Influencing Green: Climate Change, State Policy and Civil Society

A qualitative research on the role of civil society in influencing climate policy in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Climate change endangers the security of humans, economies, ecosystems and societies, and has become one of the biggest problems faced by mankind over the last two decades. National governments, civil society and the private sector are working together to formulate policies and take actions to adapt and mitigate to the impacts of climate change. In Sri Lanka, an island vulnerable to climate change, civil society has been included in several government policies for climate change adaptation. However, indexes show that the role of civil society has been obstructed due to an undemocratic government structures and control.

Accordingly, this paper investigates to what extent civil society influences climate adaptation policy in Sri Lanka. It further explores the role played by civil society, what factors and strategies help civil society and what factors act as a barrier for influence. Using the theories of social movements and politics of infiltration, this qualitative study focuses on NGOs and green movements and uses online questionnaires, in-depth interviews and documents to gather data. The findings show that the role of civil society to influence policy is limited in Sri Lanka, due to corruption and lack of political interest although factors such as networking and collaboratively working with the government can help to a certain extent. The findings aim to add to the gap in research and literature on this topic and help in future climate policy making in Sri Lanka.

Key words: civil society, climate change, policy, Sri Lanka, role
Words: 17,700

"There's one issue that will define the contours of this century more dramatically than any other, and that is the urgent threat of a changing climate"

Barack Obama, former President of the United States of America

List of Abbreviations

CBO   Community Based Organizations

COP   Conference of Parties

CSO   Civil society organization

GOSL   Government of Sri Lanka

MOMDE   Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment

NAP   National Adaptation Plan

NACC   National Expert Committee

NGO   Non-Governmental Organizations

SMT   Social Movements Theory

SDG   Sustainable Development Goals

UNFCCC   United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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1   Introduction

It is not an unknown fact that, climate change is one of the most serious issues affecting our planet in recent years. The study of climate change began in the nineteenth century as a matter of natural scientific inquiry, in the field of Earth Science which looked at issues of mean and variability of temperature, wind and precipitation flow and levels of radiation from solar energy (Le Treut, et al., 2007). It evolved into a battleground for intergovernmental negotiations with the development of the influential Brandt Report, the Brundtland Report, the setting up of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the development on of the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Haibach & Schneider, 2013). Today, increase in population from 1 billion in 1800 to 7.7 billion in 2019 (Roser, et al., 2020), increase in consumption and production of non-renewable fossil fuels by more than 1300-fold and 1500-fold, respectively (Ritchie & Roser, 2020), and the increase in food production has contributed to a rise of 25% in greenhouse gasses (Ritchie, 2019), resulting in a rise in global temperatures (Nicholson & Wapner, 2015). This has resulted in rising sea levels, biodiversity loss and increased droughts, floods and heatwaves (IPCC, 2014). These climate change effects have been detrimental to societies, economies and ecosystems, making climate change and its urgently needed counter measures top the political agendas in many countries around the world (Haibach & Schneider, 2013), and certain scholars have gone on to describe climate change as an issue of national security (Schewe, 2018).

Consequently, several scholars have expressed the need to take immediate action to reverse the warming trend (Nulman, 2015). Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17- Partnership of the Goals encourages importance of involving multi-stakeholder partnerships (governments, the private sector and civil society) at every level in working towards achieving the SDGs, and in this specific case, Goal Number 13: Climate Action (United Nations, 2019). Hence, governments are taking action to combat this global problem, through the adoption of greenhouse gas reduction targets, stronger laws and policies for forest restoration

and investment into renewable energy (World Resources Institute, 2015). Apart from states, civil society play a large role and can influence states to take more action when it comes to climate change. Research conducted by the International Institute of Environment and Development shows that civil society plays a key role in pushing for new laws, programs and policies on climate change (Reid, et al., 2012). Civil society organizations (CSOs) are key in conducting "climate advocacy" (p.46), by raising awareness about the issues of climate change among the general public, ensuring that the voices of the vulnerable and the marginalized are being heard, holding governments accountable and pushing towards new laws and policies (ibid) to achieve the SDGs. Hence, it can be noted that civil society is important in influence climate change policy.

In Sri Lanka, climate change is a major concern. In 2010, a study by German think tank, Germanwatch, ranked Sri Lanka as the 6th most vulnerable country to climate change following heavy landslides and droughts (Eckstein, et al., 2018, p. 6). Increase in annual rainfall by 2500mm each year, between 1974 and 2008, has resulted landslides and soil erosion, as well as the siltation of reservoirs (Silva 2010). The rise in temperature has caused droughts in several districts, over the last few years, and approximately 9803.24 hectares of crops were lost from between 1974 to 2008 (ibid). Rising sea levels, ocean acidification and increased carbon dioxide levels, has affected the island's coral reefs and 90% are estimated to be dead (Pundir, 2019).

Climate change became part of the national agenda following the end of the 30-year civil war (Pallawala, 2018). Over, the last decade, the Sri Lanka government (GOSL) has been working towards countering and addressing the issues of climate change. Sri Lanka has focused on developing multi-level governance structures, with the involvement of national, district and local level agencies to help in developing climate policies and implementing them (Climate & Development Knowledge Network, 2018). Sri Lanka, also, has several national-level plans and strategies in place, mainly the National Adaptation Plan 2016-2025 (NAP) (ibid). GOSL is also, working closely with other stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, to implement the above-mentioned policies (MoMD&E, 2016). Put forward by the GOSL, the climate governance strategy is inclusive to different parts of society and involves the government, the private sector, the public sector, non-governmental and civil society working

towards the achievement of the climate goals. Consequently, according to the Sustainable Development Goal tracker, Sri Lanka is on track to achieve Goal Number 13: Climate Action by 2030 (SDG Index, 2019).

On the contrary, the official CIVICUS index[1] states that civil society in Sri Lanka is 'obstructed' (CIVICUS, 2020). An obstructed civil society refers to a situation where "CSOs exist but state authorities undermine them through the use of illegal surveillance, bureaucratic harassment and demeaning public statements" (ibid). Hence, this possess a series of questions: are all civi society actions obstructed in Sri Lanka? Does this situation apply for CSOs working in climate policy? Do CSOs in Sri Lanka, although they are included in climate governance mechanisms and policies, really play a role and help to influence or are they limited?

Accordingly, this research paper analyzes the role that civil society plays in climate policy in Sri Lanka, and to what extent does CSOs matter in influencing climate policy. It goes on to further identify, if whether CSOs are influential in climate policy making, what factors and strategies help, and are most successful. It focuses on Sri Lanka as a case to understand the importance of civil society and the government for small island states to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Moreover, this paper aims to add to the literature on the limited knowledge and research done on the role of civil society actors on climate change policy both in Sri Lanka and in general, which has been relatively understudied (Tilt, 2010). Furthermore, it aims to provide information on understanding the role civil society plays in order to contribute to future policy making decisions.

Consequently, it asks the following research questions:

1) **To what extent and how have green movements and NGOs[2], from 2010 to present, influenced climate adaptation policy in Sri Lanka?**

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[1] CIVICUS is a global alliance of civil society organizations dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society, by defending civic freedoms and democratic values, strengthening the power of people to organize, mobilize and take action and empowering a more accountable, effective and innovative civil society (CIVICUS, 2020).
[2] It should be noted that CSOs and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are used interchangeably. However, NGOs are a subset of CSOs and would be primarily looked at in this study, along with green movements.

2) If they have been influential, what factors and strategies have been most successful for green movements and NGOs to influence climate adaptation policy in Sri Lanka?

Accordingly, the research questions would be answered, and the aims would be met by carrying out a qualitative study. Data is gathered through interviews, online questionnaires and documents, and is coded for thematic analysis. The paper starts with a literature review, followed by the theoretical framework of the infiltration and social movement theory, a background on Sri Lanka, the methodology, the analysis and findings and finishes with the discussion and conclusion.

2 Literature Review

The purpose of this research is to identify to what extent NGOs and green movements influence climate adaptation policy, and the role it plays. If it has been successful in influencing, it goes on to look at what factors and strategies have helped. Accordingly, this literature review looks at the available studies on the role of civil society in policy, the factors that help CSOs influence, strategies that help in its influence of policy and the factors that inhibit civil society functioning. It, also, identifies the existing gaps in this topic. It investigates the broader, global context and then narrows down to the case of Sri Lanka. In general, there is extensive literature on the role of civil society in governance and politics that has emerged over the last forty years (Edwards, 2009; Fukuyama, 2001). However, the role that CSOs have played in climate change policy is a fairly new phenomenon and there is space for more research into the subject (Tilt, 2010). Likewise, there is literature available on the factors and strategies that help civil society influence. However, they are focused on other areas, such as health, community development and land tenure rather than on climate governance and policy (Fioramonti & Heinrich, 2007; Pasha-Ghaus, 2005).

Role of Civil Society

Globally, there has been several studies carried out that looks at the role of civil society in climate policy and governance. Studies have shown that the role of civil society includes acting as a 'watchdog' and holding governments and institutions accountable, creating awareness and advocating about issues and giving a voice for marginalized communities and governments (Jordan, 2003). One main reason why civil society matters in policy making, is because they have the ability to confer legitimacy on policy decisions. Furthermore, civil society actors can increase the pool of competing policy ideas, providing more complex and holistic solutions (ibid). Scholars have noted the increased number of civil society observers at COPs (Bernauer, 2013; Fisher, 2010) and their contributions from

work in official side events (Hjerpe & Linner, 2010). Jacobs noted how negotiations and influence from NGOs was able to contribute to climate change policy after the Paris Climate Agreement (Jacobs, 2016). Likewise, a research by Bäckstrand and others showed that the participation of NGOs in COPs have stimulated agenda setting, shaped rules and principles, helped in mobilizing public engagement and providing information and capacity building towards climate policy (Bäckstrand, et al., 2017). There has, also, been research into how transnational social movements are engaging at multiple scales, their work organized around the pursuit of climate justice (Gupta, 2012). Several authors have emphasized the significant potential that CSOs have to enhance national efforts to curb carbon dioxide emissions and close the so called 'emissions gap' (Hale, 2018; Bäckstrand et al, 2017). Research conducted by the International Institute of Environment and Development, shows that civil society plays a key role in pushing for new laws, programs and policies on climate change (Reid, et al., 2012).

Empirical studies have shown the influence of CSOs on climate policy. A 2013 study conducted by Derman using documented observations, field notes and interviews and reports from the COPs 15, 16 and 17 showed that CSOs provided legitimate and inclusive responses, and strong inputs towards the global climate regime (Derman, 2013). A quasi-experiment by Bohmelt looked at how civil society lobbying activities affected state climate policy and concluded that civil society, both NGOs and the private sector, were able to exert influence and enhance states' efforts towards environmentally friendly policies (Bohmelt, 2013). Further, Dombrowski using the case of the UNFCCC showed how NGOs could fill in the gaps and bring the voices of affected and marginalized communities to the state climate policy level discussions (Dombrowski, 2010). In China, a survey experiment concluded that there was a positive effect of greater civil society organization involvement and the benefits it provided to climate policy (Bernauer, et al., 2016). Similarly, a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews, by Lopa and Ahmad concluded that Bangladesh's environmental policy involved robust engagement from civil society at all levels to "carry a common voice through national and grassroots workshops in order to formulate policy" and CSOs were necessary to help in climate adaptation and mitigation policy (Ahmad & Lopa, 2016).

Factors helping in civil society influence

When it comes to the factors that help in civil society influence, there are several studies that have been carried out. However, most of them do not explicitly focus on climate policy, which is an understudied area. With regards to factors, several studies have identified the main factors that help CSOs to influence policy as networking, scope and size and funding capacities (Jaskyte, 2013; Pasha-Ghaus, 2005; Ostergaard & Nielsen, 2002). In their paper, Pasha-Ghaus noted the importance of funding and resources to help in CSO influence and concluded that scarcity of financial resources make it difficult and limit opportunities for "coalition-building, long-term institutional development and other aspects of local capacity building" in developing countries (Pasha-Ghaus, 2005, p. 8). Likewise, a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews and focus groups, identified that funding helps CSOs to respond rapidly to violations, cover gaps in programme implementation, help in ensuring internal efficiency, and to pilot new work and projects on the ground (Karlstedt, et al., 2015).

In terms of size and scope of the NGO, a quantitative study involving hierarchical multiple regressions, found that the larger the organization, the more capable they of investing in research, knowledge and innovation, which could add to more influence over policy (Jaskyte, 2013). Networking has also been an important factor that helps in the ability of NGOs to influence policy. A research by Samad concluded that networking acts as an effective tool for coordination between the NGO, government and other stakeholders, empowering citizens and the general public, sharing information and experiences which has helped to influence state policy in Lebanon (Samad, 2003). Likewise, one research identified that building networks and practicing networking is a "natural" activity among NGOs and have the potential to satisfy the needs and goals that the NGO works for (Holmen, 2002).

Strategies helping in civil society influence

In terms of strategies, Covey (1994) identifies five main strategies that NGOs use to influence policy which are education, persuasion, collaboration, litigation and confrontation (Covey, 1994). The impact of these strategies on environment action and policy are understudied but have been looked at in other areas, such as human rights and land law (Islam, 2013; O'Rourke, 2005).

With regard to collaborative strategies, a comparative case study analysis of civil society and government agency collaboration in land reform policy found that higher levels of collaboration between or among local administration and CSOs can accelerate the implementation process of land reform policy and program in Bangladesh (Islam, 2013). Furthermore, Sibanda in 1996 concluded that the collaboration between representatives of the CSO- Zimbabwe Federation of Disabled and the government helped trust to be built between the two parties, allowing for a more transparent and stronger Disabled Persons Act (1992) to be drafted up and improve the equal employment and education opportunities of disabled individuals in Zimbabwe (Sibanda, 1996).

Confrontational strategies have also been used to influence policy. A study by O'Rourke found that confrontational, advocacy strategies such as protests, lobbying, demonstrations and campaigns by NGOs had resulted in several victories on environmental health and safety issues, around the use of sweatshops by producers (O'Rourke, 2005). Moreover, the recent radical student-led 'Fridays for Future' movement has pushed climate policy to the top of national agendas, one example being the passing of a climate package by the German government which bans the sale of new oil heater from 2026 and put a price of 10 euros for each ton of carbon dioxide emitted from transport and heating fuels (Braw, 2019). Although litigation and confrontation strategies have helped in improving policies, a study has shown that NGOs are moving more towards collaboration from confrontational strategy to ensure better policy implementation and understanding between multiple stakeholders (Elkington & Power, 2003).

Factors restricting civil society influence
There are several studies that have shown the factors that inhibit civil society functioning and its influence on policy. A qualitative study conducted by the European Union Agency for fundamental rights found that there were four conditions that affected the ability of civil society to create and maintain space: uneven regulatory environment, lack of finance and funding, difficulty and accessing decision makers and a limited right to participation, and a not safe space for civil society (FRA, 2017). Likewise, a mix-method, qualitative study in Kenya found that media plays a large role in aiding the activities of CSOs, and obstructed press freedoms and government control media platforms can affect the functioning and influence of CSOs (Njeri, 2014). Further, using Qualitative

Comparative Analysis (QCA), Never and Betz, concluded that weak, domestic environment civil society was a sufficient condition for weak climate policy performance and stressed the importance of strong civil society in the emerging economies of Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Mexico and South Africa (Never & Betz, 2014). Similarly, back in 1997, Salamon and Anheuer identified six main impediments to the growth of CSOs: authoritarian political control, influence of religion, colonialism, low income and constrained social development, limited resources and a weak legal system (Salamon & Anheuer, 1997).

Case in Sri Lanka and beyond

To sum up, it can be noted that there is a clear knowledge and research gap on the influence that CSOs have on climate policy and what strategies and factors help in this process. Although, globally there have been several studies carried out on the role of civil society organizations in COPs and climate governance, this has not been translated into what factors and strategies have helped. This area is understudied in the broad area of climate governance and policy. Although there are studies carried out on these aspects in other areas, such as land reforms and human rights, the studies are quite outdated and might not be applicable for today's context.

This, also, applies to the case of Sri Lanka. The influence and role of civil society has been extensively studied in peace building and rehabilitation after the 30-year civil war and in disaster management post the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami (Hilhorst, 2013; Paffenholz, 2009). Yet, the role that civil society has played in climate adaptation policy in Sri Lanka is relatively understudied. There are a few studies conducted on the role of CSOs in green-energy sector. A case study analysis conducted by Mahees showed how environmental movements acted against the building of the proposed coal power plant in Nuronchcholai, Sri Lanka (Mahees, 2010). Similarly, a study was carried out looking at the role that NGOs and green movements played in the policy making and eventual, implementation and usage of biogas in Sri Lanka (Reid, et al., 2012). However, the strategies and factors that help to influence civil society in Sri Lanka is unexplored. Hence, it can be noted that there is a thorough lack of knowledge and research in these areas. Accordingly, the purpose of this research is to fill this gap and contribute to lack of literature available on the role of civil society on climate policy, and the

strategies and factors that affect this. It aims to act as a primary piece of information and knowledge which can help as a foundation for further research in this area.

3   Theoretical Framework

As mentioned above, the purpose of this research is to investigate to what extent CSOs influence climate policy, the role they play and what strategies and factors help in this process. In order to understand to what extent civil society influences, it is necessary to understand how this happens or the process behind this influence. One of these theories that would be used is the Infiltration Theory (Klein & Lee, 2019). This is a theoretical framework that describes how civil society penetrates and influences the state through the politics of forward and backward infiltration. It looks at concepts such as discursive influence, establishing a hegemony, and institutional takeover as a means of influencing policy (ibid). However, as this theory is abstract, and does not mention how the process of institutional takeover or influence happens and what factors or strategies help, it will be supplemented with the more concrete Social Movements Theory (O'Neill, 2012). This theory provides a strong theoretical understanding of how CSOs can influence policy through measurable factors and variables. The use of this theory is necessary for the research as it goes in line to identify the factors and strategies that help in the process of influencing and infiltration. Accordingly, this section goes into detail on the two theories and closes with the three proposed hypotheses of the study.

3.1 Infiltration theory

The influence of Civil Society: The politics of forward and backward infiltration
One conceptual framework to theorize the process of how civil society penetrates and influences the state, the economy and, eventually, policy is the newly developed politics of forward and backward infiltration theory (Klein & Lee, 2019). There are two directions in which penetration can occur: first, through

forward infiltration from civil society into the state, and second, through backward infiltration, initiated by the state and powerful actors to penetrate civil society (ibid). Under each form of infiltration, there are three sub-modes (Figure 1)**: the politics of influence, the politics of substitution and the politics of occupation.**

The first sub-mode politics of influence corresponds to strategies for discursive influence. It "encompasses efforts by civil society actors to influence formal political and economic actors through contentious action, such as consciousness-raising, advocacy, and protest, or through lobbying, providing information, and other forms of more cooperative interaction" (Klein & Lee, 2019, p. 68). Most contemporary social movements, through strikes, demonstrations and petitions, belong to this category of infiltration as they aim to influence and alter existing rules and policies by formal institutions without aiming to establish new organizational and institutional forms. Environmental protests, over the last few decades, are an example of this category as it shows how civil society forces engage in ideological debate and create a discourse to challenge the current institutional policies than to replace state functions.

The politics of substitution corresponds to functional replacement. In this mode, civil society infiltrates state functions, by shrinking the state sector through civil society's capacity for self-organization and voluntarism. In this mode of infiltration, public services are delegated to nonprofit or voluntary organizations specializing in such services, although in most cases the government choose to collaborate (Donahue & Zeckhauser, 2011). Moreover, in this mode, politics of influence is also used as civil society actors use influence in order to achieve a certain goal which is exclusively carried out by formal political institutions. A study showed how civil society groups contributed monitoring and compliance capacity to ensure that Argentina's weak administrative state was able to enforce labor and environmental regulations (Amengal, 2016). Hence, politics of substitution is a good method that can be used when the influence of existing state institutions is minimal or nonexistent.

The politics of occupation looks at institutional takeover. It is defined as 1) "the systematic entrance of representatives of civil society and civic associations into critical state or economic realms" 2) "the institutionalized participation of civil

society in the administration of state programs or economic institutions" (Klein & Lee, 2019, p. 73). The politics of occupation works towards an aggressive and significant replacement of status quo institutions (ibid). Civil society actors attempt to mobilize themselves and participate in new institutionalized spaces and guide the legitimacy and performance of preexisting state actors (ibid).

Klein & Lee, define backward infiltration as the "conscious strategies on the part of incumbent actors embedded in state and economic fields to mobilize or reshape civil society either to solidify the existing regime's legitimacy or to promote actors' political and economic agendas" (p. 75). This form of infiltration attempts to identify the strategies that state and economic actors use that go beyond coercive power to try to restructure civil society itself to privilege certain issues, identities and interests. Backward infiltration would, also, be explained using the previously mentioned subcategories, but they aim to achieve rightwing or left-wing versions of domination, regulation, and discipline rather than influence, independence and democratization, as in the case of forward infiltration.

The idea of backward politics of influence is related to the idea of hegemony, as originally suggested by Antonio Gramsci (1971). Hegemony refers to a cultural or moral leadership that generates and justifies the dominance of one social class over the rest of society. In this framework, civil society is infiltrated by ideological or hegemonic projects enacted by state institutions that go in line with the interests of the dominant class. This form of infiltration has been seen the rise of the "civil society agenda" where there has been a shift from a more critical movement oriented society to the role of civil society groups promoting good governance and other development goals (Alvarez, et al., 2017). One of the reasons for this shift has been the role that donors and powerful economic actors have played to influence and reshape the agenda and interests of civil society organizations (ibid).

In the politics of substitution, in backward infiltration, state actors replace the functions or institutions of traditional civil society with state-driven policies and organizations, or economic actors work to reshape the interests of civil society and replace their own activities which were traditionally carried out by civil society, resulting in the crowding out of civil society actors. This has been

described as a "revolution from above" (Moore, 1966), as state actors initiate the transformation of society and the state. This form of infiltration aims to establish institutional control by eliminating diverse kinships, community-level institutions and it the foundation of modern social welfare institutions. Central state actors seek to undercut or incorporate local, private and scattered welfare institutions through the formation of national benefits that cover all members of the political community. Examples of this form of infiltration is the replacement of traditional family organization dominated tasks, such as pensions, medical insurance, and long-term care systems with the state welfare organizations. Other examples are the replacement of childcare systems and family allowances to encourage women to find economic roles in the market, shifting from the traditional stay-at-home paradigm (Esping-Anderson, 2009).

The politics of occupation occurs "when state elites dispatch allies to take over executive or leadership positions of important CSOs, thereby managing CSOs under the tutelage of the state power" (Klein & Lee, 2019, p. 79). This type of infiltration is usually seen in semi-authoritarian, authoritarian or even totalitarian politics, and there is no independent civil society, as CSOs are incorporated into the state. In authoritarian regimes, these associations serve as organs of the state, help in mobilizing support for the state, spreading the state's agendas to their members and clients and monitoring surrounding associations' interests and behaviors (ibid). In certain cases, the state can even create its own civil society groups (quasi-government organizations), which can crowd out and overpower more autonomous, independent civil society actors. Beyond totalitarian regimes, backward infiltration through occupation can occur through deliberative forums where civil society leaders align their interests with these organizations of the state. Examples of this type of occupation, are the trade unions created in the authoritarian regimes in Spain, Taiwan, South Korea, China and Brazil.

Although a significantly newer theory for understanding the influence of civil society on state policy, the politics of infiltration theory has significant advantages. First, it specifies the processes through which civil society actors penetrate other societal domains and generate hybrid organizations that provide the resources to sustain social movements (Klein & Lee, 2019, p. 64). Secondly, it helps us to understand the different modes and conditions that civil society can

successfully achieve their goals (ibid). Hence, I believe that the politics of infiltration is a good theory to understand my research problem for two main reasons. One, it helps to identify through what means of infiltration has taken place in Sri Lanka, whether an ideological discourse has been created, or collaboration has taken place or whether there has been a complete institutional and state reform towards the climate policy. Second, since the above mentioned strategies depend on the power that civil society has, especially labor and capital (Klein & Lee, 2019), this theory would help to assess how infiltration has varied based on the size and scope of the civil society organizations in Sri Lanka.

However, as mentioned above, the infiltration theory of civil society can, also, be an abstract and broad theory. It includes abstract concepts such as hegemony, dominance and institutional takeover, which is difficult to measure when it comes to conducting a research. Although it provides a strong foundation to understanding the different modes that infiltration can take place, it does not describe the factors and variables that allow this to happen, such as power, size and scope. Hence, I am using the social movements theory as a second theory to understand what factors matter for this infiltration to take place.
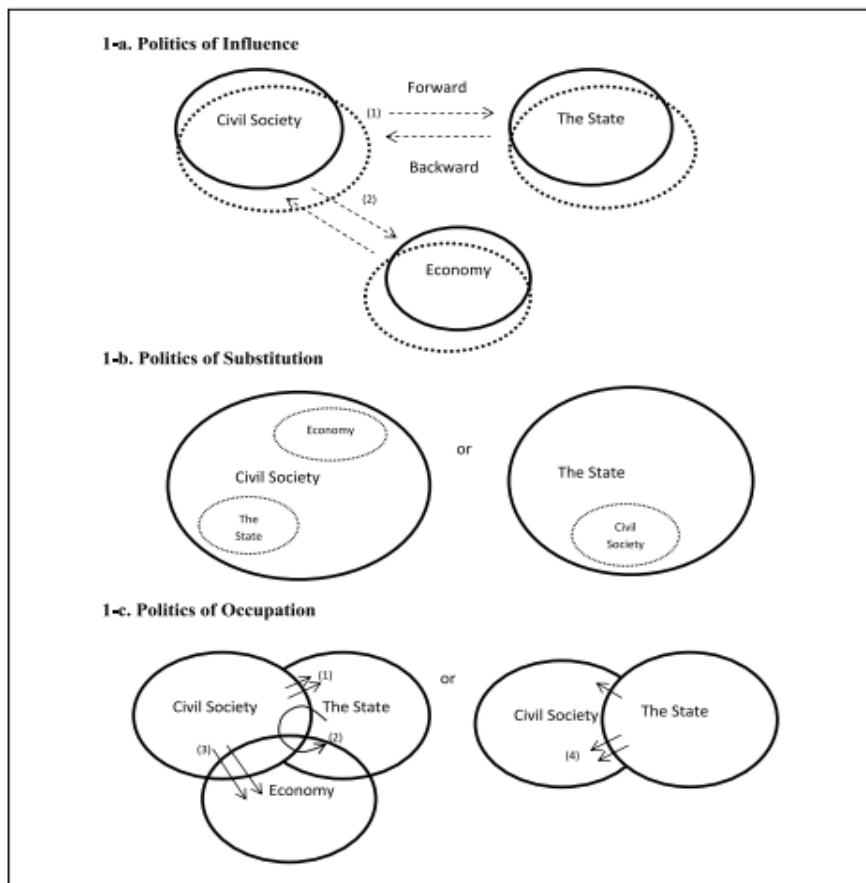

Figure 1: Two models of infiltration & three modes. Source: Klein and Lee (2019)

3.2 Social Movements Theory

<u>The ability to influence: The Social Movement Theory</u>

The second theory that would be used to theorize the factors that affect the ability for civil society to influence state policy is the Social Movement Theory (SMT). SMT gained prominence during the political turbulence in the United States in the 1960s, and cuts across the disciplines of political science, sociology and anthropology (O'Neill, 2012). SMT seeks to explain why social mobilization occurs, the forms under which its manifests, as well as potential social, cultural and political consequences (O'Neill, 2012), by looking at the political process, resource mobilization, social impact on individuals, cultures and political systems and collective behavior (ibid).

Broadly, a social movement can be defined as "an association or set of associations organized around a common interest that seeks to influence collective outcomes without obtaining authoritative offices or government" (Dryzek, et al., 2003, p. 2). Within this rubric, environmental movements are "broad networks of people and organizations engaged in collective action in pursuit of environmental benefits" (Rootes, 1999, p. 2). "New social movements" which include environmental, feminist, gay rights and civil rights movements were in reaction to Marxist theories of social action, which showed that labor-industrialist divide was not the only source of social conflict. Social stratification based on race and gender, also plays a part. Other characteristics of social movements include resistance to the state or the market, ideological fluidity and greater attention to social than economic goals (O'Neill, 2012).

SMT has been used to explain differences and similarities in the trajectories, impacts and organizational forms of environmental movements. The main strength of using SMT in the analysis of environmental movements is that "it brings a theoretical structure-established debates, concepts and methods- to what could be overly ad hoc or descriptive accounts of movement organizations and their impacts" (O'Neill, 2012, p. 122). Another advantage of the SMT is that lends itself easily to comparisons, of civil society actors and their influence based on

factors such as timeframe, scope and networks (McAdam, et al., 1996). Scholarly interest has focused on two broad sets of variables. First, they are interested in explaining the movements themselves: their organizational forms, their resource base and membership, their choice of tactics, their trajectory over time among others (O'Neill, 2012). Second, they look at various impacts that these movements have in terms of goal attainment, or the creation and spread of new societal norms (ibid). Accordingly, these variables generate questions and help to explore the differences or similarities across borders, or a single-country case study regarding civil society movements and their influence (Schlosberg & Bomberg, 2008).

Thus, SMT would be a useful theory to understand my research problem. It provides a measurable framework to balance out the shortcomings and weaknesses of the abstract infiltration theory. It allows for the factors that help civil society to infiltrate to be measured and operationalized. Moreover, the variables identified by SMT scholars would help to identify what factors (such as funding, network, size of the NGO and so on), and methods help in influencing climate policy in Sri Lanka and how beneficial or useful there are. Furthermore, it would allow a comparative understanding, to understand why one CSO was able to influence climate policy, and another was not, which would help to answer my research question (RQ).

3.3   Expectations of Study: Hypotheses

Although traditional qualitative studies do not have hypotheses because of the difficulties in formulating, writing and testing them, hypotheses can be done any "form of research to predict scenarios that can be either confirmed or proved[…] to give direction to scientifically justified conclusions" (Chigbu, 2019 p. 8). I have referred to hypotheses as expectations of the study. The main reason of having these are to provide direction and steer the research. Since this research investigates the extent that CSOs influence climate policy and what factors and strategies help, based on the theoretical frameworks and the literature overview, it is possible to state hypotheses of what is expected from the findings and see if

they have been confirmed, or if an entirely different idea has been generated. Accordingly, the hypotheses of the research are stated below.

Hypothesis/Expectation 1:

As stated above, funding is important as it provides NGOs and green movements with the resources for larger capacity building, project implementation and greater information provision. Networking is important too, as it acts as a tool of coordination between multiple stakeholders to ensure strong policy. Hence, the hypothesis is as follows: *For NGOs and green movements in Sri Lanka to influence climate adaptation policy, **larger networks is more important than funding.***

Hypothesis/ Expectation 2:

Collaborative strategies (which include education and persuasion) allow NGOs and green movements to build a relationship and trust with the government to work together for policy making and implementation. Hence, the hypothesis is as follows: *NGOs and green movements in Sri Lanka **that use collaborative strategies are more successful** in influencing climate adaptation policy than those who use litigation and confrontational strategies.*

Hypothesis/Expectation 3:

Corruption and weak state institutions can act as a barrier for CSOs to influence policy, as it shrinks the space for civil society to function. Hence, the hypothesis is as follows: *NGOs and green movements in Sri Lanka are **inhibited and find it difficult to influence climate adaptation policy due to corruption and weak institutions.***

4   Case Study

4.1 Overview of Sri Lanka

Located in the Indian Ocean, off the southwest coast of India, Sri Lanka is listed as the 25th smallest island in the world (Calder, 2009). Geographically diverse, the island possesses a hot and humid tropical climate although there are significant differences across variations in topography (USAID, 2018). The island boasts a diverse landscape comprising of mountains and hills, beaches and coastlines and flat, fields and plains. Sri Lanka is listed as one of the 35 biodiversity hotspots in the world (Conservation International, 2016) and is home to a large population of endemic fauna (such as the leopard and the sloth bear), plants and invertebrates (MoMD&E, 2016). The primary economic drivers are tourism, commercial agriculture and manufacturing, with the service sector (mainly tourism) employing 45.9% of the population (USAID, 2018). However, Sri Lanka is extremely vulnerable to climate change, deforestation, soil erosion and biodiversity loss which have affected the country's economic output (ibid).
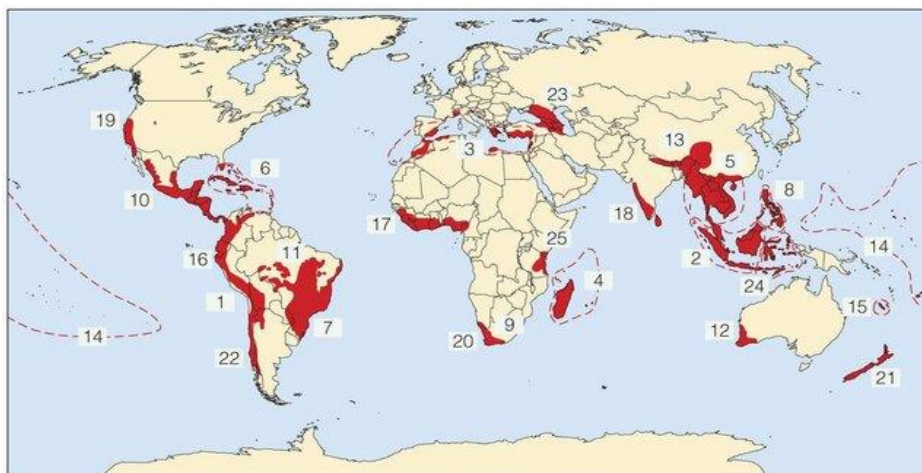

Figure 2: Biodiversity Hotspots in the World. Sri Lanka and the Western Ghats are number 18

4.2 Impact of climate change in Sri Lanka

Being a small, tropical island, Sri Lanka is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (Government of Sri Lanka, 2016). The coastal region of Sri Lanka is susceptible to changes in sea level, and important sectors of the economy such as tourism and fisheries could be affected due to sea level rise (Ahmed & Suphachalasai, 2014). Tourism is one of the largest industries in Sri Lanka contributing to nearly US$11.1 billion to the country's GDP (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2019). Consequently, coastal and marine biodiversity and recreation have been affected, with rising sea levels and ocean acidification have contributing causes to the destruction of 90% of Sri Lanka's coral reefs (Marine Environment Protection Authority, 2019) and other biodiversity hotspots, such as mangrove forests (ibid). Further, many of the endemic flora and fauna are under threat of extinction, with the highest threatened group being amphibians and mammals (Geekiyanage, et al., 2015). Of the 223 vertebrae species that have been threatened 62% are endemic to the country (p. 101). The main reasons for loss in biodiversity have been identified as poaching, habitat loss and change, deforestation and climate change (MERE, 2012). Currently, poaching has affected the lives of leopards who are hunted for their skin, nails and teeth (Roberts, 2020). Though it is minimal, deforestation increased greatly over the last century. Between 1990 and 2000, Sri Lanka lost an average of 26,800 hectares of forests per year and grew at a rate of 1.43% from 1.14% (Nissanka, et al., 2008). Rising coastlines have also been a cause of the flooding which have and could, in the future, displace populations (USAID, 2018).

Livelihoods and food security are also at risk due to the impacts of climate change. The agricultural sector comprises of 7.8% of GDP and occupies 28% of the labor force (USAID, 2018). Increase in temperatures have resulted in droughts, which have affected crop cultivations and made food more insecure in certain districts. According to the Disaster Management Center, 1,927,069 people across 17 districts were affected by droughts, and did not have access to drinking water or water for crop cultivation (UN Resident Coordinator Office, 2017). According to the joint Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission, the total production of paddy was down by 40% compared to the previous year due to dry

weather (FAO, 2017). Lack of access to water and limited crop cultivations have resulted in food security, malnutrition and poverty among vulnerable populations (USAID, 2018). Similarly, changing rainfall patterns can put a strain on irrigation systems, resulting in the increased risk of landslides and flooding, further destroying crop yields (ibid).

Climate change has also affected the health and infrastructure sector of Sri Lanka. Apart from increased malnutrition due to food insecurity, there is an increased vulnerability to vector-borne illnesses, such as dengue fever. Spread by mosquitos, dengue outbreaks can be rooted back to increased nighttime and daytime temperature and higher humidity levels, which is expected to increase over the coming years (USAID, 2018). Leptospirosis is a rodent borne disease, with outbreaks occurring following monsoon seasons, which are expected to intensify (ibid). In terms of industry and infrastructure, increased floods and landslides have resulted in in destruction of turf on road embankments and inundation, requiring several million rupees for repair and maintenance (Punyawardena, 2014). Furthermore, a large proportion of energy is generated through hydroelectric plants, which can be affected by changing rainfall and weather patterns (USAID, 2018). Consequently, such climate stressors could affect the exports of the country, which tallied to US$10.9 billion in 2017 and the overall growth and development of Sri Lanka (ibid).

4.3 Climate Governance

The impacts and risks of climate change are highly visible and weigh heavily on Sri Lankan policy makers. Since the 1990s, Sri Lanka has been developing plans and documents to reduce the impacts of climate change. However, these were limited and reduced due to the civil conflict, and the 2004 tsunami where planning focused more on building resilience to natural disasters, rather than climate change. It was only after 2009, once the civil war ended that climate change become a priority on the state agenda (Hewawasam & Matsui, 2019). Although the progress has been slow, there have been several policies and plans developed

and institutional bodies put in place to reduce the impacts of climate change (USAID, 2018).

In the 1990s, when climate change dialogue began to emerge, climate change was recognized as a meteorological related issue in Sri Lanka and was the Department of Meteorology was the national focal point for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for Sri Lanka (Pallawala, 2018). It was later recognized to be a subject under the Ministry of Environment (ibid). Climate change governance in Sri Lanka works on three layers: national, provincial and local levels (ibid). The national level has 43 ministries involved and at the sub national level, there are nine provincial councils and 329 local government authorities (Pallawala, et al., 2018). The national level institutional bodies are as follows.

- *The Climate Change Secretariat (CCS):* This is the main institution in Sri Lanka that coordinates climate change related matters in the country. Established in 2008 and currently, under the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment (MOMDE), the objectives of the CCS are two-fold. First, the CCS acts as the national focal point to address climate issues at the national level (Pallawala, 2018). Second, the CCS provided a platform to liaise with other key stakeholders and ensure wider consultation when it comes to policy implementation (ibid).

- *The National Expert Committees of Climate Change (NACC):* Established by the CCS, the mandate of the NACC was to bring together key stakeholders and coordinate all climate related activities. The NACC consists of 31 members from key stakeholder organizations, including ministries, departments, authorities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and academia. There are two expert committees: The National Expert Committee on Climate Change Adaptation (NECCCA) and the National Expert Committee on Climate Change Mitigation (NECCCM) (Pallawala, 2018).

- *Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee*: The establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee on climate allows for coordination between line ministries and the MOMDE. The committee provides a platform to coordinate national level climate change related matters at the government level (Pallawala, 2018, p. 15).
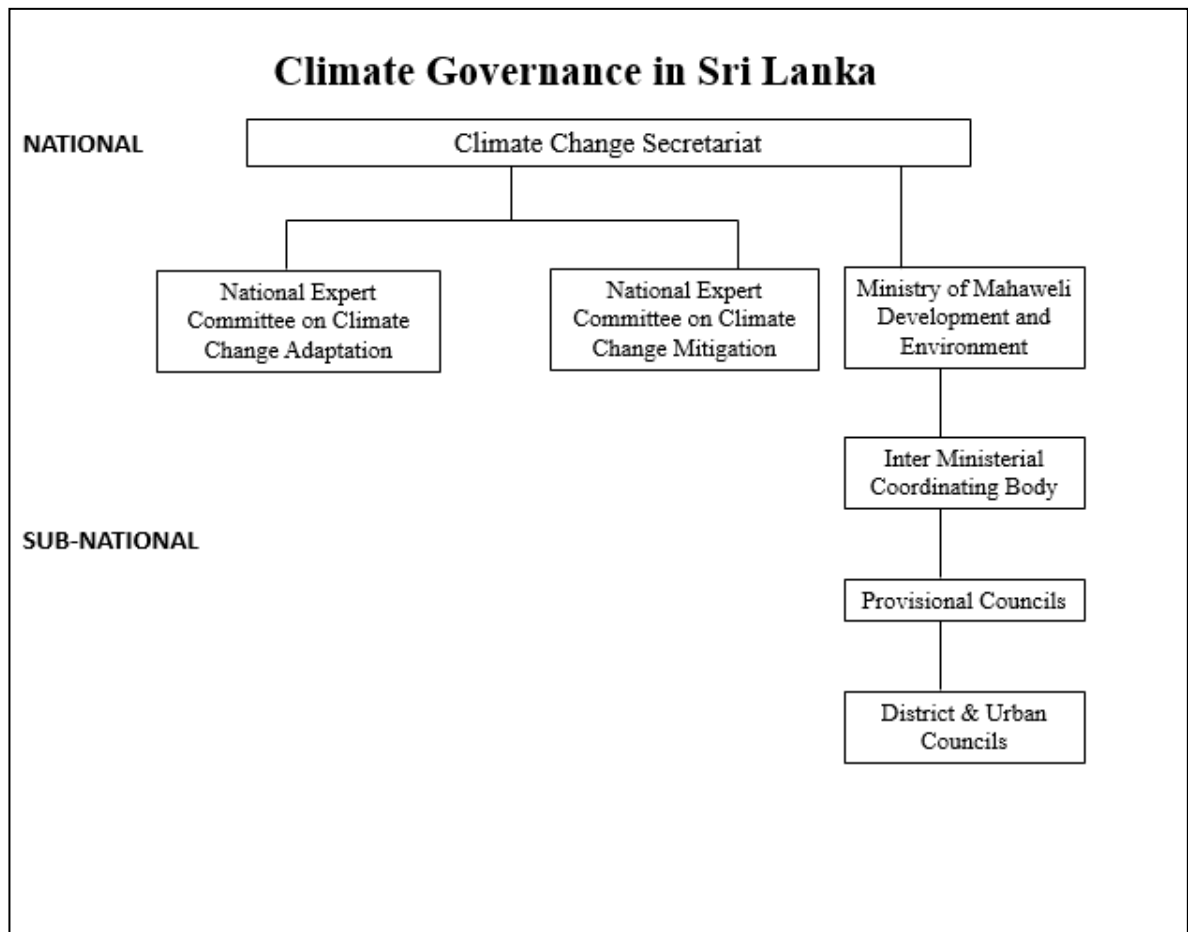
Climate Governance in Sri Lanka

NATIONAL

Climate Change Secretariat

National Expert Committee on Climate Change Adaptation

National Expert Committee on Climate Change Mitigation

Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment

Inter Ministerial Coordinating Body

SUB-NATIONAL

Provisional Councils

District & Urban Councils

Figure 3: Diagram of climate governance structure in Sri Lanka. Source: created by author

 the main climate adaptation policies.

- National Climate Change Policy of Sri Lanka: This is the overarching policy that guides the climate related interventions in Sri Lanka. This was adopted in 2012 and encompasses areas of vulnerability, adaptation, mitigation, sustainable consumption and production, knowledge management, technology transfer and market and non-market-based mechanisms among other things. It acknowledges that "collaborative action at all levels is necessary to transform this policy into meaningful set of actions to meet the challenges of climate change" (Ministry of Environment , 2012).

- National Adaptation Plan for Climate Change impacts in Sri Lanka 2016-2025 (NAP): The NAP is a comprehensive plan "prepared in line with the broad set of guidelines set forth by the UNFCCC [….] and covers adaptation needs at two levels; namely, adaptation needs of key vulnerable sectors and cross cutting needs of adaptation" (Government of Sri Lanka, 2016, p. 9). It provides the goals, objectives, the institutional mechanisms and resource mobilization needed to

achieve these goals. It focuses on nine key sectors: food security, water, coastal sector, health, human settlements, biodiversity, tourism & recreation, export development and industry energy transportation. The NAP recognizes inter-agency coordination, stakeholder engagement and national and sub-national level coordination as important components (Government of Sri Lanka, 2016).

In general, even though there have been institutional bodies, mechanisms and policies in place, multi-level climate governance has been a challenge in Sri Lanka. The climate action plans of most of the Provincial Councils (PCs), which go in line with the NAP, have not been developed or finalized, except for the Western Province Climate Change Action Plan (Pallawala, 2018). Furthermore, the general issue of coordinating and integrating all the institutions at local and provincial level with national level for mainstreaming climate action has been a challenging and complex task.

4.4 Civil society in Sri Lanka

Civil society in Sri Lanka, to a large extent, has been shaped by British colonial rule and establishment of the modern, democratic state in the first half of the twentieth century (Orjuela, 2006). The earliest NGOs were ecumenical organizations affiliated to the 19th century Christian missions, such as the Ceylon Bible Society and the Young Men's Christian Association (Perera, 1999). This was followed by similar organizations promoting the Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim religious values (ibid). Traditional CBOs were, also, established that focused on helping in agriculture, providing food for rural communities and cooperative services (Ruberu, 1963). It was only post-independence, where there was a gradual increase in the number of NGOs. These were mainly focused on human rights and civil rights activism based on left wing political activism (Fernando, 2007). It was in the late 1970s, with the liberalization of the economy and increased flow foreign assistance that resulted in the rapid growth of NGOs, and their activities and numbers became more diversified (ibid). This trend was further reinforced by after the outbreak of the civil war in 1983 (Orjuela, 2006).

Over the last four decades, the role and activities of CSOs in Sri Lanka have greatly diversified. During the civil war, civil was mainly focused on providing relief and human rights advocacy and activism during the civil war (Orjuela, 2006). Following the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, in which 35,000 Sri Lankans died, NGOs helped governments by filling the gaps in terms of funds, relief and assistance (Parakrama, 2006). At the end of civil conflict in May 2009, civil society found itself faced with the role of rebuilding the North and East, rehabilitating victims, prisoners of war and other traumatized individuals, demining and removal of other weapons (Orjuela, 2006). At present, the precise number of CSOs remains unknown, with varying estimates from 20,000 to 50,000 (Wickremasinghe, 2006). The main categories of CSOs operating in Sri Lanka are humanitarian and post-conflict activities, domestic advocacy, poverty alleviation and sustainable development (ADB, 2013).

As mentioned above, since climate change and environment issues were a relatively new phenomenon in Sri Lanka, the number of CSOs focusing on climate change, environment and biodiversity conservation is limited. Today, there are several NGOs, both international and local, and CBOs and green movements focusing on different aspects such as biodiversity, sustainability and climate change. One of the first ENGO in Sri Lanka was the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society (WNPS) which was established in 1894 as a game protection society and evolved to become a wildlife and nature conservation society by the 1970s (WNPS, 2018). One of the other largest movements is the Green Movement of Sri Lanka (GMSL), which is a consortium of NGOs, CBOs and civil society groups focusing on environmental conservation and creation of awareness (ADB, 2013). Accordingly, these CSOs play different and diverse roles on how they operate and try to make a difference. Some NGOs, work with direct collaboration with the government, while others use more confrontational strategies involving litigation and the use of courts.

In general, the relations between the GOSL and civil society have been seesawing. Although the increase in NGOs in the 1970s was welcomed by the government, the anti-statist ideologies of the NGOs which was an uncomplimentary role to the government, was not appreciated (Wickremasinghe, 2006). As a result, the government began viewing their activities negatively and slated them for undermining national security and supporting terrorism (ibid). During the civil

war with the increase in government expenditure, the government was dependent on foreign aid flows from NGOs, although these were conditioned based on issues such as politics, peace and human rights (Kelegama & de Mel, 2007). Today, the relationship between CSOs and GOSL is tense due to the lack of freedom of speech and media, and to the human rights abuses.

5   Methodology

The purpose of this study is to identify the influence that CSOs, specifically green movements and NGOs, have on climate adaptation policy in Sri Lanka. The research aims to see to what extent civil society play a role in influencing climate policy and how capable they are of doing this. Since this research examines what reasons influence policy and civil society, and in what way these associations or reasons manifest themselves, this is a qualitative, contextual research study (Ritchie & Ormston, 2014). It provides the opportunity to 'unpack' the issues around CSOs and their influence on policy, see what they are about and what lies inside them and to explore how they relate to each other (ibid). Therefore, a qualitative research study is the necessary methodological approach, as the subject matter; civil society and climate policy in Sri Lanka; is not well understood and there is limited research done in this area, and qualitative methods allow for exploration of such issues without previous understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). This entails an epistemology that the self-expression by CSOs can be treated as a facet of a jointly constructed reality (Demeritt, 2006) and resemble a piece of the puzzle.

The choice of sample and method is chosen based on the complex, contextual nature of the research problem (Yin, 2003). Since this topic requires information to be collected from those who work directly on the issue and specialists who have an idea of this already-limited field, interviews were conducted with experts on the topic and staff from NGOs and green movements. Although my initial idea was to only use semi-structured in-depth interviews, due to logistical problems, I opted for open ended questionnaires, as well. Document analysis of secondary data sources, such as policy documents for the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL)

and media articles, were also incorporated in order to complement the puzzle with further pieces. Since multiple methods are being employed, methodological triangulation would be used to compare and cross check findings, to ensure the validity of the data. (Yin, 2003). Following which, the data was analyzed based on the thematic areas and codes were created using the NVivo software.

Accordingly, this section goes on to elaborate further on the choice of method used, the sampling and procedure behind the data collection and provides a brief understanding of how the data was analyzed. It, also, explains the variables in this study, the issue of validity and the ethics of the study.

5.1 Selection of key concepts

Civil Society

Since the study looks at the extent of influence of civil society on climate policy, a key variable of the study is the influence and engagement of civil society organizations. CSOs refers to a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, foundations and charitable organizations, usually called the "the third sector" that has the power to influence the actions of elected policy-makers and businesses (World Economic Forum, 2018). The focus of the study would be on green movements and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Based on the SMT, the influence and engagement of CSOs would be analyzed based on the factors and methods (strategies) of influence. The factors refer to what resources help CSOs to influence (such as networks and funding) and the strategies focus on the way these resources (such as knowledge sharing and collaboration) are used influence policy.

Climate policy

The other key variable of the research is the influence of climate policy. Policy is defined as "a deliberate statement of intent and principles used to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes" (Lowi, et al., 1964). Hence, my definition of climate policy would be "the procedures and principles developed, implemented and used by the Government of Sri Lanka, to guide them in taking action for

climate change". Climate policy incorporates the following aspects; biodiversity, water management, waste management and environment as these areas are covered in policies such as the National Adaptation Plan for Climate Change Impacts in Sri Lanka (NAP) 2016-2025.

5.2 Design and Method

Sampling

As my research problem required me to gather data from a specific sample of society-green movements and NGOs, I used purposive sampling. Also, I contacted experts who had experience and understanding in the field, since this was a new topic. Purposive sampling was necessary as it ensured that sample units are chosen because they have features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and questions which the researcher wishes to study (Bryman, 2012). The advantage of using purposive sampling for my research was it provided me with the opportunity to get detailed understanding about the subject matter, from the intended target population. To recruit the sample, I browsed the NGO Secretariat in Sri Lanka website and found several registered and relevant NGOs and green movements. From there, I found their email addresses or added contacts on the platform LinkedIn. I, also, used personal networks.

Having gotten in touch with a few relevant organizations, I requested them to put me in contact with other organizations who could take part in the research. In this situation, I used snowball sampling. This is a type of sampling technique where existing subjects recruit future subjects among their acquaintances (Bryman, 2012). Snowball sampling was advantageous as it got me to locate other NGOs and green movements that I previously did not know off. Further, the fact that I was put in touch from another organization, provided me with more credibility and trust towards the newer sample.

I chose to target as many respondents as possible, to increase the validity of the research, as there is always the risk that some will not follow up on the questionnaire and the interview, and we want to avoid too little data (Lichtman,

2017, p. 124). I contacted thirty NGOs and green movements in Sri Lanka, which ranged from local to international (Refer the appendix for the complete list).

Interviews

In-depth interviews are a powerful method for "generating description and interpretation of people's social worlds" and "understanding their point of view" (Yeo, et al., 2014, p. 178). Accordingly, interviews provided me with the opportunity to get in-depth understanding about the influence that civil society had on climate policy in Sri Lanka. The fact that the interview was semi-structured, allowed probing and following up on responses, especially in cases where I was unsure, misunderstood or wanted more clarifications (ibid).

I conducted two pilot interviews to help me see whether my questions were resulting in answers relevant to the research. This helped me to alter and change my interview guide accordingly. For the research, I conducted seven interviews online, which were done through the platform Skype or WhatsApp. Each interview was around 30-40 minutes long. The interviews were recorded. However, I made handwritten notes, in case the audio-recording device did not work (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Interviews were transcribed for data analysis. One limitation of conducting interviews online was that I could not see the physical cues and body language of respondents when talking about the subject matter, which would have provided me further detail of what they were feeling (Yeo, et al., 2014).

Logistical Weaknesses

Since I had no direct access to the field due to logistical issues (such as time, cost and the COVID-19 pandemic), it was difficult to do interviews in real-time. Hence, I thought online interviews would work but it was difficult to schedule interviews due to the time difference between Sweden and Sri Lanka. Moreover, several respondents were busy with year-end reports and budgets, and proposed the request of a written questionnaire. Hence, for this reason, I sent out an online survey with my interview questions for the respondents to answer at their convenience.

Online Surveys/Questionnaires

Although questionnaires are generally not thought to be part of qualitative research study and are almost non-existent in textbooks on qualitative research (Jansen, 2010), qualitative questionnaires can be used to determine the diversity

of some topic of interest within a given population, rather than aiming at establishing frequencies, means or other statistical parameters (ibid). The main aim of using questionnaires was to make it possible and easier for representatives of green movements and NGOs to respond at their convenience. The questionnaire consisted of the same questions from the interview guide, with a few additional questions. There was a total of twenty questions, some which required descriptive answers and others which required checkboxes. I also, requested the participants to write their email addresses so I could follow up if I had questions or clarifications. In terms of follow up, several NGOs responded to my doubts, such as in one case where an NGO had written on the questionnaire that they had won a case against the logging of a forest in Sri Lanka. I asked them, in an email to explain this further such as how easy was it and what the procedure was, and they responded with full answers. I sent out a total of thirty questionnaires.

Document Analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, to examine, interpret and making meaning out of data and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Document analysis was used in my research as a means of triangulation- 'the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon' (Denzin, 1970, p. 291). The data from documents such as policy documents from the GOSL, media and press briefings from NGOs and green movements can be used to complement the results of my primary data to contextualize, broaden, enhance and strengthen the results and its analysis (Bowen, 2009). Since the research problem was a relatively new and under-studied topic, the additional document analysis provides credibility. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Pre-defined codes that had been created from the initial primary data analysis were used to identify similar themes and patterns for analysis (Bowen, 2009).

5.3 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis helps us to answer the question of "what does it all mean?" (Leavy, 2017, p. 150), which loosely translates to making sense and creating a meaning behind all the pieces of information that has been gathered. The process allows us to make sense of the data that we have gathered and interpret it to answer the research questions. The research instruments that were used were semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and document analysis of reports, press releases and social media posts. Seven interviews of 298 minutes were transcribed and analyzed, and seven questionnaires, with of response rate of 23.3% and a total of twenty press releases and reports were analyzed (Refer to the Appendix for the interview guide and the questionnaire).

To help analyze the data, I used the NVivo software to code. The interview transcripts, the documents and the additional comment section of the questionnaires were coded. First, I constructed an initial thematic framework for organizing the data (Spencer, et al., 2014). Each theme or idea had some sub themes. Then I gave each of the themes and the sub-themes a numerical value or code/label to make it easier to use on the software. I, then, looked at the recurrence of themes and how it corresponded to my questions and used that for my data analysis. To help in my analysis, since it is a recursive process (Leavy, 2017), I followed three suggested steps to make the analysis easier- 1) data preparation and organization, 2) initial immersion, 3) coding, categorizing and theming (ibid).

1- Data Preparation and Organization

 The first thing that I did was I transcribed the interview data and scanned the data from the questionnaire and the secondary sources (Leavy & Hesse-Biber, 2011). To make it easier for myself, I organized the data into folders, based on the type of data I was looking at; such as secondary data and links, interview transcripts, for easier access.

2- Initial Immersion

Before starting the coding, I read, looked at and thought about the data to get an idea of the picture that I was looking at in terms of civil society and climate policy, and to provide a roadmap when I started the coding and thematic analysis (Leavy & Hesse-Biber, 2011). The initial immersion of the data helped me to feel the "pulse of the data" and see the bigger picture that was unfolding (Saldana, 2011), get an initial idea of the possible themes that were emerging, and to help in

prioritizing the data what was needed to answer my research questions and purpose (Leavy & Hesse-Biber, 2011).

3- Coding and Thematic Analysis

 Since, I had a few data sources to analyze, five interviews, seven questionnaires and twenty-two documents, I used the coding NVivo, to make it easier and faster for me. I copied all the responses, and key ideas and assigned codes and developed themes, accordingly. Although, the topic I am researching is relatively new and there is not a lot of pre-existing literature, I had a rough idea of how my themes should look like based on the questions and answers of the interviews, online surveys and document analysis. Accordingly, I used deductive coding (Leavy, 2017), based on my hypotheses and the SMT, and generated themes to operationalize the research questions during the data analysis.

5.4 Other considerations

Validity

Since this is a qualitative study, it is highly important to ensure that validity is maintained. Validity determines that the findings of the study are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I ensured that validity maintained through triangulation of data from my interviews, questionnaires and documents based on converging themes which would add credibility to my results and validity to the city (ibid).

Ethics

Since the research involved gathering information from 'people' officials and representatives of green Movements and NGOs and experts, it is necessary to adhere to necessary ethical guidelines (Punch, 2014). Through e-mail, I informed the participants of the aim and purpose of the research and answered any clarifications and issues that they had before I sent them the questionnaire or scheduled them for the interview. Once, they had agreed to take part, I informed them again of the purpose of the research and asked them to sign the consent form (in the questionnaire). I, also, reminded them that the information would be anonymous and confidential, and they could withdraw their data from the study at

any time. I only requested their emails in for follow-up and informed them that these details would remain confidential and not be disclosed.

6   Results and Analysis

As mentioned in the introduction, the purpose of the study was to investigate the influence that civil society organizations in Sri Lanka have on climate policy. The two research questions of the thesis are *"to what extent have and how have green movements and NGOs, from 2010 to present, influenced climate adaptation policy in Sri Lanka?"* and *"If it has been influential, what factors and strategies of activism have been most successful for green movements and NGOs to influence climate adaptation policy in Sri Lanka?"* As mentioned in the previous section, the data was gathered through interviews, online questionnaires and documents, and were analyzed through thematic analysis and coding using the NVivo software.

In order to make the data analysis process easier and deeper, I broke the data gathered into broad areas which ultimately helped in answering my research questions. The four areas were **overall landscape for civil society functioning, role of NGOs and green movements, factors** and **strategies that help in influence.** A summary of the findings is provided and would go into detail below. It should be noted that direct quotations from the respondents have been written in the *italic* font.

Through the analysis, each of the four broad areas was broken down into further themes. The **main results** were that **corruption, lack of political interest** and **weak private sector collaboration** were the **main factors hindering** the ability for CSOs to influence policy. However, there were a few larger, established green movements and NGOs that influenced climate policy through **knowledge sharing** with the GOSL which was the most common way, or **creating awareness** and **changing laws and policies**. The **main factors that helped** NGOs and green movements to influence policy were **availability of funding and the networks and relationships created by the organization with the GOSL.** In terms of **strategies**, both **collaborative** and **litigation** strategies were used although the

success of each was **mixed** and depended on the issue and the goal of the organization.

In the broader sense, it can be noted that the corruption, lack of interest and weak institutions in Sri Lanka have shrunk the space for civil society to function and influence policy. However, those who could influence climate adaptation policy owe it to their funding and network capacities, and the strategies that they use. Hence, the extent to which NGOs and green movements can influence policy in Sri Lanka is limited due to political and external factors, but influence is possible to a certain extent.

The results and findings of this research help in understanding the role of NGOs and green movements in climate adaptation policy more clearly. It provides a foundation to understanding what strategies should be employed and what factors are required to help in influence policy in the future. It also showcases the barriers that hinder the ability of CSOs to influence policy and acts as a tool to help in improving and strengthening future climate adaptation policy making in Sri Lanka. Consequently, this section goes into detail on the findings of the research based on the four areas mentioned above, and links them back to the hypotheses of the study.

Area 1: The overall landscape for NGOs and green movements to function

This section focuses on the external threats, the barriers and the overall landscape that affect the ability for CSOs to function and influence climate adaptation policy in Sri Lanka. The sub themes that were generated were lack of political interest, corruption, weak private sector collaboration and weak institutions. Nearly all the NGOs and green movements agreed that the lack of interest from the state, the weak judiciary system and hidden agendas from politicians made it difficult for them to influence policy. This indicates civil society functioning is limited. Further, several NGOs and green movements agreed that limited funding and financial resources from the GOSL made it difficult for them to achieve their goals. To sum, since the ability for NGOs and green movements to influence is limited by corruption, weak institutions and other political factors, hypothesis 3 can be confirmed.

Lack of political will and interest

One factor was the lack of political will and inadequate capacity to monitor and mainstream the policies. Political willingness is necessary to help NGOs and

green movements influence climate adaptation policy as *"climate change is a new discourse in Sri Lanka [...] and strong political will, policy framework, legislation and institutions are important to face this new challenge. Otherwise it will not be addressed properly"* (Interview, 27/03/2020). Another interviewee highlighted that *"climate policies do not get priority in the national agenda, since climate change is not a priority"* (Interview, 17/04/2020). It was further stressed that the lack of political interest in the issue made the *"[...] MOMDE lack large implementation and monitoring capacity for the policies, and mainstreaming is limited as climate policies need to be implemented by all other industries as climate change is a complex issue, which makes it difficult for civil society to voice their concerns as they are not taken seriously"* (ibid). Moreover, analysis of a press release by EFL criticized the GOSL *"for not considering the negative impact on the environment when planning and making decisions [...] and stressed the need for proper coordination between relevant government authorities and stricter law enforcement"* (EFL, 2017).

Some NGOs and green movements felt that there is lack of willingness and interest among policy makers and politicians on climate adaptation. One NGO responded that *"Even if certain officers wanted to do certain things, I feel that leadership from local council to the national level is not focusing on issues, such as climate change and making it a priority"* (Q05). One local, green movement and one NGO stressed that *"NGO's and other movements are weak in forcing the GOSL for policy influence, implementation and achieving set results"* due to *"some hidden agendas of corrupted politicians"* (Q06; Q01). This lack of interest and willingness by the GOSL can be reflected in the lack of financial resources and funding from the state for NGOs and green movements, where one green movement stated *"the lack of interest from the GOSL towards the issue of climate adaptation, has resulted in lower funds and budget allocation for this regard making it harder for us to pursue our goals with limited resources"* (Q03).

Private sector collaboration

Another factor that affects the ability for NGOs and green movements to influence climate adaptation policy has been lack of private sector collaboration. Five out of seven respondents believed that private sector collaboration was most important to help NGOs and green movements to influence policy. One NGO responded, *"it is necessary to come up with a new approach to combine private sector and public*

sector where the NGO could intervene as a mediator to the policy process" (Q02). Another NGO highlighted that *"collaboration with the private sector and NGO sector would help to increase funding for the NGO, help in better and larger awareness campaigns and put additional pressure on the GoSL"* (Q07). Thus, it can be implied that weak private sector collaboration, which is currently, the case in Sri Lanka, makes it difficult for NGOs and green movements to influence policy as private sector can act a funder, donor and agent to make change and influence.

Nepotism, corruption and weak institutions

Corruption, weak democratic context and authoritative state power affects the ability of NGOs to influence policy. One NGO stressed that the main issue that NGOs had to influence was the *"low levels of literacy and knowledge that politicians had on the subject of wildlife, climate and environment issues but were appointed due to contacts and influence [...] and the corruption that exists in the system"* (Interview, 06/04/2020). This quote directly shows that corruption and appointment of politicians based on influence is a problem, limiting civil society's space to function and influence policy. Moreover, it was emphasized that *"the power of NGOs is limited when it comes in front of the government, as the democratic context is weak and state power is strong and controlled"* (Interview, 16/04/2020). Furthermore, a small NGO emphasized that *"they are not able to be involved in detail with policy creation, as it is a niche area that is given to known stooges"* (Q02), which indicates that personal networking and slight corruption is required in order to influence policy, which can hinder smaller NGOs with smaller networks and influencing power.

As it can be seen, the biggest factor that affects the ability for NGOs and green movements in climate adaptation policy making in Sri Lanka is weak legal and political institutions. Weak institutions refer to institutions that lack the capacity to monitor policy implementation on the ground, weak judicial systems and institutionalized bureaucracy. Five out of seven respondents ranked "good political context, with less corruption, strong rule of law and strong institutions" as most important factor. All respondents stated that *"bureaucracy within GOSL, weak political context and weak institutions"* make it difficult to influence policy. One international NGO emphasized that *"Sri Lanka does not have a shortage of policies but is in the weak area due to lack of institutional capacity to monitor the*

implementation and mainstreaming of policies" (Q07). Hence, this shows that although civil society can help in influencing policy, the inability to monitor implementation means that this influence might not be translated to reality on the ground indicated to the limited role that CSOs have in policymaking. In terms of weak legal systems, one small, NGO responded that "*it was difficult to change norms and policies by holding the GOSL accountable and taking the issue to courts, as smaller NGOs do not have the power, money and networks to fight with larger private corporations who are mainly destroying the environment and have the GOSL in their control"* (Q02).

Newspaper articles, reports and press releases, also, show how Sri Lanka experiences high levels of corruption, nepotism and bureaucracy that have affected the ability for civil society to function (GAN, 2018). Corruption has affected the natural resource sector, mainly illegal sand mining in the Nilwala and Ginganga rivers which have created resulted in environment problems (Piyadasa, 2011). From 2012 to present, there have been several campaigns by NGOs and green movements, although their contribution to reduce this problem is affected by "*weak district management system, authority and power were concentrated in the hands of a few officers making conditions ripe for corruption, and lack of strong [...] policies"* (Pereira & Ratnyake, 2013, p. 20). Furthermore, there is evidence that civil society functioning is restricted as the government interferes in the work of NGOs, controls freedom of expression and the media (Benedict, 2019; Freedom House, 2017; Perera, 2015). This clearly states that the role of civil society is restricted.

Area 2: Role of NGOs and Green Movements in climate adaptation policy
This section of findings and results focus on the role, if any, played by NGOs and green movements in climate adaptation policy. This section would be divided into the main themes, which are knowledge sharing, awareness creation and accountability and changing of norms and policies. It should be noted that two out of the seven NGOs and green movements who took part in the online survey, did not play a major role or were not involved in influencing climate adaptation policy in Sri Lanka. They stated that the main reasons why they were unable to be involved in climate adaptation policy making was there were limited in terms of funding, networks and collaboration. This states that the role of NGOs and green movements is limited and depends on certain factors, to help them influence

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climate policy. From the findings, it can be stated that discursive strategy, of creating discourse and dialogue around the issue has been the most common way that NGOs and green movements have used to influence climate adaptation policy.

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing was the most common role played by NGOs and green movements to influence. Although the capacity depends on the size and scope of the organization, its network and its resources, almost all organizations shared some sort of knowledge with the GOSL, whether in the form of research expertise, capacity building or policy recommendations. One international NGO noted that *"we took part in the workshops that were conducted to write up the climate change adaptation strategy and provided our feedback and ideas and share our experience and expertise in the field"* (Q01). Another local NGO stated that *"we were not part of direct consultations during the policy writing process but helped in reviewing the policy once it had been written up"* (Q002). Accordingly, this implies that knowledge sharing is a key role of civil society organizations to influence policy, as it allows for exchange of information, experience, research and technical know-how between the GOSL and the CSOs.

Furthermore, one local NGO answered that *"our main role has been to provide technical advice to the government. We work in close collaboration with the GoSL by providing recommendations and information and identifying gaps in current policy and are part of the National Expert Committee on Climate Change Adaptation"* (Interview, 27/3/2020). Larger, more established and in some cases, international NGOs have also, been part of international climate change negotiations and conferences (Interview, 27/3/2020) and have used that information to provide technical advice and support to the GoSL. In certain cases, knowledge sharing takes place *"when the climate policy is written up and open for public comment where NGOs are allowed to provide suggestions"* (Interview, 17/04/2020). In certain instances, these NGOs have also provided expertise through monitoring and evaluation of projects such as land restoration and management of the Kanneliya Forest Reserve, multi sector planning for the implementation of a policy protecting marine life and working with species inventory for the management of the Maragala Mountain Range (IUCN, 2020). Another means of knowledge sharing has been where NGOs have carried out

projects for resilience building in coastal areas and empowering and training forest department officials on awareness programs and laws (EFL, 2020). Once these projects concluded, the NGOs have provided the results, recommendations and lessons learned to the relevant GOSL ministries to help them in relevant policy making (ibid).

Awareness creation

Awareness creation is a role that few of the NGOs and green movements carried out to influence climate adaptation policy. Social media and website pages analysis of several local NGO and green movement pages, have shown that their main role is creating awareness by informing the general public about the issue, through community and school programs, and tagging the relevant ministries in posts or inviting officials to these events (CEJ, 2020). Awareness was created about the accidental capture and death of dolphins in fishing nets used to fish tuna in Sri Lanka's ocean by several biodiversity conservation focused NGOs to the GOSL, which resulted in an education and awareness program for fisherman by the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic resources (Rodrigo, 2020). Furthermore, one NGO created awareness by conducting a workshop with the Department of Government Information on the issues of biodiversity loss, plastic pollution, human-elephant conflict and urged journalists to report more about these issues to create awareness among the public and the GOSL (EFL, 2018). Moreover, NGOs also take part in COPs and use that information when conducting workshops with GOSL officials about climate change and biodiversity loss (EFL, 2018). Hence, it can be noted that awareness is created in a multitude of ways by either directly or indirectly working with the GOSL.

Accountability & changing of policies and laws

Holding the GOSL accountable and pressurizing them to change their existing policies and laws towards climate adaptation was the main role and focus of three organizations; two large, local NGOs and a small, international NGO. These organizations have worked towards "Holding the GOSL accountable for lack of interest in the policy arena" and "putting pressure on the GOSL to change existing policies" (Q02; Q04; Q03). In certain situations, NGOs have been able to change and draft up new policies by being part of the steering committee and having consultations and workshops with the GOSL, such as with the writing up of the National Waste Management Policy (NWMP) (EFL, 2018). However, the most

common way of holding the GOSL accountable and changing of policies and laws, was through writing petitions, litigation and legal means as it the *"only way to make the issue heard"* (Interview 02, 17/04/2020). One notable case was stopping the construction of a controversial coal power plant in Trincomalee, where the NGO and its lawyers discussed the unsuitability of coals and its impacts on the environment, resulting in the victory of the NGO and a way forward to improve the natural environment of Sri Lanka (EFL, 2016). More recently, another litigation focused NGO filed a writ petition to request an environmental impact assessment to be carried out, to the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, following the destruction of a prominent forest reserve for the creation of an aloe vera cultivation, after permission was sought by the Central Environmental Authority's office by the private company (CEJ, 2020). Hence, this implies that litigation is needed to take action and make a change to improve the climate policies when required.

Area 3: Factors that help in influencing climate adaptation policy

The findings in this section varied between the survey respondents and the interviewees. Although the common theme from both instruments was the importance of funding, survey respondents argued that size and scope was the most important factor, while the interviewees said networking skills was important to influence climate adaptation policy. Nevertheless, contrary to the idea that organizations larger in size receive more funding, funding was not dependent on the size or type of organization, but rather on the goal, interest and activism on the ground. However, availability of financial resources is an important factor as it relates to other factors, such as availability of other resources, the scope the NGO can work on and ground activism. Hence, from the findings, it can be concluded that funding and networks were the most important factors that helped NGOs and green movements to influence climate adaptation policy. As the two factors go in line with each other, hypothesis 2 can be partially confirmed.

Funding and financial resources

Two local green movements said that the lack of funding was the main reason why it was difficult for them to influence climate adaptation policy as they lack resources to conduct large-scale projects (Q05, Q06). Several respondents believed that that the larger the organization, the more funding and resources it

has, to conduct larger, more long-term projects on the ground which can help to influence the policy (Q01, Q02, Q05). Funding and the availability of financial resources was one of the most important factors that affected the ability of NGOs and green movements to influence climate adaptation policy. All the NGOs and green movements responded that funding was the "*most crucial aspect as it helps us to do activities and conduct our projects*" (Interview, 06/04/2020). However, an expert in one of the interviews stated that "*International donors, such as GEF, funds smaller NGOs that are trying to make a difference, especially those with better and more unique ideas*" (Interview 1, 17/04/2020). Hence, this could depend on the idea, goal and willingness the local green movement has, to secure funds from international donors. Furthermore, another respondent stated that although larger and international NGOs receive greater funding than smaller local NGO and green movements, most of the funds go towards administrative work rather than to work on the ground (Interview 2, 17/04/2020). It was also emphasized that in "*in certain cases larger NGOs usually focus more on administrative work and give the actual policy work as a consultancy work for smaller NGOs*" (Interview 2, 17/04/2020). The ability for the smaller NGOs to get this work however depended on their networks and activism on the ground (Interview 2, 17/04/2020). Hence, it can be noted that funding can depend on many factors such as idea and goal and willingness, and what the money is really used for. It can also, work in line with other factors such as networking and activism on the ground.

Human, technological and infrastructural resources

The availability of other resources, such as human, technological and infrastructural resources help when it comes to NGOs and green movements trying to influence climate adaptation policy. In the questionnaire, almost all the respondents rated "larger human, technological and infrastructural resources" as "extremely important" and the remaining rated it as "very important" (Q01-Q07). One local NGO stated that it has been the "*good technical knowledge that has come from our staff and people within the organization, that has helped us to be recognized and take part in international climate change dialogues and be part of the NECCA*" (Interview, 27/03/2020). Likewise, another local NGO gave credit to the competent staff in the organization and the technical facilities available, which had helped them to monitor, research and come up with solutions to reduce the

human-elephant conflict, which have even been used by the GoSL and Department of Wildlife (Interview, 06/04/2020).

Size and Scope

Many NGOs and green movements responded, in the surveys, that the size, scope and type of organization; whether it was a local or international, played a part in the organization's ability to influence climate adaptation policy. A local NGO responded that the size of the NGO matters, as if it is a larger organization it has a more recognized name which can help to influence policy (Interview, 16/04/2020). Several respondents believed that that the larger the organization, the more funding and resources it has, to conduct larger, more long-term projects on the ground which can help to influence the policy (Q01, Q02, Q05). However, one expert stated that if smaller NGOs and green movements get together and form a collective network, working towards one goal, there is a greater chance that they would be able to influence policy (Interview, 23/04/2020). Hence, size of the organization might be as important of a factor, and the ability to network matters more.

Trust, Relationships and Networking

Another factor that helps NGOs and green movements to influence climate adaptation policy has been the building of networks, relationships and trust between the civil society organizations and the GoSL. All the experts who had been interviewed unanimously responded that size of the NGO did not matter, and the networks that they had created were more important. One expert stated that *"Since Sri Lanka is a country that relies heavily on relationships, in both professional and personal contexts, it is necessary that the NGO or green movement builds a rapport and creates trust with the officials and ministries, which gives them a greater chance of engaging in policies"* (Interview 1, 17/04/2020). The ability to network does not depend on the size of the organization, as most of the successful climate adaptation and biodiversity related NGOs and green movements are local, but it depends on the individuals of those organizations. One expert emphasized that *"the individuals (mainly the Managing Directors) of the two most successful local ENGOs in Sri Lanka have been working continuously on this issue for decades with the GoSL, created their connections and networks and their names are synonymous to the organizations, making it easier for them and the organization to influence policies"* (Interview 2,

17/04/2020). Consequently, the fact that organizations need to create networks and relationships with the GOSL to influence policy shows that a certain level of nepotism and corruption exists, which hinders smaller organizations from being part of policymaking.

Interest and Willingness

One secondary factor which affect the ability for NGOs and green movements to influence climate adaptation and biodiversity were interest and willingness. All the respondents of the questionnaire agreed that willingness, interest and commitment towards the issue and the drive to make a difference was important to influence policy (Q01-Q07). One interviewee responded that *"one of the most important things to influence policy is the issue and the goal that the NGO is representing and what that means for the community and success is dependent on the goal of the organization and their commitment and willingness and how dedicated they are at achieving a change"* (Interview, 16/04/2020).

Ground Activism and Citizen Participation

Other secondary factors that have affected the ability for NGOs and green movements to influence climate adaptation and biodiversity policies in Sri Lanka have been ground activism and citizen participation. Half of the NGOs who took part in the survey responded that citizen participation was "very important" to influence climate adaptation policies (Q01, Q02, Q07). One ENGO was successful in winning a case preventing the construction of a coal power plant in Sri Lanka (EFL, 2016) but one of the factors attributed to this was that the advocates of the NGOs involved the community and took a *"few community people and children to courts, to get the perspective of the community and make the voice heard and to have a real feel of the issue"* (Interview 2, 17/04/2020). Similarly, how active the NGO and green movements are on the ground plays a part in its ability to influence policy. One NGO stated their biggest strength for contributing to climate policy, has been their work and activism on the field, which has helped them to understand the context and make relevant solutions to reduce the elephant-human conflict (Interview, 06/04/2020). Likewise, an expert responded that ground activism for an NGO is important, because if the organization works directly on the ground and with the community, the government would take them more seriously when it comes to policy influence (Interview 2, 17/04/2020). On the other hand, another expert stated that citizen

participation is important to influence policy but argued that *"Sri Lanka's civil engagement is low and small and needs to be increased to influence policy"* (Interview, 23/04/2020).

Area 4: Strategies that help in influencing climate adaptation policy

The main strategies that NGOs and green movements in Sri Lanka use to influence climate adaptation policy are three-fold; educational, collaborative and litigation. Since, two of the three strategies overlap (as they are quite similar), education- collaboration have grouped together. Most NGOs and green movements use non-confrontational, persuasive, collaborative means to share knowledge and create awareness around climate adaption. A very small number of NGOs use confrontational and legal means to make the issue of climate change heard, and work towards changing laws and policies. However, the success of each strategy depends on the issue being tackled. Consequently, the findings show that success of each strategy is relative. Some issues were handled through legal means when collaboration could not be used and vice versa. Hence, hypothesis 2 has neither been confirmed nor denied as both strategies have success in their own ways.

Educational and collaborative strategies

Most of the NGOs and green movements in Sri Lanka have used educational and collaborative strategies. They are similar as both these strategies involve working in harmony with other stakeholders, mainly the GOSL, in order to share knowledge, expertise and advice and create awareness around the issue. The main methods are workshops and conferences with the officials of the MOMDE and GOSL, to influence policy. According to an interviewee, *"the use of workshops and conferences allows NGOs and green movements present and create awareness about the problem, especially in situations where the ministries do not have knowledge competent staff"* (Interview 2, 17/04/2020). An expert on the topic noted that *"organizing workshops, conferences and symposiums with the government to share information and knowledge is a useful way to create discourse about the issue, especially when NGOs cannot put pressure on the government"* (Interview, 16/04/2020). Of the five NGOs in the survey who answered this section, three used educational-collaborative strategies and ranked them as "successful" to influence policy and justified it as *"government is willing to hear if we can provide strong evidences proving why we should change existing*

systems, so dialogue with the government turns out to be fruitful most of the time" (Q01) and *"friendly, educational approach has made it easier for the government to trust us and include us in policymaking"* (Q07).

Collaborative strategies involving multi-stakeholder dialogues and consultation with the GOSL was also used by most of the organizations. The level of collaboration has varied depending on the size, scope and network of the organization, but all organizations to a certain extent help in information sharing, providing technical and research expertise and support the GOSL, but this varies in degrees. Some NGOs work directly with the government and engage in policy dialogues by being part of the NECC (Interview, 27/03/2020) while others take part in workshops when climate adaptation policies are being drafted up (Q01, Q02, Q03). One NGO official responded that collaborative strategy was necessary as *"it is important to collaborate with the GoSL and gain their trust and build a network with them, as direct collaboration can help all stakeholders get a better idea of the situation, which can help to improve projects on the ground and policy making"* (Interview, 27/03/2020). Analysis of press releases from NGOs have shown how educational-collaborative strategies are used by conducing workshops with the GOSL and media journalists (EFL, 2018) and conducting workshops on climate adaptation awareness (CEJ, 2020).

Litigation Strategies

A very small number of NGOs and green movements in Sri Lanka used litigation strategies to influence climate adaptation policy. There are mainly two local NGOs who focuses on using legal means as a way of influencing climate adaptation policy, and changing the existing laws and policies surrounding the issue. Litigation strategies are necessary *"in situations where other types of mechanisms were not helping and are not working"* (Interview 1, 23/04/2020). However, the *"success of legal means is mixed. But it is the only radical and forceful way to make the issue heard"* (Interview, 16/04/2020). Although there are a few success stories, there are still many cases on-going, dismissed or in queue in the courts to be solved (EFL, 2020; CEJ, 2020). The main reason has been problems in the Sri Lankan judiciary system. One NGO who focused on litigation to influence policy emphasized judiciary issues such as "cases being handled by judges who are not scientists or have no knowledge on environment issues", "vague climate change laws" and "lack of comprehension of scientific

information from the judges" (Interview 2, 23/04/2020). Nevertheless, the interviewee highlighted that "one factor of success for winning legal cases, has been the involvement of different communities in cultural and humanitarian aspects", (ibid), which indicate the importance of citizen participation to make litigation a successful strategy to influence climate adaptation policy.

7 Discussion

The purpose of this thesis was to identify to what extent does civil society, mainly NGOs and green movements, influence climate adaptation policy. It further analyzed, if civil society was influencing climate adaptation policy, what the role was played, and what factors and strategies helped in this influencing. The research questions of the thesis were *"to what extent and how have green movements and NGOs, from 2010 to present, influenced state policy on climate adaptation in Sri Lanka?"* and *"if it has been influential, what factors and strategies of activism have been most successful for green movements and NGOs to influence state policy on climate adaptation in Sri Lanka?"* The findings of this study sought to add to the existing knowledge and research gap in this area of academia, provide recommendations to help in future climate policymaking in Sri Lanka and improve the understanding on the role of civil society in policy making. Accordingly, this section discusses the main findings of the study, its relation to the RQs and the theories, the relevance of the findings, future opportunities for research, the recommendations to policy makers and civil society and the limitations of the study.

Findings

One finding from this study was that civil society influence in climate adaptation policy is limited. The main reason for this has been lack of political will, corruption, nepotism and weak institutions. In 2019, Sri Lanka was ranked as the 93rd most corrupt nation (Transparency International, 2019), and this has reflected in the ability for civil society to influence climate policy. Corruption takes place in a series of ways; such as through the appointment of ministers, without relevant knowledge, education and skills into specialized agencies through influence and contacts, weak political and legal institutions that are undemocratic, bureaucratic and lack capacity within institutions to understand, monitor and implement policy on the ground. This has made it difficult for NGOs and green movements to

influence climate adaptation policy. This collaborates with the findings of Zakaria, who noted that increased corruption in society tends to weaken civil society power (Zakaria, 2012).

A second important finding is that networking and relationship building are important factors to helping NGOs and green movements influence climate adaptation policy. In Sri Lanka, which relies *"pretty much on relationships"* (Interview, 17/04/2020), it is necessary for individuals from civil society to develop personal and professional relationships with officials from the GOSL. This creates understanding between the two parties and the GOSL tends to trust the NGO, when it comes to influencing climate policy, and would consider them in future climate policymaking. This finding goes in line with Straub's view that networking provides an instrument of moral and political pressure, for NGOs and green movements to influence environmental policy (Straub, 2015).

A more obvious third finding from the study is that financial resources is important for NGOs and green movements to influence climate adaptation policy. With secure and large funding, CSOs can increase their scope of action by working more actively on the field, employing more technical and human resources to help in groundwork and research, and expand their goals and interests to secure greater funding from donors. In certain cases, mainly for large NGOs, funding is directed to administrative costs rather than to actual policy influence work. However, the lack of political willingness and interest makes it difficult for smaller CSOs to secure monetary resources for their operations. The GOSL does not have separate funding, grants or budget allocations for these CSOs to influence climate policy. Furthermore, weak collaboration makes it difficult for CSOs to partner up with the private sector to raise finance and funding to help in operations. Hence, funding is extremely important for CSOs but securing the funds are a challenge in Sri Lanka.

A fourth finding of this study is that involving citizens and encouraging them to take part in the issue of climate change is, both, a role played by NGOs and green movements in Sri Lanka, as well as, an important factor to influence policy. CSOs in Sri Lanka use of the voices of marginalized communities who are affected by climate change to make the issue heard and bring the issue to the table and advocate for changes in norms and policies. Similarly, some CSOs use citizen participation through volunteer programs, recruitment and lobbying to create

awareness about climate change, which can help to influence policy. This corelates with the findings of Dromski (2010), Kumar (2016) and Ahmed and Lopa (2016), who conclude that citizen participation is a role played by CSOs and a method to influence state policy making (Dromski, 2016; Kumar, 2016; Ahmed & Lopa, 2016).

A fifth finding of the study is that there is ultimately no one strategy that helps NGOs and green movements to influence climate adaptation policy. The strategy that is used depends on the role that the organization plays in influencing policy, and the issue and goal that they are tackling. Collaborative knowledge and information sharing are the most common role played, and such organizations use workshops, meetings and discussions with the GOSL to influence policy. Knowledge sharing between multiple stakeholders is important to influence climate policy as it allows new ideas to be generated, gaps to be identified within policies, gain recognition and create a sense of purpose (Cherbel, 2015). Knowledge sharing is used mostly when information, research and technical advice needs to be shared between the GOSL and the NGOs, to help in writing new policies, identifying gaps in existing policies and creating awareness. This view and the benefits of knowledge sharing have been supported by the findings from Ahmad and Karim (Ahmad & Karim, 2019). However, the more critical question to discuss is to what extent is the knowledge provided by NGOs and green movements being reflected in climate adaptation policy. The other strategy that NGOs and green movements in Sri Lanka use to influence policy is through litigation. Although legal means has proven to be a strategic way to make the issue of environment and climate policy heard and change existing laws and policies with a few landmark cases, using litigation is a time consuming, expensive and difficult strategy. Issues, such as vagueness of climate policies, lack of knowledge from judges and corruption in the judiciary system make litigation a challenging and difficult strategy to use. However, if the NGO or green movement have strong resources, such as citizen participation, technical and scientific knowledge on the issue, large finance and good human resources, litigation can be a good strategy to influence climate adaptation policy in Sri Lanka.

Relation to RQs and theories

Based on the findings, it can be noted that the main way that CSOs in Sri Lanka penetrate and influence policy, is through *forward politics of influence* (Klein & Lee, 2019). CSOs use strategies to create discursive influence, such as through consciousness-raising advocacy, information provision and protests, which are ways of creating a dialogue around the issue of climate change. As mentioned in Klein and Lee's seminal work, environment protests are an example of this category, and this can be applied to the case of Sri Lanka to show how CSOs engage in ideological debate and discourse to challenge current policies, and influence new ones on climate change adaptation. To a certain extent, traces of f*orward politics of occupation* (Klein and Lee, 2019) can also be seen, where CSOs (mainly those who use litigation strategies) work towards changing and replacing the status quo institutions. The judiciary and legal system in Sri Lanka are corrupt and biased, and CSOs are trying to change this system by making it fairer to help them influence climate adaptation policy.

Discussing the situation of CIVICUS Index and the role of civil society, it could be noted that although civil society in Sri Lanka is indeed obstructed and limited, it is not in the sense that index states. The CIVICUS index states that civil society is obstructed based on "illegal surveillance, bureaucratic harassment and demeaning public statements" (CIVICUS, 2020). However, the influence of civil society in climate change adaptation policy is hindered in the sense that there is lack of political willingness, corruption and weak, undemocratic institutions. Hence, the full capacity of CSOs to influence climate policy is limited due to this situation, but not exactly on the factors determined by the index. Nevertheless, this is not to state that the index is incorrect but rather to show that CSOs dealing with the issue of climate change is not hindered by those factors indicated by the index, and it might be applicable to other issues such as human rights abuses and media freedoms.

Looking back at the RQs, it can be stated that the influence of civil society in climate adaptation policy in Sri Lanka is limited. The ability and potential for NGOs and green movements to influence climate adaptation has been hindered by lack of willingness from the GOSL, corrupt, political interests and undemocratic political structures. However, a handful of NGOs and green movements have been able to influence policy through strong networks and large financial resources

which have helped them to involve communities and work actively on the ground. Some of these NGOs and green movements, depending on their goals, motives and targets, have worked collaboratively with the GOSL, while a few have worked against the GOSL by creating awareness and trying to change existing laws and policies. Hence, the role played by green movements and NGOs in Sri Lanka from 2010 has been limited due to political factors when trying to influence climate adaptation policy. However, certain factors such as networking, citizen participation and funding and using collaborative strategies can help to influence policy, to a certain extent. Nevertheless, there is space and potential for more civil society inclusivity and better climate governance mechanisms to ensure that the issue of climate change can be tackled in Sri Lanka.

Relevance, Future research and limitations

Accordingly, the findings of this study can be relevant to understand the role of civil society in climate adaptation policy and help in future climate adaptation policy making. It shows that civil society is important to small, climate change vulnerable islands with political instability, as it helps to keep the government in check, and hold them accountable when necessary. Civil society is necessary to help work collaboratively with the government for information provision, provide research and technical advice, identify gaps in policy, help in consultation, and creating awareness. Hence, it is required that governments start providing funding for civil society organizations to help in climate adaptation policy and open the space for more CSOs to get involved and be included in the policy-making process. These findings also help CSOs to get an understanding of what factors they need to start focusing on to help influence policy, whether they need to work on the networking or extend their activism on the ground. It also, shows them that there are a multitude of strategies that they can use to help influence climate policy depending on their targets, goals and resources available. Further, in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, another relevance of these findings would be to show how important CSOs are to influence climate policy-making, in a situation where there would be lack of funding for CSOs and more focus on economic growth over climate change concerns.

This study opens the door to future research opportunities. This study focused solely on the influence of civil society (mainly NGOs and green movements) on climate policy. Future research can look at other policy areas linked to climate

change, such as the influence civil society have on disaster management, water and sanitation (WASH) and agriculture and livelihood development. Civil society can be expanded to include community-based organizations (CBOs) which were not looked at. Furthermore, other areas of interest would be to study how specific factors have helped influencing policy. For example, how funding and monetary resources is being used by civil society organizations to influence policy, and how and why networking and relationships matter. Similarly, another area of research could be to look at how CSOs help or are effective in policy implementation, which was not an area looked at in this study, or to study how much of knowledge contributed by CSOs is being reflected on the policy. Accordingly, this study hoped to provide a foundation to understanding the influence and role that civil society plays in climate policy in Sri Lanka and hopes to pave way for future research in this area.

There are several limitations that can affect the findings of this study. Firstly, the role of civil society in climate policy is a relatively new topic. This made it difficult to understand what I would be expecting in terms of my findings, and how to do a research of this type, as there were little to no previous studies done in this topic for me to get an idea from. This might have made my research aims, objectives and findings too broad. Secondly, accessing the sample was a challenge. There are a few green movements and NGOs in Sri Lanka who work on the field and getting in contact with them was difficult. It would have been easier if I had a gate keeper to help me get in touch with the organizations and conducted face-to-face in-depth interviews, but the COVID-19 pandemic made this impossible. These logistical issues would have affected my findings. Furthermore, being a Sri Lankan and having a preconceived notion and idea about the context of civil society, the personal biases would exist which would have affected the findings of this study. Nevertheless, researchers can use these limitations and improve the quality of such research in the future.

8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this six-month long thesis was to analyze to what extent do civil society organizations play a role in influencing climate change adaptation policy in Sri Lanka. It went on to investigate that if civil society played a role, what are the most successful factors and strategies that help in this process. Based on the findings and results, it can be concluded that the role of civil society is limited in Sri Lanka due to weak political institutions, political instability, corruption and lack of political interest towards the issue of climate adaptation, which makes it difficult for CSOs to influence climate adaptation policy. However, strong networking and collaboration with the GOSL, large citizen participation and availability of financial resources can help to influence policy to a certain extent. Through this study, I aimed to add to the literature in this area and help provide information on understanding the role of civil society in order to contribute for future policy making. Also, I believe that this research can act as a foundation for future research to look into the role of civil society, in other climate change related areas such as in disaster risk reduction, WASH and agriculture as well as the role of civil society in policy implementation on the ground. The main limitations of the study were the logistical weaknesses, the lack of previous research and knowledge and data available on the topic and individual biases of the researcher. Nevertheless, future researchers can use this research and its findings as an example and build upon its weaknesses to add to the vastly understudied, yet important topic of the role of civil society in climate adaptation policy, both in Sri Lanka and beyond.

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10 Appendix

Online Questionnaire/Interview Guide

It should be noted that the online questionnaire and the interview guide had the same questions. Hence, for this reason, they have both been merged.

Part 1:

1) Name of organization

2) Type of organization (whether it is a green movement, local NGO, international NGO).

3) Has your NGO or green movement influenced, helped to formulate or played a role in climate policy- Yes or no.?

Part 2:

1) If you answered yes to part 1, what role has your organization played in influencing policy? (In the online questionnaire, there were check boxes with options such as holding the GOSL accountable, creating awareness, etc.)

2) What factors make it possible or easy for your NGO or green movement to influence climate policy? (In the online questionnaire, there were check boxes with options such as size, funding, stronger networks etc. there was even the option to write other factors).

3) Why have these factors helped?

4) What strategies or tactics does your NGO or green movement use to influence climate policy? (in the online questionnaire, there were check boxes with options such as workshops and conferences with the GOSL, petitions, lobbying, litigation and legal means etc.)

5) Have these strategies been successful? Why have they been successful or not? What makes them successful or not and provide examples of instances where these strategies have been successful or not?

Part 3:

1) If you answered no to part 1, what makes it difficult for your organization to influence climate policy? What factors make it difficult? Why do these factors make it difficult? Does the GOSL limit your functioning? In what way?

Part 4:

1) This was a general section. In the questionnaire and the interview, respondents had to rate how important were the following factors/strategies to influence climate policy from a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important):

a) Human, financial, technological and infrastructural resources

b) Membership base and citizen participation

c) Ground activism

d) Networks

e) Government collaboration

f) Private sector support

g) Political context (democratic institutions, strong rule of law)

2) In general, how successful have NGOs and green movements been in influencing climate adaptation policy in Sri Lanka?

3) What factors make it difficult for NGOs and green movements to influence climate policy?

List of NGOs and green movements, and GOSL agencies who took part in the research:

1) Janashaktan

2) World Vision, Lanka

3) Environmental Foundation Lanka

4) Wilderness & Wildlife Conservation Trust

5) Sevalanka

6) Thuru Foundation

7) IUCN, Sri Lanka

8) Rainforest Alliance

9) Sri Lanka wildlife conservation society

10) Rainforest Protectors, Sri Lanka

11) Foundation for Environment, Climate and Technology

12) Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment

Organizations of the experts who were interviewed:

1) Centre for Poverty Analysis, Sri Lanka

2) United Nations Development Programme, Sri Lanka

3) Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand / University of Colombo, Sri Lanka