

determine the extent to which the contentions made in the literature are warranted for CARE Canada and ICACBR. In the third section, I will elaborate on the three general difficulties that arise with the application and utility of the mainstream literature and propose an alternative means of conceptualising publicly funded NGOs.

1. The Three Vices: Linear Thinking, Donor Controls, and Evaluation Methods

In contrast to government's 'comparative advantage' which lies in its ability to exert power, control, and authority in order to provide security and redistribute wealth in society, NGOs are portrayed as small and independent facilitators, innovators, and private actors able to adjust rapidly to changing situations. Consequently, the arguments against the development of donor-NGO relationships generally fall into three related categories: first, it is argued that NGOs' values will be compromised because of a 'government mentality' that constrains their expression; second, it is asserted that NGOs' ability to autonomously design and implement projects which are responsive to the situation 'on the ground' will be compromised; and third, the literature claims that the tools used by governments to measure the success of these projects will obscure qualitative changes to civil society and ultimately limit NGO effectiveness. These three critiques are examined in turn below.

1.1 Linear Thinking

Biggs and Neame (1994) suggest that the "formal, linear, mainstream approach" to problem solving adopted by bureaucratized governments is incapable of capturing the complexities involved in development.⁹ Besides the interplay between a diverse set of actors (e.g. NGOs, local politicians, international organizations, and the people themselves), development and reconstruction involves simultaneously addressing problems in several issue areas (e.g. political, social, economic). The 'project' or 'blueprint' mode of conceptualising these challenges is based on the contested assumption that it is possible to isolate simplistic causal relationships, acting upon which will lead to predictable results (Fowler 1994).

The implication of a linear mindset is a tendency for NGOs to alter their organisational structures to mirror those of governments. Thus, the state's preference for "technical competence, developed management systems and cost-efficiency" are adopted by NGOs as an implicit condition of funding (Korten 1990: 103; Robinson 1997). Consequently, a government 'mentality' that discourages multidimensional and integrative programs in favour of unidimensional projects with strict rules, tangible results, and financial accountability, is perceived by some to ultimately be more threatening to the overall success of development than the dependence on government funding itself (Biggs/Neame 1994: 40).

⁹ This literature review relies heavily on literature examining NGOs in development since this material is more theoretically advanced and accessible than material on peacebuilding. However, when applied to post-war reconstruction and peacebuilding, the principles at work in development seem virtually identical. To the extent that they are not, examining them in the context of peacebuilding cases can encourage useful reformulations and insights into the two processes. Furthermore, several of the articles examined in this paper originated in one of two volumes edited by Hulme and Edwards (1994; 1997) since this collection is one of the most comprehensive examining the relationship between donors and NGOs.