legitimacy, as they balance tensions inherent within these narratives, for example of closeness and difference. This chapter will now turn to consider how the negotiation of these multiple subjectivities shapes civil society development practices, and argue that is through the negotiation of these multiple subjectivities that greater legitimacy is found.

## 8.5 Enhancing legitimacy: Negotiating multiple subjectivities

Civil society groups craft multiple narratives of legitimacy, but these narratives and subjectivities are imbued with tension and contradictions and it is the negotiation and balancing of these different forms of legitimacy that further builds a legitimate civil society group. It is not enough for groups to base legitimacy on just one of these domains, rather they can maintain claims of legitimacy through the careful mediation of relations with different audiences. To be a legitimate subject in the eyes of these multiple audiences therefore requires multiple simultaneous carefully crafted, sometimes contradictory subject positions, where activities intended to claim legitimacy with one audience can impact detrimentally on the degree of perceived legitimacy by another (Brown & Jagadanada 2007). Legitimate subjects cannot easily be placed on to the dimensions described previously, with civil society actors always moving between these positions, balancing aspects of one with parts of another (Pile & Thrift 1995). This negotiation of identities resists the normative categorisations of what makes civil society legitimate and it is at the edges of these narratives that civil society groups mediate legitimacy (Baillie Smith & Laurie 2011; Horowitz 2009; Lewis 2013; Pile & Thrift 1995). It is sometimes through the processes of negotiating these multiple subjectivities that civil society groups experience challenges to their legitimacy, attempting to balance different versions of what a legitimate civil society should be. It is these negotiations of legitimacy which shape how civil society groups practice development, through the activities they chose to undertake as Tina discusses below:

‘So writing, being very professional and authoritative, yet understanding. Because NGOs need…to be professional, you have to be able to write a report…and you…have to compartmentalise because you're managing so many relationships…being able to be firm yet passionate at the same time... You have to be able to switch when and where so you have to be powerful and driven and also extremely passionate compassionate and concerned…’

 Tina, Founder Barbadian CSO, 12th December 2015

Civil society groups are negotiating these multiple legitimate subjectivities, as Tina explained, for example mediating the professionalism of their organisation with the desire to be close to the community. She talks about how to be both professional and grassroots at the same time, and being able to shift between these identities as required. Negotiating these diverse legitimate positions is a significant aspect of enacting development for civil society groups, as Pam explains in the context of being cautious about opportunities for her civil society group to work with the state, a process that may challenge their legitimacy with other audiences:

‘We only in December completed a project with [a government ministry]…The last meeting in November was a set of consultations with the Ministry. It was an experience, a different one…there's strong opposition to genetically-modified organisms (GMOs) in the country…and there were a number of people that felt that [Pam’s organisation] should not have been an organisation doing this because they saw us as promoting GMOs. We had to say listen, no, this is not about promoting GMOs or supporting GMOs or supporting the government to support GMOs - this is about providing information, education and putting a mechanism in place to regulate…’

 Pam, Founder Grenadian CSO, 1st February 2016

In contrast to Pam’s experience, Fletcher spoke of his organisation’s withdrawal from a project once the state became involved, again in an effort to maintain his group’s legitimacy, demonstrating how the mediation of legitimacy plays a key role in the development practices of civil society groups, with concerns over legitimacy influencing the involvement of civil society groups in certain arenas and the types of activities they conduct.

‘When I got the first funding…to build that first project, [it] was basic seaman’s license…we got funding from Caribbean Development Bank. Its continuing now but we're not part of it because the government took control of the idea and it got so political that we pulled out… an old West Indian type of politics we use these events to build you know support for our parties which is so negative…the people who should be really benefitting from the project wasn't seeing it happening and our input wasn't taken on board so there was no sense of us…’

 Fletcher, Founder Grenadian CSO, 14th March 2016

Other civil society actors told me how legitimacy concerns influenced the practices of civil society groups. Rather than purely constraining the activities he conducted Colin felt that being a legitimate group meant being able to be flexible and engage in practices that were outside the remit of his project proposal, balancing legitimacy through professionalism with legitimacy gained through his relationship with the community. Balancing these different versions of legitimacy also shapes the way that civil society groups operate, and the way they organise themselves. Rachel explained to me how her organisation had developed a community group closely allied to their own group to enhance the legitimacy of her organisation ‘they saw us an international brigade, although we're not, so what we did we set up a community-based organisation…’ (Rachel, Director Grenadian CSO, 15th February 2016).

The process of mediating these different forms of legitimacy also provides an arena for concern and reflection, as Pam implied earlier. One of my participants, Keith, reflected on the difficulty of being a legitimate civil society representative within national forums. He acknowledged that his legitimacy as a civil society representative comes from his ability to make a statement on behalf of the people he represents, but he is also conscious that gaining their views is not always easy, and that he might be projecting his own perceptions rather than a wider view. He went on to describe the lengths he goes to in order to gather the opinions of different agricultural groups based around Grenada, and how this drive for legitimacy influences his engagement with these different groups. The ability of civil society groups to negotiate these diverse and sometimes contradictory versions of legitimacy is crucial to their work, and it is through these delicate negotiations that legitimacy is enhanced. Civil society groups want to be able to be non-partisan, but also engage with the state and they want to be perceived as professional yet also close to the community. The mediation of the different values is something which is constantly being undertaken by civil society groups, we saw for example how Fletcher’s group had withdrawn from a project because he perceived as it as too close to the state. Legitimacy is therefore continually being renegotiated depending on the opportunities available, the needs of the organisation and the wider context.

These balancing acts shape how civil society groups engage with and practice sustainable development, from the activities and projects they chose to undertake to the organisational structures they utilise. Negotiating legitimacy also provides a context for reflection for civil society groups, with Keith contemplating the role of the civil society representative in national forums. These multiple legitimate subjectivities are seen as relational, social and embodied process, with civil society groups negotiating the tensions and contradictions within and between these different subjectivities. They challenge the divisions between the different categorisations of legitimacy with these acts of negotiation influencing how they engage with development practice. The final empirical section of this chapter will consider moments when these dominant narratives of civil society legitimacy are challenged and destabilised and the opportunities and constraints this may offer for civil society action.

## 8.6 Destabilising legitimacy

This chapter has so far suggested that civil society actors simultaneously embody multiple legitimate subjectivities in the work that they do and that these subjectivities are made relationally through political and social relations, and in response to particular discourses. These dominant narratives of legitimacy highlight the importance of being grassroots, non-partisan and professional in civil society work. But rather than being able to uncompromisingly embody each of these subjectivities, civil society actors continually have to renegotiate these different versions of what it means to be legitimate. This is a careful balancing act and shapes the way that civil society groups practice development. But these dominant subjectivities are not stable (Baillie Smith & Laurie 2011), they are continually being destabilised, both from the outside and by civil society actors themselves as they search for legitimacy in new forms of social relations and attempt to challenge the dominance of certain social and political relations in the construction of legitimacy. This section will use three examples to outline how the dominant versions of the legitimate civil society subject are being subverted and explore some of the implications of these quests for alternative subjectivities for civil society action.

### 8.6.1 Contesting the state and rejecting the social

Civil society groups are often perceived as legitimate if they engage in dialogue with the state through the appropriate channels or if they are acting within the social domain (Chandhoke 2007; Edwards 2014; Mercer & Green 2013; Stigum Gleiss 2014). This leaves little room for other legitimate forms of contestation with the state (Jeffrey 2008; Mouffe 2000) and when civil society actors step outside of this discursive space they are often met with challenges to their legitimacy both on a personal level and at an organisational and sectoral level. This was particularly noticeable in Grenada where civil society groups would complain about the personal insults they had received, alongside uncomplimentary labeling of their group by the state, challenging the legitimacy of their actions.

‘The whole notion of civil society engagement, the environment was extremely hostile. I mean sometimes, I now tend to forget, but we did all of that in an extremely hostile environment. You were branded, you were labeled and it wasn't a positive label or positive branding either…’

 Pam, Founder Grenadian CSO, 1st February 2016

‘We were able to exist apart from political blackmail and so on, intimidation…and then some other people had to go underground because they thought they would lose their jobs, so we been struggling since then…’

 Pip, Founder Grenadian CSO, 27th February 2016

The delegitimisation of civil society and civil society actors by the state became apparent during my time in Grenada through contestation by civil society about the proposal to sell a public park with beach access for real estate development. Civil society actors organised campaigns against the sale of the land including an online petition, letters to the government, press releases, public meetings (‘townhall meetings’) and candlelit vigils on the site. The state challenged the legitimacy of these contestations, for example by stating that the petition was rigged, announcing that a public forum organised by civil society to discuss the sale of the park had been cancelled when no such cancellation had taken place and accusing civil society actors of being ‘anti-development’, who did not care about the nation’s economic interests. When I left Grenada the plans to privatise the park had slowed, with civil society actors recognising the role their campaign had played in the stalling of the privatisation of public land. Although the state had used delegitmisation as a tactic to weaken the voice of civil society in this instance they had not been successful and civil society were able to maintain the legitimacy of their campaign through the mobilisation of a significant section of the populace (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015). This discursive delegitimisation by the state resonates with examples from civil society in other parts of the world, for example civil society groups being seen as a threat to national culture and sovereignty in Sri Lanka (Walton 2008) and accused of corruption in Bangladesh (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015). The cumulative effects that these tactics of delegitimisation can have were evident in discussions with civil society actors. Participants spoke of the fatigue that comes with being labeled and branded and it is important to recognise that although the importance of destabilising particular versions of civil society may assist in increasing voice it is also potentially personally emotionally draining and may lead to the sector losing some of its more vocal activists.

Resisting this delegitimisation, and making it more acceptable to challenge as well as engage in dialogue with the state, has transformative effects, as articulated in the Camerhogne Park example above. Pam also spoke of the change in environment for civil society groups in Grenada, and the way that by continually pushing the boundaries of what a legitimate civil society is, progress can be made:

‘The environment is much more conducive, it’s not friendly but it is much more conducive. Thirty years later the track record is much clearer. People still they're not going to want to see us…If I ask for a meeting to discuss Camerhogne Park I might get the run around but you know they wouldn't say oh welcome, happy to see you. No, no, no you wouldn't get that, but the environment is less hostile...But it has not been an easy road it is still not an easy road it’s still very rocky.’

 Pam, Founder Grenadian CSO, 1st February 2016

### 8.6.2 Being part of the state and civil society

In much of the civil society literature and in the legitimacy discourses articulated here previously the separation of the state and civil society has been crucial for maintaining the legitimacy of civil society (Chabal & Daloz 1999; McIlwaine 1998a; White 1999). This resonated with the tripartite model of civil society, projecting a distinct boundary between civil society, the state and the market (Van Rooy 1998b). Some civil society actors however believed that dismantling this boundary did not damage their legitimacy as civil society actors, and may even enhance it, as Lincoln and others explained to me:

‘I think I was able to take in terms of being an advisor for government and doing consultancy work for the UN across the region, a lot of what I learnt in a very practical way growing up in the community solving problems, strategising, planning and I was able to take a lot of that and understanding human nature…you [also] bring back a high end level of ability, to write, an ability to plan… definitely brought back the ability to interface with different levels of people.’

 Lincoln, Founder Barbadian CSO, 27th October 2016

‘It’s a very good being in the NGO world because where I work here in the ministry to get things done and written the party politics is really strong and what I do I use my links and contacts within the ministry to develop you know programmes on the outside…’

 Fletcher, Founder Grenadian CSO, 14th March 2016

By working with and within the state Lincoln and Fletcher are also destabilising the legitimate civil society subject by saying that their work with the state enhances their activism, rather than becoming co-opted, a criticism that is regularly leveled at civil society actors (Ibrahim 2015; Kamruzzzaman 2013; White 1999). This also challenges the legitimation of civil society through their separation from the state, premising a sense of a more complex, indistinct and potentially strategic relationship between civil society and state institutions (Batley & Rose 2011; Lewis 2011; 2013). Other civil society actors also agreed that working for the state did not delegitimise their civil society work, in fact it enhanced it and was a mechanism through which they were able to improve both arenas, contrasting with the traditional separation of the state and civil society and the legitimacy that separation implies. This demonstrates the transfer of knowledge and skills through usually seemingly discrete sectors and how this can shape development processes (Lewis 2011; 2013).

### 8.6.3 Being ‘unprofessional’

The final example of destabilising the dominant narrative of legitimacy is through civil society actors challenging the professionalisation agenda associated with the global development industry. Over the course of three interviews with Alyson at her house in Grenada, she shared with me her frustrations at the way the global development industry operates. She spoke of her dissatisfaction of having to work within a system that may make sense on paper and having to do development, an inherently human endeavour, in a framework devised by an accountant who is totally focused on demonstrating fiscal responsibility to their government and tax-paying public. Alyson spoke of her desire to reject and change the neoliberal professionalism fundamental to donor money. She recounted an experience of having to temporarily stop implementing her project to complete a financial report. While she sat consumed at her computer, two volunteers, who had walked in off the street worked on the project, taking it further than she had imagined, without any funding. Alyson felt that by being anchored to burdensome procedures, that are designed primarily to meet financial requirements imposed from elsewhere, donor-agencies can suck the life out of NGOs. She told me that she was tempted to return to her capitalist sensibilities and would rather solicit the direct assistance of universities, students, corporations seeking to demonstrate their corporate social responsibility and think about the merits of crowd-sourcing, of tapping into the resources of our Diaspora groups and of using online resources and connections to build our knowledge and skills. In the previous chapter Alyson’s financial experiences were drawn on to show the diversity of civil society funding, here her explicit rejection of donor money challenges the way that civil society is made legitimate through the professionalism associated with this type of funding. She contends that professionalism can be embodied in other ways that are less driven by international donor agencies. This example is not intended to show Alyson as unprofessional in a negative sense or irresponsible, rather is it used to show how the legitimacy created by the professional narrative associated with neoliberal financial management can be destabilised by civil society groups, with this destabilisation offering Alyson opportunities to engage with different groups of people potentially expanding civil society.

These three examples show how civil society actors and those around them are continually destabilising dominant legitimate subjectivities. This process of destabilisation has the potential to offer opportunities for different types of civil society action to be made legitimate, expanding civil society voice and broadening the range of ideas civil society offers. These alternative legitimate subjectivities also provide some potential for concern, with for example the closeness between the state and civil society having the potential to narrow opinions offered on development concerns. These examples of destabilised legitimacy challenge the social, political and power relations that make up dominant legitimate civil society subjectivities offering potential for both a widening and narrowing of civil society voice and what constitutes development.

## 8.7 Conclusion: Redefining civil society legitimacy

‘…One of the things I was able to do was to learn more how to go into different forums and to switch hats and when I come among ordinary people to switch hats again, almost like a schizophrenic. Yeah, different characters. You've got a comedian, almost like a schizophrenic, bipolar kinda way, but in a good way that you have different characters you have to keep switching hats and characters to suit different times.’

 Lincoln, Founder Barbadian CSO, 27th October 2015

Legitimacy is an important concept for civil society, and one that is not necessarily pre-ordained, but something that has to be built. Civil society actors have to embody multiple subjectivities simultaneously to maintain their legitimacy, and these are deployed strategically in different spaces and at different times. These multiple subjectivities and the building of them through negotiated relations with the public, the state and the donor community articulates the need to think about legitimacy not as finite or stable but as shifting and situated processes. The legitimate civil society subject is therefore not fixed, but always a work in progress, as Pam, Pip and Alyson’s stories of destabilising legitimacy articulate.

Legitimacy is crucial for civil society groups, and particularly complex because of the need for civil society groups to be legitimate to multiple and sometimes competing stakeholders simultaneously (Brown & Jagadanada 2007; Jeffrey 2007; 2008). This chapter has delved into how legitimate civil society subjectivities are made, threatened and broken. It could be argued that legitimacy has become an even more pertinent feature of the civil society landscape in recent decades, particularly with the rise and fall of civil society as a development actor, the increasing challenges to civil society voice around the world and the rise of ‘new’ development actors, such as the corporate sector or global philanthropists (Walton et al 2016).

In considering legitimacy in the context of civil society this chapter adds to the body of work that argues for greater exploration and conceptualisation of legitimacy in the context of non-state actors (Grugel & Riggirozzi 2015; Tharandottir 2015; Walton et al 2016) and contends that understandings of legitimacy in these contexts must diverge away from procedural, bottom—up or top-down understandings (Lister 2003). Exploring the multiple subjectivities of civil society actors contributes to the literature on civil society legitimacy, whilst at the same time legitimacy offers a conceptual lens through which to highlight the transformative possibilities that are connected to unstable subjectivities. Building on Suchmann’s (1995) definition, in this context legitimacy could be thought of as: ‘transformative processes that develop a sense of justification, appropriateness and desirability of an entity through diverse relations with others, which has the potential to both open up spaces for new ideas and also close down around dominant discourses, altering the social and political landscape’.

This foregrounds the question of what is the relevance of these multiple forms of legitimacy for civil society action? The crafting of different types of legitimacy is important for civil society action, having the potential to increase voice, participation and acts of transformation. Legitimacy shapes organisational formation, the use of particular development practices, relationships with communities, the way civil society engage with the state and the financial mechanisms they use, all of which influence how sustainable development is practiced in the Caribbean. But these dominant narratives of legitimacy are also unsettled, broadening what constitutes development and civil society action. Closing down around a singular notion of legitimacy has the potential to exclude wider voices, but to diversify what counts as legitimate is not an easy task, it means shifting social, political and cultural relations. Through the unsettling of dominant versions of legitimacy civil society can expand its voice, widening what it is seen as and what counts as legitimate civil society action. Whilst others, and the social and political landscape, often guard the limits of what civil society can and should be, the ability of civil society to rethink its legitimate self produces possibilities for different types of civil society action, as Pam’s example details.

Legitimacy offers both possibilities and limitations, both building civil society and making it vulnerable. There is a need to channel what it means to be a legitimate civil society actor, to consider who determines what counts as legitimate and what civil society can and cannot do. Civil society is partly made legitimate by the boundaries set on the sector by others, and the social norms, regulations and limitations that accompany these boundaries (Lister 2003). If civil society actors can destabilise the boundaries of what constitutes legitimacy this could create different opportunities for civil society within political and social life, but also presents potential areas of concern for civil society action.

# 9. Conclusion: Complex interactions and permeable boundaries

## 9.1 Introduction

This research has explored the experiences of civil society actors in Barbados and Grenada in their involvement in sustainable development. Whilst acknowledging that knowledge is always partial and situated (Haraway 1991), these experiences have provided opportunities to reflect on alternative narratives that contest dominant knowledge claims about civil society and how it operates. These ‘other’ versions of civil society organising highlight the agency of civil society actors, their hopefulness and resourcefulness, but also articulate insecurity and unpredictability (Ballie Smith & Jenkins 2016). With civil society at a crossroads, the research was framed by the idea of ‘searching for civil society in its actual formation, rather than as a promised agenda for change’ (Mamdani 1996:19), asking questions concerned with civil society actors’ experiences and relations. This concluding chapter begins by summarising this research and its findings and then proceeds on to discussing the final research question posed in this thesis, how these empirical findings based on everyday experiences, shape how we could think about civil society activity away from dominant framings. The chapter concludes by making a case for relational thinking in the context of civil society scholarship.

## 9.2 Approaching civil society

Civil society has become crucial within development discourses and practice, and intimately connected to the good governance agenda (Abrahamsen 2004). Civil society as a mechanism through which development can occur is founded on the tripartite model developed by Western theorists. The De Tocquevillian framing, which later inspired Robert Putnam, placed great emphasis on the potential for associational life to enhance democratic tendencies (De Tocqueville 1840; Putnam 1993; 1995; 2000). The immense hope for civil society within development was twofold, firstly as a tool that would drive liberal democratisation and democratic transitions with a causal link assumed between civil society and enhanced governance. Secondly civil society organisations, and more often non-governmental organisations, were seen as alternative development agents at a time when the state was presumed to be inefficient, corrupt and bureaucratic (Bebbington 2004a; Chandhoke 2007; Hyden 1997). Civil society organisations have also been given prominence for their ability to be efficient and effective service providers. The global development industry has devoted significant resources to building civil society in the name of development, and whilst there are many example of successful development through civil society, substantial critiques have also been directed at the sector and the role and sustainability of civil society within the contemporary development landscape, particularly amongst ‘newer’ development actors, is contested (Blowfield & Dolan 2014; Mawdsley 2013; 2017).

Civil society both theoretically and in development discourses and practice is dominated by various framings that accentuate fixed categories, static boundaries and dualistic binaries, including civil society and the state, global/local, civil/uncivil, North/South and vertical models. These versions of civil society have been critiqued, particularly through feminist and post-colonial lenses, for not reflecting civil society beyond the Western imagination, where it may embody more informal or ‘uncivil’ relations, and for neglecting the complexities of civil society ‘on the ground’ (Chabal & Daloz 1999; Fraser 1990; Lewis 2002; Obadare 2011; 2014). The collaborative partners in this research told me at the start of the project, perhaps semi-jokingly, that they needed to understand more about how civil society groups gain or lose influence beyond formal visible mechanisms, they needed to understand the informalities and the unofficial. This demonstrates that the existing models of civil society presumed by development discourses do not reflect the complexities of civil society action, inhibiting the ways in which international donors and others engage with the sector.

There have been calls for civil society scholarship to move beyond these dominant framings and literature has started to advocate for a more human understanding of civil society, to ‘think with civil society’ (Lewis 2002:570), to ‘explore civil society in its actual formation’ (Mamdani 1996:19) and to ‘understand NGOs as made up of individuals, with… histories, commitments and allegiances’ (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2012b:643). There is then a need to think about a conceptual framework that can assist with this type of thinking, and I have argued in this thesis that the intertwined concepts of lived experience and everyday life could provide a foundation for doing so. Using these conceptualisations could assist in revealing complex, vibrant, diverse and contextual pictures of associational life(s) that are not overshadowed by a Western/non-Western binary or constructions of civil society currently dominating international development discourses.

Using everyday experience as a lens to think with about civil society makes visible the narratives of the people who are part of civil society and accentuates the importance of their experiences. This research focused on the experiences of people who worked for, volunteered with or were activists within self-defined civil society organisations. Actively thinking about civil society through the lens of everyday experience has the potential to alter the focus of civil society research, away from assessments of effectiveness and static boundaries, to a renewed concentration on the people, relationships, practices, materials and mobilities that constitute the complex arrangements of people and things that form civil society. Using this conceptual approach brought up questions such as: What do these particular approaches to thinking about lived experiences and everyday life mean for the way we engage with civil society? And how does this emphasis shape the way research on civil society is conducted?

## 9.3 Civil society and sustainable development in Barbados and Grenada

The research on which this thesis is based promoted a conceptual framework and research design that premised understanding civil society through everyday experiences and the narratives of civil society actors. Based in the Eastern Caribbean, on the islands of Barbados and Grenada, research was conducted through ethnographically inspired in-depth interviews and participant observation with a variety of civil society actors working in the field of sustainable development. The everyday work of key civil society actors who are part of these groups is full of intricacies and complexities and the next three chapters of this thesis focused on three key themes that were drawn from these civil society actors’ everyday experiences.

Civil society actors highlighted the importance of social relations, or social capital, for their work. Taking Naughton’s (2014) cue that we can use social capital to tell the stories of different socio-spatial relations, chapter 6 considered how the everyday social relations involved in civil society work in Barbados and Grenada complicate dominant framings of transnationalism within civil society scholarship. These ‘local’ organisations whose work is seemingly very much ‘in place’ are also transnational in nature, but not in the way assumed by scholarship on global civil society, which premises horizontal organising. Instead they operate globally through personal mobility and power-laden connections with people overseas. This opens up civil society thinking to ideas of collective action that are not based on Western constructs and reveals new possibilities for action, for example the potential for Diaspora groups to help build and sustain civil society and shape sustainable development in the Caribbean.

Whilst social relations are an important part of civil society work, money and financial stability is also a significant facet of everyday experience. Chapter 7 focused on civil society actors’ experiences of obtaining and using money within their work. Financial arrangements ask questions about who decides what counts as development and how development should be enacted – in essence it brings to the fore ideas of responsibility. Traditionally civil society groups have been conceived as passive recipients within financial interactions (Banks, Hulme & Edwards 2015; Porter 2003; Reith 2010), but this research showed that, alongside contextual shifts in the international aid architecture, such as donor retreat, civil society groups are actively diversifying their funding options and becoming more entrepreneurial. This entrepreneurial spirit can be seen in how civil society groups create their own diverse financial networks, taking more responsibility for development in the process, but also embodying both opportunities and insecurities. There is a ‘feel good’ factor about self-sustainability and opportunities to practice and shape development in a more autonomous manner. However, these different funding mechanisms also produce insecurities, of being vulnerable to reputational demise and the potential individualisation of responsibility for development.

The final empirical chapter in this thesis concentrated on another aspect of civil society experience that of the civil society subjectivity and civil society actors’ quests to promote themselves as legitimate development actors. This links with the previous two chapters, as claims to legitimacy are constructed through both social and financial connections, but this chapter argues that legitimacy is constructed by civil society actors through the negotiation of multiple dominant narratives of what it means to be legitimate. This research showed that legitimacy is a resource for civil society groups, and one that they are not automatically imbued with, but something that is crucial for their engagement with sustainable development. Legitimacy is made through relations with multiple audiences, including communities, the state and international donors, and civil society groups must negotiate and find a balance between these narratives. On occasions these dominant narratives are destabilised as civil society groups push the boundaries of what has previously been conceived as legitimate. This has the potential to increase civil society voice and participation and shape the way development is practised, broadening what constitutes civil society action.

## 9.4 Thinking beyond the boundaries of dominant knowledge claims

A consistent theme throughout all of the empirical chapters presented here is the way that a focus on everyday experiences contests dominant knowledge claims about civil society activity and opens up ideas about possibilities for action (Hume 2004; Nayak & Jeffrey 2013; Pink 2004). In particular, these reflections on everyday experiences challenge the boundaried ways much of civil society activity has been previously theorised (Obadare 2012; Painter 2006). Whilst there are some particular conditions related to the Caribbean island context that may challenge the stability of these boundaries, for example the region’s history of mobility and migration and Barbados and Grenada’s island nature, the ways in which dominant knowledge claims about civil society may not always represent civil society action more widely can still be reflected on through this empirical material.

Civil society scholarship, and its conceptualisation in development discourses, is built on a tripartite model of separation between civil society, the market and the state. But this research demonstrates that there is greater fluidity and permeability to these relations than articulated by the tripartite model. The permeability of the boundaries between the state and civil society is articulated in the stories of legitimacy. We have seen how the state may enhance the reputation and legitimacy of some civil society groups, but also how civil society actors work within both the state and civil society simultaneously. These relationships are not understood through usual terms, such as the co-option of civil society, rather they are seen as beneficial to civil society and the state, shaping how both sectors work and how development is conducted, as knowledge and practices travel between the two (Lewis 2011; 2013).

The tripartite model of civil society also premises the separation of civil society and the market. Whilst Edwards (2014) comments that these boundaries are collapsing, there has been limited attention to the ways in which this might be happening and how this is influencing development processes. The way that civil society groups in Barbados and Grenada obtain and use money in their work shows that there is greater permeability between the boundaries of civil society and the market than considered in the tripartite framing. Civil society groups are actively using the market to finance their work and becoming part of it, through engagement with a social enterprise model of working, by selling their consultancy and administrative services and developing voluntourism opportunities through which (international) volunteers financially support the continuation of the group’s activities. This differs from viewing the market as something that civil society should contest; in fact some civil society groups are actively turning towards the market to reduce their reliance on international donors. Civil society groups are also not solely working in partnership with corporate forces they are actively becoming part of the market, and in doing so drawing these relations into development processes.

The way civil society groups engage with money and the shifts this produces in notions of responsibilities also complicates the dominant knowledge claims based on North/South binaries and vertical dependency relations that prevail in civil society scholarship. The engagement of civil society groups from Barbados and Grenada in multiple forms of funding places greater responsibility for development in their hands and contests the notion that civil society should only be understood by their place at the bottom of a vertical aid chain. This again presents ideas of fluidity instead of static framings, with civil society groups developing networks of responsibility instead of vertical mechanisms of financial accountability. The way civil society groups craft their legitimacy also challenges the dichotomy of top-down and bottom-up conceptualisations of legitimacy (Walton et al 2016). Here legitimacy claims are understood as far more irregular and unstable, made through the interactions with multiple audiences, and continually being negotiated and destabilised.

Whilst these boundaried models have become institutionalised and reinforced within international development practice (Lamont & Molnar 2002; Mercer & Green 2013), this research argues there is a need to move away from thinking about civil society and the people that make and occupy it as bounded by these different static framings. But what other options are there? Instead civil society within development processes could be conceptualised as a more open-ended set of relations and thought about through a relational ontology (Deuchers 2010; Painter 2006). Drawing on a theoretical framework that actively thinks about civil society through the lens of the everyday via empirical research conducted in Barbados and Grenada shows that:

1. Civil society can be thought about through complex arrangements of people and things that come together at particular times, yet this does not dislocate the work from its (Caribbean) context.
2. Both human and material actors exist within these relations, and work needs to pay attention to their practices, processes and entanglements of power.
3. These actors are not fixed or static and there needs to be consideration of the mobility of people, ideas and materials and the continually changing nature of civil society.

I want to argue here for the value of approaching civil society from a more relational perspective, rejecting the tendency to favour static boundaries and binaries. In the paragraphs that follow I will detail how relational thinking can provide a different perspective for thinking about civil society, particularly within development processes. As well as challenging dualisms and foregrounding agency, thinking relationally about civil society has the potential to challenge the dominant discourses on civil society in four ways. Firstly, it highlights the role of both human and non-humans in civil society work. Secondly, it views the self as made relationally within civil society action. Thirdly, it has the potential to consider civil society as something that is always in flux and finally relational thinking may help articulate the complex power relations that are part of civil society.

## 9.5 Thinking civil society relationally

Relational ontologies reaffirm the importance of both human and non-human relations in civil society organising, suggesting that it is not just humans that are active in the constitution of civil society and their practices are not only embedded in relationships between humans (Hoehn 2013; Jones 2009; Whatmore 2006). This line of thinking is particularly associated with actor-network theory and assemblage thinking, where sensitivity to material processes shapes how the social world is made and remade (Latour 2005; Mol 2010; Muller 2015; Whatmore 2006). New materialisms literature stresses the need to attend to the materiality of social, political and ethical life and highlights the role of things as active and constitutive elements of our everyday lives (Bennett 2010; Jackson 2000), with for example Hoehn’s (2013) work concerning the role of documents in NGO work in Namibia, contending that documents shape the work and focus of the organisation, actively altering the interactions people have with each other, facilitating particular relationships and driving forms of social action. Money is also understood as an active material within civil society and development processes. I have argued in this thesis that the use of money by civil society actors in Barbados and Grenada reflects changing responsibilities within sustainable development. Money then has consequences that evolve from the features that are given to it by human agents, highlighting the agency of humans to transform money, and in this case the ability of civil society groups to shift notions of responsibility within development processes through their engagement with money (Hornborg 2014; 2017).

For some relational thinkers one of the most important spaces is the space of the self, with embodiment and corporality being crucial in our understanding of relationality (Pile & Thrift 1995). By thinking relationally, the subject is understood intersubjectively, through their relations with others, with political subjectivity understood as a co-constitutive process (McDowell 2004; Popke 2003; Rossdale 2015; Zevnik 2015). The need for recognition by others in the formation of the subject highlights the importance of relations, others and audiences for exploring subjectivity, dovetailing with Goffman’s (1958) social and cultural regulation through performance of the self (Bell & Valentine 1995). The importance of the self within relational thinking is demonstrated through the work here on civil society subjectivities. Here the legitimate civil society actor is made through its relational entanglements with others, its sense of a legitimate self, made in effect, through connections with others that are bound within particular cultural, political and social contexts. A civil society actor thinking or saying they are legitimate does make them so; their legitimacy is made, contested and remade relationally through engagement with others, and the construction of this legitimacy also shapes development processes.

Thinking about civil society from a relational viewpoint also foregrounds aspects of movement. Although actor-network theory acknowledges that the world is constantly in motion, assemblage approaches perhaps offer the most vivid examples of fluidity (Deleuze & Guatarri 1988). Although there is a range of different ways of thinking about assemblage, one of the key theoretical features is the coming together and disintegration of different components (McFarlane 2009). This resonates with Pugh’s (2013) thinking with the archipelago, which considers islands as island movements, rather than static isolated entities. This emphasises interconnections and movements over a static territorial understanding of islands. These tenets are demonstrated in civil society work through the coming together, breaking down and reforming of different relations. This is seen through the empirical chapters here, as social and monetary relations come together, perhaps temporarily to create civil society activity and guide development. In considering legitimacy, we can see how, for civil society actors in Barbados and Grenada, legitimacy is continually being made and remade through different connections and disconnections. There is a sense of flux about legitimacy, it is made and then broken and then remade in a different way. This may also be true for civil society organisations themselves. The sector is not static, organisations and people come and go, some organisations unable to sustain in a particular form, but then returning differently at a later date. This sense of flux is important for international donors to consider as they attempt to work with what they perceive to be a fixed sector.

These concerns with movement are also extended into considerations of how people, knowledge, ideas and policy flow and are actively channelled through particular relational complexes (Bebbington & Kothari 2006). This highlights the instability of many of these flows and the way that ideas, objects, knowledge and ideas change through the process and practices associated with making a thing mobile (Larner & Laurie 2010). The mobility of people and knowledge through development processes is a theme that recurs throughout David Mosse’s (2013) edited book entitled ‘Adventures in Aidland’, with various authors exploring the social networks through which development knowledge is made, sustained and reinforced (Eyben 2013). This research highlights the mobility of individual civil society actors in shaping the formation of civil society groups and their actions, with this mobility embedded in historical and contemporary relations.

Relational ontologies have been critiqued for flattening out relations of power, but there is a need to consider the power relations through which social and political change is constructed (Jones 2009). Thinking relationally shows that power circulates and can be felt, stabilised and mobilised through relational practices, but these processes are often unequal and power becomes centred on certain people and things, with some people more able to access, utilise and shape the network compared to others (Bennett 2010; Routledge 2008; Schwanen & Kwan 2012). This is echoed in actor-network theory where particular constellations of relations give rise to apexes of power with the intensity of relations in a given area producing specific formations of political, social and developmental activity (Bosco 2007; Davies 2012). Power also circulates through the complex relational arrangements involved in civil society work. We have seen how the state may exercise power to legitimise (or delegitimise) certain aspects of civil society and how power may be exerted on civil society groups to be accountable to multiple financial donors. The social relations involved in civil society work are not neutral but are imbued with power, with social resources enabling certain organisations to consolidate and cement the work they have been doing through their own social capital.

Relational thinking has been used to develop different understandings of the complexities of social and political change and the varied geographies involved in sustainable development (Davies 2012; Featherstone 2010). These literatures demonstrate the importance of the diffusion of ideas through human and non-human relations (Escobar 2001; Latour 2005), the importance of the movement of knowledge and resources (Bebbington & Kothari 2006; Larner & Laurie 2010), how the self is made relationally (Pile & Thrift 1995) and how power circulates through relational arrangements (Routledge, Nativel & Cumbers2006). Of particular relevance to understanding civil society in Barbados and Grenada is the work of island scholars to conceptualise islands relationally (Baldacchino 2007; Mountz 2015). Archipelagic thinking, drawn from the work of Caribbean scholars such as Édouard Glissant (1997) and Derek Walcott (1974), amongst others (Pugh 2013), understands political and social change through the relational nature of island formations, whether these are physical islands or islands of political activity accentuating a sense of connectivity, movement, flow and expansiveness (Davies 2017; Foucault 1990; Mountz 2015; Pugh 2013; 2016; Stratford et al 2011). Using the example of the Barbados Landship Pugh (2016:14) contends that relationality does not negate the distinctive character of island life. The Landship is a product of Africa, England, the sea and the land but ultimately it is Barbados, so foregrounding these shifting relations actually highlights the uniqueness of that particular island. This resonates with Glissant’s (1997; Pugh 2013) thinking. Island life is formed of the different relations in a locale expressed as relational rootedness. Rather than juxtaposing relations with uniqueness Glissant (1997) shows how relations intensify in particular island settings.

## 9.6 Conclusion: How does an everyday focus guide our thinking on civil society?

Developing more actor-focused accounts has shown the multiplicity, diversity and varied geographies of the relations that contribute to civil society organising. This research has placed the everyday experiences of civil society actors at the forefront of understandings of civil society and sustainable development in the small island states of Barbados and Grenada. These everyday experiences show that the relations that make up civil society work in Barbados and Grenada challenge the stasis of dominant framings of civil society, both the tripartite model and hierarchical and dualistic accounts that monopolise development discourses and practices. There has to be a different way of constructing knowledge about civil society beyond these dominant framings. I have argued here that a relational approach to civil society thinking may draw attention to these diverse and unexpected relations that shape and sustain civil society work in the sustainable development field. This may be particularly important given the different challenges civil society is facing, including its credibility as a development actor, the narrowing of civic space and changes to the international aid architecture (Hayman 2012; Walton et al 2016).

Relational ontologies may be particularly suited to the Caribbean and small island contexts, particularly because they resonate with the work of Caribbean scholars such as Édouard Glissant (1997), Stuart Hall (1991) and Paul Gilroy (1993) and recent scholarship on the relational nature of islands. ‘Islandness’ is implicit in much civil society work in Barbados and Grenada, with island living shaping the development challenges in both locations and the way civil society groups gain support for example through voluntourism and wider relations with the tourism industry. Occasionally, and often informally, participants would also tell me about how the smallness of their island influenced their work with one participant informally (and memorably) commenting that ‘the prime minister knows you’re not at home when he drives past and your car is not on the drive’. Whilst relational ontologies lend themselves to Barbados and Grenada, there is also potential for a relational focus to be applied to civil society and development in other places in an effort to understand more about the complexities of civil society action, how political, social and developmental change can come about and as a way for international development agencies to think about civil society organising, and their role in it, in the context of their work.

Thinking relationally encourages a formulation of civil society that identifies co-existence, new relations and openings (and potentially closings) and understands it is an arena in which individuals can be in the presence of others, placing them in a political relationship (Amin 2004; Davies 2009; 2012; Dikec 2012; Featherstone & Korf 2012; Painter 2006). The work of civil society then is about the negotiation of different relational arrangements to construct development processes (Massey 2005). This opens up conceptualisations of civil society to ideas about forms of collective action not based on Western modes of association, for example associations based on ethnic ties as described by Konings (2009) and Lewis (2002). Heterogeneous aspects of civil society are made visible and advocates of this way of understanding social change argue that relational thinking encourages a more extensive view of processes that exist away from the state and of both formal and informal mechanisms of participation and development, as seen in Barbados and Grenada (Clark & Jones 2013; Massey 2005). Privileging relationality in civil society theorising also allows civil society to be thought of as something that is always in process, it is not fixed or static, but as something that is interstitial, fluid and unfinished, something that Fowler (2012) believes is even more pertinent with the rise of social media. This emphasis on multiple connections in the formation of civil society work also directs us to think beyond normative hierarchical relationships and the tripartite model of the state, the market and civil society and removes the primacy often given to the examination of the relationship between the state and civil society, moving instead towards attending to the multiple, informal and perhaps ‘uncivil’ relations that civil society actors engage with in their work (Fraser 1990; Obadare 2009). This also contests the way civil society has been ‘rendered technical’ within dominant development discourses, arguing for complexity over more simplistic and sometimes dehumanised models of organising (Mercer & Green 2013; Murray Li 2013; Mosse 2013). Relational thinking also encourages the researcher to think through their connections, power, mobility and sense of self in greater detail within the research process (Sheehan 2011).

The unsettling of dominant templates for civil society work inevitably raises questions about how civil society action should or could be relationally conceptualised. It would be tempting to suggest the use of a network or assemblage framing to accentuate the emphasis on social connections. Despite the usefulness of these ideas and the importance of acknowledging the key scholars in these schools of thought (Deleuze & Guattari 1988; Glissant 1997; Latour 2005) in arguing for one of these frameworks, however it is in a sense replacing one spatial framing for another, when it is the openness to a multitude of different and sometimes unexpected social relations within civil society work that needs highlighting. This resonates with some of the tenants of archipelagic thinking, accentuating how small, seemingly local civil society activity is highly relational, operating beyond the boundaries of formal organisational structure and the territorial boundaries of the nation state (Davies 2017; Pugh 2013; 2016; Stratford et al 2011).

Drawing on Massey (2005; 2009 et al) it is the notion of untapped potential and connections yet to be made that projects a positivity to ongoing civil society work in sustainable development and also helps us think about how the current arrangements of civil society may be altered and shaped in the future. Thinking relationally is a way of making us more aware of the lives of others and the interconnectivity and responsibilities of civil society within development processes. This presents a sense of possibility, opportunity and hopefulness (Massey 2005). Taking Kapoor (2014a) as a starting point this may provide some opportunities to think about civil society without hiding cultural difference. Whilst this research has focused on Barbados and Grenada, and there are very particular contextual factors that direct us towards a relational understanding of civil society, the elements that have been explored here, social capital, money and legitimacy, resonate with civil society groups around the world, without projecting universality in the way these concerns are articulated in different places. Further research could investigate the financial diversity of civil society organisations in different places, where donor retreat may be more marked, or consider the role and potential of Diaspora groups in building civil society or the part civil society groups play in development coalitions.

This was a collaborative project and it may be helpful to consider what a more relational viewpoint to thinking about and working with civil society may add to the approaches taken by international development agencies. Based on this research I would suggest a more relational approach could:

* Encourage development agencies to consider how their work at a particular scale (e.g. regional) may be able to intersect with civil society work that is nominally at other scales, for example national or local, and actively encourage connections across scale and outside of the nation-state.
* Provide an opportunity for development agencies to think broadly about what and who sustains civil society activity, and the potential for other actors, such as the Diaspora, to enhance civil society action. This may be particularly pertinent for an institution such as the Commonwealth Foundation, who may be well placed to engage with Diaspora within the Commonwealth.
* Encourage development agencies to reflect on the purpose of their funding sources, which groups are able to access them and the accountability mechanisms in place, and to see their funding as part of a wider portfolio of funding for civil society organisations.
* Allow development agencies to think about how they discursively legitimise civil society in their work and how their influence may encourage others to legitimise civil society. Do they promote particular versions of civil society? If so, why and what does this potentially do to the sector?
* Help development agencies consider the importance and power of informal connections and different types of associational life for civil society action, rather than always emphasising the importance of more formal mechanisms or organisations.
* Encourage development agencies to think about their work with civil society as one part of a broader web of diverse connections, they are only one part of the network, and to consider how their influence may reverberate around the network.
* Provide an understanding as to why attempting to strengthen civil society from the outside is not straightforward or always welcomed.

It is imperative to articulate the multi-layered, ambiguous world of civil society within the development field and for a model that emphasises social networks, spatial connections and material and physical culture. This approach does not view civil society as a bounded whole, and has the potential to consider some of the prominent parts, constellations and complexities that Western theorising has tended to downplay (Deuchers 2010). This shift in thinking is particularly pertinent due to the changing nature of the international development landscape, where there is increasing emphasis on ‘new’ development actors, including countries of the Global South and the corporate sector, an emphasis on partnerships to produce solutions to complex problems and concerns over the public perceptions of aid and its effectiveness (DFID 2016; Mawdsley 2017). Thinking about civil society relationally endorses an understanding of civil society that moves away from static hierarchical framings, to a narrative about the people and things that are part of civil society, their practices, relations, subjectivities and (im)mobilities (Baille Smith & Jenkins 2012b; Jenkins 2015; Long 2001). It highlights and interrogates the key relational arrangements that make civil society tick and the agency of civil society actors. Thinking about civil society relationally also begins to understand development as a process that is made through diverse, complex, messy and unexpected transnational relations, and one that is inherently human, irrational and unpredictable (Kapoor 2014a; 2014b).

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1. Here the global development industry refers to the ‘complex of state and non-state actors, donors and NGOs focused on planned intervention in the Global South’ (Baillie Smith & Jenkins 2012b:640). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The use of the terms West and Western (after Hulme 2009:6) implies the influence of the Western Enlightenment rationality, where attempts were made to standardise and quantify the world, as well as the geographical location of such thinking. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This chapter is an amended version of Peck, S.2015. Civil Society, Everyday life and the Possibilities for Development Studies. Geography Compass 9/10: 550-564 and is used here with permission. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Obadare (2012) discourages this concentration on civil society organisations. Here engagement with organisations is articulated as one, but not the only way of searching for stories about the people who shape civil society. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Outside of the directly political sphere Freud’s early work included analysing everyday parapraxes as representative of the unconscious. Examples of parapraxes are ‘slips of the tongue’ or ‘slips of the pen’, coining the colloquial ‘Freudian slip’ (Freud 1973). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See also Edwards 2014; Lewis 2002; Obadare 2009 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The term civil society is often used in international development literature and practice, whereas concepts such as the third sector or voluntary sector appear more usual in social policy discourse (Ishkanian 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Neither the writer of this article or the one below were not participants in the research. Their work is used here as an example of some of the public discourses surrounding this particular campaign. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For example DFID is currently embarking on a 4 year Caribbean infrastructure fund with the Caribbean Development Bank, focusing on the provision of grants to improve or create new infrastructure (Caribbean Development Bank 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This may be particularly relevant for small island states, where partisanship and adversarial politics can dominate (Bishop 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)