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**Challenges of Civil Society in Promoting Democratic Governance: A
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By D. Siaffa Dennis Morris

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DEDICATION

To all the civil society stake-holders who serves their various communities, societies, nations and peoples, as their quotas toward African solidarity.



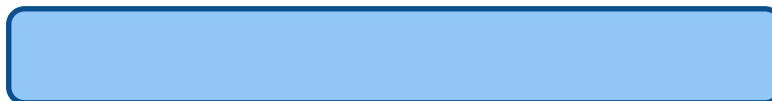
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ARCLR-MITL	Arcelor-Mittal
ADV:	Advocacy
AUTNM:	Autonomous
ASSYMT:	Asymmetries
ABRG:	Abrogated
ADVT:	Adventurism
ALG:	Aligned
AMLIB:	Americo-Liberians
ARCAEOL:	Archaeology
ABS:	Absurd
ANCY:	Anarchy
BRGN:	Burgeoning
BWD:	Bewildered
BTMUAPPR:	Bottom-up-approach
BLR:	Blurred
CSOs:	Civil society organizations
CSM-L	Civil Society Movement of Liberia
CEDE	Center for Democratic Empowerment
CMNT:	Culminated

CONST:	Constitution
CRYSL:	Crystallized
CMMGL:	Commingle
CSLD:	Consolidation
CTDRG:	Contadora group
CONTMP:	Contemporary
CNTRV:	Controversy
CBOs:	Community Base Organization
CJPC:	Catholic Justice & Peace Commission
CNFT:	Conflation
DEMOGNC:	Democratic Governance
DEN/L	Development Education Network/Liberia
DIMETR:	Diametrically
DECD:	Decadence
DVST:	Devastating
DICHTMY:	Dichotomy
EU	European Union
ENGM:	Engagement
ECOWAS:	Economic Community of West African States
ECOMOG:	Economic Community Monitoring group
ERS:	Eros
EXSP:	Exasperate
ENGM:	Enigma

FDL:	Foundation for democracy in Liberia
FBR:	Fabric
GA	Green Advocate
IREX	International Research and Exchange Board
INTERC:	Interneccine
INVL:	Involvement
INEXTR:	Inextricably
INSTLZ:	Institutionalization
IGOs:	Inter-governmental Organizations
LET	LET-Liberia Education Trust
MND:	Mundane
MNCHY:	Monarchy
MAGL:	Marginalized
MYD:	Myriad
MOJA:	Movement of Justice in Africa
NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organization
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NADL:	National dialogue
NEOLIBR:	Neoliberal
NETWK:	Networks
NARDA:	National African Research Development Agency
NEX:	Nexus
ODS:	Orduous

OLGR:	Oligarchy
OSIWA:	Open Society Initiative for West Africa
PLET:	Plethora
PRST:	Prostrated
POLR:	Polarized
PAL:	Progressive Alliance of Liberia
PLUR:	Pluralistic
PECN:	Pecuniary
PRTC:	Participation
PRATR:	Praetorianism
PRLF:	Proliferation
PNRS:	Partnership
PHLTP:	Philanthropic
PATRSM:	Patronism
QUAL:	Qualitative
QUINT:	Quantitative
RETRS:	Retrospection
SSK:	SUSUKU
SME-DBY	Sime Darby
SB-SHRN AFR	Sub-Saharan Africa
SPC:	Spice
SYNG:	Synergies
TRT AFR	Trust Africa

STUP:	Stupendous
TTLR:	Totalitarian
TUTL:	Tutelage
TRGY:	Tragedy
USAID	United State Agency for International Development
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
VNR:	Veneer
WTIA:	Winner-Take-it-All
WACSI:	West Africa Civil Society Institute

ABSTRACT

The emergence of civil society actors as a significant voice is considered by many to be one of the major new developments in institutional relations over the past century. The proliferation of these organizations can be seen as a reaction to the failure of governments to respond effectively to cross-cutting problems related to the people's wellbeing and a feeling of solidarity in the face of common aids threats. In the quest of promoting a democratic society which will adequately meet up with the liberties of the people, civil societies are rather retrograding from their fundamental quest. It is to this that we want to find out; what are the challenges faced by democratically oriented civil societies in contributing to the democratization process in Liberia?

In a bid to attain the interest of our work we held on research design, population as we proceeded with sample and sampling technics, data collection and analyses which permitted us to reach the real impact civil societies activities on the population likewise their relation with the government and as such seeing the perception the people hold on civil society organizations thus determining why the lapses and how they can possibly be ameliorated. Considering the scientific quest of the work, the structural functionalist theory and the social contract theories were used to determine the relation and behavioral determinants in the society.

Our work held that the challenges civil society organizations are facing are external to them and at the same time inherent to them as the environment and individuals characterizing it are animated by diverse interests. It is with this that in an urge to under mind the peoples plight a real synergy must be reached between civil societies and stake holders, political structures and foreign stake holders which must hold on transparency and accountability.

Section 1.0:

INTRODUCTION

Though the transition from war to sustainable peace is multifaceted and nonlinear, we can distinguish the three overlapping phases of making peace, keeping peace and sustaining peace, with each phase requiring a mix of political, security humanitarian and developmental activities. Yet it is difficult to determine which set of activities will achieve its objectives in a given situation. Moreover, the appropriate timing of and the intersection between the various intervention is not well understood. The international community is working within a multidisciplinary and inexact science.

The essential element of a peace process is political willingness by all warring factions to enter into negotiations and a security framework to maintain the peace. This usually requires extensive investment in time and money before the parties are brought to the negotiating table. In particular, the various parties must overcome the lack of interpersonal trust that has developed during the conflict. Another important component is the need for all involved to view the negotiation as a “way out” of the conflict where not all demands will be met. As conflict results from differing societal perceptions, even the best peace process will result in a compromise.

However, to minimize discontent, maintain momentum and reach the largest common denominator,” the process needs to be comprehensive, transparency, and inclusive. This means that all social, economic and political aspects of the conflict should be addressed in an open forum, allowing all interested members of the society an equal opportunity to participate. Through the process, no sector of society should dominate. Civil society, including women`s

The following thesis has four main sections: the three overlapping phases of war to peace transition and a brief conclusion. The first section, making peace, discusses the peace process, including the role of civil society and the international community. The second section, keeping peace, addresses post-conflict governance, elections and issues related to implementing the peace accords. The third section, sustaining peace, explores reconstruction and reconciliation. The final section concludes by emphasizing the need for an integrated strategic framework a coherent approach to sustainable peace.

associations and even the combatants who may be responsible for atrocities, should be represented. To expedite the process, each group and/ or faction should have a negotiator with a clear mandate. Marginalization of a significant group or issue often leads to more violence.

The following premises were suggested for effective negotiations: (a) dialogue between factions allows for the conceptualizing of peace; (b) an agreement on how to identify issues, participants and procedures, thereby legitimizing the process and actors; (c) a consensus that the substantive agenda should include economic, social and political issues, addressing the major underlying causes of the conflict; and (d) a prioritizing of issues, negotiating the substantial areas before dealing with operational aspects.

For the peace to extend beyond the negotiating table to the larger society, a number of transformations need to occur. First, behavior must be altered from the application of violence to a more peaceful form of dispute settlement; second, a transition from war time to a peace mentality needs to occur; third, the system of risks and rewards should encourage peaceful pursuit of livelihoods, rather than intimidation, violence and rent-seeking; fourth, adversaries must come to view each other as members of the same, working toward a common goal—a peaceful and prosperous future; and fifth, structures and institutions must be amended at all levels of the society to support these new peaceful transformations. Participants also noted that the “nature of war determines the nature of peace.” This means that the factors which produce and sustain the conflict will directly impact the ensuing peace settlement.

The Guatemalan peace process offers many lessons: first, transparent processes increased trust and reduced suspicion; second, participation by most of the stake-holders build a sense of partnership among the various components of society, legitimizing the process and outcome; and third, the agreement addressed the root causes of the conflict, providing a blue print for socio-economic development. In this manner, the agreements went beyond addressing military arrangements to provide a comprehensive package for a new nation. Participants stressed that the peace was brokered by the Guatemalans themselves, not imposed by outsiders.

Civil society can play an important role in the peace process by: (a) ensuring that discussions and recommendations take into account the needs of the larger society; and (b) monitoring the implementation of these very recommendations. In this manner, the agreements become an exercise in national conflict resolution and reconstruction. As already noted, civil

participation legitimizes the peace and outcome. However, participation by civil society requires that the factions open the process to all interested members of society, that institutional mechanisms are in place to guarantee civil participation, and that resources are available to support local peace building and conflict management efforts. Workshop participants described this as “inclusiveness in meaningful institutions.” This process may be very difficult in a highly militarized society. Involving civil society in the peace process can contribute to psychological healing. Civil Society the network of informal and formal relationships, groups and organizations which a society together can provide the environment within which the level of trust and sense of community necessary for durable peace that is constructed by allowing civil society to participate in the peace settlement, reconciliation becomes part of the peace-process itself.

The displacement and destruction associated with conflict usually has an adverse effect on civil society. Yet, some aspects of civil society usually survive and can be built on. This is the case, even in Liberia, where civilians were targeted by the various factions. Involving civil society in the peace process is a way of articulating social capital (societal trust and cohesiveness), the foundation of every society, in the political arena. The international community support civil participation by “creating space” for civil society to realize its full potential--- both as peacemaker and peacekeeper. Local methods of dispute settlement, reconciliation and institution-building should be encouraged.

During the Guatemalan peace process, civil society played a unique role. It was instrumental in defining the issues and agreements, and nurturing the peace process itself. This potential has yet to be realized in Liberia, conceivably threatening the emerging peace. The establishment of a multi-sectorial electoral commission with broad representation could be a fundamental transitional political instrument for bringing Liberians civilians into the peace process. The international community plays important role in facilitating or expediting peace processes. Development institutions and donor governments can provide technical and financial support, as well as programs which strengthen civil society. The “Groups of Friends,” an organization of countries supporting the Guatemalan peace process, played a critical role in that country’s conflict resolution. The United Nations, which is considered more impartial than any one government, can fill another important role. However, the united nation can only play a meaning role if (a) its participation is based on understanding of and sensitivity to the problem and, (b) it is invited by all warring factions. The international community should be careful not to contribute to or exacerbate the conflict. Often, foreign

intervention lacks coherence or even a common desire outcome. Moreover, external solution may not be able to influence the source of the conflict. It is important for external assistance to go beyond settling competing local claims to engaging the factions in more comprehensive dialogue. However, outsiders should not impose a peace process or agreement on the local population; peace that is not “home grown” tends to be weak and short-lived as the case of Angola. Regional organizations also may be instrumental in the process, especially where refugees and regional support for different factions produce a regional dimension to the conflict. Regional bodies may be better-placed to assist the peace process their judgments are based on more comprehensive understanding of the conflict and its regional implication.

In Central America, for example, the Contadora group has influenced the settlement of several conflicts. However, in West Africa, attempts by ECOWAS and ECOMOG to bring about a resolution to the Liberian civil war by intervening militarily have demonstrated that regional solutions also can be hindered by regional politics. The end of violence does not mean the end of conflict. Disputes and differing views on social, political and economic, moreover, the signing of an accord is just the beginning of a lengthy and arduous process of building a society on a non-violence fundament. Sustainable peace requires accommodating the divergent needs and tables of various segments of society. This usually means the reconciliation of competing agendas and addressing the many factors which lead to the Conflict.

Yet as mentioned above it is indeed important to recognize that no accord will comprehensively address all demands. Even with the Guatemalan accord, perhaps the most comprehensive set of peace agreements in the post –cold war era, opposition continue from a small number of groups who feel that they gained comparatively little. The peace process is critical step toward restoring the fundamental element of a functioning society: confidence rest on the mutual understanding those former adversaries will not take up arms again. A participant noted that confidence also demand mutual respect. Building confidence often involves a trade-off between justice and reconciliation. So far, the process has been expensive, mismanaged and time-consuming, with little justice or reconciliation. A society emerging from conflict has to balance the quest for justice for the victims of violence with the need to get on with life as one society. In some case,

Further conflict can erupt when judgments are deemed excessively harsh. In other cases, the process becomes time consuming and expensive without contributing to reconciliation. A

“culture of impunity,” on the other hand, could undermine the reconciliation process and encourage people to take the law into their own hands. A participant suggested that “justice as opposed to vengeance” may be the appropriate balance. Post-genocide Rwanda is a daunting example of the difficulties of balancing justice with reconciliation. So far, the process has been expensive, mismanaged and time-consuming, with little justice or reconciliation. The process in Guatemalan, on the other hand, is illustrative. The reconciliation process begins with a “national dialogue” where over one hundred organizations “learned” to communicate about previously shrouded issues. Next, arrangements were made to identify the needs of direct victims of violence and create conditions for them to pardon their aggressors.

These arrangements were then institutionalized into a commission to investigate human rights violations. However, a participant questioned the validity of comparing genocide with civil war. In the final analysis, two important elements of successful peace accords are active involvement by civil society and skillful governance. With the state apparatus and civil society both weakened by conflict, good governance the management of resources on behalf of all citizens with fairness and openness is an important goal. Successful governance, in this in this and other context, has several key features: Transparency, which requires budget, debt, expenditure, and revenue disclosure. Who pays and who benefits must be apparent to all.¹

Accountability which means that the governing bodies will be responsible for how it is generating revenue and allocating expenditure, Rule of law, which demand a legal framework by which government and society conduct themselves. Institutional pluralism rather than unitary structures which support the foregoing conditions of Participation which implies the involvement and important of all those affected by governance Participants suggested that the following considerations might ease the burden on post post-conflict governing bodies and facilitate good governance. To the extent possible, authority should be decentralized to increase the participation of civil society. Community-centered development and increasing capacity at the local level may produce quick impact and sustainability. Decentralization may also avoid “winner takes it all” scenario. Another important consideration is that the weak administrative capacity of the government means that it should concentrate on a few

Priorities. public dissatisfaction and loss of faith in the process. Moreover, while establishing a macroeconomic framework may be necessary to reduce inflation.

¹ for example, Mary Anderson and Lara Olson 2003 confronting war; Critical Lessons for peace practitioners: Collaborative For Development Action, Inc. Available on line.

Objectives of the Study

Section 1.1

Political Objective:

Multiples channels for civil society CSOs engagement in prevention and peace building. As discussed in the previous introductory part of this thesis preventing violent conflict and building sustainable peace in a globalization world requires strategies that address structural causes of conflict, many of which may be inherent in the global system and enable partnerships between civil society actors at the local, national, regional and global level and with governments inter-governmental organization (INGs) and potentially businesses. In addressing this challenge, there seem to be three basic orientations that motivate civil society groups to work on conflict-related issues, such as illustrated in the introductory component of this thesis paper. First, there are pre-existing existing civil society groups - such as women`s organization or faith – based groups – that do not consider working on conflict as a part of their core focus but who feel compelled to respond to the challenge that conflict and war pose their constituents. Their involvement may be motivated in part to ensure that their core concerns are addressed; they often highlight key issues that should be included in processes to address the conflict. For example, women`s organizations may aim to ensure that women`s needs are met and women are represented at the negotiating table.

These sectorial CSOs often call upon others in their wider networks to extend solidarity, thus helping to mobilize resources and make a powerful contribution to awareness – raising. Second as described in the next subscription, there are CSOs who aim to address underlying structural problems that give rise to conflict in general through efforts aimed at policy reform and system change, yet who are not directly focused on efforts to resolve or transform specific situation of conflict. Third, there are groups who are focused primarily on responding to specific conflict situations, as outlined in the following box. It can be difficult for civil society-based peace building initiatives to directly resolve large-scale armed conflict, especially when the macro-political situation remains unfavorable. In regions such as the Middle East and the Caucasus, conflict appears deeply entrenched and intractable in part because the parties are in geopolitical stalemate. Yet as has been seen in parts of South – Eastern Europe – all well known for shaky political agreement bringing about sustained transition. In all of these cases, the cumulative effects of CSOs initiatives helped by preparing the ground work for peace so that as conditions begin to shift, opportunities for peaceful

resolution were not lost similarly, they aimed to transform the deeper causes and consequences conflict are addressed and to support the transition from a shaky political agreement out of a negotiated process into a more sustainable peace.

As peace building is a long-term process of social and political change, it is very difficult to access the influence of a specific type of activities, initiative or methodology in the short term. The macro-processes through which civil society groups can foster longer term change are not well as a visionary one. A low-key civil society initiative often generates changes at a subtle and seemingly subterranean level. This can help to create conditions favorable for dramatic bursts of change from high-profile efforts. In general, multiple efforts aiming at different kinds of outcomes can combine create a climate that is ripe for change – as well as risk undermining its Specific CSOs initiatives vs. aggregated civil society involvement. The effectiveness of civil society peace building is sometimes questioned because it is extremely difficult to determine the effect of specific initiatives on the wider conflict dynamic. There are very valid concerns regarding the evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of specific efforts. Therefore, when considering the relevant of civil society roles, it is important to distinguish overall civil society involvement vs. specific CSOs-led peace building initiatives. In judging the effectiveness of civil society peace building, it is necessary to understand how effects of a single initiative combine with other initiatives and contextual factors over time rather than evaluating them in isolation.

This includes efforts by CSOs explicitly focused on working with conflicts, as well as the wider range of agencies working in conflict situations. There three levels of analysis that can be identified: 1 Roles of different groups of people (civil society groupings) within and outside of a society in relation to conflict. This can include those who are focused on mobilizing strategies to achieve their objectives by surfacing conflict through peaceful and/ or armed means. 2, the combined impact of the range of CSOs activities explicitly intended to contribute to: 3, peace building in a specific conflict system. The impact of a specific civil society initiative aimed at peace building.

Each level of analysis can shed a different light on civil society role in conflict situations. Often people focus principally on the third level – the effect of a specific initiative – outside the wider context in which it is embedded. This can make it difficult to determine its influence on the wider conflict system over time. The complex and cumulative of multiple – and ever competing and seemingly contradictory – initiatives over time can probably only be property

understood retrospectively through historical analysis. These points can be illustrated, for example, by looking at a few of the many, many civil society – based activities that influenced the transition in Liberia.²

Fostering change in Liberia: cumulative effects of different types of civil society engagements. For decades, anti-apartheid and pro-democracy activists in South Africa sought to challenge the status quo through both non-violent direct action (such as protest demonstration) and an armed movement. They were trying to surface the conflict in a situation of profound structural violence when the balance of power was heavily weighted against them. Their efforts were supported by solidarity groups around the world and even by some governments (Northern European, as well as Soviet bloc). They enacted an international boycott and disinvestment strategies that were important for isolating South African whites and significant section of the business community. This civil society-led campaigning strategy helped provide the incentive for the business community in particular to recognize the need for change and, eventually, to support a negotiated transition. Activists continue to move throughout the region.

Social-Cultural Objective: Civil society as a factor in war as well as a force for peace: Most people, most of the time, do not want to be a part of wide-scale violence. Many will, however, participate when they do not see alternatives or are so inflamed with a burning sense of justice that violence is considered a necessary remedy. In these cases, there are civil society actors who are central to the mobilization and escalation of war. Intellectuals, traditional authorities and religious leaders may provide the rationale and moral justification for violence; educational institutes and the media can shape perceptions of what is going on and how and how advocate war as the answer; civic associations and political parties may mobilize their members for the war effort.

Thus civil society groups can be a factor in war as well as in a force for peace. A maximalist conception of civil society recognizes that this plurality because it is a manifestation of the range of opinion, interest and values that exist within a society. In some contexts, there may be deep divisions within the society that are, in turn, reflected in and shape by polarized CSOs. Some CSOs promote causes that are incompatible with internationally agreed norms and principles, such as those promoting exclusionary or other hate-based ideologies or those

², for example, Clark, John D. 2003. *Worlds Apart: Civil Society and the battle for Ethical Globalization*. Bloomfield CT: Kumarian Press, inc.see, John Clark (2003) and Smille, Ian and Henry Helmick,

tolerating (or even endorsing) tactics based in violence or oppression. There are also dominant elements in society that may use various forms of coercive power – often executed through civic and state institutions – maintain their privilege and promote their interest at the expense of other groups, of future generation or of the environment as a whole.

Most would argue that “armed groups” are not part of civil society per se. yet these groups are usually supported by element in civil society that champion the cause and view armed struggle as legitimate, further indicating the fuzzy lines around the “civility” of some CSOs. A diverse and thriving civil society is nevertheless one of the crucial underpinning for strengthening the capacity of societies to manage conflict peacefully. This is particularly true when individuals are members of multiples groups, each of which addresses different aspects of concerns – such as their communal identity, vocational interests and hobbies, social and political values, and neighborhood environment. These cross-cutting memberships across CSOs create “bridging social capital”: the dense networks that are a powerful force integrating society and minimizing the potential for polarization along any specific divide. Within any society, civil is a potentially powerful force that can mobilize either to escalate conflict or facilitate its resolution. Ultimately, the state belongs to its people. Civil society engagement in addressing problems that could generate conflict which may strengthen long term social and political development of a country, Conversely, governments that attempt to suppress the aspirations voiced through civil society tend to provoke a struggle to meet those needs through other means, including violence resistance.

Any long term strategy for prevention needs to be rooted in creating features of peace. In the meanwhile, it is important to engage antagonist civil society actors in dialogue processes capable of working through differences, developing common ground, and transforming perceptions distorted by fears, misunderstanding and hatred. If the diverse elements within a society feel that the ‘solution’ are legitimate, they are more likely to take responsibility for implementing them. Finding a Voice: Civil Society and the News Media: ³

There has been a close relationship between the growth in civil society voices on the global scene and the opening of global media channels – including ‘news media’ enabled by the internet. The media has often been crucial in providing a channel for the voices and perspectives of CSOs actors, thus creating a complex and interdependent relationship between many CSOs campaigners and the media people who turn to them for information, analysis,

³ See Fernando Henrique Cardoso. “Civil Society and Global Governance” Contextual paper for UN high-Level panel on UN – civil Society Relations online: www.geneva2003.org/wsis/documents/cardoso_paper.doc

ideas and stories. The voice of civil society campaigners in the media connects to a longer-term shift of communication in the public sphere away from formal societal institutions as the source and site for information and discussion to the media system, with correspondingly important implications for governance and democratic politics.

Scientific Objective: In the first instance, it is often argued that NGOs aid democratization because they pluralize the institutional arena, expand and strengthen civil society, and bring more democratic actors into the political sphere. However, it is too simplistic to suggest that the mere existence of an NGO sector will lead to these outcomes. Such a position often rests on the conflation of NGOs with civil society itself (and vice versa), so that sheer numbers of NGOs are taken as indicators of the existence or otherwise of a civil society in a given place.

To take a typical example, Fisher (1998), in her account of the promotion of civil society by NGOs in the developing world, suggests that NGOs strengthen civil society simply by increasing the number of intermediary organizations between citizen and state, and that furthermore, the sheer number of NGOs indicates the strength of civil society. Such a position is not unusual (see Fukuyama, 2001), and is problematic for several reasons. First, it must be acknowledged that part of the reason why NGOs should have become the embodiment of civil society in developing countries in the last two decades of the twentieth century has as much to do with the dovetailing of the timing of their growth with changing development discourses as with any inherently democratizing characteristic of NGOs. Secondly, the conflation of NGOs with civil society can be problematic from a definitional perspective: the range of organizations that qualify as NGOs differs between author, organization and locality, thus rendering 'civil society' itself conceptually vague.

Thirdly, it credits NGOs as being in possession of certain popularly held characteristics of civil society that may be largely unwarranted, such as the role of 'watchdog' *vis-à-vis* the state, or in representing and acting for the interests of the poor and disenfranchised. Such attributes cannot be taken as axiomatic. At the same time, the conflation of NGOs with civil society speaks straight to donors: fund NGOs and you are building civil society. However, Fisher is quick to point out that 'there is nothing foreordained' (1998: 17) about the relationship between NGOs and civil society. Citing the activities of Islamic extremists in Sudan in the late 1980s, she suggests that autonomous organizations can also destroy civil society as much as they may be able to build it. There is then the implication that it is possible to distinguish a 'right' and 'wrong' type of NGO, and that only the former should be

considered desirable in the pursuit of civil society. That civil society itself might be conceptualized as a sphere of competing interests (whether these be political, cultural, social or economic) is not considered, it is only a 'good'. This brings me to my second point: that much work on NGOs weaves a normative narrative, imagining future scenarios for the *potential* contribution of NGOs to democratic development given more favorable conditions (or donor funding), which usually involves decrying the forces of neoliberalism that have pushed NGOs towards becoming public service contractors (particularly common within the literature on Latin America). The normative ideal that is imagined for the contribution of CSOs to democratic development is overwhelmingly a liberal democratic one. That civil society might be conceptualized as a more problematic sphere of competing interests across both state and society, that it is not an inherently democratic space separate from the state and that the liberal interpretation stems from historical western experience, are largely neglected matters.

That said, it is important to acknowledge the increasing body of literature (to which we return below) that conceptualizes civil society and CSOs within the tradition of Hegel, Marx and Gramsci, and that argues that the democratic role of CSOs is circumscribed by wider social, economic and political cleavages. While this is to be welcomed, there is no simple division between those writers who adhere to a Tocquevillian perspective (civil society is a 'good' and therefore all NGOs are 'good things') and those who adhere to a Gramscian one (civil society is a contested space, therefore CSOs reflect struggles within wider society).

Even among those who acknowledge the various social, political and economic inequalities associated with NGOs and civil society, there are commentators who (seemingly inexplicably, given their empirical material) cling to the normative and hopeful conclusion that, given the right conditions, CSOs might be able to fulfil their democratic promise at some point in the future (see, for example, Farrington and Bebbington, 1993; Ndegwa, 1996; Dicklitch, 1998). Moreover, in highlighting the 'incivilities' within NGOs and civil society (such as ethnic and regional tension, undemocratic practice and weak capacity), much of this critical CSO literature runs the risk of reinforcing the widespread perception that civil societies in poor countries are indeed 'fragmented', 'weak' and 'unorganized'. The assumption is that civil society (in its familiar western guise) has somehow gone wrong in the developing world; that these societies are incapable of becoming 'civil'. In the third instance, then, it is quite clear that those whose perspectives are informed by various strands of liberal democratic, modernization or political development theory, consider the cultures and social structures of

developing countries as ‘blockages’ to modern western democratic development or, certainly, to building a desirable civil society.

As Hadenius and Uggle have argued, the ‘traditional norms, rituals and patterns of authority are part of the reason why a strong and viable civil society is absent in many Third World countries’ (1996: 1625). For many such writers, NGOs and civil society implicitly become part of a wider project of transformatory development that seeks to break down undesirable traits and structures within ‘other’ societies and to engender modern, liberal, democratic ones in their place; in fact, to make societies truly ‘civil’. For example, membership of NGOs and other civil groups that cut across ethnic and regional cleavages are considered a key mechanism for breaking down ‘traditional’, ‘deeply rooted’ and potentially divisive socio-cultural identities that are anathema to the liberal democratic vision; ‘civil society can also be a crucial arena for the development of other democratic attributes, such as tolerance, moderation, a willingness to compromise, and a respect for opposing viewpoints’⁴

(Diamond, 1994: 8). Hadenius and Uggle similarly argue that ‘making civil society work’ is a question of ‘socialization into democratic norms . . . it is a matter of changing popular norms (or mentality)’ (1996: 1622–23). Civil society organizations and CSOs in particular, are thus seen as the institutional vehicles for effecting the democratic transformations of developing societies into modern, liberal societies. As John Clark, now of the World Bank, suggests, ‘countries which are Western in outlook . . . are likely to have strong CSO sectors’ (1991: 80). According to Williams and Young (1994) and Hearn (1999), such a perspective is partly responsible for driving the donor (and some academic) interest in ‘engineering’ civil society, in which NGOs become key actors in process of transformatory development.

⁴ See, for example John Burbidge, Ed. 1997 *Beyond Prince and Merchant: citizen participation and the rise of civil society*, (Brussels Institute Cultural African International)

Title: Civil Society – Diverse Sectorial & Organizational Forms

fig. 1-1



5

Catherine Barnes 2005 “Wavering the web civil society role in working with conflict and peace” in Van Tongeren, Paul, Malin Break, Marte Hellem, People bldg. ii.

⁵ The following is based Catherine Barnes 2005 “wavering the web. Civil-society role in working with conflict and building peace” in Van Tongeren, Paul, Malin Break, Marte Hellem Juliette Verhoeven Eds people building II: successful stories of civil society: Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner

Interest of the Study

Section 1.2: The significant of the study is to validate and indeed ascertain the altitude and perception of the people with respect to the democratic governance in Liberia, in relation to their level of advocacy, infrastructure, legal environment, organization capacity, financial viability, service provision and public image of those civil society organizations that are in the sphere of participation and engagement in the democratic process. More besides, the significant of this thesis go beyond just focusing on the factors that are easily noticeable. But is also concerned with the understanding of how corruption undermines a favorable political environment, also look at why civil society organizations are hindered from effective participation and how citizens` participation and their civic engagement can be enhanced. The constituents of civil society in any given setting can be distinguished by considering the functions that particularly organizations perform or do not perform on behalf of individual citizens. It is with respect to their inclinations and their effectiveness in performing these functions those specific organizations in any particular country can or cannot be classified as CSOs. Broadly, three sets of functions

That is performed to varying degrees by different types of civil organizations such as:

- Articulating citizens` interests and demands;
- Defending citizens` rights; and
- Providing goods and services directly, without recourse to state agencies;

Each of these is very much indeed important, given the particular context, for mobilizing citizens towards various tasks involved in reducing poverty.

Articulating citizens` interests and demands is an important function performed by CSOs. Particularly when state policies and the program of government agencies do not take account sufficiently of needs of the poor or of some other vulnerable sections, CSOs can step into this breach and help to represent their needs and interests. Cases from South Africa and Ukraine included within this thesis illustrates situations where civil society actors have mobilized sections of civil society and where government policies have based on interests and demands voiced by these actors.

Defending citizens' rights is an important theme in another group of cases that deal with post-conflict situation. In Guatemala, for instance, decades of unremitting civil war had resulted in tearing the social fabric and eroding whatever trust existed among citizens and government. Civil society organizations play a critical role in this situation in reestablishing social trust, in setting up institutions that could defend the social contract, and indeed implementing programs that could bring citizens' rights to bear upon national policy and institution building. Civil society actors involved in this effort were not always or necessarily in conflict with the government. A successful program was developed through restoring mutual confidence-building and partnerships among CSOs and government agencies.

Accomplishing similar objectives was made much harder in Laos on account of the reluctance that this country's government had towards any form of civic association that functioned outside and apart from the state. Defending citizens' rights to form association in this context required a careful and balanced strategy. The advantages of civic associations would need to be demonstrated carefully, without in any way appearing to threaten the government, so that the risk of strong and adverse responses could be minimized. To succeed in this milieu, the strategy of strengthening civil society had to start small and build incrementally. It was necessary first to demonstrate success on a small scale. Results accumulated from successive small-scale demonstrations provided leverage for seeking changes in policy at the national level. To a considerable extent, the strategy developed in Laos has worked successfully, at least through the initial stages necessarily long drawn-out process. The government is more permissive in its attitudes towards civil society, and more projects are being taken up among CSOs in this country.

Delimitation of the study

Section 1.3:

The theme of study is : ' Challenges of Civil Society in Promoting Democratic Governance' with a case study on the Foundation for Democracy in Liberia (FDL), and will be focusing from the time period of 1970 – 2004 and this theme will indeed be delimited in three aspects : Timing, Spatial and Scientific delimitations.

Timely

- a. The choice of the time limit between 1970 – 2004 is based on many factors, first and foremost on past governments that did not give and/ or allow civil society organizations the conducive operating atmosphere or breathing space as journalists were jailed, beating, torture and many times have to flee the country for fear of persecution, and because of such inconducive atmosphere Be holding the environment, donor fatigue grew more irrelevant thereby, hurting the effort, time and enery CSOs have managed to have exerted over the past years as regarding achieving their objectives. The military take-over of 1980 under the Young leadership of Mgt/SSgt Samuel Kayon Doe saw journalists as enemies of progress rather than value members of the fourth estate. The suppression of journalists in the military regime was a terror that sent strong signal to the international community that there a need now to start engaging the democratic process by turning over the country to civillian rule in 1985 and then the country go into elections

Scientific Interest of the studies

- b. The scientific interest of this thesis and/ or studies is for civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-government organizations (NGOs) in Liberia comprehensively network with each other it doesn`t matter whether the weaker organizations are among the stronger ones. Because unity in diversity matters a lot and can indeed help to complement each other strength because there is no one organization which will have all of the expertise in all of the focus or thematic areas of Civic society works. In view of the aforementioned, it is feasible that civil society organizations consolidate human and materials resources such as time, efforts and energy in order to come against a common enemies which could be any government that would want to stands in the way of democratic government such as: transparency, accountability, rule of law, political pluralism press-freedom and the civic engagement processes.
- c. The civil society organizations all over the world are the macrocosm of every democratic Governance process and as such, they should be allowed to lead, participate, engage and indeed drive the interests and demands of the people whose voices are only heard through the sincere and dedicated works of the way civil society organizations conduct its activities as it relates to the articulation on behalf of the

citizens, defending the rights of the citizenry and the provision of goods and services for the people in the absence of state resources and/ or donors intervention.

- d. There is a Krio proverb that says ‘One finger can’t pick up a lice.’ Effective coalitions are a quintessence of CSOs and actors with shared values convictions. CSOs collaboration through coalitions provides an important instrument to engage policymakers and advocates against unfavorable policies. Effective and results oriented coalitions that can be intricate to organized, fund and sustain. Many coalitions have been formed in Liberia, but funding, effective leadership and sustainability has been a problem. Individual egos characterized my an engrained fancy for the limelight subordinates coalition interest to personal interest. Many times, heads of coalitions regulate the interest of member organizations and objectives and elevate the interest of their own organizations and themselves to the fore.
- e. Many of the challenges that face CSOs individually are faced by CSOs coalitions. The formulation of polices are no longer preserved for government. The democratization of countries come with demands for better governance and these demands require that CSOs create or demand the space for participation at various level of a government development agenda. The rhetoric of good government preached by government themselves and multilateral institutions place the onus on CSOs to understand the nexus of issues that confront the collective desire for
- f. Good governance. CSOs actors understanding of the critical issues that involves simple nexus complex policy matters and require expert scrutiny determine whether CSOs contribution can help to effect change. The adequacy and depth of CSOs contribution to policy issues in Liberia is limited. There is serious lack of intellectual capacity to deal with the complex socio-economic and political issues populate the national agenda. Many CSOs practitioners lack the experience and there are limited financial resources to attract and retain experience professional. CSOs have to compete with government and international organizations for staff that have adequacy to navigate the diverse issue-based policy implementation terrain.
- g. The lack of technical and intellectual depth of CSOs to sufficiently engage government on major policy issues leave them overlooked and weakened. Under these challenges and constraints, CSOs tend to do limited research on policy matters and contribution is limited to rhetoric bordered on generalities, government are sensitive to

the incompetence of its civil society civil society and responsive when they know they are dealing with a civil society that is informed and a valuable partner. The imbalances that come with a civil society weaken on policy matters that can manifest itself in constant confusion and failure of constructive engagement between CSOs and government.

- h. The challenges and issues that face CSOs are manifold ; I'm addressing some in this thesis and i'm well aware that CSOs practitioners` faithful to the cause can enumerate several challenges and issues it is equally important that we proffers some ideas on how these issues can be mitigated. The challenges that come with financial reliance on donor is difficult to mitigate, but it is not impossible for CSOs to minimize their dependence on donor such that they can preserve their independence when require. CSOs independence rest on the effectiveness of their internal governance structures and the methodology used to implement their projects. Sound governance structures are a sine quo non to a healthy CSOs and a healthy CSOs should have the ability to attract resources that are united to conditionnalités. CSOs can also mitigate the reliance on donor by amalgamate their strength and pursuing shared vision and objectives.
- i. Liberians CSOs are yet to tap local mobilization of resources. Membership fees, local corporate sponsorship and corporate and quantification of expertise to provide consultancy to other CSOs are ways that organization can generate funding. Investment in real estate that could be utilized by other CSOs for meetings and conferences can contribute significantly to CSOs independence. There is nothing that can stop a well-grounded CSO from accessing bank loan. Effective CSOs is just as good as the staff itself. An attractive CSO that people that people to work for it is clearly seen.

Spatial

- a) The area of concern for this study is indeed, limited within the geographical political landmark which covered the 47,000 sq. miles of the Republic of Liberia inclusive of its fifteen political sub-divisions of Liberia called counties. By political boundaries, Liberia is bounded in the North by the Republic of Guinea, in the East by the Republic of Cote` d` Ivoire, on the West by the Republic of Sierra Leone and in the South by the Altantic Ocean.

- b) The Republic of Liberia has the following counties such as: Bomi County, Grand Cape-Mount County, Gbarpolu County, Montserrado County, Margibi County, Bong County, Lofa County, Grand Bassa County, River Cess County, Sinoe County, Nimba County, Grand Gedeh County, River-Gee County, Maryland County and Grand Kru County.
- c) The choice of this selection of interest is incumbent upon the fact that, each of the counties previously mentioned are fully involved into the work of civil society organizations that are indeed playing a pivotal role in each of those counties and as such, the work of CSOs in those various counties have some greater and interesting benchmark, which will obviously lead to an appreciable and stimulating of passion, vision and mission that drive citizenry into CSOs work without any semblance of depending on state resources and/or donors support with respect to the satisfactorily and comprehensively articulation, defending and the provision of goods and services in total complementarity to the true and fully implementation of the democratic governance process. to the largely communities as a whole.
- d) Having said that, the inherent interest of CSOs in regards to serving their own citizens and their communities will straightly lead us to Max Weber traditional theory of Symbolic Interaction Theory of (1864-1920) which emphatically states that, 'relates.

Definitions of Concepts and Key Terms

Section 1.4:

From the content and theme of my research, there are several terms that are indeed needed to be circumspectly clarified and defined, some of which include the following:

- I. **Americo-Liberians**: are Liberians of African-Americans descents. They traced their ancestry to freeborn and formerly **enslaved** African-Americans who **immigrated** to Liberia in the 19th century. In 1822, the **American Colonization Society (ACT)** established the Liberian colony on the West African coast to send freeborn African Americans manumitted slaves back to the African continent. Numerous settlements were established along the coast as thousands of immigrants (about 12,000 in total) made the journey across the Altantic throughout the 19th century. As the ACS eventually lost interest in Liberians internal affairs, the Americo-Liberian settlers took over from the ACS and declared themselves independence from the United States of

America on July 26, 1847. The Americo-Liberians consolidated power by creating a one party state and ruled throughout the dominated True Wing Party for one hundred thirty-three years (133 years). **President Williams V. S. Tubman**, who ruled the country between 1944 to 1971, is **particularly**, noted for his promotion of foreign investment and for attempting to bridge the social, economic and political gaps between the descendants of the original settlers and the inhabitants of the interior. Americo-Liberians settlers were, from the beginning, essentially American rather than Africans in Outlook and orientation. They retained preferences for western modes of dress and Southern plantation-style of homes, American food, Christianity, the English language and monogamous kinship practices. The settlers held land individually in contrast to the communal ownership of the African population and political institutions were modeled on those of the United States with an elected president, a legislature with a senate and House of Representatives, and a supreme court. They seldom intermarried with indigenous African inhabitants and primarily tried to influence the interior with evangelism and trade. Civil Society: is the “aggregate non-governmental organizations and institutions that manifest the interest of its citizens.” Civil society resists easy definition, every society has its own distinct forms of social organizations, cultural and political traditions, as well as contemporary state and economic structures-all of which are central to the development of civil society and shape its specific features. Most understood, however, civil society refers to the web of social relation that exist space between the state, the market (activities with the aim of extracting profit), and the private life of families and individuals. Interlink with the concept of ‘civil society’ is the ideas of social capital: the values, traditions and networks that enable coordination and cooperation between peoples. Civil society therefore involves qualities associated with relationships, with values, and with organizational forms. Civil society takes form through various types of association. Ranging from officially constituted institution to small, informal community groups, these associations give expression and direction to the social, political, spiritual and cultural needs of members. By reflecting diverse interest and values, they enable the articulation, mobilization and pursuit of the aspirations of the different constituent elements within a society.

- II. Advocacy:** generally a type of problem solving is designed to protect the personal and legal rights of individuals so that they can live dignify excitable life. There exist many types of advocacy. Many types of advocacy do exist, with system advocacy being used

to change systems and promote social causes, with legislative advocacy being used to change laws, regardless the types; effective advocacy generally involves a broad-based approach to problem-solving.

- III. **Civil Society** is the “aggregate” of non-governmental organizations and institutions that manifest the interests of the will of citizens. Civil Society includes the family and the private sphere, referred to as the “third sector” of civil society, distinct from governments and business. Dictionary.com’s 21st Century Lexicon defined civil society as 1) the aggregate of non-governmental organizations and institutions that manifest interests and will of citizens and 2) individuals and organizations in a society which are independent of the government. Sometimes the term civil society is used in a more general sense of “the enemies such as freedom of speech, an independent judiciary, etc. that make up a democratic society. Especially in the discussion among thinkers from Eastern and Central Europe, civil society is seen as a concept of civic values. One of the widely known representatives of this concept is the former Polish dissident Adam Michnik. Volunteering is often considered a defining characteristic of the organizations that constitute civil society, which in turn are often called “NGOs”, “NPOs”, or CSOs. Most authorities have in mind the realm of public participation in voluntary associations, trade unions and the like, but it is not necessary to belong to all of these to be part of civil society.
- IV. **Democratic Consolidation:** is a process by which a new democracy matures, in a way that it is unlikely to revert to authoritarianism without an extremist shock. The notion is contested because it is not clear that there is anything substantive that happens to new democracies that secures the constitution beyond those factors that simply make it ‘more likely’ that they continue as democracies. Unconsolidated democracies suffer from formalized but intermittent elections and clientelism.
- V. **Democratic Governance:** is “a system of government in which all the people of a state or polity are involved in the decisions-making about its affairs. Typically, by voting to elect representatives to parliament or similar assembly,” as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as (a) democracy is further defined as “government by the people, especially; rule of the majority (b:) “a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercise them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free and fair elections.
- VI. **Citizen Engagement:** is the encouragement of the general public to get involved in the political process and the issues that affect them. It is the community coming together

to become a collective source of change political and nonpolitical. Civic engagement has many elements, in its most basic senses it is about decision making or governance over who, how and by whom? A community's resources will be allocated. The principle of civic engagement underscores the most basic principle of democratic governance, i.e., that sovereignty resides ultimately in the people (citizens). Civic engagement is about of the people to define the public good, determine the policy by which they will seek the good, and reform or replace institutions that do not serve that good. Civic engagement can also be summarized as a means of working together to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of skills, knowledge, values and motivation in order to make that difference. It means promoting a quality of life in a community through both political and non-political means.

VII. Institutionalization: refers to the process of embedding some conception such as (for examples a belief, norm, social role, particularly value or mode of behavior) within an organization, social systems or society as a whole. The term may also be used to refer to committing a particular individual or group to an institution, such as a mental or welfare institution. The term may also be used in a political sense to apply to the creation or organization of governmental institutions or a particular bodies responsible for overseeing or implementing policy, for example in welfare or development. In the United States and most other developed societies, severe restrictions have been placed on the circumstances under which a person may be committed or treated against their will as such actions has been ruled by the **United States supreme** Court and other national legislative bodies as a violation of **civil rights** and/ or **human rights** (see e.g. **O'Conner V Donaldson**) Thus a person is committed against their will and is never committed for an indefinite period of time.

VIII. National Dialogue: can be any communication activities involving social partners intended to influence the arrangement and development of work related issues. In the Marxist and in the radical leftist discourse in general, the National Dialogue is called "class corporation or class collaboration" these can be direct relation between the social partners themselves. ("Bipartite") or relations between government authorities and the social partners ("bipartite"). To make it more clear, social dialogue can mean negotiation, consultation or simply an exchange of view between representatives of employers, workers and governments. It may consist of relations of between labour and management, with or without direct government involvement. Social dialogue is a

flexible tool that enables governments and employers, and workers' organizations to manage change and achieve economic and social goals. Example of national dialogue activities includes mutual information, open dialogue and concertation (On-going tripartite dialogue), exchanges of opinions, consultation and negotiation (agreements/common opinions).

Section 1.5:

Literature Review

Literature review will demand we exploit what others before us said in relation to our work and as to this see how we can contribute furthering research in this domain of utmost importance to the development of people and the world at large. The literature on civil society has proliferated over the last 15 years, and with it the range of debates in which civil society are implicated. While early publications in the 1980s grappled with such issues as civil society efficiency, impact and scale, a new set of debates has gained prominence in the literature on civil society since the early 1990s. Taken together, these represent a concern with the political dimensions of civil society activity.

The African Research and Resource Forum, in **DISCOURSES on CIVIL SOCIETY in KENYA**⁶, holds that civil societies are key elements of change in political societies as they enhance quality governance in public affairs which directly impact the livelihood of the people. It is with this that their emergence and articulation as to positive change in the society as all possible actors are checked, their impact and how their prospects brought about change in Kenya. It is to this effect that scientific communities are interested in developmental policies and budgetary policies that affect the people directly as these organizations which fight against oppression. It is to this that our work will be interested in analyzing the obstacles or challenges these organizations are facing in fostering their ideal objectives.

“Civil Society in the Promotion and Strengthening of Democracy in the Americas: A Vision for the Future”⁷ report also analyses the strength and necessity as to promoting democratic governance which will efficiently affect the wellbeing of the people. This report sees some structural challenges which are linked to social, cultural, economic and political

⁶ AFRICAN RESEARCH AND RESOURCE FORUM in DISCOURSES on CIVIL SOCIETY in KENYA, African Research and Resource Forum Nairobi Kenya, 2009

⁷ FOCAL in “Civil Society in the Promotion and Strengthening of Democracy in the Americas: A Vision for the Future”, Conference Report Ottawa Canada www.focal.ca, march 2006

challenges which are animated by diverse actors and stakes. The new watchwords in international development discourses with which NGOs have become inextricably bound up are now civil society, democracy, good governance and social capital, all of which derive from western historical experience, and all of which are employed as if their meaning were universal and unequivocal (Tvedt, 1998). One of the first commentators to suggest that the contribution of civil society to development might be important for political rather than economic reasons was Michael Bratton (1989), who argued that NGOs are significant bolsterers of civil society by virtue of their participatory and democratic approach. Since then, a wealth of literature has emerged from the academic, donor and civil society communities alike that has indicated the increasing interest in, and (material) support for, the role of civil societies in promoting democratic governance. Of particular concern is the widespread embracing of as democratic actors that is discernible in much of this literature. This appears to owe more to ideological persuasion and assumption than to an engagement with wider debates about the politics of development. Relatively few critical analyses of the role of civil societies in democratization have been undertaken within the theoretical literature to date. A whole lot of mechanisms are reached to promote the challenges of civil societies like dialogue, flexibility and a better relation with the diverse stake holders. It is to this respect that our work goes further to analyze the challenges of civil society organizations in Liberia in particular and see a new context which reflects somehow African reality.

In an optic to better apprehend our work we paid interest on conflict as we saw **““Root Causes”: The Inversion of Causes and Consequences in Civil War”**⁸ holds on human behavior and symbolic aspects in a bit to understand violence in the society. Here the anthropological weight and differences of persons is been exploited to better account for violence. These differences that account for behaviors structuring others in a bid to satisfy economic, social and political interest will necessitate a mechanism of peace building in which we can depict the place of civil societies conciliating and managing different interests. Studying culture will thus as to this work permit us understand the logic of conflict and thus better see how these different views can be conciliated. In our work this approach of conflict studies will permit us see how a better conciliation of interest can enhance democratic governance in Liberia and even beyond.

⁸ Christian K. Hojbjerg in **““Root Causes and Consequences in Civil War”**, 2005, <http://www.ecmi.de>, visited 4 april 2015 at 6:46pm

FROM CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL SOCIETY: THE TRANSITION FROM WAR TO PEACE IN GUATEMALA AND LIBERIA⁹ also account for the positive role of civil societies in the development of developing countries. This work holds that civil societies should be incorporated in the peace accords as to facilitating and accord which meets with the psychosocial healing as the end of hostilities does not imply the end of conflict. It is to this effect that at the level of also implementing decisions these organizations are determinant in the peace process. Civil societies will does determine a better management of the winner loser relationship thus guaranteeing transparency and good governance. This as to our work therefore will help us determine the fundamental impact of these organizations as unfortunately Liberia saw a war in which we will see how these organizations were affected during and after and determine their challenges which will permit us best analyze mechanisms for a better governance of the public domain.

In **“Weaving the Web: Civil Society Roles in working with conflict and building peace”**¹⁰, it is accepted that not all writers on civil societies reproduce all such assumptions; the point is to draw out and comment upon the most common tendencies within the literature as a whole, in an attempt to move the debates forward. Studies that deal with civil societies in development, but that do not explicitly make an argument for their political role in civil society or democratization, are therefore not included here. Similarly, the broader literature on civil society and democracy that does not deal with the role of NGOs directly is not considered in detail. The term ‘Civil Society’ is understood here to refer to those organizations that are officially established, run by employed staff (often urban professionals or expatriates), well-supported (by domestic or, as is more often the case, international funding), and that are often relatively large and well-resourced.

Civil societies may therefore be international organizations or they may be national or regional civil societies. They are seen as different from Grassroots Organizations (GROs) that are usually understood to be smaller, often membership-based organizations, operating without a paid staff but often reliant upon donor or civil society support, which tend to be (but are not always) issue-based and therefore ephemeral. The distinction between Civil Societies and GROs is a significant one, not only in organizational terms but, as this thesis will draw out, in the differing ways they act in, and are affected by, the politics of development. In

⁹ FROM CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL SOCIETY: THE TRANSITION FROM WAR TO PEACE IN GUATEMALA AND LIBERIA, The World Bank and the Carter Center, www.cartercenter.org, visited 3|23|2015 at 7:34am

¹⁰ Catherine Barnes in “Weaving the Web: Civil Society the Role in working with conflict and building peace” www.academia.edu visited 3 march 2015 at 7:45pm

presenting a critical review of the CSO literature, the thesis will address three major concerns. First, the thesis identifies the ideological basis upon which much of the literature founds its understanding of democracy, civil society and the role of NGOs in boosting them, as a liberal democratic one. The thesis then explores a number of liberal democratic assumptions about CSOs and outlines reason why they are problematic.

In our work this will permit us determine the interest of different stake holders as to the construction of their wants which can affect general interest and as to this help us to efficient account for civil societies.

Section 1.5:

Problem Statement

There is a continuous inactiveness of civil societies in contributing to democratic governance in Liberia due to the persistence and unfavorable political environment which is caused by increased corruption that has affected the overall function of the public sector. And this has continued to persist due to the consistent increase of poverty level in the country undermining transparency leadership to create a conducive environment for effective civil society functioning.

Furthermore, the continue incapacitation of civil society and its policies towards this situation has increased in incompetence performance. Due to civil societies organizations that are being disorganized toward improving their civic participation and engagement with the government of Liberia`s democratization process. Their direct involvement to generate adequate resources is indeed limited. In addition, the citizens whom the civil societies represent, have been filled with distrust of the civic engagement role as well as engulf with a lot of fear for state persecution as a result of their participation in their civil role of contribution to the democratic governance process.

In line with the following, there`s continuous malfunction that has contributed to institutional decadence, which is coupled up with the lack of the relevant and requisite technical know-how by civil society groups that are contributing to the democratic governance process which left many with no other alternatives, but to the poor diminishing performance to counter the institutional mal-function of the state, This has left the citizens whom the civil societies represent, to lack room for participation, thereby, limiting their effective state engagement in the democratic entrenchment, thus leading to the continuous dormancy of citizens voiceless of civil society in contributing to democratic consolidation in a given society as a whole.

Research Questions

General Research Question

What are the challenges faced by democratically oriented civil societies in contributing to the democratization process in Liberia?

Specific Research Questions

Corruption within government can take place at both the political and bureaucratic levels. The first may be independence of other, there may be collision. At one level controlling political corruption involves election laws, campaign finance regulations and conflict of interest rules for parliamentarians. These types of laws and regulations lie beyond the mandate and expertise of the bank, but nevertheless are part of what a country needs to control corruption. At another level corruption may be intrinsic to the way power is exercised and may be impossible to reduce through law making alone. In the extreme case state institution may be infiltrated by criminal elements and turned into instrument of individual enrichment.

- I. How does corruption undermine a favorable political environment for civil society functions?
- II. How are civil societies hindered from effectively participating in the democratization process in Liberia?
- III. What inhibit citizens' involvement in the democratization process in Liberia?

Hypothesis

Some research thesis does include econometrics analysis but use conceptual frameworks and sub-matter knowledge to support their arguments. They may add descriptive data with some basic tables and figures. In most cases in academic studies, however, conceptual and descriptive data analysis may not be enough. Recent years, data are becoming available more than before and powerful econometrics packages are easier to use than ever. Thus, it is much easier for researchers to test their hypothesis empirically with good data and sophisticated econometrics methods. Thus, there are fewer excuses for not conducting econometrics-analysis.

Although econometrics can be a powerful tool to test hypothesis, it is quite easy to misuse it. To convince readers that you have interesting and reliable results, you first need to convince them that you have arrived robust conclusions based on sound data and well-thought-out methods.

Hypothesis 1

- I. Corruption violates the principles of transparent leadership and relationship between the functioning of civil society perhaps by blocking the inclusiveness in the democratization process in Liberia;

Hypothesis 2

- II. The incapacitation of civil society might stimulates efficient advocacy skill development and focused management towards creating a force geared to creating favorable political environment for their efficient inclusiveness in the democratization process of Liberia;

Hypothesis 3

- III. Due to the lack of political awareness among the citizens, their participation is seemingly limited by fear of persecution from government and they are rendered dormant in the democratization process

Section 1.6:

Theoretical Framework

Structural Functionalism Theory (Emile Durkheim: 1858-1917)

This theory proposes that a human society is like an organism and is indeed made up of structures called social institutions. These institutions are specially structured so that they perform different functions on the behalf of society. This theory attempts to provide an explanation on how human society is organized and what each of the various social institutions do in order for society to continue existing. According to this theory, as a result of being interrelated and independence one of the organs can affect the others and intimately make an impact on the whole. Functionalism is a

framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at society through a micro-level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole, and believes that society has evolved as an organism. This approach looks at both social structures and social function. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in term of the function of its constituent's element; namely norms, customs, traditions and institutions. A common analogy, popularized by Hebert Spencer, presents these parts of society as "organ" that work toward the proper functioning of the "body" as a whole. In most basic term, it simply emphasizes the "effort to impute, as rigorously as possible, to each future, customs or practice, its effect on the functioning of a supposedly stable, cohesive system". For Talcott Parsons,"Structural- functionalism" came to describe a particular stage in a methodological development of social science, rather than a specific school of thought. The structural functional theory is a macro-sociological analysis with a broad focus on social structures that shape society as a whole.

The Social Contract Theory by Jean Jacques Rousseau

Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains.' These 'chains' are the constraints placed on the freedom of citizens in modern states. The stated aim of this thesis is to determine whether there can be legitimate political authority ...whether a state can exist that upholds, rather than constraint, liberty.

Rousseau rejects the idea that legitimate political authority is found in nature. The only natural form of authority a father has over a child, which exists only for the preservation of the child, political thinkers particularly Grotius and Hobbe have asserted that the relationship between ruler and subject is similar to that between father and child : the ruler cares for his subjects and so has unlimited rights over them. This kind of reasoning assumes the natural superiority of rulers over the ruled. Such superiority is pepertuated by force, not by nature, so political authority has no basic in nature.

Nor is legitimate political authority founded on force. The maxim that 'might make rights' does not imply that the less should be obedience to the strong. If might is the only determinant of right, than people obey rulers not because they should, but because they have no choice. And if they are able to overthrow their ruler, than this

also is right since they are exercising their superior might. In such circumstances, there is no political authority; people simply do whatever is within their power.

Rousseau's suggested answer is that legitimate political authority rests on a covenant (a 'social contract') forged between the members of society. He has a number of predecessors in theorizing a social contract, including Grotius, who opposes that there is a covenant between the king and his people. a 'right of slavery' where the people agree to surrender their freedom to the king. Grotius is less clear that the people get in return for their freedom. It is not preservation: the king keeps himself fed and indeed contended off the labor of the people, and not the other around. It is not security: civil peace is of little value if the king makes his people to go to war, and desolates the country by stockpiling all its goods for his consumption. Yet it must be something, because only a lunatic would give up his freedom for nothing, and a covenant by a lunatic would be void. Moreover, even if people were able to surrender their own freedom, they could not justifiably surrender their freedom of the children as well.

It is impossible to surrender one's freedom in a fair exchange. By surrendering their freedom to their ruler, people surrender all their rights, and are no longer in any position to ask for something in return. More importantly, Rousseau links freedom with moral significance: our action can only be moral if those actions were done freely. In giving up our freedom we give up our morality and our humanity.

Rousseau also objects to the suggestion that prisoners of war could become slaves through an even exchange, where the conqueror spares the life of the vanquished in exchange for that person's freedom. Wars have nothing to do with individuals. Wars are conducted between states for the sake of property. When an army surrenders, he ceases to be an enemy, and becomes simply a man. The people in an absolute monarchy are slaves, and have no freedom and no rights. A people only becomes a people if they have their freedom to deliberate amongst themselves and agree about what is best for all.

The concept of nature is very important throughout Rousseau's philosophy. He is famous for countering the common enlightenment position that reason and progress were steadily improving humankind with the suggestion that we are better off in our state of nature, as nature as 'noble savages.' This opinion is expressed more forcefully

in his earlier work, the *Discourse on Inequality*; in *The Social Contract* Rousseau is more ready to accept the possibility that modern society potentially benefit us.

It is not entirely clear what Rousseau means when he talks about ‘nature’ or our ‘nature state.’ In his *Discourse on Inequality*, he seems to be alluding to a pre-historic state of affairs where people had no government, law, or private property. However, he makes no effort to support the historicity of this claim, and later denied that he intended the discourse to refer to an actual former state of affairs.

Rousseau is not interest in history or archaeology so much as he is interested in understanding human nature as it exists in the present. His political philosophy is driven by the conviction that the political associations we participate in shape of our thoughts and behavior to a great extent. His interest in a ‘nature state,’ then, is an effort to determine what we would be like if political institutions had never existed. Whatever is not a part of this ‘nature state’ has come about as a result of human society, and is thus ‘unnatural.’

In the *Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau paints a very rosy picture of this nature state : without property to quarrel over and governments to enforce inequality, our fundamental human right is compassionate and free to strive. This view contrasts sharply with most of Rousseau’s predecessors. In the *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes famously asserts that human life without political institutions is solitary, poor nasty, brutish and short. ‘Hobbes and Grotius both claim that human society comes about in order to improve this unpleasant natural state. Rousseau suspects that Hobbes gives such a negative portrayal of our natural state out of an assumption that human nature remains unchanged with or without political institution. If human beings today were suddenly to find themselves without political institutions, they would indeed lead unpleasant lives because they would have all the selfishness and greed that society has bred in them without any of the safeguards and protection of that society. Rousseau’s hypocritical natural state is pre-societal: before we were corrupted by politics, we had none of the unpleasant characteristics that Hobbes identifies. It is important to understand that Rousseau believes it is impossible return to this natural state.

It should be clear that Rousseau intend to sharp contrast between nature and civil society. Human society is not a part of our natural state; rather, it is formed artificially. Rousseau’s suggestion is that, it is formed by a ‘social contract’: people living in a

state of nature come together and agree to certain constraints in order that they might all benefit. The idea of a social contract is not original to Rousseau, and could even be

Section 1.7:

This section presents an overview of the methods to be used in the study. Areas covered include the research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, data collection and analysis

Research Design

- I. The study will involve eliciting data on the processes and challenges faced by civil societies in contributing to democratic governance and evaluating the status of democratic governance in Liberia. The relationship between the participation of civil societies in the democratization process and democratic governance will be established. Consequently, the research will be designed to achieve the objectives set out by the researcher.

Population

- II. The target population for the study thus includes the following: Foundation for Democracy in Liberia (FDL) and another three (3) civil society organisations to make comparison on the data collected.

Sampling and Sampling Techniques

- III. It is obvious from the definition of the population above that a census is not feasible in this study. Accordingly, the researcher will adopt the survey type of research in which a sample from the target population will be used for the study. Based on the topic of the study, a **Non-probability Sampling known as Purposive Sampling** will be used to elicit data as the researcher's main target is to get reliable data from the target group or structures taking active part in the democratization process of Liberia. In total, a sample size of about **ten (10)** respondents will be interview from the selected target population for the study.

Data Collection

- IV. The main focus of the study is on attitudes and perception of the people and authorities on the concept of democratic governance and its implementation in Liberia and

therefore the importance of primary data cannot be over emphasised in this research work. However, secondary data will also be collected to augment the studies. Before the actual data collection the researcher will collect introductory letter from the Pan African University to the sampled institutions particularly the Foundation for Democracy in Liberia (FDL) and other relevant institutions targeted by the researcher. This will help the researcher to seek the consent of all the respondents targeted for the study.

Data Collection Instruments

- V. The researcher will collect data by administering a questionnaire. The questionnaire will use structured questions both opened and closed-ended questions will also be used, consisting of approximately not more than **20 questions**. Each section will focused on answering a specific research question and testing the hypothesis. Furthermore, if necessary a follow up Interview guide will be used to verify some of the information provided by the respondents in the questionnaire in order to reduce unnecessary errors. Part of the structured questions will be the close-ended type and respondents will be asked to mark the appropriate box matching the correct answer. Other questions, however, will require respondents to give opinions.

Data Analysis

- VI. The responses to the structured closed-ended questions will be rated in percentages and numbers. The percentage of respondents for each alternative will be provided and critically analysed. The data collected will be analysed using the computer software known as Statistical Package for Service Solution (SPSS) and Excel. Also Comparison of the information with other norms/standards will be used by the researcher.

Research Sources and Application

- VII. **Secondary Research** is a kind of research which seeks information that is library oriented and/ or reliable information-based and its source of information comes from the following sources such as follow.

- a) Books, b) Internet, c) Encyclopedia, d) Commentaries, e) Editorial, f) Newspapers, g) Magazines, h) Periodicals, i) Articles and Journals

VIII. **Empirical Research** is a kind of research in social sciences, such as economics, it is indeed impossible to control the social environment. What we can do is to observe changes in people`s behavior under simultaneous changes in many factors. When many factors change at the time, we may find many variables changing in the same direction. This could be just a coincidence (an association). Or this could be a causal effect of one factor to another (a causal effect). For instance, we find that the demand for air-conditioners was high during the past summer and that the household income was high at the same time. Thus, you find an association between the demand for air-conditioners and the household income. But you also find that the temperature was very high in the past summer. Thus, it is possible that the demand air-conditioners was high not because of the high income, but because of the high temperature. Thus, household income did not have a causal effect on the demand for the air-conditioners but the high temperature had a causal effect. Distinguishing an association from a causal effect is one of the most difficult issues in Empirical Research.

“Introductory to Economics” (2nd edition) by Jeffrey Wooldridge and “Econometrics analysis” (5th edition) by Williams H. Greene.

IX. **Research Findings and Analysis:** after a comprehensive and indeed satisfactory fieldwork, the research was able to capture and construct the following data. Four targeted civil society organizations, each of which played a key leading role in Liberia`s democratization and good governance processes give us an analytical update of CSOs with regards to their performances, and as to how the citizens perception, attitudes and government authorities on the concept of democratic government and its implementation in Liberia so as to validates CSOs in relation to seven sectoral areas such as advocacy, legal environment, organization capacity, public image, infrastructure, financial viability and economic sustainability.

Title: CSOs Self Examination Perception Index Analysis Scores and Fact Sheet of Liberia as of August 2015

Fig: 1-2

No.	CSOs SECTORAL SPHERE	FDL	NDI	CEDE	NHRCL	Percentages (%) by Sectoral Rating	Ranking by Sectoral Performance
1.	Advocacy	68%	75%	78%	80%	75.25%	3 rd
2.	Legal Environment	78%	80%	75%	72%	76.25%	2 nd
3.	Organizational Capacity	66%	68%	70%	65%	67.25%	5 th
4.	Economic Sustainability	80%	88%	70%	75%	78.25	1 st
5.	Financial Viability	65%	68%	70%	65%	67%	6 th
6.	Public Image	60%	68%	70%	78%	69%	4 th
7.	Infrastructure	80%	88%	70%	75%	78.25%	1 st
8.	Over-all Performance rate of CSOs Scores and Fact Sheet for Liberia					<u>71.54%</u>	

Title: Ordinary Citizens Perception Index Analysis of CSOs in Liberia fig: 1-3

No.	Liberia`s Fifteen (15) Political Sub-Divisions Called Counties	FDL	NDI	CEDE	NHRCL	Percentages (%) by Sectoral Rating	Ranking as seen by Citizens` Sectoral Performance of CSOs
1.	Montserrado	72%	78%	80%	75%	76.25%	4 th
2.	Bomi	60%	70%	68%	75%	68.25%	12 th
3.	Grand Cape Mount	68%	69%	70%	75%	70.5%	9 th
4.	Gbarpolu	70%	78%	75%	69%	73%	8 th
5.	Margibi	69%	88%	70%	68%	73.5%	7 th
6.	Grand Bassa	70%	72%	78%	60%	70%	10 th
7.	Rivercess	68%	65%	60%	60%	63.25%	15 th
8.	Sinoe	70%	66%	65%	69%	67.5%	13 th
9.	Grand Kru	68%	66%	65%	60%	64.75%	14 th
10.	Lofa	78%	80%	88%	85%	82.75%	1 st
11.	Bong	70%	79%	85%	69%	75.75%	5 th
12.	Nimba	78%	79%	80%	85%	80.5%	3 rd
13.	Grand Gedeh	80%	88%	85%	76%	82.25%	2 nd
14.	Maryland	70%	77%	76%	79%	75.5%	6 th
15.	River Gee	70%	72%	68%	65%	68.75%	11 th
16.	Overall Performance rate of CSOs Scores and Fact Sheet as per ordinary perception					<u>72.83%</u>	

**PART ONE: THE ORIGINS AND MUTATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANIZATIONS IN LIBERIA**

CHAPTER ONE: ORIGINS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN LIBERIA

The ability of non-state actors to set a compelling agenda particularly on environment, social and, to a lesser extent, economic and security issues has been a significant force in shaping new responses to key structural programs. Although CSOs have been able to draw on the legal, political or military power of states, they have been to draw on the power of what some theorists refer to as ‘discursive legitimacy’ rooted in their analysis of the problems, the moral ‘voice’ that they bring to identifying solutions, and the perceptions that they have the support of large numbers of people who want change.

As will be explored in greater detail in chapter one, CSOs have been crucial in mobilizing campaigns for specific policy changes in the conduct of war (such as banning land mines) as well as to address structural factors in the global system that can generate conflict (such as unfair trade policies and practices) and in protesting the pursuit of war itself. Yet there are substantive differences within global civil society related to political perspectives and strategic choices.

These can be categorized roughly into those who (a) promote stability / the status quo, (b) those who promote reforms, and (c) radicals who focus on profound system change, some of whom choose to avoid engaging with existing institutions and official decision-making forums. In short, there is a scope for considerable levels of conflict within civil society at all levels – although it has mostly been addressed through constructive debate rather than debilitating violence.

Unsurprisingly, problems have surfaced. One serious critique relates to the persistent imbalances between those in the ‘center’ and those in the ‘periphery’ of access to resources and power. This dynamic plays out in the terms of who is able to create the ‘agenda’ for what is to be addressed and whose ‘voices’ are heard in decision-making and social change initiatives. Within some of international NGO coalitions, there is a tendency for the northern Western partners to assume a dominant voice and thus set agendas that respond to their perceptions of problems in ways that might not reflect the views and goals of Southern Eastern partners. Some have also critiqued the ways in which northern Western groups have tended to impose demands Southern / Eastern governance (e.g., through advocating conditionality and sanctions) in ways that might compromise sovereignty and paradoxically

undermine democratic governance and local civil society in those countries. They worry that externally imposed prescriptions on the national policy undermines local capacities to address central challenges in their society by both weakening sovereignty and making the government more accountable to external forces (especially international financial institutions and powerful foreign governments) than to the domestic population.

For example, some are concerned that the tendency of North-based INGOs to shift debates on structural issues away from national parliaments (which can help to strengthen the accountability of governments) to international forums organized around multilateral agencies and inter-governmental meetings. International forums tend to be inaccessible to less wealthy CSOs, especially those in the global south and for those with less experience or language skills for effective participation. Some feel that focusing on multilaterals is a ‘soft target’ when the decision making power lies with governments. Furthermore, ‘internationalization’ concerns on specific issues / projects can lead to a distortion of the Complexities and needs of those directly affected as the situation is filtered through the lens and some people.

Section: 1.0. History of Liberia

Liberia was founded as a colony for free slaves from the United States of America (USA) by the American Colonization Society (ACS), a philanthropist organization which had the support of the then US president John James Monroe. The first ship load of free slaves arrived in Liberia in January 1822, after a supposedly negotiated purchase of the Cape Mesurado area (present day Monrovia) by Elias Ayres and Robert Stockton from King Peter and five other chiefs who owned this area. This event is often used to mark the beginning of the history of Liberia, largely because those settlers and their descendants (Americo-Liberians) for almost one and a half centuries dominated the political, social and economic life of Liberia. But it is equally important to remember that before the arrival of the free slaves from the USA, there existed for at least a hundred years, what used to be called the Green Coast, which was inhabited by about one and a half dozen ethnic groups.

Though they were destabilized occasionally by minor strife those ethnic groups had co-existed in relative peace. This last point is very much indeed essential. Firstly, because to equate the history of Liberia only to the fortunes and characteristics of the nineteen centuries

immigrants from America and their descendants, is to obscure the fact that the Americo-Liberians form only a small minority of the total population. Most significantly, the relations between the new comers and those they met remained a source of conflict throughout Liberia's history. Furthermore, if the colony of the free slaves had been carved out of an unoccupied piece of land, the history of Liberia would have been different perhaps ECOWAS and the UN would not have had a conflict resolution role to play between 1990 and 2003.

The story of the initial purchase of the Cape Mesurado area has been told variously this ranges from a peaceful contract signed between the chiefs and the leaders of the settlers to the forceful seizure of land from the indigenes. Whatever the true account, the seeds of discord and distrust between the indigenes and settlers were sown soon after the settlers' arrival, and initially over issues of land acquisition and later the attempt by the settlers to impose an alien socio-culture, political and economic system, (in which they were themselves not properly trained) on the indigenes.¹¹

In reaction to the settlers' determination to establish hegemony and to dispossess them of their land, several indigenous groups put up resistance. The coastal Kru, Gerbo and the Gola engaged the settlers in protracted conflicts. Which sometimes assumed the proportion of minor wars? However, the settlers were not pushed, as it were into the sea partly because the natives had their inter-tribal jealousies some of which were deeper and older than the quarrels with the newcomers. As a result, the attacks came from one ethnic group at a time. The lack of unity among the Liberian natives could as well have been the effect of the slave trade which made the tribes attack one another for slaves. One lesson which the settlers learnt early enough was that their survival depended on the cohesion within their camp. They needed a united front to respond effectively to the hostilities of the natives.

This largely explains why in 1839, all of the clusters of independence black American settlers' enclaves along the Grain coast came together as a self-governing commonwealth which prepared the way for Liberia's independence in 1847. Thus, the settlers won the initial serious of wars but the mutual distrust and suspicious that had been created, and the more difficult and persistent problem of incorporating the native population into the political, social and economic life of the nation, would remained unresolved, and explode from time to time.

¹¹ The American colonization Society (ACS), provided that the settlers would be entitled to all rights and privileges of the free people of USA. The ACS was itself founded in 1816. President Monroe after whom the Liberian capital was named took personal interest in the work of the ACS. The US Congress approved of \$100,000 for settlement of slaves. Elias Ayes became the first agent of ACS in Liberia and Stockton

Section 1.1: An Overview of Africa's CSOs Landscape

In Africa one of the approaches to democratization is the fostering of civil society organizations. However, these civil society organizations have always been limited to play their role in the continent's democratization process due to many factors including the repressive regulations imposed on them by governing parties. Democratization, in contemporary politics has been considered a sine-qua-none of political maturity and modernization. The process of democratization has not involved only just the transition to democracy but also its subsequent consolidation. While most research in the world has deliberated on the requisites of accomplishing democratization, most concede that the process requires a crucial role to be played by the civil society. This experience of civil society contribution in promoting democratization in Liberia is not any different from many of the other countries though Liberia as a country has its particularities that make it to be a case of its own due to its various civil war experiences.

The outbreak of the Liberian civil war cannot be explained by a single dominant factor. The war grew out of the domestic, socio-economic and political environment of the 1980s (Jeremy Armon, 1990. P 10) there were two major events principally associated with this period: the 1980 military coup and the 1985 parliamentary and presidential elections. There is general agreement among analysts of Liberia that the 1980 coup, which was led by Master Sergeant Samuel Doe and ended over a century of Americo-Liberian rule, failed to address the fundamental questions of political and socio-economic exclusion of the majority of the population which had characterized settler rule. No sooner had the initial euphoria which greeted the putschists of 1980 evaporated than the military regime progressively descended into a brutal reign of terror this repressive rule in turn engendered economic decline, accompanied by widespread corruption¹²

Augustine Konneh noted that "...the coup did not fundamentally alter the political oppression or the peripheral capitalist economy and its exploitative relations of production and distribution...the underlying contours of the political economy remained intact; the only 'change' was the loss of Americo- Liberian suzerainty."¹³ Amos Sawyer spoke of "the

Francisco, CA: Institute for Contemporary Studies Press, 1992)

¹³ Augustine Konneh, "Unconstitutionalism and State Failure in Liberia", Liberia Journal of Democracy, Amos Sawyer, op. cit. p.299 vol 1 no.2 2000, p.73

appropriation of the autocracy of the presidency by a military dictator organized around a Krahn ethnic core, supported by military power and serviced by a core of civilian officials at varying levels of acculturation¹⁴ As Liberian civil society grew wary of the military's repressive rule, its opposition to the regime increased. The student community, particularly at the National University of Liberia, called incessantly for a return to constitutional civilian rule and became the voice of a disaffected population. Faced with growing opposition at home and external pressure particularly from the US, the illegitimate military regime organized elections in October 1985 and the elections were massively rigged in favor of the incumbent Samuel Doe who succeeded himself as the newly elected civilian leader.

Barely a month later, a botched attempt by Doe's former army commander, General Thomas Quiwonkpa, to topple the Liberian autocrat, resulted in the brutal murder of Quiwonkpa. The failed coup attempt was followed by a pogrom against Quiwonkpa's ethnic Mano and Gio kinsmen in Nimba County by the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) dominated by Doe's ethnic Krahn. In the aftermath of the abortive coup and as Doe sought to tighten his grip on power, he mercilessly crushed all real and perceived signs of opposition to his rule and stifled dissent.

Thus began a second reign of terror in Liberia, until Charles Taylor launched his armed rebellion against the Doe regime in December 1989 which culminated in the civil war. Looking further back than the volatile political climate of the 1980s and the immediate causes of the war, the Liberian conflict is rooted in a past that reads very much like the history of colonial Africa, though the country itself was spared the indignities of European colonization. The Liberian conflict is the "brutal culmination of the country's unresolved past"¹⁵ – a past that is steeped in contradictions. As Boima Fahnbulleh, noted: "Liberia has been postponing rather than resolving its contradictions,¹⁶ these contradictions largely revolve around the lofty ideals of freedom and self-determination on which the Liberian state was founded and the politics of exclusion anchored on the appropriation of the state's resources by ruling elite which marginalized the majority of its population as well as inhibited any sort of Civil society functioning in the country at a time.

¹⁴ Amos Sawyer, *op. cit.* p.299

¹⁵ Armon and Carl, *op. cit.* p. 11

¹⁶ H Boima Fahnbulleh, "ECOWAS and Liberia Analysis of an Intervention", *Africa World Review*, July 2000, p. 13

Section 1.2: Liberia: From Independence to the Second World War

The declaration of independence of Liberia's independence in 1847 once more brought to the fore the question of the relations between the settlers and indigenes. The question was whether Liberia is to have an exclusive or all inclusive society. The Americo-Liberian leaders opted for "a settler state that would exercise prerogatives of government over a settler dominated society" The preamble of the 1847 Republican Constitution confirmed the emergent segregated society: "We the people of the Republic of Liberia were originally the inhabitants of the United States of North America. And with that, citizenship was restricted to only those of the settlers stock, while the indigenes, the original inhabitants were exclusive" Worse still, the constitution made no provision regarding the government of the indigenous groups but left all such questions to be determined by general legislation of the government of Liberia. Yes, the natives were required to pay taxes. Other aspects of the contradiction in the declaration of Liberia's independence could be found in Liberia's motto. "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here" as well as the national flag, national anthem and seal, all of which did not reflect the cultural values and realities of Liberia but those of USA,

By the end of the nineteenth century, much of the structure of Liberia's political and social organizations was fixed. As Clower and others, succinctly state: the Americo-Liberians occupied the coastal strip and ruled the hinterland tribes they have learnt to subdue and treat harshly. Special taxes and coercive sanctions were imposed on the tribal people. The original inhabitants were thus set apart and treated as a subordinate and inferior group while discrimination against them hardened into a policy as well as a habit of mind" This was comparable to the white settlers regime in other parts of South Africa who were agitating for self-rule. As a result, the threat of conflict would continue well into the twentieth century.

However, it would be a mistake to assume that the settler group was itself monolithic. Three classes initially existed within this group based largely on colour of skin and how the settlers entered Liberia – lighter pigment (mulattoes) at the top, the darker skin in the middle, and Congoes at the bottom. It was to the lighter skin settlers who also formed the comprador (commercial) class based in Monrovia that declared Liberia's independence and remained the ruling class for at least the first quarter century producing the first four presidents. The darker skin class which was largely agrarian and based outside Monrovia received the declaration of independence with mixed feelings because they feared comprador domination. Later, dark skin class pitted its strength against and wrestled power, with the support of the Congoes,

from the compradors. It is important to note, however, that these struggles for power remained largely “family” affairs which was not allowed to mar the cohesion of the Settler group or change its relationship with the natives.¹⁷

Also with time and as a result of intermarriages, class distinction became blurred. Thus, for the first half century of Liberia’s existence as an independence state, the authorities retained only a passing interest in the more remote hinterland. Apart from putting down rebellions when they arose, the settler society made no attempts to regulate the internal affairs of the tribal areas till the end of the nineteenth century. To a large extent, therefore, two distinct societies existed. Another interesting aspect of Liberia’s independence is that, while it was readily recognized by most of the European powers, it took the USA so many years to do so many years to do so. This could describe as neglect of Liberia by the USA, which was the same altitude the USA exhibited at the beginning of the civil war almost one and a half century later.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Liberian authorities under pressure from British and French Imperial demands to demonstrate evidence of effective occupation and control of the territories they claimed. This revisited the question of what to do with the indigenous population. In response, the Liberian government was compelled to grant citizenship (second-rate) to the residents of the interior and introduced administrative aimed at expanding control over the land beyond the limits of the initial settlements. The comprehensive strategy for facilitating the control of the interior by the settlers’ authorities was the Barclay Plan of 1904. The plan, inter alia, re-organized the administrative structure on the basis of districts, chiefdoms, clans, towns and villages and the paramount chief a political

¹⁷ Apart from the settlement of Monrovia, other independent settlements included Maryland, Bassa Cove and Mississippi-in Africa. Their independence existence also created legal problems.

The plan set the tone for settlers-indigenes relations for the first decades of the twentieth century. It established the machinery for effective domination and exploitation of the indigenous populations; eroded the traditional base of the authority of chieftaincy and it vulnerable to manipulation and granted enormous powers to the government, especially the president. In Sawyer's view "The implements of exploitations galvanized by the Barclay plan made it easy for succeeding administrations to manipulate traditional political systems, appointing chiefs and increasing taxations." The hall-mark of this exploitation as the allegation of the exportation of labour to Fernando po which eventually to the demise of the president King in 1930. The irony of it is that a group, whose ancestors had been freed from slavery and declared war against slavery on their arrival, should indulge in slave trade.

Against this background, it should not be surprising that the rebellions of indigenous citizens against the settlers continued up to the mid-1930s. For instance, in 1915, the settler government had to rely on the US military advisors and weapons to put down an uprising among the kru only for them to rebel again 1930. President Edwin J. Barclay (1930-1944), who assumed office after the exit of president King, took steps to stamp out internal rebellions by launching military campaigns to quell them and also by establishing military garrisons at strategic locations around the country. To stifle dissent, he promulgated stringent sedition laws. Barclay's policies were popular among the settler group who saw his pacification campaigns along the kru Coast and the liberal use of sedition law against the indigenous intelligentsia as appropriate measures designed to restore peace and stability.

But among the indigenous communities, not even Barclay's effort to repair relations with the chiefs and their people could remove the deep scares of the campaign. To them, Barclay was a "stern president who engendered fear and respect but not friendship. It was in 1935 after the indigenous groups had failed in their attempts to re-gain their autonomy through armed resistance that they sought and struggle for positions in Liberian body politics as full blooded citizens. Not much however was achieved in this direction until the accession of Williams V.S. Tubman to the presidency in 1944.

The settlers close up indigenous relations that had existed thus far was such that Tubman himself would later describe it as "colonial" The 27 years of Williams Tubman's reign often creates the impression of a benevolent leader who took his people through an era of economic development, national integration and political stability. However, a critical review of that period in Liberia's history also reveals several paradoxes which not only kept the Americo-

Liberian hegemony intact, but also eventually contributed in no small way to the crisis, apart from the problems which Tubman's reign created for his successor Tolbert some of the techniques of suppression that would be later employed by Doe against his opponents could be traced to Tubman's tenure of office.¹⁸

Tubman, very early in his rule, initiated two policies which virtually became synonymous with his name – the Open Door policy and the Unification Policy. The former placed at the core of Liberia's approach to economic development the exploitation of mineral and agricultural resources through investment. The adoption of this policy was largely dictated by the fact that Tubman's assumption of office coincided with the growing demand for rubber and steel after the Second War. The policy which was based on joint ventures between the government and foreign investors had the positive effect of stimulating economic growth including employment.

The Unification Policy which was proclaimed on 14 February 1944 officially aimed at bringing the gap between the Americo-Liberian and the indigenous people. It involves the extension of the suffrage for the first time to the indigenous, formulation and implementation of the national unification schemes to obliterate the psychological impediments to integration and the restructuring of the subdivisions of the country to foster parity in representation.

Section 1.3: Africa's Crisis of Governance

Some people see in Africa's political and economic failings proof that Africans are incapable of ruling themselves. Such people may also believe that the colonial powers opted out of the continent prematurely and that some more years of tutelage might have made a difference in this liberal age such views are rarely spoken openly by either the enemies or friends of Africa. But it would be naive to think that Africa's experience has not raise questions about the quality of the character and mind of the Africans. The doubt certainly occupies the thoughts of many Africans as they watch their prostrated countries as basket case self-doubt has grown with each decade of apparent failure.

Ordinary Africans, bewildered and disappointed by the outcome of self-rule, find little around them to instil the confidence that as a people they can manage their recovery some aspects

¹⁸ D. Elwood Dunn and S. Byron Tarr, *Liberia: A National Polity in Transition*, (Metuchen, NJ and London: Scarecrow Press, 1998); J Gus Lebanon, *Liberia: The Quest for Democracy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana Press, 1987); and Amos Sawyer, *The Emergence of Autocracy in Liberia: Tragedy and Challenge*.

Africans are now more vulnerable to theories of black inferiority than they were during colonialism. Under colonialism they dream of that with liberation would come the opportunity to prove their worth? The future was uncompromised by the failure of the present.

After more than three decades of mismanagement and/or government, many Africans have lost faith. In the 1990 a state governor in Imo State in Southeastern Nigeria explained to a public meeting the capital of Owerri that his cash-strapped government was unable to solve the severe erosion problem devastating the region. After he had spoken an old man in the audience stood up and said ‘Since you and other black leaders have tried your best but have not been able to improve the lives of us ordinary people, why don’t we ask the whites to come-back. When the white man ruled us things were not this bad. Please ask them to come and save us. ‘The statement, spoken with sincerity, met momentary silence in the audience followed by some laughter and applause.¹⁹

In a way, the whites have been returning. Some would say they never left. Over the past decades western governments, aid agencies and multilateral financial institutions have sent experts to African countries to help them achieve development. The help increasingly involved attempts to direct the political and economic development of the recipient nations.

Section 1.4: Calls for Recolonization

The experts and their prescriptions have failed to shift Africa. The next stage, it seems, is the West to directly take over the management of troubled African nations. Last year writes Norman Stone in ‘The Observer Newspaper proposed a Programme of enlightened re-imperialism to sort Africa out. Conditions in Africa today, he said, were similar to the bloody mess that prevailed before European colonization in the nineteenth century. ‘There a strong case for another version of the nineteenth-century liberal international order to be imposed...empires do not have to be formal or tyrannical --- There are times when they are good, and the post-independence history of Africa indicates that this is one of them.

Why not simply privatize the whole of African countries? Asked Robert Wheelen of the Institute of Economic Affairs. In the Journal of the Institute in September 1996 Wheelen argued that multinational companies should be invited to bid for the right to run African

¹⁹ As a result of the persistent allegation of the League of Nations instituted a commission of inquiry which forced President C.D.B. King and his vice president Allen Yancy out of office and brought Edwin J. Barclay to power

nations until leases of up to 31 years, they would undertake to provide specific services and bring an efficient and discipline in return for pre-set tax revenue.

The tragedy of Africa's situation is that as absurd as these proposals by latter day imperial Sound, there are many Africans who would support some degree of direct governance beyond external agents to straighten out their countries. For instance, some Liberians called for war-battered nation to become a trust territory of the United Nations. International football star George Weah, apparently exasperated by the anarchy and hopeless condition of his homeland, told the New York times in May 1996: 'the United Nations should come in and take over Liberia, not temporarily, but for life. To make Liberians believe in democracy, make them believe in human rights. 'For his outspokenness, two of weah's cousins were raped and his house burnt down by gunmen from one of the warring factions that for six years turned Liberia into a killing field in a senseless war. ²⁰

The cause of civil war in Liberia can be traced to the country's unresolved ethnic and political differences. The country that was founded on the principles of freedom and democracy, but after one and a half centuries of its existence, the country descended into destruction in which both democracy and human rights were compromise. This thesis traces the history of Liberia its establishment to the outbreak of the war in 1989 focusing on some of the causes for contradiction in that long history. In particular, the geo-political profile of the Liberian state is examined with a focus on the period from Liberia's independence from 1847 to 1990. The social political of the warring factions are analysed and the dynamic of the war up to the ECOWAS intervention in August 1990. The thesis concludes with a summary of the causes and effects of the 14-years conflict.

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The initial settlers in Liberia were American Negroes who have been born, about one-third of whom were mulattoes (light skinned). The second waves of settlers was made up principally of former slaves who had emancipated on condition that they migrated to Africa. The third wave the Congoes –the recapture.

CHAPTER TWO: LIBERIAN CONFLICT AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Liberia, for example, the rise of CSOs has been accompanied by a decline in state legitimacy (White, 1999); Clarke (1998a) describes them as a ‘virtual parallel state’ while Wood (1997) refers to Liberia as a ‘franchise state’. For many, the issue is one of accountability and citizenship; states, at least, must account for their actions (in principle), while CSO accountability is increasingly considered to be upwards to the donor rather than downwards to the grassroots (Zaidi, 1999). As Gary points out, ‘would not reformed state institutions be more efficient in providing social welfare services, let alone planning development, than scattered CSO efforts?’ (1996: 163). Commenting on the *Fondo Social de Emergencia* (FSE), the Bolivian government’s social fund established in 1986, Arellano-López and Petras (1994) argue that increased donor support to NGOs has weakened both state and civil society. The

FSE was funded by international and multilateral donors and administered by the Bolivian government, who parceled out social welfare projects to bidding CSOs and other private organizations. According to Arellano-López and Petras (1994), Bolivia’s GROs, the popular movements that have traditionally been more politically active in their attempts to represent the interests of workers, peasants and different ethnic and cultural groups to the state, have been doubly disenfranchised by the neoliberal agenda of the international financial institutions that the Bolivian state has had little choice but to embrace. Not only has the enervated state been weakened through the structural adjustment period, rendering it less able to meet the demands of GROs, but the GROs themselves have increasingly been bypassed by donors in preference for NGOs. At the same time, the CSOs ‘have demonstrated a notable lack of enthusiasm for participating in the political mobilizations of poor people that have occurred during the 1980s’ (1994: 567).

They continue . . . the weakening of state agencies and grassroots organizations, coupled with the strengthening of CSOs, which are heavily dependent on international donor funds, undermines the institutional capacity of Latin American countries to define and defend alternatives to the development agenda articulated by international financial institutions and development agencies. This mutes voices of opposition and fundamentally weakens democratic political processes. It is ironic that CSOs, which generally see themselves and are often seen by others as agents of democracy, have been instrumental in undermining the

institutional bases of political participation in this way (1994: 567). It is, therefore, quite clear that the role of CSOs *vis-à-vis* states in democratic development is a contested one, in which CSOs are interpreted from a range of standpoints as providers of structural support for emerging neoliberal democratic regimes, or as principal actors in the undermining of weak states, and even of weak states *and* societies.

At the same time, the impact of the neoliberal agenda advocated by international financial institutions has encouraged the blurring of the CSO and state sectors. The point is that the role of CSOs in the politics of development is far more complex than that proposed by the liberal democratic view, and concomitantly, by those donors bent on funding CSOs in order to build a strong civil society. In Liberia, The first stirrings of what would be recognizable as civil society can be traced to the activities of one remarkable Liberian, Albert Porte (1906-1986), a schoolteacher whose political career began in the 1920s when he distributed pamphlets that took the Americo-Liberian oligarchy and the True Whig Party government to task for the unconstitutional arrogation of power to the presidency.

By the 1970s, Porte's one-man crusade for accountability had taken aim at President Tolbert's brother, Finance Minister Stephen Allen Tolbert, who was co-founder of the first Liberian-owned multimillion-dollar conglomerate, the Mesurado Group of Companies, with interests that included fishing, frozen food, detergent, animal feed, and commercial agriculture. In response to Finance Minister Tolbert's use of public office to advance his business interests, Porte penned a scathing broadside, *Liberalization or Gobbling Business?*²¹ When Stephen Tolbert sued the strong-willed activist for alleged libel before a court presided over by the plaintiff's father-in-law, Supreme Court Justice James A.A. Pierre, no less—and won a ruinous \$250,000 award, a spontaneous outpouring of public support for the defendant led to the creation of what was arguably the first real Liberian civil society organization, Citizens of Liberia in Defense of Albert Porte (COLIDAP).

While the lawsuit was never finalized Stephen Tolbert died in an airplane accident in 1975 COLIDAP galvanized the reform movement then nascent among Liberia's university teachers and students. A number of political movements were established during this period of ferment, including the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) and the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL). MOJA was founded in 1973 by an economics professor at the University of Liberia, Togba Nah Roberts, an ethnic Kru born Rudolph Nah Roberts (he later changed his

²¹ Cf. Albert Porte, *Liberalization or Gobbling Business?* (1974).

name again to Togba Nah Tipoteh). Armed with a pan-African platform of anti-colonialism, the MOJA advocated the nationalization of Liberia's major businesses, including the large landholdings of the country's ruling classes, and the punishment of corrupt government officials.

In an effort to reach out to other constituencies, the MOJA, which drew its support primarily from the educated middle class, also established, primarily with support from German, Dutch, and Canadian funding agencies, non-profit business and agricultural cooperatives as well as other social services under the umbrella of its SUSUKUU non-profit business affiliate. Among MOJA leaders were two political science professors who would go on to play prominent political roles: Amos Sawyer, the Americo-Liberian dean of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, who later became head of one of the transition governments during the civil war, and Henry Boima Fahnbulleh, Jr., an ethnic Vai whose father had been an ambassador before President Tubman had him charged with treason, who later served as Liberia's foreign minister and ran unsuccessfully for president in 1997.

The second group, the PAL, was organized in 1975 by a group of Liberian scholars and students then living in the United States. Led by Gabriel Baccus Mathews, who had quit his post as Liberian vice-consul in the U.S. to dedicate himself to political activism, the group called for rapid political reform, the adoption of socialism, and an activist pan-African foreign policy. Drawing its support within Liberia primarily from the urban poor, the PAL's stated immediate objective was the establishment of a "Progressive People's Party" (PPP), a group, since renamed the United People's Party, still active in Liberian politics.

Like analogous civil society organizations in other parts of Africa at the time, the MOJA and the PAL, together with allied professional organizations, student groups, and other groups, focused on the goal of political reforms. Things came to a head in 1979, when the government proposed to increase the price of rice, one of the staples of the Liberian diet, from \$22 per hundred-pound bag to \$30, a sum that represented more than one-third of the monthly income of an average family at the time. The price increase sparked a massive protest campaign, culminating in an April 14 demonstration organized by the PAL. Police fired on the demonstrators, killing at least several dozen and wounding hundreds. This incident marked the start of what Liberians came to call the "Year of Ferment," during which the PAL agitated to get its Progressive People's Party legally registered to contest the True Whig Party's monopoly of power. The increasing tensions, exacerbated by Tolbert's clumsy handling of the

situation, hastened the fracturing of the long-dominant Americo-Liberian oligarchy, which collapsed altogether with Doe's coup the following year.

Section 2.1: CSOs in Post-1970s Period in Liberia

If civil society in Monrovia had operated freely and unfettered by government intervention during the civil war of 1989 to 1996 largely due to the favorable political climate under IGNU, the actions of the Taylor regime after the end of the civil war threatened the expansion and consolidation of that democratic space. Having viewed Monrovia as the stronghold of the civilian political opposition, once in power, the Taylor regime adopted a hostile attitude toward civil society groups, most of which were based in Monrovia and had earlier opposed Taylor during the war. The regime made no distinction between civil society organizations and the political opposition, which it regarded as one and the same.

The ensuing adversarial relationship that developed between the government and civil society was further exacerbated by a government perception which views civil society groups – largely funded by external donors – as working at the behest of the donor community. Taylor has persistently accused the donor community of undermining his government by withholding international assistance to his administration. Hence the regime is overly sensitive and intolerant of almost any criticism by civil society groups. Consequently, the Taylor government has sought to repress the activities of civil society through intimidation, arbitrary arrests and unlawful detention of its members.

In 1997, following the mysterious disappearance of market-woman, Nowai Flomo and the failure of the police to solve the case, Etweda Cooper of the Liberia Women Initiative was briefly arrested and detained by the Liberia National Police for suggesting that the victim might have been murdered. James Torh, Executive Director of the Child Rights Advocacy Group, FOCUS, was arrested and charged with sedition for describing the Taylor regime as a government of “boys’ scouts.” Out on bail, James Torh subsequently fled Liberia for fear that he would not get a fair trial. Samuel Kofi Woods and James Verdier, both former heads of the Justice and Peace Commission (JPC), and many other civil society activists have on numerous occasions been threatened with arrest. Amos Sawyer and Commany Wesseh, leaders of the Center for Democratic Empowerment (CEDE) were physically attacked in their offices by Taylor's security forces in November 2000. Both subsequently fled into exile. On other

occasions, the government has also banned peaceful demonstrations to forestall mass action by civil society groups. Taylor has also sought to penetrate and divide the ranks of civil society by giving support to organizations favorable to his own position. Organizations such as the Concerned Citizens of Liberia, Network of Liberian Human Rights Groups, the Association of Liberian Journalists and the Movement,

These organizations have all appeared on the scene intermittently, mobilized by the state in response to specific ‘national calls’ and in support of the government. The greatest danger posed to civil society by the government’s acts of repression and intimidation is to free speech and press. Government actions against the independent press have resulted in the closure of radio stations, newspapers and the arrest and detention of journalists – usually on trumped-up charges. In March 2000, the government closed down the Catholic-owned Radio Veritas and Star Radio stations for broadcasting what it termed, news that was “inimical to national security interest”.

Though Radio Veritas was later reopened, Star Radio remained closed. In August 2001 the Liberian government refused to renew the short wave permit of Radio VERITAS, claiming that broadcast licenses granted by the government were a matter of privilege and not a right. Five months later, Radio Veritas’ license was renewed. Newspapers such as the New Democrat, the Heritage, and the National Chronicle all closed down as a result of government actions. In August 2000, four foreign journalists working on a TV documentary on Liberia were arrested and charged with espionage. The journalists were accused of fabricating the script they were to use as narrative for their TV documentary and the government claimed that the script included libelous material about Charles Taylor. The Liberian government later released the journalists after considerable pressure and appeals from various sections of the international community. In February 2001, four local journalists were arrested and charged with espionage for reporting that the government had spent large sums of money repairing military helicopters while civil servants went unpaid. These journalists were subsequently released after spending six weeks in jail. As a condition for their release, the government forced a written apology out of the journalists. Journalists, Al Jerome Cheidi, Alex Redd, Tom Kamara and Momo Kanneh have all fled the country due to threats made on their lives by state security agents. The extreme form of this clampdown on the media and free speech has sometimes resulted in the arrest and intimidation of persons participating in radio talk-

shows who express views contrary to those held by the government²² those held by the government.²³ These assaults on free speech have been systematic and characterized by the use of intimidation and threats of arrest and detention. Liberia's civil war provided some useful lessons about the power of advocacy and collective action. Civil society was prepared, with the end of the war, to seize the opportunity to expand its democratic space in peacetime. There are now over a dozen human rights organizations, pro-democracy and women's groups, and development-oriented NGOs in Liberia.

With the end of the civil war in 1997, the three main tasks faced by civil society included: the consolidation of nascent democracy, peace building, and national reconciliation. Again, drawing from the lessons of the past, civil society became more critical of government actions. It insisted on the practice of good governance, transparency and accountability, and espoused other broad democratic principles. It also embraced and preached the message of peace and reconciliation through justice and the rule of law. Civil society organizations in Liberia argued that justice founded upon a system of the rule of law was the only true basis of peace and national reconciliation. Internally, civil society's dependence on foreign aid – largely provided by institutions in the US and the Netherlands - has threatened its own existence and survival and in some cases limited its capacity.

Funding provided by external donors allows civil society to impact the political process. When donor support is reduced or withdrawn, civil society groups either disappear or their impact on national politics is greatly diminished. Their ability to reach out to the population becomes considerably limited. However, this is not to suggest that civil society will cease to exist in the absence of external funding for its programs, but to underscore that financial support for its activities is crucial to its success. To reduce civil society's dependence on external funding will require harnessing and encouraging support for civil society's activities through local initiatives.

But this can only be possible when the political environment is free of repression and when people do not feel threatened by the government when they give support to civil society groups. One way out of their dependency syndrome is to allow CSOs to use some of the funding they receive from donors to build an investment capacity. As the investment capacity

²² Miss Precious Andrews, a private Liberian businesswoman was arrested and briefly detained by the police for comments she made on a radio talk-show. See also JPC situation Reports on Liberia, (Monrovia: JPC, November, 2000) for cases of intimidation

²³ Ibid

of CSOs grows over time, they will become less dependent on external funding to support their programs. Civil society organizations in Liberia have also come under criticism for lacking an agenda - a clear plan of action. The charge is that civil society groups are reactive and tend to address issues sporadically as they arise, which does not contribute much to a comprehensive understanding of problems or to a systematic search for solutions. But more importantly, how has civil society impacted on the democratization project and contributed to peace and national reconciliation in Liberia? We now turn our attention to examine the activities of five sectors of civil society in post-1997 Liberia: human rights groups, the media, women's groups, religious organizations, and student activists. Situation after civil wars and commencement of work

Section 2.2: Crack-Down on Civil Society Organizations

The antecedent to organized civil society in Liberia can be traced to a lone crusader for press freedom and other civil liberties Albert Porte. A school teacher, social commentator and pamphleteer, Porte's writings criticized the excessive authority of the presidency as well as government corruption.²⁴ With senior American officials - was unleashed on Liberia to wage war on Doe, but later abandoned by Washington when Taylor's Libyan links became evident. Consequently, some Liberian scholars have argued that the United States has both a "moral and ethical responsibility" to clean up some of the "mess" it had created in Liberia.

The antecedent to organized civil society in Liberia can be traced to a lone crusader for press freedom and other civil liberties Albert Porte. A school- teacher, social commentator and pamphleteer, Porte's writings criticized the excessive authority of the presidency as well as government corruption. During the long years that spanned his career (1920-1986) the writings of Albert Porte came to epitomize the conscience of society. Porte's crusade against government abuses raised the awareness and consciousness of Liberia's citizenry. It also provided inspiration for civil society activism and a rallying point for Liberians to demand accountability of their government .However, it was not until the 1970s, during the presidency of William Tolbert, those social groupings and other bodies appeared in Liberia as modern institutions of civil society. The flurry of civic activities during this period has been attributed largely to the end of the Tubman presidency in 1971 and the reformist political overtures

²⁴ Amos Sawyer, op. cit. p. 289

made by Tubman's successor William Tolbert. These openings provided the political opportunity for Liberia's intelligentsia to mount a challenge to settler domination. Indeed, it has been said that it was the end of the Tubman presidency that gave rise to the "outburst of hitherto repressed social forces."²⁵

Among the many organizations that appeared during this period, there were two that were to have the most enduring impact the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) and the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL). MOJA was a social movement organized in 1973 by a group of students and professors of the University of Liberia, prominent among whom were Amos Sawyer, Togba-Nah Tipoteh and Boima Fahnbulleh. The movement was initially a liberation support group founded to educate the public and mobilize material support for the liberation wars against Portuguese colonial forces and apartheid in South Africa. But, as MOJA's membership expanded, it took on local issues like civil liberties, equality of opportunity, and urban and rural poverty. With the help of supporters, it also created a socio-economic advisory service known as SUSUKUU²⁶ SUSUKUU's main activities were geared toward establishing cooperatives and providing technical support services to farmers. Dutch funding agencies supported its programs.

The Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL) was founded by Liberians in the US in 1975; this was a "pressure group in search of an opportunity to organize a political party."²⁷ In 1978, PAL opened its offices in Monrovia and quickly found support among the unemployed and under-employed of urban Liberia who was its main support base. Together, these two groups supported by other professional organizations, interest groups and student bodies mobilized civil society, agitated for political reforms and made demands on the state. Their persistent pressure hastened the demise of the Americo-Liberian settler oligarchy culminating in the military coup of 1980. As in many parts of Africa experiencing opposition to repressive regimes and demands for greater political reforms, Liberian civil society organizations acquired a distinctively political character from the outset.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 295

²⁶ Ibid. pp. 289 – 290.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 291

Title: Liberia CSOs Sustainability Index Analysis

fig. 1-4



28

Sub-Saharan Africa evaluation of Liberia's CSOs Sustainability Index Analysis for 2013, Diamond Larry "Rethinking CSOs toward Democratic Consolidation"

²⁸ Sub-Saharan Africa evaluates Liberia's CSOs sustainability index analysis for Fy-2013 Diamond Larry, "Rethinking CSOs towards democratic consolidation" journey of democracy, vol. 5, No. 3 (July) (1994) 4-17

Section 2.3: Civil Society Organizations Scores for the Liberian Government

²⁹CSO sustainability: 4.8

In 2013, Liberia's national budget was reduced by 17.7 percent from its 2012 levels to \$553 million. This drastic reduction is attributed to the falling revenue of major public corporations, such as the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company, as well as corruption and under-declaration of assets and profits. The diminished national budget has weakened the education and health fields, as public subsidies to private institutions were cut or even eliminated. As a result, some CSOs that partner with the government had to serve more people with fewer resources and draw on their own funding. Others had to reduce staff or shut down. The political environment was stable, and CSOs continued to be active advocates. CSOs advocated for a moratorium on new concessions for oil exploration by the National Oil Company of Liberia and for iron ore mining by the Lofa County government because these concessions lacked transparency and would not benefit the country. The national legislature invited CSOs to make presentations on these issues, and as a result, one iron ore concession was not awarded.

The overall sustainability of CSOs remained the same in 2013. However, CSOs improved their ability to mobilize communities to undertake local projects. Additionally, many CSOs now have clear visions and strategic operational plans. At the same time, local CSOs lost more staff to international organizations. Local CSOs are still donor dependent. Individual philanthropy is still rare, although communities regularly support CSOs through volunteerism. During the year, the government invited CSOs to present their views on various issues. CSOs provide a diverse range of services, and the government implicitly recognizes the value of CSOs in service provision.

In 2013, 159 new CSOs, including nine international ones, were registered. Thirty domestic CSOs and sixteen international CSOs renewed their accreditation with the NGO Coordination Unit this year. In total, there were 800 registered and active CSOs in Liberia in 2013, a significant reduction from the 1,347 in 2012. This sharp decline can be attributed to the renewed focus of the government and donors on development, rather than emergency assistance, which decreased the number of CSOs accredited during the year.

²⁹ See, Sub-Saharan Africa evaluates Liberia's CSOs sustainability index analysis for Fy/2013, Diamond, Larry, "Rethinking Civil Society: Towards Democratic Consolidation" *Journal of democracy*, vol. 5, No. 3(July 1994) 4-17,

Legal Environment: 4.9

CSOs in Liberia operate under the Association Law (1977, as amended in 2002). CSO registration is not described in any legislation, but is governed by the NGO Policy issued by the Ministry of Planning in 2010. However, the Policy is still not fully implemented and is greatly affected by the frequent changes of ministers who develop their own policies or interpret existing policies differently.

CSO registration involves multiple steps: attainment of Articles of Incorporation and registration at the Liberia Business Registry; and accreditation with the NGO Coordination Unit at the Ministry of Planning, as well as other ministries or agencies with oversight in the CSO's field of activity. Incorporation and registration are officially the purview of various agencies. However, the Liberia Business Registry, also called the National Registry, continues to serve as a one-stop shop for these functions. Processing by the Registry takes forty-eight hours if all the required documentation is provided correctly. Incorporation and registration is done once when an organization is established but accreditation is required annually. CSOs in rural areas are largely unaware of the requirements for registration. While registration is required by law, most active CSOs do not register, mainly due to lack of organizational capacity or inability to travel to Monrovia.

The procedures for applying for accreditation by the Ministry of Planning and the relevant ministries and agencies are easy, but CSOs often experience delays in receiving their accreditation, which must be issued by the Minister of Planning. In 2013, the government merged the Ministry of Planning with the Ministry of Finance. As a result, the Minister of Finance now acts as the Minister of Planning as well.

The Minister's need to simultaneously govern two ministries has caused further delay in CSOs receiving their accreditation. The situation has also resulted in uncertainty about the NGO Coordination Unit's placement within the merged structure. CSOs must frequently exert additional efforts, such as phone calls, visits, and monetary tips, to get their applications processed. CSOs that intend to import goods must go through an additional process to receive duty-free exemptions. This process continues to be cumbersome, especially for petroleum products.

Monitoring by the Ministry of Planning has slackened due to uncertainty in leadership, coupled with the lack of logistics and coordination. Most CSOs do not submit the annual activity reports required by the Ministry, unless pressured to do so by a donor.

Organizational Capacity: 5.1

CSOs have managed to mobilize and enable people to initiate viable projects for their communities. While there is a general tendency in Liberia to rely on the government to resolve local issues, self-help initiatives and community projects are developing due to the efforts of CSOs and community-based organizations (CBOs). For example, in Bong County, Lutheran Development Service's Farmers in School project mobilized farmers to engage in food production, preservation, and education. While CSOs are now working through community-based groups and building local constituencies, they do not have the resources to maintain these constituencies without donor support.

In 2013, more CSOs developed clear missions and strategic plans. Registered CSOs are more advanced in developing strategic plans and following them. On the other hand, CBOs do not typically go through a formal strategic planning process. Even when they do create strategic plans, CBOs have problems sticking to these plans due to unreliable funding.

Registered CSOs have boards of directors with distinct roles specified by articles of incorporation and bylaws. However, in practice, these boards are virtually non-functional. Governance structures in informal CSOs are centered on individuals, as opposed to being institutionalized.

International CSOs tend to maintain permanent staff, while their local counterparts do not. CSOs generally undertake short-term projects, so they cannot afford to hire staff on a permanent basis. Instead, they rely on short-term paid staff or volunteers. In addition, local CSOs compete for the few qualified staff in the sector. In 2013, local CSOs lost more staff to international organizations which offer higher salaries. For example, Christian Health Association of Liberia (CHAL), once a leading health sector CSO, lost most of its program staff to international CSOs and UN agencies. CSOs, especially local organizations, do not have their own resources to modernize their equipment. However, with project funding, they can obtain new computers, modems, printers, and other equipment. For example, in 2013 the Sustainable Livelihood Promoters Program (SLPP) in rural western Liberia received laptops, desktops, printers, and modems. Internet access is available in most parts of Liberia.

Financial Viability: 5.8

The financial viability of CSOs and CBOs did not change significantly in 2013. Local CSOs are still donor dependent. CSOs receive most of their funding from international sources such as USAID, Trust Africa, and the National Endowment for Democracy, UNDP, and the EU. However, most local CSOs lack the capacity to compete directly for international funding. Instead, local CSOs receive donor funding through sub-grants from international CSOs. While international funding to international CSOs increased in 2013, funding levels that reached local CSOs and CBOs remained the same. In many cases, the government competes with CSOs for funding. For example, in 2013 both government and CSOs sought funding from Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA).

Individual philanthropy is still rare, although communities regularly support CSOs through volunteerism. Communities also provide in-kind support in the form of land, space, community mobilization, and storage. Corporations like Arcelor-Mittal and Chevron have provided funding and made commitments to CSOs and local communities on projects in health, water, sanitation, and the environment. CSOs in Liberia are only engaged in the sale of goods and services in rare instances. Few CSOs have assets that they can rent.

It is rare for local CSOs to implement large government contracts. However, in view of the upcoming senate election in October 2014, the National Elections Commission contracted with CSOs like Talking Drum Studio and New Africa Research for Development Agency (NARDA) on an extensive voter education program. The government generally does not provide grants to CSOs. As a result of budget cuts, public subsidies to private institutions were cut or even eliminated in 2013. As a result, some CSOs that partner with the government had to serve more people with fewer resources and draw on their own funding, while others had to reduce staff or shut down. Most CSOs do not have financial management systems in place, making it difficult for them to generate financial reports. The majority of CSOs only prepares reports and undergoes audits when donors require them for continued funding.

Advocacy: 4.0

In 2013, CSOs continued to collaborate with the government at similar levels as in 2012. There is some CSO-government communication on national issues, particularly through the national legislature, although the government sometimes ignores CSOs' views. During the

year, the government invited CSOs to present their views on various issues. For example, CSOs advocated at the national legislature for a moratorium on new concessions for oil exploration by the National Oil Company of Liberia and for iron ore mining by the Lofa County government because these concessions lacked transparency or did not benefit the country. Negotiations on one of the concessions were suspended. However, it is not clear how much these meetings affect decision-making. CSOs have exerted enormous efforts in the formulation and public awareness of the draft Oil Law to provide a proper role for the National Oil Company of Liberia and ensure that its activities reflect the public interest. CSOs formed the Gas and Oil Coalition and have participated in the nationwide consultations launched by 74

legislators over the draft law, which involved discussions at town hall sessions throughout the counties with the involvement of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, members of the national legislature, local officials, and CSOs. During these discussions, the World Bank invited CSOs to a meeting to convince them to accept the draft law. However, CSOs refused because they claimed the national consultations on the draft law were not sufficient. CSOs also continued to work with the government to strengthen laws on rape and violence against women.

The Civil Society Council of Liberia is an umbrella organization that seeks to represent all CSOs in policymaking. In 2013, it held and participated in a number of consultations at the national level on constitutional review; the development of the CSO directory; and Liberia's national development policy, Vision 2030.

Green Advocate, a local organization, continued to advocate for environmental protection, especially in the forestry and oil palm plantation sectors where businesses receive government concessions. The group was instrumental in ensuring that concession agreements with Chevron and others were audited. Green Advocate also conducted an environmental impact assessment, provided legal services to affected communities, and advocated for the rights of community dwellers in the Sime Darby concession areas in Bomi County. Recently, a group of faith-based organizations made a public commitment to advocate for climate change and environmental issues. There were no efforts in the wider CSO sector to advocate for reforms to the legal framework pertaining to CSOs.

Service Provision: 4.4

CSOs provide a diverse range of services. Over the years, CSOs have responded to the shift in need from relief to development, expanding their traditional engagement in health and education to rights issues, such as transitional justice, gender-based rights, and empowerment.

In 2013, the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) in partnership with the Carter Center began a program to strengthen the rule of law in rural Liberia. The Church World Service regional office collaborated with the Ministry of Education to conduct a one-day stakeholder's consultative meeting on introducing school safe zones in Liberia.

Beneficiaries typically do not pay for services, though communities sometimes are involved in project implementation, such as a road project in the central Liberian district of Kokoya (Bong County). The government implicitly recognizes the value of CSOs in the provision of services and considers the service provision needs raised by CSOs and CBOs. Under the Sector Pool Fund and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Ministry of Health contracts out the management of health care delivery in some counties to CSOs. In addition, the Land Commission partners with CSOs on land dispute resolution.

Despite this recognition, CSO services do not benefit from significant financial or other support from the government. Due to the drastic reduction in the national budget in 2013, CSOs implementing projects for the government had to scale down their operations. Furthermore, the government can be dismissive of findings by CSOs that are critical of the government's performance.

Infrastructure: 4.8

The Civil Society Council of Liberia has a resource center in Monrovia that provides information to CSOs, but has limited reach outside the city. The Development Education Network/Liberia (DEN/L), Resource Center of NARDA, and the Liberia Media Center are also major resource centers. The Media Center provides media services and research on policy and development issues. DEN/L is involved in the training and development of CSOs in the country. Other resources centers also still function, but have limited capacities and reach. Resource centers are funded through projects and programs and are donor-driven. NARDA continues to serve its members through its resource center in Monrovia. NARDA's

members include thirty CSOs and about thirty affiliated rural CBOs engaged in health, education, agriculture, social services, and community development.

DEN/L, NARDA, and Liberia Media Center still provide a range of training for CSOs. For example, in 2013 NARDA organized three sets of training for its members on sustainability, monitoring and evaluation, and organizational development. This training was funded by the USAID-funded Civil Society and Media Leadership (CSML) Program, which is implemented by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX). DEN/L facilitated training and mentoring in organizational development and social enterprise development, also under the CSML program. The training provided by both of these organizations was offered mostly to CSOs outside Monrovia.

The West African Civil Society Institute provides training in community mobilization, financial management, and basic management for CSOs through an arrangement with Trust Africa, a grant making organization seeking to professionalize local CSOs in both rural and urban areas. Despite the offerings in the sector, not all CSOs can afford to participate in training. Some CSOs participate in training only when it is covered under programs with international partners. CSOs are slowly developing local expertise in some training areas, although foreign experts are still usually relied upon. A number of umbrella networks for CSOs exist. For example, the National Integrity Forum brings together CSOs, government, media, and the private sector to fight against corruption. There are only a few grant making organizations in Liberia, including Trust Africa, OSIWA, Liberia Grants Solicitation and Management Program, and Liberia Education Trust (LET). Such grant makers primarily re-grant with international funds.

Public Image: 4.7

The media contributes to a positive image of CSOs, and most media institutions have programs that showcase CSO activities. While in previous years CSO initiatives received negative coverage, CSOs' efforts to improve public accountability resulted in more positive media coverage in 2013. For example, more CSOs were invited to provide opinions on issues such as human rights, the environment, governance, and policy. There was considerable media coverage of discussions surrounding the Oil Law, and radio stations throughout the country aired comments from CSOs on its development. CSOs must pay for coverage most of the time, even when they address highly relevant issues of human rights and governance such

as corruption. CSOs try to cultivate relationships with media and promote their organizations and activities through print and electronic media. CSOs are also gradually using social media.

Section 2.4: The 2013 CSO Sustainability Indexes for Sub-Saharan Africa

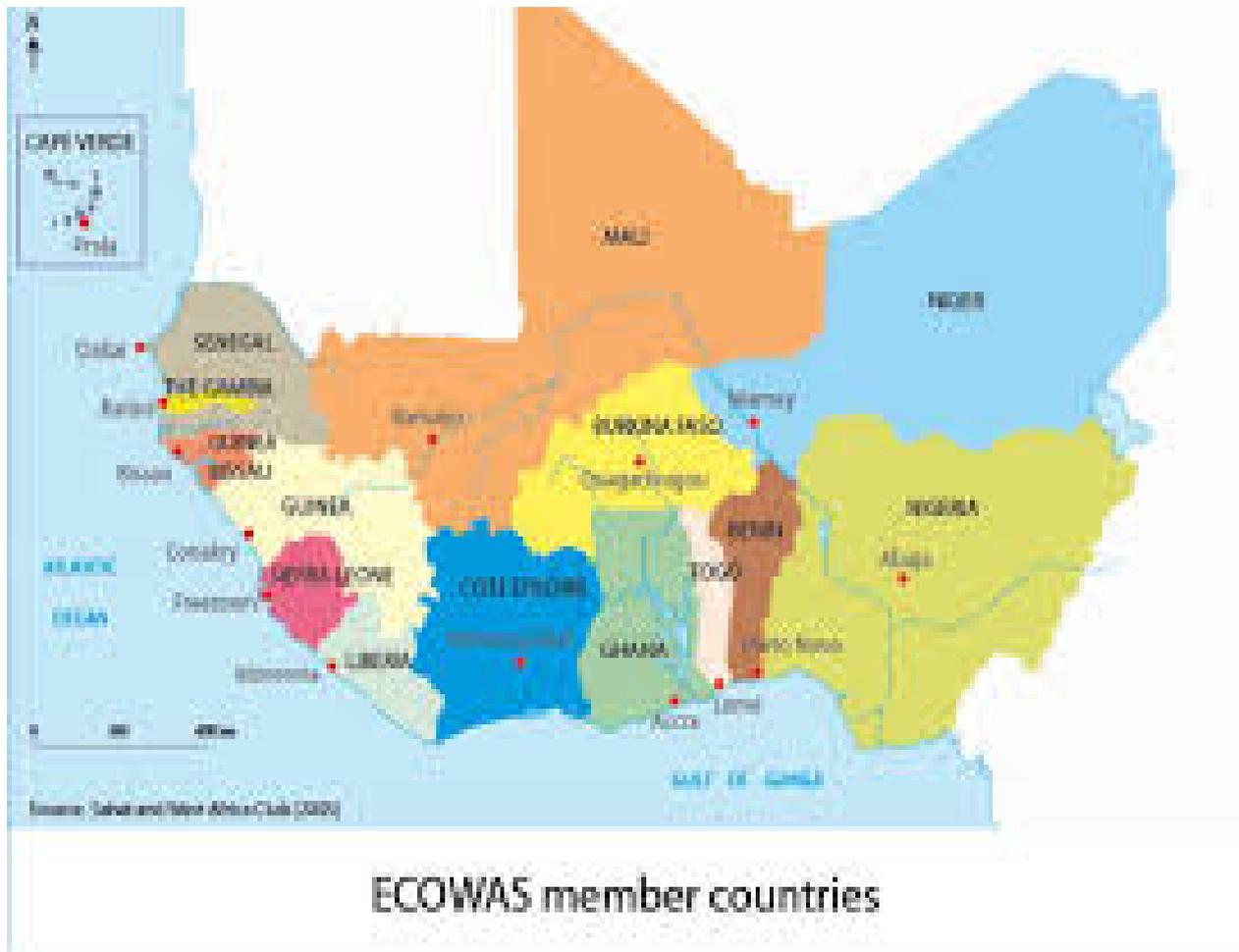
The public has an increasingly positive view of CSOs due to their growing engagement in advocacy and outspokenness on issues of national concern. For example, CSOs like Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative have gained the respect of communities over time. At the local level, community residents appreciate the work of some CSOs. However, the public thinks most CBOs are³⁰

Sub-Saharan Africa which is mostly represented by West African Countries shows countries in the ECOWAS Region which have stimulating civil society organizations that are indeed making fervent changes in the region.

³⁰ And, Gabriel A., and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, Preston: Preston University press, 2005. Almond, Gabriel A. and Sidney Verba ed., *the civic Culture Revisited*, Boston: Little Brown and Company.

Title: ECOWAS Countries that are in Active Civil Society Organizations Engagement

Fig1-5



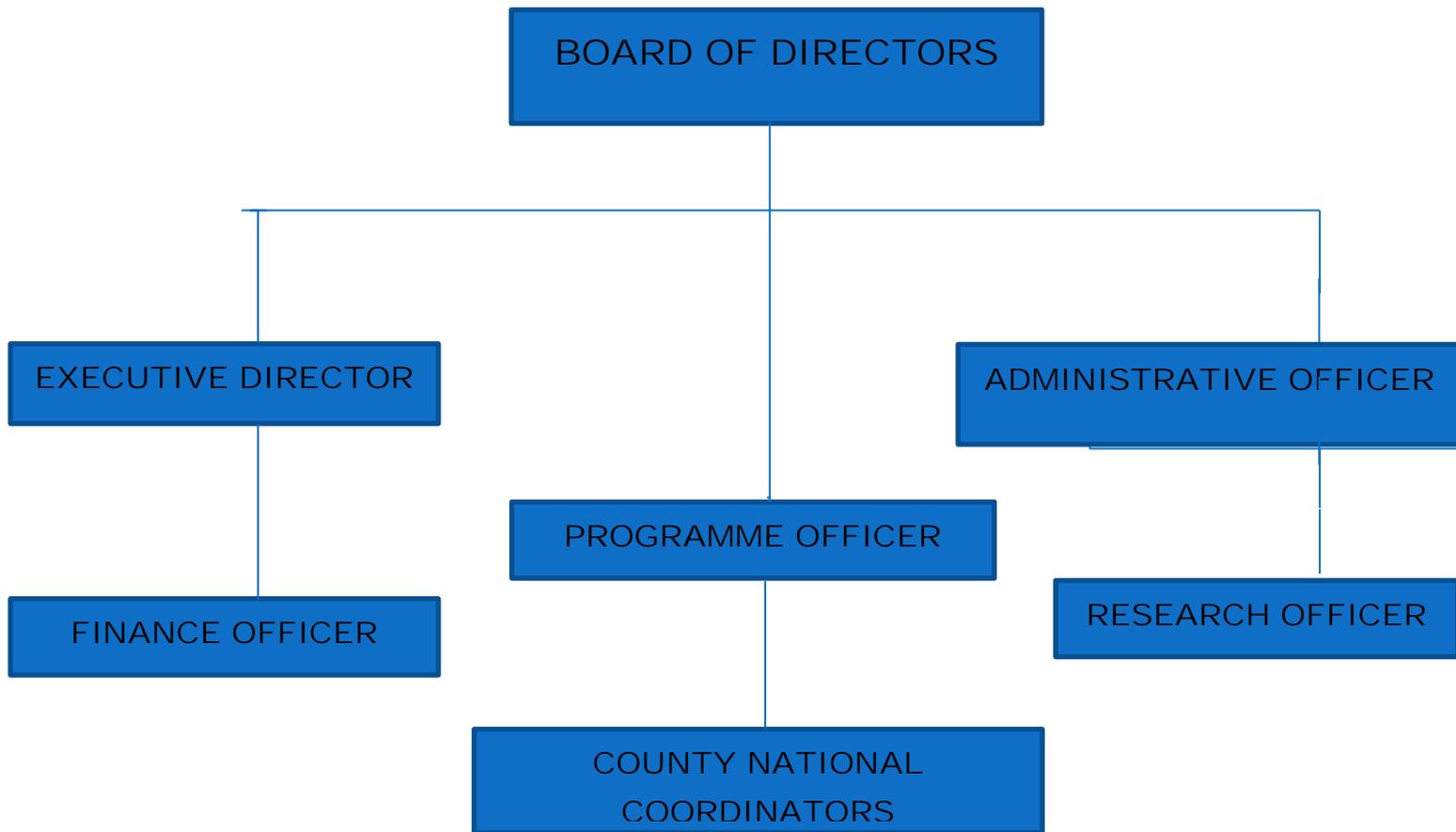
31

Source: ECOEAS Civil Society Showing Countries of Active engagement in the Processes of Democratic Governance.

³¹ http://www.ecowas.CSoss.org/php_cdainc.com/ 2015: ECOWAS Civil Society showing countries of active engagement in the processes of democratic governance in their various countries in West Africa.

Title: The Managerial Structure of Foundation for Democracy in Liberia (FDL)

Fig. 1-6



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Profound Methodological and Practical Challenges 2004@London Printing Press House. FDL hierarchical chart confronting php 25.

³² Http://: Foundation for Democracy in Liberia (FDL) Organization hierarchical chart. Confronting war php 25 most of the evaluations of literature pertains to level © and the profound methodological and practical challenges 2004@London printing press house.

Section 2.5: A Case Study of the Foundation for Democracy in Liberia

The Foundation for Democracy in Liberia (FDL) was founded on May 3, 2003 as a result of the gross injustice and social decadence that was gradually penetrating the socio-economic and political spheres of our civil liberties in Liberia, which if have not been intervened into, would have led to the total break-down of our generational fabrics of the country. Burgeoning but effective civil societies organizations (CSOs) are catalyst for change, healthy for enhancing good governance and indeed critical for a post-conflict country like Liberia. FDL performs a plethora of role in health, justice, education, politics and other good governance issues that significantly, comprehensively, and substantially contributed to societal stability and development. However, FDL is confronted with challenges that impedes the effectiveness and keep it rooted in mundane initiative that often lead to it premature demise. The quantitative and qualitative growth of FDL in the 10 years has been stupendous, but this growth has been punctuated by different interests and actors that have used civil society organizations as a platform to project varied and diametrically polarized interests. Nevertheless, whatever the basic for FDL existence, it is indeed clear and that it has contributed substantially to the democratization of Liberia and the fight human and civil rights.

Liberia`s nascent democracy places CSOs in the limelight, obligating them to help fight and indeed maintain a pluralistic system that provides ample space for impacting nation growth, development and democratic governance. Historically, the space has been populated by unpatriotic Liberians who have weakened the public systems and controls for personal pecuniary benefits. To effectively engage a system of conflicting values, FDL has to develop the competence tenacity and governance structures that would allow them to be a functional player in creating a wholesome functional state. This thesis emerges out of the compelling aspiration for a better governance system for CSOs that would make them productive, progressive and responsive to their beneficiaries and benefactors. This thesis will look at the historical perspective of CSOs in Liberia, their legal and institutional framework and the issues and challenges they encountered as part of their routines. A final opinion should allow for the proffering of ideas that would help CSOs mitigate some of the many challenges the face... how does the existing environment limits FDL`s operating space? Subsequent analysis will attempt to examine the challenges FDL faces while interacting with varied influences and environmental factors.

It is difficult to enumerate and define CSOs' role in Liberia. But the Foundation for Democracy in Liberia (FDL) was borne out of the One Hundred and sixty seven years of existence, but it is indeed comprehensively that a good governance structure that sanctioned political and economic marginalization of the majority of its people fertilizes the environment for a societal change and/ or awakening that lead to advocacy for better governance and then political struggle that culminated into years of violence conflict. Freedom of movement and assemblage enshrined in the constitution crystallized the establishment of various movements. But early civil movements that advocated change that had a veneer of political leanings that blurred their objectivity and made them instrument of power –seeking leaders. Individual advocate like Albert Porte captured the soul of the nation in their writings, but sustained impact on governance required consolidated efforts from group perceived by government and other stakeholders as neutral, reform-focused and well organized.³³

Many CSOs that advocated change in the period between 1960 and 1990 were politically aligned and not trusted by government as credible partner for change. Civil society movements such as the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA), SUSUKU, and Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL) exploited the space and commingle the people thirst for change with a spice of political adventurism and civil action. With all of these considered, FDL in Liberia served as an agent of change along with many other civil society groups with respect to Policy Reform Advocacy and good governance are a product of the nineties – a period when civil and human rights were abrogated by internecine conflict that allowed dictatorship and mayhem to flex its muscle and indeed flourish. During this period, FDL collaborated with partner CSOs that grew in number and stature to engage issues directly aligned with the public interest. Issues that claimed center-stage and remained relevant today transcend political advocacy to more research and policy issues in areas related to health, education, human rights and civil liberty, corruption, environment, et cetera. As the CSOs dispensation is more issue-based and clearer, it is now possible to pinpoint political activists from actual CSOs Practitioners. This dichotomy requires that CSOs practitioners lead by example and develop the intellectual strength to withstand the shafting patterns in democratic governance.

³³ Department of Sociology, University of University, funding for recent field work has been granted by the DCR in 2014.

**PART TWO: CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE
DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS IN LIBERIA**

CHAPTER THREE: CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN LIBERIA

A number of political scientists and some journalists writing for a larger audience have thus become interested in the impact of culture on political life, including in a particular organized armed conflict. On the other hand, anthropologists are in general wary of providing information on cultural and social phenomena and coercive instead of their science as semiotics, preoccupied with questions of meaning and sense-making. Among those few who actually address the issues of causal mechanisms in connection with social violence, the untenable idea that the epic-phenomena of culture can be seen as causal is replaced by notions of rational choice among individual actors (pursuing maximal interests, sometimes through the deliberate ‘use’ of culture) and the role of social institutions, including intergenerational tensions and class conflict. My inherent perception sympathizes with the view of those who discard culturalist explanations of human behavior as long as the critical issues of culture’s motivational force and implication for human behavior remains unaddressed in terms of underlying cognitive and psychological processes.

However, the argument of this thesis is based on the idea that the refusal to consider the impact of ‘culture’ on collective violence and war contains the risk of throwing out the baby with the bathing water. Causes of war are very blurred. War is profitable to many actors who may have different interests. Take for instance, the constantly reoccurring rebel insurgency in eastern DR Congo. To the people involved and many commentators alike it is not always clear what is at stake, Is it a competition for resources and gains, ethnic tensions, or a proxy war waged by one or more neighbors of the DR Congo? Not only are causes of war blurred. It is also difficult to disentangle the causes and effect of war. Thus, the ethnic enmity that many commentators depict as the reason of armed confrontation may just as well be seen as a product of the conflict.

As shown by Kalyvas, it is also worth recalling that actions and motivation of combatants in civil war rarely resonate unambiguously with a general ideological program orchestrated by supra-local elites.³⁴

Top-down run group goals that make use of social violence always intersect with local feuds, personal revenge and sheer opportunism. The apparent confusion of causes and consequences of the conflict, especially in connection to the so-called 'new war' had not prevented contemporary analysts of war to craft a number of broad brush explanations of the proliferation and nature of violent conflict at the end of the Cold War and beyond into the twenty-first century. Such general explanations of the new, small wars privilege either one or a combination of factors that relates to resource scarcity and population pressure, clash of cultures, and global political economy. General insight into the nature of new wars is, however, often gain at the expense of adequate attention for their social and cultural context.

I hereby, apply the term context both in the sociological sense as reference to the actors planning and carrying out of war and in the sense of cultural ideas and practices associated with violence, identity construction and notions of belonging. It is characteristic of anthropology's contribution to an understanding of collective conflict and civil war in an era of globalization that it privileges a bottom-up approach; that is, a 'grounded' account of the background and scale of conflict which differs from most 'broad brush' explanations and large-scale comparative analysis. This contextual alternative to mono-causal explanations of the war allows for a better grasp of the social dimension of war, and of the agency of the war-affected in re-inventing peace.

Much attention has been paid to the cultural, symbolic aspects of violence in order to understand how both victims and perpetrators make sense of, cope with and justify otherwise incomprehensible acts. As mentioned, this kind of research is interpretive rather than explanatory in orientation. It may be rightly be argued that a focus on the micro-level of wars entails the risk of blurring causes and effects and of losing sight of the 'real issues' and the broader picture.

Yet it is at the time a matter of debate whether sweeping explanations of nature of small, new wars actually risk misconstruing the complexity of the subject under study. As suggested by a number of anthropologist and political scientists of war and political violence it is rather a

³⁴ Department of Anthropology, Anthropology and Linguistics, Aarhus University. Funding for recent field works mentioned in this article has been granted by the Danish Council for Development research (FFU). I'm grateful to the anonymous reviewers and the participants, "The roots causes Civil war and conflicts ---"Conference at Alison for their constructive comments on an earlier version of this article.

question of striking a balance between, on the one hand, macro-level politics and political economy, including the effect of globalization, and, on the other, micro-level dynamics that influence the course of violence conflict at a local level. It appears futile also to discuss causes of war without a clear notion of the scaling of war. Thus, so-called new, small wars are closely linked up with international political economy.

Section 3.0: A Brief Description and/ or History of the Foundation for Democracy in Liberia (FDL)

The Foundation for Democracy in Liberia (FDL) is a pro-democracy and human rights organization that is run by an executive director as the head, but who is accountable to the Board of directors and automatically serve as the secretary of the Board of directors by virtue of his position and by dectics of constitutional provision of FDL. Decision of the Board of Directors is taken by 2/3 majority of the member of the board.

The executive director of the Foundation for Democracy in Liberia is assisted by four senior staff members such as Administrative Officer, Finance officer, Program Officer and County Coordinator who help to complement the rudimental task of the day-to-day activities of the executive of FDL.

This thesis is meant to be discussed in regards to the role FDL played with CSOs activities on civil liberties, human rights and democratic governance issues. It is very much indeed important to have a working definition of what is civil society, we reference the definition proffered by the Center for Civil Society at the London School of Economics which states, “civil society commonly embraces a diversity of space, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities, developmental non-governmental organizations, community groups, women`s organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions advocacy groups, etc.

Section 3.1: Mission statement

The mission statement of the Foundation for Democracy in Liberia is to enhance the promotion and protection of democracy and human rights of every citizen through well-coordinated responses as a whole.

GOAL

The goal of the Foundation for Democracy in Liberia (FDL) is to see a democratized and human rights oriented Liberia that will lead a violence-free society in Africa, and the world as a whole.

Section 3.2: Underlying Causes:

The Business War

- a) The protracted nature of Liberia's war is explained in large part by economics, or perhaps better stated: greed. Various war-lords emerged during the course of the war, all scrambling for opportunities to control and profit from Liberia rich natural resources. Of all the warlords, Taylor proved most adept at cultivating sources of foreign exchange, allowing him to arm his soldiers and conquer areas with easily exploitable resources. He encouraged business as usual in territories that he controlled iron ore, diamond, and timber from zone in return for taxes, which were paid to him personally.

- b) In addition, during the war rebel leaders promised new recruits the opportunity for personal enrichment through looting. The United Nations estimated that there were 60,000 combatants in the civil war of whom few had received any formal military training and none of whom were paid. Guns provided rebel soldiers with a livelihood during the war, giving them a chance to seize resources they could not get legitimacy in a system so long corrupted by patronage and clientelism. As the war progress, vengeance, hatred, self-defense, and survival undoubtedly motivated rebel fighters, but economic motivation were a chief catalyst to the fighting.

Since the civil war, Charles Taylor has been implicated for using his resources to support the brutal rebels of the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone.³⁵

For this reason, the United Nations imposed sanctions on Liberia in May 2001 to block Liberian diamond sales, to restrict international travel by top Liberian officials, and to sustain the arms embargo (UN Security Council Resolution 1343). A UN investigation found, however, that Liberian officials were effectively circumventing the arms embargo, which led to the UN to extend sanctions for another year until May 2003. In addition, groups such as Global Witness have raised concerns that the Liberian government is utilizing profits from its timber industry, to finance regional conflict.

Regional Involvement

- c) In addition, some of the ethnic Krahn and Mandingoes in Doe's armed forces formed alliances with the government of Sierra Leone, allowing them to escape into Sierra Leone to flee Taylor's forces and to regroup as the United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO) before entering the fray once again. Meanwhile, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) formed the Economic Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), supplying a peacekeeping force comprised primarily of Nigerian and Ghanaian soldiers who remained in Monrovia from 1990 to the end of the war. ECOWAS was headed by Nigerian's president Abrahim Badimassi Babangida, a friend and ally of president Doe, which contributed to Taylor's unwillingness to recognize the interim government that ECOWAS set up in Monrovia in the early 1990s. As the conflict became more protracted, reports are that ECOMOG soldiers who were unpaid and understaff entered into deals with warring factions, thus also benefiting from the 'business of war'.

More recently, Taylor has accused the government of Sierra Leone and Guinea of supporting LURD rebels. In an effort to deal with the situation, the Liberian government expelled the ambassadors and diplomats from those two countries and closed its borders with them for a

³⁵ Global Witness http://www.globalwitness.org/press_releases/display2.php?id=147 UN, 'Security Council Resolutions Concerning the situation in Liberia pursuant to resolution 1343 (2003)/<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/Liberia2/Liberia2/ResEng.htm>

time. LURD is reportedly composed of former fighters from the 1986-96 civil war, many of whom became refugees in Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea after the war. Since 1990, LURD has engaged in rebel activity, primarily in Liberia's northern Lofa county. However, the violence has slowly made its way closer to Monrovia. In February 2002, the government of Liberia declared a state of emergency, blaming its failure to defeat the rebels on the UN arms embargo placed on the country. Rather than responding with support for the Liberian government, the international community has displayed a general distrust of and lack of sympathy toward³⁶ Charles Taylor. For example, a number of conspiracy theories have been postulated regarding the events leading to the February 2002 state of emergency.

Many diplomats, aid workers, and Liberian journalists believed that the Taylor government may have engineered or manipulated the conflict in northern Liberia in order to create another humanitarian crisis that would win international sympathy and lead to a re-evaluation of the arms embargo placed on Liberia.

Continuing Conflict

- d) However, suspicion of duplicity lacks solid evidence and LURD has continued to attack government forces close to the capital, suggesting that Taylor has limited control over the situation. LURD does not appear to have the military strength to take the capital, but tensions remain high and any attack on Monrovia would likely cause widespread panic and trigger more internal displacement. The general consensus of most reports from Liberia is that the country is on the brink of returning to war and violence that would jeopardize the fragile peace in Sierra Leone and further destabilize the region. Human rights groups and aid agencies are calling for the international community to engage with the Liberian problem rather than ignore it and hope it will go away. There is a need to prioritize stricter monitoring of violence of the arms embargo, to extend the arms embargo to the LURD rebel forces, to broker a cease-fire agreement with LURD, and to limit Charles Taylor's ongoing negative influence in the region.

³⁶ Integrated Regional Information Network for West Africa (IRIN-WA) <http://www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp?SelectRegion=West> Africa. Global IDP Database of the Norwegian Refugee Council (2002) Liberia Information menu <http://db.idpproject.org/Site/idpSurvey.NSF/Countries/Liberia> Crisis web <http://www.crisisweb.org/projects/showreport.cfm?reportid=741> LURD website <http://>

The extent of indiscriminate violence and civil unrest during the civil war such that virtually all of the country's approximately 3 million people had to flee their homes at one time or another, sometimes for a few weeks and in many cases for several years. However, official figures estimated that 1.2 million were internally displaced and 700,000 were refugees at the ending of the war. Now, with continuing conflict and resulting displacement in Liberia, efforts to categorize and count Liberia's displaced populations are complicated by the fact that old case-load and new case-load refugees cohabitate in exile. In addition, within Liberia's borders, returnees mingle with IDPs, some of whom have been displaced for years and others who have recently left their homes in search of safety. Sierra Leoneans and Ivorians refugees are also added to the mix of displaced people within Liberia's borders. Taylor made alliances with Libya, Burkina Faso, and Cote d'Ivoire that made it possible for him to train and arm his forces. Cote d'Ivoire was also complicit in permitting him to launch 1989 attack from their borders.³⁷

Section 3.3: Immediate Causes

Conflict Induce Displacement

- e) The first refugees to flee Liberia escaped on evacuation flights and, ship was sent to Liberia by Sierra Leone and Ghana to transport their nationals. However, as the situation worsened, thousands of Liberians fled by land and sea to safety using whatever resources they had to pay their passage or to bribe their way to safety. Many endured grueling journeys on foot through the bush or by ship.

- f) The most publicized of these journeys was the voyage of some 2,250 Liberian refugees on the BULK-Challenge ship in May 1996. Denied admission to Cote d'Ivoire, the ship was forced to continue its way to Ghana where it was also not welcome until promises of European Union and the United Nations assistance were made, which finally led the Ghanaian government to allow refugees to disembark. This incident challenged the notion of African hospitality, highlighting the realities of growing host-fatigue and concerns of the national security threat that could be posed if Liberian rebels were included among the new arrivals (USCR, 'Liberia refugees Crises').

³⁷ Integrated regional Information Network for West Africa (IRIN-WA) <http://www.irinnews.org/frontpages.asp?Selectregion=west> = west Africa. Global IDP database of the Norwegian Refugee Council (2002) Liberia information. <http://www.Db.Idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/countries/Liberia>. <http://www.crisis.org/web/projects/showreport.cfm?reportid=741>

- g) Liberians refugees were granted refugees status en masse or a prima facie basis in surrounding West Africa states, all signatories of the UN Convention and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention applies to the Liberia case, offering protection for people in cases of ‘external aggression’ occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disrupting the public order. At the beginning of the crisis, when the refugees first arrived in host countries they were typically assisted by the local populations. However, host governments quickly invited UNHCR assistance but were opposed to camp, preferring refugees to settle freely among the local population in a restricted region in the western part of the country known as **Zone d’Accueil des Refugees (ZAR)**.³⁸

Refugees

- h) In addition, in each of the host countries, an unrecorded number of refugees settled outside of the camps and restricted areas, fending for them rather than relying on UNHCR assistance.
- i) At the conclusion of the civil war, UNHCR began a repatriation program to assist Liberians wishing to return home. From 1997 to 1999, about 350,000 to 400,000 Liberian refugees repatriated with at least 40,000 more returnees joining them during 2000. However, by 2000 reports of renewed violence, particularly in Lofa County, discouraged more refugees from returning home, and only 2000 refugees were repatriated during the 2001 by UNHCR. Recognizing that conditions were worsening in Liberia, the UNHCR suspended its formal repatriation program and ceased most reintegration projections in the late 2000 and 2001.
- j) The UN estimated that by 1997, after seven years of civil war in Liberia, there were 750,000 person displaced within the country. By the end of 1999, an estimated 90 per cent of Liberia`s IDPs had return home (UNHCR). UNDP funded an IDP reintegration Programme, and the agency assisted over 130,000 IDPs to return to their homes from 1997 to early 2000. Many other IDPs returned home on their own, unassisted. However, conflict between pro-and anti-government forces in Lofa County from 2000 to the present has resulted in large numbers of newly displaced Liberians.

³⁸ UNHCR, Country Report <http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/Africa/liberia.htm> USCR ‘Liberia’s Refugee Crisis: Africa’ Reconciling its traditions of hospitality’ http://www.refugees.org/world/articles/liberia_rr967.htm. Global IDPs data base: liberia information Menu http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/wCountries/Liberia_IOM_2002, ‘Liberia IOM assesses the IDPs Situation.

k) Though the numbers of newly internally displaced people in Liberia is hard to pin down August 2002 estimated ranged of between 90,000 and 200,000 by October 2000, WFP reported that they were assisting 183,900 IDPs living in fourteen camps for IDPs primarily located in the sub-burbs of Monrovia, Totota, Bong County and CARI (Global IDPs Data Base). Several factors have converged to make assistance for Liberia IDPs less than adequate. First, aid agencies have repeatedly been unable to access people displaced inside conflict zones. By the end of 2000, there was no Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) or UN agency working in Lofa County. Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF) has been assisting Kolahun Hospital in Upper Lofa, pulled out because of fighting in the areas. In addition, rebel activity on the road to Monrovia has made it impossible to reach certain areas (ICRC).

Vulnerable Population

l) Secondly, concerns have been raised that international opposition against Liberia's government has translated into inadequate provision of assistance for Liberia's IDPs. Political donors are very wary of Taylor's regime and reluctant to support it, which unfortunately has meant that food, medicines, clean drinking water, and adequate shelter are typically in short supply. Since 1989, development assistance to Liberia declined by approximately \$100 million a year to less than \$30 million in 2001. As a result, Medicines Sans Frontiers Belgium had to reduce support to Monrovia main hospital, Save the Children UK was unable to fund nine out of sixteen health clinics and UNICEF's funding dropped from \$9.3 million in 1998 to \$3.7 million 2000 (OCHA New 2001).

m) Third, until February 2002, the lack of humanitarian Co-coordinator weakened the effectiveness of aid agency response to IDPs needs. Efforts are currently being made to set better institutional management and co-ordination mechanism, building on lessons learned in Sierra Leone. The OCHA IDP unit that went to Liberia in April 2002 has facilitated this process by assessing protection issues and making recommendations for improving assistance. Ironically, not only has Liberia produced large number of refugees, but it has simultaneously hosted large number of refugees. Ten of thousands of refugees fled from Sierra Leone to Liberia during 1990s to escape civil war, but found Liberia to be worse options than their own war-ravaged country,

causing thousands of them to repatriate. About 300,000 Sierra Leonean refugees live in Lofa County; many of them on their own; about 800,000 are being hosted in camps near the Sierra Leonean-Liberian border, which have repeatedly seen inaccessible to aid workers due to outbreaks of violence in the area.³⁹ Four refugees' camps closer to Monrovia –Banjor, Samukai, VOA-1, and Zinnah –host another 30,000 Sierra Leoneans who received assistance from the UN and other aid agencies. Recent Liberia IDPs are now being assisted in these camps along with Sierra Leoneans.

Child Soldiers

- n) Women in Liberia and those in exile have also endured much injustice. The frequency of rape by both rebels and government forces in the civil war and in the current conflict suggest that it has been used as a tool of war to intimidate the civilian population. In some cases, girls have identified high-ranking government officials as rapists (Amnesty International 2001). Little has been done to bring perpetrators to justice, giving license to others to continue the practice unchecked. In addition, desperate economic conditions in Liberia and in refugee camps have led many women to engage in concubinage. While prostitution does go on, the more common scenario is for women, particularly those who are heads of households or young girls who lack adequate familial support, to enter into a relationship with a man providing them with sexual favors' in exchange for his economic support for herself and her children.

- o) In refugee camps in West Africa, it was discovered that aid workers exchanged food or rations for sex with children, causing an international disaster or scandal. An unspecified number of interviewees complained that they or their children had to have sex in order to have food and favours. Those implicated included over 40 aid agencies, including the UNHCR itself, and sixty-seven individuals, mostly local staff named by the children. UNHCR responded with various measures to curtail this behavior, including greater security measures in the camps, hiring an increased number of female staff, and improving the system for hearing refugees' complaints.⁴⁰

³⁹ US committee for refugees, 2002 Country Report. <http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/africa/liberia.htm>. Coalition to stop the use of child soldier <http://www.child-soldier.org/cs/childsoldier.nsf/> Human Right Watch, 'Easy Prey' Child soldiers in Liberia

⁴⁰ BBC News, 'Child Refugees sex Scandal' <http://new.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/Africa/1842512.stm> allAfrica.com, 'UNCHR, partner launch 16 days of activities against gender Base based violence violence <http://allafrica.com/story/200211260143.html>

NGOs and UNHCR workers in IDP camps have made efforts to address the issues of domestic violence, which is not new in Liberia is perhaps exacerbated by the difficult conditions of living in an economically and politically unstable environment. In November 2002, a sixteen day UNHCR –sponsored Programme brought together more than 200 refugees, both men and women, as well as other war-affected persons from Samukai town, Zinnah Town, Banjor and VOA-1 refugee camps to address ways of improving domestic situations for women in a way that is culturally relevant. Involved in a very small proportion of the population thus limiting the impact of it.

**CHAPTER FOUR: MECHANISMS OF CSOs
IN PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

Over the past fifteen years, groups of citizens have taken advantage of increased of personal and political freedoms and come together to give voices to their concerns and advocate for greater inclusion in national and international affairs. At the national level of CSOs and citizens, have become increasingly active in local issues and national politics, demanding accountability, promoting transparency and having access to information, as well as proving basic services to the population. CSOs have also become active at the international level and inter-states affairs, with Liberia and the high profile of the summit being venues of choices for participation in regional policy and decision-making processes. On-going engagement has led to recognition of civil society`s contribution, accompanied by incremental increases in access and greater CSOs inclusion in Liberia`s particular at ECOWAS level.⁴¹

Despite progress, the development and consolidation of civil society in countries across the African continent has been uneven. In some countries civil society has been established as a strong root and one that has productive working relationship with governments, while in other countries this has not been the case and CSOs remain excluded by suspicious and uncooperative governments. However, now more than ever there is recognition that the existence of an active, diverse and inclusive civil society is an integral component and important indicator of a mature democratic society. It is acknowledged that CSOs contribute to democratic consolidation by strengthening governance mechanisms and promoting open and transparent decision-making processes. Regionally, CSOs play a key role in monitoring elections, advocacy and providing input on the content, implementation and monitoring of important agreements, including the Democratic African Charter, Summit Declaration and the Continental Convention against Corruption.

⁴¹ The Inter-American democratic Charter can be accessed at:
http://www.oas.org/main/main.asp?sLag=E&sLink=http://www.oas.org/OASpageeng/documents/democratic_charter.htm Civil society has been defined in many ways. For the sessions civil society was defined broadly to include non-governmental and non-for profit organizations, as well as the media, Labour Unions, students and academics.

Section 4.0: THE NEEDS FOR KEY ALLIANCES: STRENGTHENING KEY PARTNERSHIPS

While CSOs do have useful skills and flexibility of action, it was clear in the discussion that CSOs cannot generate pluralism, consensus, constructive policy reform and transparency on their own. This thesis has concluded that to reach these goals, CSOs must build collaborative relationships with key actors, including political parties, governments, multilateral organizations and international donors, so that all can work together towards common solutions. For such partnerships to develop players must agree to reduce the mutual mistrust that has characterized relationships and prevented previous collaboration. It is suggested that past approaches on both sides must be re-evaluated and that the rapport between CSOs and formal institutions must shift from a confrontational to a constructive stance. As for the sole intent of this thesis, CSOs must present a transparent agenda and be willing to cooperate with institutions with other CSOs, balancing their criticism with concrete alternatives proposals where ever possible. Institution, particularly political parties and governments, must also be willing to cooperate, share information and indeed recognize the potential of civil society`s contribution to effective governance.

Section 4.1: Working Collaborately – Networks and Inclusivity

As a first step, CSOs must respect each other`s views and work together where possible. Civil society is by no means homogenous. CSOs often have disparate agendas and work at different levels. From the grassroots to the engagement with regional institutions, the multitude of issues and means to address them can lead to a discord and competition between organizations. In the spirit of pluralism and respect, there must be an acknowledgement that all organizations, in their own way, can make a positive contribution. It is with a diverse civil society that we are able to hold governments accountable. In cases where organizations have similar goals and expertise, participants emphasized the need for increased coordination and collaboration through networks. Groups can share information, best practices and build coalitions to promote share agendas at the national levels and regional levels. Networks allow for an efficient division of labour, allowing organizations to use their expertise to do what they do best, while benefiting from the knowledge and activities of others. However, participants recognized that networks are not always a necessity, and must be formed on the

basis of a clear need and value added. In cases where they are appropriate, well-funded and well-staffed secretariat, sufficient infrastructure and technology are essential to efficiently maintain networks and provide the services required by its members

Section 4.2: Political Parties

In recent years, and with few exceptions, political parties have been largely discredited in the eyes of citizens across the region, often in reaction to the perception that parties are ineffective, self-interested and unable to promote social and economic development. Further, while there are exceptions, collaboration between CSOs and political parties is rare and often confrontational. Political often reject civil society as non-representative, while civil society wages criticisms of corruption and incompetence. There is also sometimes rivalry between the two, as CSOs are charged with trying to compete with or replace parties.

However, political parties are indispensable to democracy as formal mechanism of political representation and participation. Participants reaffirmed the integral role of parties despite their current state, and one participant pointed out that constant criticism and rejection of parties will not provoke positive change or reform, but conversely further reduce citizens' faith in the democratic process. Rather, they urged civil society to engage with parties wherever possible, agreeing that CSOs can make a positive contribution to internal party discussion on specific ideas and the formation of coherent platforms and programmatic commitments.

Participants suggested that creating spaces for dialogue and exchange between CSOs and parties would be a first step towards a more productive relationship, and the diversity of ideas and proposals will in time support a more fruitful national policy dialogues. In the spirit of strengthening competent parties and fostering political institutions CSOs must resist the urge to reject all politicians as corrupt and incompetent, but should rather provide constructive feedback, knowledge and support party advancement and promising candidates. Participants underscored that in the process civil society must be careful not to – be coopted by parties, but nevertheless, believed that strengthening the collaboration between non-elected and elected sectors would have the positive effect of increasing the credibility of both sides, essentials for the long-term viability of the democratic process.

Section 4.3: Relations with Donors

Many CSOs in the region rely on external organizations for funding, often unable to count on domestic public or private funds to support their activities. As such, CSOs-donor relationships are important and to a certain degree can determine the scope and direction of CSOs activity. Given this critical relationship, participants discussed how the donor-CSOs relationships could be improved to better support democracy promotion and strengthening.

Stability is vital for CSOs effectiveness, allowing organizations to construct agendas that look beyond daily crisis. However, it was noted that donors' preference to fund activities over core institutional costs often prevent CSOs from establishing viable organizational infrastructure and limit their term planning and permanent engagement in a given area. This is compounded by the sometimes narrow and shifting agendas of donors as they respond to new situations and their own priorities. As a result, organizations sometimes have to accept projects that are determined by outside forces and do not allow them to focus on their areas of interest, described as a "paternalistic" this relationship can limit innovation and contribute to the perception that CSOs priorities are donor-driven, fuelling concerns about Northern bias and conditional support for southern CSOs.

One participant hypothesized that the current complexity and politicization of international cooperation is perhaps exacerbated by some donors' tendencies to invest in projects rather than provide longer-term funding that allows organizations leeway to set their own priorities. There was agreement that donors must help CSOs overcome limited access to structural funds in order to provide them with increased continuity and independence. Not only would this support organizations' success, it would also increase their effectiveness, expertise and, ultimately, their legitimacy.

Conversely, participants recognized the conflicting demands placed on donors. Donors must achieve their own goals and priorities, but are also asked to remain flexible, embrace innovative ideas, and be alert to the needs and agendas of the organizations they support. In light of these requirements, participants suggested that candid exchanges between donors and CSOs about their goals, challenges, successes and failures would be helpful to all. Likewise, while a diversity of interests and priorities is beneficial, it was noted that donor coordination would facilitate donor work, help orient CSOs and contribute to overall

organizational and programmatic stability in the region. Coordination does not mean prioritizing one approach or theme over others, as results are achieved through a combination of top-down and bottom-up, national and local level work, domestic and international initiatives.

While not a panacea, coordination, transparency and regular evaluation would be useful to all players. Donors must trust their partners, support their potential for innovation and be willing to be held and take risks with the initiatives they choose to fund; CSOs must in turn be conscientious, transparent and honest with their funders about their successes and constraints. Finally, the need for long-term engagement and patience was underscored, especially in matters of democracy promotion and defence as the consolidation – and deterioration – of democracy is often a lengthy and gradual process.

Section 4.4: NGOs, CSOs and Democratization: The Dominant Liberal View

The relationship between NGOs, civil society and democratization is often assumed to be as follows: that while NGOs are part of civil society, they also strengthen it through their activities, which in turn supports the democratic governance process. Such a line of reasoning is informed by a particular vision of ‘democracy’, ‘civil society’ and the role that NGOs play in bolstering them. This vision is an unmistakably liberal one. Taking their cue from writers such as Alexis de Tocqueville, Samuel Huntington, Robert Putnam and others from the modernization and political development schools of thought on democracy, the CSO literature reproduces the liberal maxim that democracy within capitalist society requires a vibrant and autonomous civil society and an effective state capable of balancing the demands of different interest groups. ‘Democracy’ here, is of course understood to be liberal democracy, as if the ‘end of history’ has indeed arrived and there are ‘no other games in town’ (Baker, 1997), while ‘civil society’ is conceived ‘as the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules’ (Diamond, 1994: 5).

According to liberal democratic theory, the state should provide accountable government that is subject to free and fair elections, while civil society should be able to enjoy civil and political rights and associational autonomy. A strong and plural civil society is therefore necessary to guard against the excesses of state power, but also to legitimate the authority of the state when it is based on the rule of law (Diamond, 1994). By channeling and processing

the demands and concerns of disparate interest groups to the state, civil society underpins an effective and streamlined state, ensuring legitimacy, accountability and transparency: effectively, strengthening the state's capacity for good governance. Liberal democratic theory thus sees a strong state and a strong civil society as separate from, yet essential complements to, one another. In this vision, civil society exists only in its relationship to the state: it is not envisaged as a potentially democratic sphere in its own right through which alternative visions of democracy might be pursued (Baker, 1997).

There are different schools of thought among political analysts trying to understand the mechanisms by which democratic transitions take place and then take root (Luckham and White, 1996). Civil society is thought to play different roles at different stages of the democratization process. Most political analysts distinguish between democratic transition and democratic consolidation (Diamond, 1994; Diamond *et al.*, 1995, 1997). In democratic transitions, civil society is thought to play a major role in mobilizing pressure for political change. Organized social groups such as students, women's groups, farmers organizations, NGOs, GROs, trade unions, religious groups, professional organizations, the media, think tanks and human rights organizations are 'a crucial source of democratic change' (Diamond, 1994: 5), whether this takes place quickly and dramatically as in the assertion of 'people power' in the Philippines in 1986, or whether transition is a lengthy, negotiated process, as in South Africa in the early 1990s.

Civil society is also considered to play a key role in the consolidation of democracy, in checking abuses of state power, preventing the resumption of power by authoritarian governments and encouraging wider citizen participation and public scrutiny of the state. Such actions enhance state legitimacy; 'a vibrant civil society is probably more essential for consolidating and maintaining democracy than for initiating it' (Diamond, 1994: 7). However, it is important to recognize that, according to the liberal worldview, civil society can also have a detrimental impact on democratic consolidation. Where civil society is considered to be weak, underdeveloped or fragmented, or where there is severe socio-economic strain, corruption, an ineffective legal system, a tendency towards civil disruption and conflict and a lack of 'democratic culture', democratic consolidation is thought to be threatened. Ethnic or regional differences, particularly when accompanied by socio-economic inequalities, are often considered to be a potential problem for the consolidation of democracy (Diamond *et al.*, 1995, 1997)

Section 4.5: Role of CSOs in Strengthening Liberal Democracy

Three central arguments are made in favor of NGOs' role in strengthening civil society and democratic development within the literature on NGOs and democratization. First and foremost, by virtue of their existence as autonomous actors, CSOs are said to pluralize (and therefore to strengthen) the institutional arena. More civic actors means more opportunities for a wider range of interest groups to have a 'voice', more autonomous organizations to act in a 'watchdog' role *vis-à-vis* the state, and more opportunities for networking and creating alliances of civic actors to place pressure on the state.

For example, Garrison argues that Brazilian CSOs have become the most important interlocutors in civil society, having 'mushroomed' since the re-installation of democracy, a point also made by one of Brazil's leading CSO activist-intellectuals, Herbert 'Betinho' de Souza, who declared CSOs to be 'microorganisms of the democratic process' (Garrison, 2000: 10). In Southeast Asia, Clarke (1998b) argues that the rapid growth and important political roles played by CSOs has amounted to an 'associational revolution' in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. Remarking on the phenomenal growth and particularly prominent political role of CSOs in the Philippines, Silliman and Noble suggest that 'CSOs . . . enhance democracy by expanding the number and range of voices addressing government' (Silliman and Noble, 1998: 306). Secondly,

NGOs are said to work with grassroots organizations that are often comprised of poor and marginalized groups. In this respect they both widen (in social and geographical terms) and deepen (in terms of personal and organizational capacity) possibilities for citizen participation. At the same time, NGOs represent the interests of marginalized groups within the wider public arena, campaign on their behalf and seek to influence public policy. For example, several commentators have pointed to successful NGO efforts to support indigenous peoples' and environmental movements across Latin America and Asia (Clark, 1991; Bebbington *et al.*, 1993; Fisher, 1998). Fisher in particular argues that this type of 'bottom-up democracy' has been so successful in many instances that it might eventually lead to 'top-down political change' (1998: 126). In Kenya, the grassroots mobilizing work of the Undugu Society in a Nairobi slum has been cited by several authors as being important in empowering the local community organizations that it supports to engage with the local state in order to pursue their interests (Fowler, 1993; Ndegwa, 1996; Fisher, 1998).

Thirdly, NGOs are said to check state power by challenging its autonomy at both national and local scales, pressing for change and developing an alternative set of perspectives and policies. A recurring theme in the literature is the important role played by the NGO sector in democratic transitions and democratic consolidation in a number of countries, particularly across Latin America, and specifically in Chile and Brazil. In Chile, NGOs played a vital role in opposing the Pinochet regime throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, and, while their role has undergone some degree of change since the early 1990s (Bebbington, 1997; Lambrou, 1997), several authors have nevertheless heralded them as among the key political actors before, during and after the democratic transition (Hojman, 1993; Diamond *et al.*, 1995; Lambrou, 1997; Clarke, 1998a, b; Fisher, 1998). Similarly, in Brazil, commentators have suggested that from the late 1970s

Brazilian NGOs were ‘important players in the groundswell of civil society forces pressing for political amnesty and opening’ (Garrison, 2000: 10; also Landim, 1993; Fisher, 1998).

In the context of southeast Asia, Clarke (1998b) argues that in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, NGOs have contributed to the fight for and transition to democracy, and have remained a significant political force since. In India and the Philippines NGOs are considered to have emerged to fill the institutional vacuum caused by the weakness of political parties and trade unions (Clarke, 1998a). Similarly in Thailand the growth of NGOs and the weakness of the party political system during the 1980s encouraged NGOs to take on a key role in organizing the opposition movement against General Suchinda, which ultimately led to his downfall in May 1992 (Clarke, 1998b). In Indonesia, the fall of Presidents Suharto and Habibie’s GOLKAR (which dominated Indonesian politics from the 1970s) at the June 1999 general elections could also be read as a victory, not only for Megawati Sukarnoputri’s opposition party but also for those leading Indonesian NGOs that had aligned themselves with the opposition in the fight for democratization (Clarke, 1998b). It is not the aim of this paper to suggest that all commentators on NGOs reproduce the above arguments in their entirety.

Nevertheless, the adherence to many liberal democratic assumptions and ideals within much of the Anglophone literature on NGOs is striking. Most common is the allegiance to the normative ideal that civil society and NGOs are inherently ‘good things’; microcosms of the (liberal) democratic process, comprised of the grassroots, both separate and autonomous from the state, while acting as a ‘bulwark’ against it (see for example, Korten, 1990; John Clark, 1991, 1995; Hojman, 1993; Diamond, 1994; Sandberg, 1994; Webster, 1995; Hadenius and

Uggla, 1996; Fisher, 1998; Gyimah-Boadi, 1999; Jeffrey Clark, 2000; Garrison, 2000; World Bank, 2000).

To take an example from the World Bank, which has increasingly recognized that ‘NGOs and civic movements are on the rise, assuming an ever-larger role in articulating people’s aspirations and pressuring governments to respond’ (2000: 43), it is suggested that increased pressure from civil society will serve to reduce the scope for autonomous government action and encourage wider monitoring of the state, thus preventing ‘the worst excesses of authoritarian systems’ (2000: 44). An active civil society that encourages greater participation across all sectors of society will also aid decentralization, particularly in those countries with ‘marked ethnic divisions and deeply rooted local identities’ (World Bank, 2000), encouraging development to be carried forward by consensus, and calling attention to the need for policies to address ‘social dislocations’.

As we shall see below, such a position is problematic not simply for its ideological underpinnings, but more importantly because the complex realities of NGOs and their relationships to their wider social, economic, political and cultural contexts make it very difficult to generalize about the political role of NGOs. Before we explore these complexities, the following section highlights three ideological assumptions that make such a position possible; the conflation of NGOs with civil society, the normative rhetoric associated with NGOs and democratization and the lingering influence of modernization theories.

Section 4.6: Complexity and Diversity: The Many Roles of CSOs in the Politics of Development

One of the most striking features of the CSO literature is the diversity and difference of CSO sectors and their contribution to civil society and democracy; and yet, exploration of this diversity is often eschewed in favor of more ideologically and normatively informed studies that tend to generalize about the role of CSOs in the politics of development. While it is often assumed that CSOs strengthen both state and civil society, it is far more apparent that CSO impact is more complex, serving to strengthen the state and/or society in some contexts, but to weaken or undermine them in others. Moreover, while state and civil society are often dichotomized, much of the empirical evidence actually points to the interweaving of the two. These complexities are overlain by differences between CSOs and GROs and the spatial and

temporal contexts in which they act. In the following sections, I will explore three areas that highlight the diversity of CSO roles in the politics of development, focusing on the spatial diversity of CSO roles and impacts, how strengthening NGOs can weaken civil society and how CSOs can both strengthen and weaken the state. Homogenizing space?

Taken as a whole, the empirical literature on NGOs, civil society and democratization is characterized by a rather selective geography, as is clear from the material cited in this paper. Claims for the role of NGOs as important as civil society actors pursuing democratic development are often backed up by reference to the experiences of several core countries: those most frequently referred to include Brazil, Chile and the Philippines; Liberia, India and (to a lesser extent) Liberia also feature frequently; while South Africa and Thailand have been mentioned more recently. The regional geography of these ‘clusters’ of countries is also significant: four in Asia, two (strong) examples in Latin America, and two (weaker) examples in Africa.

This has led to the pronouncement of generalizing statements that homogenize civil societies across regional spaces. It is not uncommon to come across claims made for the strength of ‘civil society’ (in the singular) and NGOs in Latin America and their growing vitality across some parts of Asia, while passing reference may be made to the weakness or ethnically challenged nature of civil society in Africa (see, for example, Haynes, 1996; Diamond, 1997; Fisher, 1998). Other commentators echo these sentiments through their preference for a number of Latin American and Asian examples (see Clark, 1991, 1995; Clarke, 1998a). Of course, this may indicate that CSO sectors are indeed more vibrant in places where some form of democracy has been the political norm for some time. Several authors have suggested that part of the reason why democratic consolidation has been relatively successful in Chile and the Philippines is due to factors particular to those countries’ historical development, such as legacies from the colonial period and historical processes of class formation and urbanization (Hojman, 1993; Clarke, 1998a; Fisher, 1998).

Nevertheless, the inattention to geography within the broader CSO literature is problematic for two reasons: first, what is taken to be an ‘CSO given’ – that is, the ability to foster an inclusive and democratizing development process – is on closer inspection the experience of only a handful of countries (and only a handful of CSOs and localities *within* those countries); secondly, these successes become the normative ideals to which other CSOs in other (mostly African) countries should aspire; and thirdly, countries whose CSO sectors are not able to

replicate such experiences are labeled as having ‘weak’ and ‘underdeveloped’ civil societies in need of strengthening (usually through increased donor support to CSOs). As other authors have argued, ‘civil society’ is not spatially and temporally homogenous (McIlwaine, 1998; Sen, 1999;

White, 1999) and, I would add, neither is CSO sectors. The diversity of NGOs’ contributions to civil societies and democratizing forces are significant, and yet, the specialization of CSO activity and impact remains largely ignored despite growing evidence that CSOs are serving to ‘pluralize’ particular places and spaces at the neglect of others. The proliferation of NGOs and civil societies in urban over rural spaces has been noted in Ethiopia (Campbell, 2001), Uganda (Dicklitch, 1998) and Vietnam (Gray, 1999), while the tendency for NGOs and civil societies to be stronger in ‘development hotspots’ over regions neglected by development agencies has also been noted in Chile (Clarke, 1998a), Nepal (Shrestha and Farrington, 1993) and Tanzania (Mercer, 1999). What this calls for is a more contextualized approach that pays attention to local dynamics and histories, and that moves beyond the use of homogenizing labels that imply the inferiority of those CSOs sectors that do not match an implicit normative standard.

Section 4.7: Building Civil Society Organizations

Representing something of a backlash against the fascination with the ‘innate goodness’ (Young, 1994: 47) of civil society, the late 1990s saw a proliferation of studies from across the developing world that collectively argued that civil societies are often fragmented, unorganized, uncooperative and weak. Furthermore the major constituents of these civil societies, NGOs, are often internally undemocratic; characterized by authoritarian or charismatic personalized leaderships; competitive; riven along class, gender, religious, regional, spatial and ethnic faultlines; and steered by either the state or donors, or both. In other words, the social, political, cultural or economic cleavages that exist in civil society are more likely to be replicated in (and even exacerbated by) CSOs than they are to be challenged. For example, in Liberia,

Wood (1997) argues that CSOs must be seen as a constituent part of the culture in which they work, and that hierarchical and authoritarian social structures that encourage dependence and deference will often be replicated in CSOs. In particular the tendency for CSOs to be headed

by one charismatic leader can stifle individual staff autonomy and discourage wider staff participation in decision-making processes (which, ironically, is usually what staff are trying to achieve with the CSOs' 'beneficiaries'). Ndegwa (1996) has commented on a similar situation in two Kenyan CSOs (the Green Belt Movement and the Undugu Society), the internal workings of which he likens to 'personalized rule', whereby the decision to undertake political action rests solely with the CSO leader. In general, he finds Kenyan civil society to be fragmented along ethnic and class lines (although he omits gender) reflecting wider social and political fissures in the country.

For example, the dominance of Kikuyu and Luo ethnic elites within those autonomous development organizations placing pressure on Moi's (dominantly Kalenjin) government is more likely to reflect longstanding ethnic power struggles criss-crossing state and society, rather than a genuine call for democratic governance from a democratically constituted civil society (see also Fowler, 1993). The fragmented nature of CSO sectors also has important ramifications for CSO coordination and coalition-building. For example, Clarke (1998b) argues that, despite the efforts made by Indian CSOs to establish the Voluntary Action Network India (VANI), the unity of the CSO sector remains relatively remote owing to deep ethnic, religious, political and regional cleavages in civil society (see also Robinson *et al.*, 1993).

Clarke (1998b) also points to the highly organized CSO sector in the Philippines where, for all their political engagement, broader movements are often reactive and short, principally because their longevity is challenged by personal, ideological and regional tensions. Evidence of CSOs building effective, broad-based coalitions over a substantive period of time is somewhat thin. The danger here, of course, is in laying the charge of the absence of broad-based coalitions and 'fragmented' NGO sectors at the door of 'weak' civil (or 'uncivil') societies. This is not to deny the realities on the ground, but rather to point to the insufficiencies of the liberal democratic model in explaining the relationship between NGOs, civil society and democratization.

Again, context is all-important. *NGOs, civil society and the neoliberal agenda*: If we take a wider view of the context within which CSOs are working, there is now widespread recognition that the ability of CSOs to fulfill their democratic roles *vis-à-vis* civil society is increasingly circumscribed by the forces of political and economic neoliberalism as mediated through international financial institutions, states and donors. Certainly, this is a key theme

occupying much of the literature reviewed here (see, for example, Farrington and Bebbington, 1993; Robinson, 1994, 1997; Edwards and Hulme, 1995; Hulme and Edwards, 1997; Zaidi, 1999). In the first instance, the increased availability of large-scale funding has been one of the primary factors driving CSOs growth since the 1980s, encouraging the proliferation of social welfare organizations that often have little or no political agenda. A general trend towards focusing on donor-funded service provision at the expense of political activities has been noted.

The central issue here is that, if CSOs are taking up greater roles in social welfare activities as more donor funding becomes available, then the legitimacy of their claims to work with and represent the interests of the poor and disenfranchised on a political level, thereby building a broad-based civil society, comes under threat. Indeed, the question of NGO accountability to and legitimacy among the grassroots, given their increased funding, has become a dominant theme within the recent literature. For example, increasing financial support to CSOs has encouraged the proliferation of particular types of organizations with distinctive social and geographical characteristics.

Fowler points out that many CSOs in eastern and southern Africa are staffed by urban, educated, middle class elites 'with no substantive roots in underprivileged groups' (1991: 73). The deluge of funding now available for CSOs must be seen as a factor here. Those in the best position to take advantage of the donor penchant for CSOs are often urban-based educated elites, professionals or civil servants with access to information and contacts only available in capital cities where donor organizations and foreign embassies congregate. Given the considerable 'streamlining' of civil services associated with structural adjustment across many developing countries, the donor fascination with CSOs seem to have come at a propitious time for many former state employees. The urban middle-classes are thus over-represented within these growing CSOs sectors, and often lack mass-based rural constituencies.

Under these circumstances, the extent to which the agenda of such CSOs represent the concerns of marginalized groups, or whether they are a reflection of the types of activities that donors are willing to fund or that urban-based elites deem to be important, is a real concern (Farrington and Bebbington, 1993). Increased financial support for NGOs may actually undermine the building of a representative and participatory civil society. Gray (1999) details such a situation in Vietnam, where the advent of *doi moi* (renovation) reforms in the 1990s

has had a profound effect on the proliferation of CSOs, which were legalized in 1991. However, he finds the growth of NGOs has not been accompanied by the mobilization of a broad-based civil society. This is due to the donor-driven nature of CSO growth in the country, and the fact that the majority of

Vietnamese CSOs are urban, elite-based organizations whose staffs are often linked to the (Communist) party–state apparatus. It is in the countryside that Vietnamese CSOs have yet to make their mark, where entrenched power networks pose a formidable obstacle to urban CSOs' attempts to lobby for issues such as land rights on behalf of the rural poor. In sum, it still remains unclear how urban NGOs can support civil society in rural Vietnam. This may be of little relevance if the 'type' of civil society being promoted is only concerned with urban pluralism – a simple increase in the number and size of Vietnamese CSOs. For most Vietnamese, who live in rural areas, how important can this be? (Gray, 1999: 706). For NGOs in Vietnam, the problem is in *gaining* a broad-based mass constituency in the first place. In contrast, where CSOs have a longer history, some are experiencing problems *retaining* their links with grassroots organizations in civil society.

This has been the case for many well-established Latin American CSOs, many of which built up their reputation and legitimacy on the basis of their participatory and democratizing work with grassroots organizations during authoritarian periods. Significant transformations of both state and civil society have taken place since the polarized era of the 1960s and 1970s when NGOs were important actors in civil societies united in their opposition to authoritarian regimes. The return to democratic civilian rule across the continent during the 1980s has been heralded in some quarters as a triumph for civil societies in general, and NGOs in particular (Hojman, 1993; Landim, 1993; Diamond, 1994; Diamond *et al.*, 1995; Clarke, 1998a; Fisher, 1998; Garrison, 2000).

However, despite their key role in pushing for democratic change, Latin American CSOs seem to have suffered something of an identity crisis in the aftermath of transition (Bebbington, 1997), and their continued role in the democratic process is less clear within the current neoliberal climate as they find themselves steered towards social service provision and away from grassroots activism. The resulting 'crisis of legitimacy' (Bebbington, 1997) that many CSOs are facing entails the loss of linkages with grassroots constituencies (and with it the close relationships required in order to represent their interests in policy-making fora), less transparent CSOs operations as accountability now flows upwards to the donor rather than

downwards to rural constituencies and the exclusion of grassroots organizations from policy dialogue (Farrington and Lewis, 1993; Bebbington, 1997; Gideon, 1998).

The impact of increased direct donor funding on CSOs' internal bureaucratization, management structures and relationships with beneficiaries is well-documented (see, for example, Perera's, 1997 account of Sarvodaya; also Edwards and Hulme, 1992; Hulme and Edwards, 1997). Reflecting on the experience of CSOs in Liberia, White (1999) suggests that CSOs are increasingly adopting formal procedures required by donors and developing the conservatism and self-protection usually characteristic of state agencies. This has been compounded by the donor-funded growth of some of the country's largest CSOs, which have become 'formidable institutions . . . Increased size have inevitably meant increased distance from the grassroots, and the early pioneering vision has been replaced by an ethic of efficiency and professionalism' (White, 1999: 321). The irony here then, is that as donors attempt to 'scale-up' the impact of their work, to handle more (foreign) funding and take on greater roles in service provision, they are simultaneously forcing CSOs to loosen their connections to their grassroots constituencies. Strengthening NGOs may actually serve to weaken civil society (Tvedt, 1998)

Section 4.8: CSOs in a Neoliberal era: Strengthening the State?

The co-opting of CSOs into state service provision has also had wider repercussions for states, although the jury appears to be out as to whether they are strengthened or weakened overall. The establishment of state-sponsored social funds, which usually carry World Bank and international donor backing, have used CSOs to implement state development plans designed to mitigate the harshest effects of structural adjustment programmes. Many governments, somewhat wary of the political effects of CSOs, have had little choice but to concede the important role of CSOs in providing social services. On the one hand, many authors consider the drafting of CSOs into government-sponsored social funds to pose the least threat to state legitimacy, and may actually boost it, both among international donors (because civil society involvement, in the form of

NGOs, complies with donor demands for good governance) and among the electorate (owing to better services, associated with the state development programs even if delivered by an NGO). It has been noted that some governments direct social funds towards social welfare

provision for politically sensitive groups, in order to minimize opposition to the state (see Gideon, 1998, on Latin America and Gray, 1999, on Vietnam). It is quite clear from the CSO literature that the impact of the state social funds has been felt nowhere more strongly than across Latin America (Bebbington, 1997; Lambrou, 1997; Mirafteb, 1997; Pearce, 1997; Gideon, 1998).

Formerly authoritarian states have given way to a set of open civilian governments keen (in rhetorical terms, at least) to build alliances with civil society and NGOs. A key priority for these new governments has been to shore up their legitimacy by reaching down to the poorest sections of society, previously the constituencies of the CSOs. This is being attempted both politically (through decentralization) and economically (through improvements in social welfare provision). In practice this has meant enrolling CSOs into state social funds and programs. As Gideon has observed, 'CSOs have become harnessed by the state and [have] been used as a tool to implement the neoliberal model' (1998: 304). A recent study of civil society–government–World Bank relations in Brazil (Garrison, 2000) published by the NGO and Civil Society unit of the World Bank's Social Development Department, is an insightful example here. Reminiscent of many World Bank documents on the virtues of NGOs and civil society, Garrison argues that

Brazilian NGOs are significant actors in the democratic process, both before, during and after the transition itself. While they have made important contributions to social welfare, Garrison argues that Brazilian CSOs have also made significant contributions to public policy and have acted in a 'watchdog' capacity with regard to the state, demonstrated in their ability to network around certain issues and to initiate national level civic campaigns. A key organization in formulating NGOs' strategic role has been the *Associação Brasileira de* (ABONG), Brazil's first CSO umbrella organization that was formed in 1991, although Garrison points to several regional and sectorial networks and coalitions that not only bring together CSOs, but also CSOs and social movements, to work with government. In terms of policy impact, Garrison points to the central role played by CSOs in initiating and supporting the widespread movement that led to the impeachment of President Collor in 1992 for corruption.

However, instances of CSO experiences in more sustained policy dialogue with government are patchier: there is very little evidence to suggest that CSOs are actually fulfilling the policy role that Garrison attributes to them. The examples cited seem to have been initiated by the

World Bank in discussions related to Bank-financed sectorial loans in an attempt to create ‘developmental synergies’ between state, private and civil sectors, rather than as a result of CSO initiatives. Garrison also points to the increasing linkages between the Brazilian state and CSOs as a sign of their role in democratization; the government–citizen policy councils that foster ‘deliberative democracy’ at the local level; the provision of technical assistance to local governments on a consultancy basis; increased government funding to CSOs through various government- and Bank sponsored small-grant facilities in order to carry out a host of (mostly social welfare) projects and programs; and the election or hiring of leading figures from civil society organizations to positions within local and national government. It is instructive to note, however, that the government–citizen policy councils are given only a consultative rather a deliberative role. In fact, their role seems to be to support and legitimize government policy rather than to question it:

These informal citizens’ movements should thus be seen as a complementary power that adds strength and depth to the democratic system, rather than a movement that challenges the power of elected representatives. As the Bank’s 1997 World Development Report recognized: ‘The growth of these intermediary organizations reflects the larger movement toward democracy in many regions and, in some countries, the need to bridge the “missing middle” between citizens and the state’ (Garrison, 2000: 47). In other words, CSO participation serves to legitimize the status quo, not to challenge it.

This is further evident from the technocratic discourse surrounding the apparent advantages of increased Bank–civil society linkages in Brazil: it improves the process of public policy-making; it may improve the rate of return; governments and Banks have the expertise and knowledge to provide the ‘development hardware’ (macro policies, economic modeling, and baseline research sector work). Civil society organizations, on the other hand, provide the expertise in ‘development software’ (participatory approaches, community organizing, stakeholder ownership strategies); CSOs are often smaller and therefore more innovative, adaptable, cost-effective and locally informed; and their grassroots representation brings legitimacy and community mobilization to the Programme (Garrison, 2000). Any agenda for social and political change is lost in this technocratic discourse that essentially argues that CSOs be utilized to legitimize World Bank-sponsored attempts to foster widespread acceptance of the neoliberal Brazilian state. Clarke’s (1998b) thorough study of the role of CSOs in Southeast Asian politics echoes many of these points. Given the right conditions, he

argues, CSOs can play a vital role in shoring up the legitimacy of vulnerable democratic regimes, as the instances of Cambodia,

Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand exemplify. In (newly) democratic countries characterized by a weak institutional political realm, Clarke argues that CSOs strengthen the state through their participation in improving efficiency in government services, acting as strategic partners for reform-oriented ministries, filling in gaps in service provision and helping the government forge ties with the grassroots. At the same time, NGOs strengthen civil society. Through protest, CSOs serve to ‘aggregate and moderate political demands and [provide] channels distinct from Congress through which disputes can be negotiated and dissipated’ (1998b: 211). In a recasting of Huntington’s ‘Praetorianism’, Clarke views NGOs as a distinct ‘layer of civil society’ (1998b: 207) that take on a role in the ‘rationalization of authority’ (1998b: 205). That is to say, CSOs strengthen and support newly democratic regimes while also organizing (or ‘channeling’) protest and citizen participation into organized and recognized institutional forms (CSOs) that are subject to rules laid down by the state. But is this not another way of arguing that CSOs legitimize and strengthen the neoliberal regimes that have flourished or that are emerging across Southeast Asia?

As Feldman (1997) argues with respect to Liberia, the growth of (foreign-funded) CSOs is merely ‘institutionalizing representation’, channeling all protest and citizen participation into the CSO sector that has come to represent a ‘legitimized . . . controlled, organized arena of public debate with institutional and financial support from the donor community, [which] has come to speak on behalf of the citizenry’ (1997: 59). Moreover, ‘the participation of the donor community in CSO initiatives corresponds to a move toward the privatization of resource distribution and forms of production away from locally initiated and locally controlled development activities’ (1997: 59).

While the state may be legitimized and therefore strengthened by GO action, these experiences suggest a distinct *weakening* of broad-based civil societies. However, there are also those for whom the handing over of social welfare activities formerly executed by the state to the CSO sector can be very damaging for state power. The diversion of funding away from states towards CSOs serves to threaten state legitimacy, while continuing to undermine the ability of the state to play a role in social service provision (Fowler, 1991; Tvedt, 1998). Strengthening civil society through NGOs can actually weaken the state (Marcuse, 1996).

Section 4.9: Response to Democratic Challenges: Harnessing CSOs Strengths

In the core problems of poverty, lack of representation and inequality, and attendant violence, corruption and polarization require complex and long-term solutions, which must be based on strengthening fundamental elements and principles in societies across the region. Among these elements is the need for information and ideas that provide citizens, politicians and policy-makers with a common basis for informed discussion and decision-making. Secondly, is the need for pluralism and respect for difference of opinion. Thirdly, is the need for consensus-building techniques that allow citizens to reach agreement and identify common objectives for national life at the local and national level. Finally, there is a need for highlighted transparency and accountability in government activity to ensure that these shared visions are being implemented by elected official. Given these fundamental priorities, CSOs possess a number of characteristics and strengths that for them in a position to undertake activities in a way that will indeed support democratic values and promote political pluralism, consensus-building and accountability.

Diversity

- A.** In the first place, civil society organizations represent a host of issues, interest and groups, while their objectives, organizational structures and activities vary to include single-issues grassroots organizations, national movements, think-tanks and academic institutions alike. The diversity of CSOs means that they offer solutions to a variety of issues, bringing the perspectives and needs of various sectors of society. The articulation and sharing of ideas not only increases the options available to deal with a situation or solve a problem, but also contribute to pluralism and compromise. Civil society action can be useful in protesting injustice on the street and working with governments and multilateral officials to improve national and regional governance structures.

Flexibility

a) Because they do not depend on votes or large bureaucracies and are not broken to the norm of multilateralism, CSOs enjoys a freedom of action that governments or regional institutions do not. In the area of democracy defence, CSOs can use their networks and local knowledge to collaborate with a wide range of actors, engage in a rapid course of action to promptly alert others to impending crisis, not being bound by consensus requirements or violation of sovereign concerns. This makes them a valuable ally to governments and international organizations. Though traditional diplomacy sometimes fears non-state actors, viewing them as a “non-representative” threat, their flexibility is valuable and the potential synergistic effects of CSOs and government and/ or inter-African collaboration must continue to be explored.

b) Innovative

CSOs have great potentials for innovation. Due to their structure (often small with multi-skilled staff), the nature of their work (education, research) and their largely autonomous nature (not beholden to constituents, bureaucracies or customers), CSOs are able to be dynamic and responsive to new situations. While sometimes constrained by donors’ expectations, CSOs are free to explore new ideas, generate alternative proposals and initiate action. The need to connect with like-minded organizations locally and nationally promotes the sharing of ideas and best practices, with organizations modifying and improving the ideas of another.

Despite these strengths, CSOs are not without their limitations and internal challenges. Like other organization, they can suffer from non-democratic governance practices, capture by outside interests, corruption and other problems. Further, asymmetries among organizations exist, as some groups maintain privileged access to resources and influence, while other organizations marginalized. Civil society has shortcomings that cannot ignore and must be taken into account when setting expectations about what civil society alone can achieve. In response to this CSOs must maintain high standards and incorporate democratic principles of transparency, accountability, pluralism, justice and collaboration into their own work.

Section 4.10: Priorities Activities: Civil Society Stronghold

Thinking about the elements needed for strengthening democracy, and civil societies' strengths and limitations, participants highlighted activities considered key CSOs strongholds-- areas where civil society can have a particularly positive impact. In most cases CSOs across the region are already undertaking a number of these activities. Some areas, however, will require learning on the part of organizations, and may necessitate a refocusing of objectives, partners and methodologies.

Promote dialogue

- a) In discussing challenges to democracy, including a lack of broad-based consensus on basic national principles, polarization and marginalization, the need to create spaces for debate and dialogues was underscored. Such spaces bring people together and provide an opportunity to discuss issues and share different point of view, which is essential in reaching compromise and a shared direction. An autonomous and moderate civil society can help bridge divides between groups and work to build social and political consensus, while contributing to pluralism and promoting tolerance. To do this, they must engage a broad range of society on a wide array of issues at the local and national level. CSOs throughout West Africa must do much more to foster productive dialogue, building understanding and a strengthening a tolerance middle ground.

Give Voice to Disenfranchised Groups

- b) Given that current unproductive political forces challenging democracy are fuelled by marginalization and under-representation, CSOs must continue to play a critical role in articulating the needs and rights of all citizens. Civil society must present alternative methods for citizens to obtain a voice. They must demand access to information, transparency and consultation in decision-making processes, ensuring that the perspectives and interests of those currently excluded are coherently presented and incorporated by decision-makers. Further, crucial to achieving a more equal distribution of power and resources CSOs must support communities in autonomous

and participatory local development, promoting initiatives and policies that generate improved living standards and provide opportunities for communities. Such work would in turn help build the social fabric of democracy at the grassroots.

Undertake Analysis and Development Policy Options

- c) Closely connected to the need for dialogue and citizen inclusion in decision-making, participants emphasized the need for CSOs undertake a thorough analysis and develop well-articulated and feasible policy and program ideas. Many CSOs efforts to date have focused on accessing decision-makers. However, CSOs have expertise that is available to governments and international bodies and must take better advantage of their knowledge and present stake-holders with coherent proposals. The work of analysis and advocacy was flagged as a weak area for many CSOs who, for lack of capacity or information about political processes, do not always advocate productively. Discussions underscored the importance of a constructive attitude, careful research and the need for a better understanding of the appropriate lobbying channels and methods. Presenting a transparent and concrete agenda is a basis for productive cooperation and adds to organizations` credibility and legitimacy.

Educate

- d) For a number of reasons many citizens lack the knowledge or information necessary to be active participants in their democracies. Hand in hand with research and policy development, CSOs must continue to educate the public about their rights and responsibility, their national government and how proposed policies and decisions will affect their lives. Similarly, where appropriate, CSOs should provide more public education about regional issues and institutions, as well as information about the international agreements, treaties and conventions that their governments have signed. On-going dissemination of and education about Charter, its provisions and the rights and responsibilities it contains was repeatedly underscored as a priority in the promotion and protection of democracy. Liberia Civil Society

Title: Monitoring Liberia`s Civil Society Organizations Democratic Charter fig.1-7

Given the sessions` focus on the promotion and protection of democracy, the idea of independence civil society initiative that would use the democratic charter as a basis for monitoring democracy in the Liberia was discussed on several occasions. Such a charter monitoring mechanism would consist of a network of CSOs and academic working together across national boundaries. As part of such an initiative local organizations and scholars would assess changes and progress in the democratic situation in countries across the region and provide periodic country reports, flagging emerging situations and providing early alerts based on a serious of predetermined indicators. These reports and bulletin would be a source of updated, independence and locally generated information that would be valuable to governments and international organizations when planning their policies and action.

As independence organizations, CSOs have a critical role to play in monitoring and following up on governments` domestic and international commitments. A necessary activity in ensuring accountability, these commitments provide a baseline against which to measure progress in key areas (i.e, human right, corruption, democratic governance), while monitoring ensures that appropriate public policies are being implemented and adhered to. Beyond monitoring, organizations must become effective at publicly disseminating the results through country and issue-based reports. Such reports put successes and failures in the spotlight and keep governments accountable through public opinion and international pressure. With a better understanding of existing accords, CSOs would also contribute to the formulation and drafting of future agreements.

Develop Conflict Prevention Skills

- e) Finally, the need for CSOs to develop and help impart practical conflict resolution skills was also flagged as an important and emerging areas of concentration, Given growing insecurity, polarization and protest, organizations and citizens equipped with dialogue, negotiation and consensus building skills are well placed to reduced tension and division between individuals and groups, promoting moderation and communication.

⁴² Thomas Leger "Bridging Divides, Impasses", FDL policy paper, www.fdl.org

CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSIONS

Section 5.1: Poverty, Inequality and Corruption

The Liberians continue to face poverty, inequality, corruption and weak institutions, while emerging situations further test democratic principles and collective mechanisms to support democracy. In reaction to these challenges fed by marginalization and under-representation, efforts must be made on many fronts to reduce inequality, promote pluralism and strengthen political institutions. The meeting held in Ghana in March 2006 set out to determine how civil society can best help reach these goals. Participants concluded that civil society, while not without limitation, is diverse, flexible and innovative, characteristic that lend themselves to activities in some critical areas.

Section 5.2: Dialogue Promotion, Policy Reforms and Consensus Building

These CSOs strongholds, while not exhaustive, include dialogue promotion, constructive policy reforms and consensus building; will do much to strengthen values and structures critical to democracy. CSOs are currently involved in some or all of these areas. The Ghana gathering reconfirmed the essential nature of these activities given the current regional context, stressing particular areas of action and innovative applications of old methodologies. Relationship building was also stressed, as CSOs constructive engagement will strengthen the fabric of democracy, while aggregating the forces working towards an equal, just and democratic hemisphere.

Section 5.3: Practical Application, a Priority to be Sustained

The ideas and suggestions in this thesis are a guide for CSOs as they plan future engagement and actions. At the local and national levels the practical applications must be based on collaboration and discussion, in keeping with the national context, needs and capacities. At

the regional level it is imperative that civil society continue to work together to forward the key recommendations contained here, particularly those related to using the regional mechanisms to protect democracy at the national level. The following recommendations were identified as the core priorities for civil society and other actors as they proceed with this work. FDL hopes that the report will and these recommendations will foster productive collaboration and contribute to the efforts of CSOs, donors, governments and international institutions as they forge ahead to collectively promote and strengthen democracies in Liberia and Africa as a whole.

Civil Society Must:

- A. Lead the strengthening and protection of democracy by embodying democratic principles and exercising democratic values of pluralism, compromise and consensus building in its engagement with all stakeholders, from citizens to multilateral bodies;
- B. Act as a bridge between divided groups. By promoting spaces for open discussion and debates CSOs can build consensus and strengthen the moderate middle ground;
- C. Harness its strengths and its knowledge, unique position and flexibility to bring the issue and concerns of citizens to the forefront in a productive manner;
- D. Take full advantage of existing spaces for consultations and collaboration with national and multilateral organization, presenting concrete and well-researched reports and policy options;
- E. Strengthen key partnership and engage stakeholders in a productive and responsible manner. Adopt a constructive approach to other domestic and international actors working to forge more collaborative relationship;

A Word to Partners

Political Parties

- a. Recognize CSOs as a valid interlocutor and knowledge about their contribution as specialized non-elected entities, viewing them as a valuable source of information and policy options. This would not only improve parties` capacity, but would also take a first step in regaining society`s trust;

Donors

- b. Increase funding for CSOs` organizational infrastructure and programmatic development, allowing them to deepen their expertise and make them more effective in achieving long-term goals;
- c. Be hold and willing to support civil society`s capacity for flexibility and innovation;

Economic Community of West African States

- a. As the central actors in regional promotion of democracy efforts, ECOWAS must embodies democratic values and practices and set regional standards for information sharing, dialogues promotion and respect for the opinion of all citizens in the democractic process;
- b. Recognize the expertise and values of CSOs as independence actors in the collection and provision of timely, on-the-ground information when reviewing democratic progress or dealing with crisis situation. Valuation work has been done by CSOs on standard and indicators of democracy that could serves as a resources by ECOWAS bodies and members;
- c. Improve information dissemination about ECOWAS, its roles, responsibilities and mandates to citizens of the hemisphere, making dissemination and promotion of the democratic process;

- d. Institutionalizing access to ECOWAS through a clear and harmonized rules of participation, CSOs rights to information, free speech freedom of action;

National Governments

- a. Create a legal, political and fiscal environment that facilitates CSOs development, protecting CSOs rights to information, free speech and freedom of actions;
- b. Establish channels for dialogue between local and national governments and CSOs;⁴³
- c. Recognize the value of civil society`s expertise and flexibility as complementary and useful in a variety of areas, from rapid action, policy making and service provision;

⁴³ This report was produced based on a working session and public conference held in Ottawa on March 1 & 2, 2006, FOCAL would like to thank the national Endowment for democracy and the Canadian International Development Agency, whose support made this thesis possible. The report was written by Laurie Cole, senior analyst, and Caroline Lavoie, Program Associate

EPIGRAPH

“Without Passion, nothing happens; but without

Compassion, the wrong things happen.”

Former United Nations Secretary – General

Dag Hammarskjold

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