The London School of Economics and Political Science

Peacebuilding and the Depoliticisation of Civil Society:

Sierra Leone [2002 – 2013]

Simone Datzberger

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Declaration

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Abstract

Over the past two decades, there has been a rapid increase in funds made available by the international donor community to support local civil society actors in fragile states. Current peacebuilding and development efforts support and strive to recreate an active, vibrant and "liberal" civil society. In the case of Sierra Leone, paradoxically, the growing support has not strengthened civil society actors based on that liberal idea(l). Instead of empowering individuals, enhancing democratic ownership and pro-active participation stemming from the civil sphere, Sierra Leone's civil society landscape appears to be neutralised, depoliticised if not instrumentalised to provide social services the state is either too weak or unwilling to deliver.

In critically assessing how Sierra Leone's civil sphere became depoliticised during the country's peacebuilding and development phase, the thesis advances three main arguments. First, it supports the commonly agreed consensus in scholarship that post-war civil societies have become instrumentalised to serve a broader liberal peacebuilding and development agenda in several ways. Second, a deeper inquiry into the history of state formation and political culture of Sierra Leone reveals that Ekeh's (1975) bifurcated state is very much alive. In short, Western idea(l)s of participatory approaches and democracy are repeatedly challenged by a persisting urban-rural divide as well as socially entrenched forms of neopatrimonialism, elite-loyalism and tribalism. Sierra Leonean civil society finds itself currently in the midst of renegotiating those various intersections of a primordial and civic sphere. Third, the effects colonialism has had on African societies are still reflected in the current monopolisation of wealth and power among a few (elites) next to a vast majority living in abject poverty. More concretely, how abject poverty, human development and above all the lack of education affect activism and agency from below remains a scarcely addressed aspect in the peacebuilding and development literature.

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List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APC	All People's Congress
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CEDSA	Centre for Development and Security Analysis
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
GNI	Gross National Income
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HDI	Human Development Index
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
JSC	Joint Steering Committee (United Nations Peacebuilding Fund)
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission (United Nations)
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund (United Nations)
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessments
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SCSL	Special Court for Sierra Leone
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SLCDT	Sierra Leone Conference on Development and Transformation
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIOSIL	United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone
UNIPSIL	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Mission in Sierra Leone
UNPBSO	United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office

UNSC   United Nations Security Council

WB   World Bank

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The writing of this thesis has been an extraordinary and life-enriching journey – intellectually, personally and geographically. This research project would not have been possible without the support, patience and guidance of many people to whom I owe my deepest gratitude. Unfortunately it would go beyond the space and scope of this short section to acknowledge all and everyone in this regard. However, there are a few people who have been indispensable throughout the process.

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This thesis could also not have been completed without the numerous people I had the privilege to meet and work with in Sierra Leone. I still remember the day when I first arrived in the country in 2011 and a handful of young men from the Freetown based street club known as Street Life Family picked me up from Lungi airport. Throughout my first research stay they helped me in any way they could and granted me unvarnished insights into their daily joys, struggles and routines.

During my second research stay, I closely collaborated with Rasta Abeti who was introduced to me by my good friend Bonnie Phillips. Rasta did not only act as my local research assistant but became soon the big brother I never had - a true and real friend for life. He travelled extensively with me throughout the country and taught me a lot about Sierra Leonean culture and the "reggae" of everyday life. I am also very grateful for the opportunity to have met and worked with the ICON Brothers, an exceptional home-grown club of young students who actively contribute to communal peacebuilding and development processes in the hope that a better future and more opportunities for everyone will arise. With the risk of forgetting to mention many more, I am also deeply indebted to John Birchall, Rebekka Friedman, Kieran Mitton, Emilia Frost, Jalloh from the Blackstreet Boys, Bonnie Phillips, Patrick Lambert, Saleem Vahidy, Binta Leigh, Alison Sutherland, Ade Daramy and Bernard Conteh. All of them helped and supported me in one way or another prior to and during both of my research stays in Sierra Leone. All the same, I am immensely grateful for the trust, warmth and generosity of my interviewees. Their stories, experiences, narratives and work laid the groundwork for this PhD. In this context, I would also like to acknowledge the generous financial support I received from the Dominique Jacquin-Berdal Travel Grant and the LSE International Relations Department for both of my research stays in Sierra Leone.

I also want to thank the colleagues, friends, and academics who supported my research and work. Prior to my doctoral studies at the LSE, I worked for three years for the United Nations (UN) Peacebuilding Support Office at HQ New York. It was during that time when I first started to conduct research on peacebuilding and development related issues affecting Sierra Leone. To this day, former colleagues like Necla

Introduction and Research Approach

The purpose of this thesis is twofold. In a wider sense, it seeks to advance our understanding of non-Occidental post-conflict societies. It critically reflects upon the consequences of applying a liberal notion of the concept of civil society in present peacebuilding and development efforts. Correspondingly, it highlights recurring theoretical, analytical and practical dilemmas in strengthening the civil sphere in sub-Saharan African fragile states with a particular focus on Sierra Leone. In a narrower sense, the thesis critically assesses and examines how the civil sphere is currently a subject of (re)construction in post conflict countries, and how this affects Sierra Leone's civil society landscape and consequently its political influence, space and voice. In doing so, it identifies and examines a striking paradox that occurred during the peacebuilding and development process of Sierra Leone in the period from 2002-2013: even though peacebuilding and development efforts support the (re)creation of an active, vibrant – liberal – civil society, unexpectedly, this rising support has not strengthened Sierra Leone's civil society landscape based on a liberal intellectual tradition and idea(l).

As Chapter 1 (Section 1.1) and Chapter 3 (Section 3.1) illuminate, overall, there has been a rapid increase in funds for local civil society actors in fragile states over the past two decades. In the case of Sierra Leone (see Chapters 5 and 6), funding for CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) was scarce before the civil war (1991-2002) but increased to 26 percent of ODA (Official Development Assistance) and non-ODA aid in 2006. It was during the later stages and shortly after the conflict, when Sierra Leone experienced a mushrooming of local CSOs, CBOs (Community Based Organisations), civic associations and home-grown youth clubs. A mapping analysis conducted for the thesis identified 358 formally registered civil society organisations in Sierra Leone as of March 2014 of which 213 were local CSOs and 145 INGOs (International Non-Governmental Organisations).[1] All these developments were surrounded by a noticeable "local" turn over the past decade within the international donor

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[1] More details about the mapping analysis are provided in the Method section of this introduction and in Appendix 3.

community's rhetoric and approaches towards strengthening civil societies in fragile states. In other words, the construction of a strong and vibrant civil society in post-conflict environments became to be seen as a key component of democratisation, peacebuilding and development processes. Concepts such as "self-determination", "local-ownership", "cultural particularism" or "everyday-resistance" emerged as recurring themes in scholarship and gradually informed donor language and project and programme support. Surprisingly, in the case of Sierra Leone the increasing attention and support towards the local civil sphere over the past ten years did not strengthen the country's civil society landscape based on those liberal idea(l)s. On the contrary, interviewees conducted with 41 CSOs, 5 CBOs and local grassroots associations, predominantly described Sierra Leone's civil society as fragmented, lacking in power, influenced by the government, tribalised, dormant or weak (see Chapter 6).[2] In the course of the research for this thesis and two extensive field research stays (2011 and 2012), it also became evident that the majority of Sierra Leone's civil sphere lacked political influence, space and voice. The author's observations are also reflected in the latest Freedom House study (2014) which recently downgraded Sierra Leone's status from "free" (2012) to "partly free" (2014) due to persistent problems with corruption and lack of transparency. In short, after ten years of peacebuilding and ongoing development efforts, Sierra Leone's civil society appears to be depoliticised - a phenomenon defined in Chapter 1 as "a process that removes civil society actors gradually from any form of political influence". For the overall argument of the thesis, it is important to note at this point that processes of political deprivation not only affect the political nature and culture of a society, but simultaneously the political culture of a society can also influence the degree of political activism or willingness to advocate for a need or cause. Whereas liberalism would characterise a political civil sphere as independent from the state, a depoliticised civil sphere would no longer be a watchdog of or advocate for specific governmental actions and policies. Instead, actors are prone to being instrumentalised by the state or other external players to serve a government's agenda and political aims.

Thus far, only a few scholars have explicitly alluded to the depoliticising effects

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[2] More details about the scope and exact number of interviewees are provided in the Method section of this introduction and in Appendix 1.

of peacebuilding and development on the civil sphere. These include: Howell and Pearce (2002), Goetschel and Hagmann (2009) and Verkoren and van Leeuwen (2012). Despite their valuable findings and analysis, which the thesis will elaborate on, all of them also share one common argument and approach: they locate the causes of depoliticisation effects in external interventionism alone. It will become apparent in Parts II and III of the thesis, why this is a limited casual explanation and it is here where the thesis will make a new contribution to the existing literature and debates. In agreement with the commonly established consensus that externally-led peacebuilding and development efforts put local civil society actors at risk of being instrumentalised, two additional factors that tend to be overlooked will be identified. The first one refers to the political culture of a society. A deeper inquiry into the history of state formation and the political culture of Sierra Leone (see Chapter 4) reveals that Ekeh's (1975) bifurcated state is still very much alive. In short, Western idea(l)s of participatory approaches and democracy are repeatedly challenged by a persisting urban-rural divide as well as socially entrenched forms of neopatrimonialism, elite-loyalism and tribalism. Sierra Leone's society finds itself currently in the midst of renegotiating those various intersections of a primordial and civic sphere. The second factor is concerned with abject poverty, human development and, above all, the lack of education. The effects colonialism has had on African societies are still reflected in the current monopolisation of wealth and power among a few (elites) alongside a vast majority living in abject poverty. More concretely, how abject poverty, human development and, above all, the lack of education affect activism and agency from below remains scarcely addressed in peacebuilding and development literature.

The argument above does not imply that there is not a rapidly growing body of literature on the local turn and/or role of civil society in peacebuilding and development processes (see Chapter 1). There are numerous international and local frameworks and evaluations targeting civil society actors and their specific peacebuilding and development functions (Chapter 3 will delve into this point). These contributions and new directions are undoubtedly of extreme value to research and practice. However, they fall short in addressing, or at least in bestowing consideration upon, the unintended consequences of exporting and applying a liberal notion of civil society to non-Western (and often postcolonial) fragile states (see Chapter 2). All the same, existing studies fail to thoroughly examine how local political voice and culture

is socially engineered in the transitional processes from peacebuilding towards development. More research needs to be done on the casual mechanism of depoliticisation effects impinging upon the civil sphere in fragile states in various contexts and post-conflict environments. Alternative approaches towards strengthening local civil societies in fragile states are scarce. It is here where the thesis attempts to fill a gap and make a new contribution to ongoing peacebuilding and development research, critical debates and discourses.

I. Introducing the broader debate: The (re-)construction dilemma of sub-Saharan African civil spheres in peacebuilding and development processes.

The rapid invasion, occupation and partition of African territory by European powers (Germany, Italy, France, Britain and Spain) between 1876 and 1912 - known as the Scramble for Africa - and the Berlin Conference of 1884-85, resulted in the colonisation of almost all of Africa, with Liberia and the Ethiopian Empire (Abyssinia), being the exceptions. In Comaroff and Comaroff's words (1999, p. 23):

> Throughout Africa, it gave birth, under the midwifery of the imperial state, to a world of difference, discrimination, and doubling: a world in which national, rights bearing citizenship and primordial, ethicized subjection – modernist interventions both – were made to exist side by side, a world composed of 'civilized' colonists governed by European constitutionalism and 'native tribes' ruled by so-called customary law.

The subsequent process of decolonisation in sub-Saharan Africa produced more civil wars than (liberal) civil societies. Independence around the mid-twentieth century led to political violence, in some instances genocide, as well as constantly deepening impoverishment of the region. According to the Upsala Conflict Data Program / Peace Research Institute Oslo armed conflict database (Straus, 2012), between 1946 - 2010 around thirty countries in sub-Saharan Africa (that is 65% of all states in the region) experienced armed conflict.[3] Notably, most of them were civil wars. More recently, political violence in the region is declining in frequency and intensity. As pointed out by Straus (2012), civil wars in the late 2000s dropped to less than half in comparison to the mid-1990s. In an attempt to rebuild and reconstruct these fragile states (and their societies) the international community has deployed a total of 27 peacekeeping and/or observer missions in the past, and currently runs nine peacekeeping operations across

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[3] See: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (22/05/2014) UCDP Conflict Encyclopaedia: www.ucdp.uu.se/database, Uppsala University, accessed on 22.05.2014

the African continent.[4] These peacekeeping missions are usually followed by several peacebuilding operations and initiatives as well as various development programmes and plans led by the international community. The results, however, have been rather disappointing and large parts of sub-Saharan Africa remain in an acute economic crisis, marginalised from the international sphere and politically volatile. External or international efforts to establish peace and foster sustainable development are repeatedly criticised for imposing top-down or culturally insensitive approaches to re-build these states (e.g. Duffield 2001, Lederach 1997, 2010, Goetschel and Hagmann 2009, Richmond and Mitchell 2011, Wennman 2010). The list of criticisms is long; they range from disregarding self-determination, local ownership, cultural particularism, or the everyday realities and challenges of the very people affected; to perceiving liberal peacebuilding and development operations as neo-colonial or imperialist endeavours. In response, there has been a burgeoning interest in the potential, role and involvement of local civil society in peacebuilding and development processes among academics and practitioners. (Re)enforcing, (re)creating, (re)building or strengthening civil society, has become the new legitimising toolkit for external interventions and peacebuilding and development agendas. Prescriptions and slogans like "strengthening civil society initiatives" or "enhancing civil society participation" have arisen as key ingredients in the language of peacebuilding agendas, priority plans and strategies. In short, the promise of a vibrant and democracy-committed civil society often serves as a universal panacea towards democratisation and hence peace and development in fragile states. Civil society simply emerged as "one of those things (like development, education, or the environment) that no reasonable person can be against. The only question to be asked of civil society today seems to be: How do we get more of it? " (Ferguson, 2006, p. 91).

In light of the above, a growing number of scholars have started to examine the role and functions of local civil societies in building a deeply-embedded peace into a society as a whole (e.g. Fitzduff 2004, Paffenholz 2010; Paffenholz and Spurk 2006; Rethink in collaboration with Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, & World Affairs, Georgetown University, Conference Report 2011; van Tongeren, Brenk, Hellema and

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[4] See: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/current.shtml, last visit 13.07.2014

Verhoeven 2005). Undoubtedly, all these contributions help us to get a more thorough understanding of the potentials of local civil societies to contribute to the peacebuilding and development process of a conflict-shattered state. What most authors generally tend to overlook, however, is that civil society, as an intellectual construct of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century capitalist Western society, never really matched the realities of social and political life in fragile states outside the Occidental World. There is very little critique of, or thorough reflection upon, the consequences of importing a liberal notion of civil society to non-Western regions. To put it another way, the historical, socio-ethnographic and local context of civil society as well as an understanding on its own terms, remains often unaddressed in peacebuilding and development research. By and large, civil society has become an uncontested idea(l). Accounts on the role, functions, potentials or activities of civil society in peacebuilding processes seem to be frequently detached from a considerable body of (predominantly postcolonial) literature that questions the usefulness of the concept of civil society in non-Western environments (e.g. Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Chatterjee, 2004; Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999; Datzberger, 2015b *forthcoming*; Ferguson, 2006; Ferguson and Gupta, 2002; Harbeson, Rothschild and Chazan, 1994; Ikelegbe, 2001; Kaviraj and Khilnani, 2001; Lewis 2001, Lumumba-Kasongo, 2005; Mamdani, 1996; Orvis, 2001). Implicitly all these authors share one core argument, namely, that a liberal and also normative notion of civil society cannot be equated with the actual societal and political experience as well as social modes of organisation.

Above all, throughout the postcolonial period, Africa's general experience with democracy has been a paradoxical one. The everyday life of Africans is firmly entrenched in three distinct legacies. These include precolonial traditions and institutions; colonial economic, social, and administrative structures; and frameworks designed during the anticolonial struggle (Chazan, 1994 pp. 67 – 105). From colonial rule onwards the civil sphere became a constant subject of externally and internally led de- and re-construction processes. In the attempt to sweep up the shambles of the past, re-construction efforts of the civil sphere are based on a societal morality of the liberal West. Yet, these liberalisation processes are continuously challenged by persisting forms of neopatrimonialism (which are not only culturally rooted but were also intensified during colonialism) and patriarchal power structures as well as informal political and economic systems. In short, one encounters corruption, tribalism,

ethnicism and regionalism in varying degrees throughout Sub-Saharan African societies. Thus, after several devastating peacebuilding and development failures during the 1990s, the international community realised that peacebuilding and development had to go beyond the sheer technicalities of instituting free market economies, multiparty electoral systems or a broader human rights agenda. Projects and programmes started to engage in efforts to promote norms and values reflecting liberal thought patterns from the bottom-up. Activities usually range from human rights training to mainstreaming gender equality or the promotion of community based development. Rapidly, civil society emerged as *the* legitimising entry point towards a liberal peacebuilding, development and democratisation agenda. The local turn did not come without its unintended consequences, however, in that strengthening local civil societies has gradually emerged as a donor-driven rather than an endogenous, locally-driven and socially engineered process. While local civil society actors are continuously strengthened, capacitated or trained to ensure participatory and communal involvement and voice, those CSOs also became the safety net for dealing with the casualties of economic liberalisation and privatisation (cf. Kaldor, 2003). In many fragile states, international and local CSOs have emerged as a parallel actor to complement and carry out functions that the state is too weak, incapable, or unwilling to perform. But also the history of non-fragile, middle income countries has repeatedly shown that the instrumentalisation of the civil sphere should not be treated too lightly. Frequently, an imposed (neo-)liberal agenda led to a gradual retreat of the state, thereby shifting more and more responsibilities towards the civil sphere. Since the late 1970s, the radical transformation in Latin America has served as a case in point. In most Latin American countries, civil society has surfaced as a parallel actor next to the state in the midst of a weakening public welfare system that struggles to take care of people in need (Balbis 2011, Cammet and MacLean 2014).

What makes the Sierra Leonean case interesting is that it not only highlights how funding allocations or liberal interventionism hamper the agency of the country's civil sphere but also that there are several additional factors that have to be taken into consideration. On the one hand, abject poverty and pressing developmental needs restrict many locals from independently engaging in the domains of social life where public opinion and opposition can be formed (see Chapter 6). On the other hand, the country's history of state formation also shaped the social fabrics of Sierra Leone's

civil society as we encounter it today (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6). Sierra Leone is a country full of socially entangled dualisms grounded in the intersections of a primordial and civic sphere. To be more specific, it will be argued that present efforts to strengthen civil society landscapes in fragile states not only heavily depend on but also intrude into the political culture of a society (Almond and Verba 1963). That is, how political life is socially engineered through people's predominant beliefs, attitudes, values, ideals, sentiments, and evaluations about the political system of their country, and the role of the self in that system (ibid. p. 12). As early as the late 1950s, prominent Western scholars pondering the concept of democracy (e.g. Robert Dahl; Seymour Martin Lipset; Dankwart Rustow) have argued that, both classical and modern forms of democracy require a distinctive set of political values and orientations from its citizens. These are not only manifested through voting but also through high levels of political interest, information, knowledge, opinion formation, and organisational membership (Diamond, 1994). Their accounts of democracy gives rise to several questions that are frequently disregarded when it comes to studying the (re)construction of societal order through liberal interventions in non-Western contexts. First, mainstream peacebuilding and development research does not focus on the extent to which the political culture in post-conflict sub-Saharan Africa actually differs from the Western ideal. Second, if the political culture of a society is defined as being closely related to the attitudes towards the political system, it should be questioned whether a liberal understanding of civil society is applicable to the context of sub-Saharan African states. Third, to a large extent, the issue of political culture is also closely interwoven with questions on the nature and characteristics of state-society relations and a societal renegotiation thereof.

Against this introductory background, and by drawing on the case study of Sierra Leone, the thesis will explore the following **research question**:

Why are civil society landscapes in non-Western fragile states at risk of being gradually depoliticised?

II. Method

The research question was formulated by means of deductive logic in the course of a four-year long research process from 2010 - 2014. In its initial stages the project

started with a general inquiry about the role of civil society during the country's peacebuilding and development stage and the thesis was based on a very broad spectrum of information. It was during field research stays in 2011 and 2012 that the main topic and research question of the thesis became more and more evident. By means of deductive reasoning, the main assumption and core argument about a incremental depoliticisation of the civil sphere was gradually further narrowed down to specific causalities (e.g. historical, social or political) that explain this phenomenon in much greater detail.

Accordingly, the thesis approach is to interlink the theory with empirical data collected in Sierra Leone and to draw on distinct but nonetheless closely related areas from humanities and social sciences. These include: international relations, sociology, political science, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, and peacebuilding and development studies. As the ensuing sections will specify, the thesis' overall research design incorporates a mixed methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative forms of data collection.

Sierra Leone as an exploratory single case study (Pilot Study)

The thesis applies a single case study approach combining illustrative, exploratory and critical elements. It is illustrative in that it resembles a plausibility probe, which is understood here as an intermediary step between the testing of an assumption and causal explanation. This allows the researcher to sharpen an assumption or theory, to refine operationalisation processes and analytical frameworks; or to explore the suitability of a particular case as a vehicle for testing a theory before engaging in a costly and more time-consuming comparative research effort. Therefore, following Gerring (2004, p. 342), the thesis approaches the method of a single case study as an "intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of the understanding of a larger class of (similar) units. A unit connotes a spatially bounded phenomenon, e.g. observed at a single point in time or over some delimited period of time". In examining the Sierra Leonean case it is expected to lay the groundwork for a future comparative research agenda. Hence, Sierra Leone is used as a pilot study in an attempt to examine a correlative relationship of peacebuilding and development processes and how they affect the agency and voice of the civil sphere. More generally, plausibility probes, be they exploratory and/or illustrative, can serve the researcher as an important tool in theory development. In informing while

simultaneously testing an assumption, single case studies open up new perspectives for reassessing and re-evaluating social phenomena. Single case study approaches are therefore applied as a preliminary step in exploring a relatively under researched and puzzling occurrence. The ultimate aim is to generate new knowledge. This allows the researcher a high degree of flexibly and independence with regard to the overall research design and the way data was collected and analysed.

How data was collected, applied and used

The project draws on expert interviews and primary and secondary literature, as well as on 'grey literature' in the form of non-published discussion papers, concept notes, articles, background papers, and transcripts of speeches. A considerable amount of qualitative and quantitative data was collected and gathered over the past four years. Qualitative data was obtained through interviews with 41 CSOs (of which two were INGOs run by locals), 5 CBOs and local grassroots associations, 8 youth and street clubs, 2 communities, 3 Sierra Leonean scholars in the fields of political science, history and peace and conflict studies (two from Forah Bay College and one from University of Richmond), 2 Government Officials, 1 female Paramount Chief and numerous informal conversations with ordinary Sierra Leoneans. A full list of all interviewees, including times and locations, is provided in Appendix 1. In view of the fact that some interviewees requested anonymity the thesis applies an encoding system (see numbers next to interviewees in Appendix 1). With only a few exceptions and for matters of consistency, the author also applied the encoding system when interviewees had noted that their viewpoints could be disclosed. All interviews were semi-structured but revolved around the same set of questions during both field research stays. A full list of questions is listed in Appendix 2.

In addition, an extensive mapping analysis was compiled at the beginning of 2011 and regularly updated until March 2014. It serves as a quantitative tool to compare the representation and agenda-setting of local versus international CSOs in the on-going peacebuilding and development process. The mapping, attached to the thesis as Appendix 3, encompasses in total 358 registered civil society organisations of which 213 are local CSOs and 145 INGOs. Data for the mapping analysis was retrieved and compiled from:

- UNIPSIL (United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Support Office Sierra Leone)
- OSSA (UN Office of the Special Advisor on Africa)
- Global Hand
- Directory of Development Organizations Sierra Leone, Volume I.B. / Africa, Edition 2010
- Accountability Alert Sierra Leone

Methodological challenges and limitations

Due to the unpredictable nature inherent in both the institutional life and funding allocations from donors of INGOs and CSOs, the thesis recognises that the mapping is not fully complete and therefore subject to change. Correspondingly, the author cannot exclude the fact that some of the local CSOs listed in Appendix 3 are either briefcase CSOs, have already moved down to the status of a CBO, or are no longer active. Whenever it was evident that an organisation did not, or no longer exists, the list was updated accordingly (as at March 2014). In short, the mapping serves as a quantitative tool to provide a general image of Sierra Leone's civil society landscape and snap shot of its specific actors and peacebuilding and development functions.

Furthermore, the research project anticipated conducting interviews in Freetown, Bo, Makeni, Kabala and Koido. While extensive research was possible in the first four listed locations, the author was unable to access Koido during the research stay as both field research stays were conducted during rainy season and heavy rainfalls made certain parts of the country almost impassable. Nevertheless, the author managed to interview experts in Freetown who either work for local CSOs in Koido/Kono district or implement projects in various rural communities in the area.

III. The thesis contribution to current research agendas about civil society in peacebuilding and development processes

Paffenholz' (2010) work provides an impressive account of past and current research agendas about the role and potential of civil society in peacebuilding. Crucially, she observes that the rapid growth in civil society peacebuilding initiatives from the mid-1990s onward is not matched by an accompanying research agenda. In

her view, only a few publications explicitly deal with the subject, which she categorises as follows (2010, p.58):

- Actor-oriented, lessons-learned studies that aim to understand who is doing what (e.g.: van Tongeren et.al. 2005)

- Single actor-oriented studies that analyse the role of particular civil society actors (mostly NGOs) in peacebuilding (e.g.: Aall 2001; Barnes 2005; Pouligny 2005; Diebel and Sticht 2005; Richmond and Cary 2006; Goodhand 2006)

- Studies that analyse civil society itself as an actor within the framework of the liberal peace (Bendaña 2003, Paris 2004, pp. 179-211 and 2006, Richmond 2005, pp. 127 -148, Heathershaw 2008, pp. 607-609 and pp. 616-618, Galvanek 2013, Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013)

- Studies assessing the effectiveness of NGO peace work in general or evaluating the impact of civil society initiatives (Anderson, Olson, and Doughty 2003) or evaluating the impact of specific (mostly conflict resolution workshops) civil society initiatives (D'Estrée et al. 2001; Çuadar 2004; Ohanyan with Lewis 2005; Atieh et al. 2005); while a number of assessments and evaluations of particular projects have taken place most of them are not publicly available.

- Country case studies: Folley (1996) on El Salvador; Paffenholz (2003) on Somalia and (1998) on Mozambique; Belloni (2001) on Bosnia-Herzegovina; Patrick (2001) on Timor-Leste; Orjuela (2003) and (2004) on Sri Lanka, Challand (2005) on Palestine.

In the view of the fact that the thesis perceives and approaches peacebuilding as closely intertwined with development, the author suggests including two additional categories and analytical angles to Paffenholz' original list. Although Paffenholz recognises the development dimension of peacebuilding in what she calls "sustainable peacebuilding", she also asserts that "the framework of liberal peace gives justification for civil society support, whereas the framework for sustainable peacebuilding gives practitioners directions for how to support civil society" (p. 59). While her distinction is generally accurate, it still sidelines a small but important body of literature that critically reflects upon the relationship of development assistance and civil society in

transitional (mainly non-Western) societies. More explicitly, it is felt that two additional categories should be added, namely:

- Studies that critically explore the relationship of civil society and development assistance in fragile and developing states (e.g. Eade 2000, Howell and Pearce 2001, Van Rooy 1998, Weijer and Klines 2012)
- Critical studies on how civil society is (re-)built, created and constructed in the peacebuilding and development process of a country (Cubitt 2012, Verkoren and Van Leeuwen 2012, Van Leeuwen 2012)

In making use of a country case study approach, the thesis situates itself in the last category within this broad spectrum of analytical directions. Notably, the critical study of the re-construction process of civil society in the non-Occidental world is still a growing field in the interdisciplinary ambits of peacebuilding and development studies. Even more so are studies on the depoliticisation of the civil sphere in non-Western fragile states. Thus far, there are only two contributions (M'Cormack-Hale, 2013; Cubitt, 2013) that address how civil society has become subject of re-construction in the peacebuilding and development process of Sierra Leone. However, both focus merely on the influence of the international community and how this led to the instrumentalisation of the country's civil society landscapes. The thesis' original contribution will be in pointing to two additional factors (political culture and how poverty affects civic activism) that cause depoliticisation (thus not only instrumentalisation) of the civil sphere. It is also the first study that thoroughly assesses this phenomenon through an extensive mapping analysis conducted over the period of four years in the case of Sierra Leone. Similarly, the thesis suggests a matrix of local factors to further substantiate the argument of how the political culture of a country can aggravate depoliticisation effects as well. Lastly, a working definition of the term depoliticisation will be elaborated and put forward in the context of peacebuilding and development processes in fragile states.

IV. Disambiguations.

What is peacebuilding and how does it relate to development?

Various definitions of peacebuilding can be found in academic and practitioners' circles. A definition that capture the broad contours of these different definitions characterises peacebuilding as:

> A strategic process involving a synergetic series of actions targeted at addressing the sources of conflict and supporting the structures and capacities for peace; usually includes a variety of institutional and socioeconomic measures, at the local or national level aimed at institutionalising justice, building positive peace (McCandless and Bangura, 2007, p.101).

In addition to the above definition, peacebuilding is further perceived as a post-war activity, which, in an ideal case, leads to sustainable and long-lasting development. In Lederach's words: "When things are suddenly headed towards a [peace] agreement the work is hardly over. It has only begun" (2005, p.37). Peacebuilding is therefore understood in Galtung's terms, as the transition from negative peace (absence of violence) to positive peace (absence of any structural violence), and consequently intertwined with a broader development agenda. Consequently, peacebuilding and development are approached as mutually constitutive, yet context-specific.

The thesis will approach the term development in the same manner as World Development,[5] which defines it as:

> A process of change involving nations, economies, political alliances, institutions, groups and individuals. Development processes occur in different ways and at all levels: inside the family, the firm and the farm, locally, provincially, nationally, and globally.

Is Sierra Leone still a fragile state?

The concept of "fragile state" is not firmly defined either academically or across development agencies (Holden and Pagel 2013, pp. 8-9). For instance, the World Bank does "not presently define conflict-affected states as such definitions could reflect a political bias. Governments of client countries may define conflict differently than

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[5] World Development is a multi-disciplinary international journal devoted to the study and promotion of world development. Its impact factor is 1.733 and it is ranked among the top journals in development studies. For more information see: http://www.journals.elsevier.com/world-development/,

international institutions such as the World Bank".[6] Experts on the subject also continue to disagree about what constitutes fragility. However, while there is no commonly accepted global list of fragile states, there is at least a consensus on some clear-cut examples (e.g. Afghanistan or Somalia).[7]

The UK government's Department for International Development (DfID) nevertheless operates on a working definition and holds that a fragile state (2005, p.7):

> (…) covers countries where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor. The most important functions of the state for poverty reduction are territorial control, safety and security, capacity to manage public resources, delivery of basic services, and the ability to protect and support the ways in which the poorest people sustain themselves. DfID does not limit its definition of fragile states to those affected by conflict.

The Operational Plan (2011-2015) of DfID's Governance & Fragile Sates Department further states that fragile and conflict affected states are furthest behind on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with only 10% of them on track to halve poverty and hunger by 2015. On the whole, out of DfID's 28 priority countries, 20 are considered to be fragile.[8] Similarly, for the OECD (2011):

> a fragile region or state has weak capacity to carry out basic governance functions and lacks the ability to develop mutually constructive relations with society. Fragile states are also more vulnerable to internal or external shocks such as economic crises or natural disasters. More resilient states exhibit the capacity and legitimacy of governing a population and its territory. They can manage and adapt to changing social needs and expectations, shifts in elite and other political agreements, and growing institutional complexity. Fragility and resilience should be seen as shifting points along a spectrum.

On the basis of this definition, the OECD-DAC (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee) 2013 report on fragile states focuses on 47 countries. Sierra Leone is one of them.

Since the end of the civil war (1991-2002), Sierra Leone's transition from conflict to peace and development has often been portrayed as a success story. On 31

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[6] World Bank: Fragile and Conflict Situations FAQ,
http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/STRATEGIES/EXTLICUS/0,,menuPK:511784~pagePK:64171540~piPK:64171528~theSitePK:511778,00.html, last visit 15.07.2014
[7] DfID (2005) p. 7.
[8] The operational plan does not specify which countries among DfID's current 28 priority countries are considered as fragile. According to DfID's annual report 2012-13 current priority countries include: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, South Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

March 2014, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) completed its mission drawdown and transferred its responsibilities to the UN country team consisting of 19 agencies, funds and programmes.[9] The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) is eager to continue this trajectory away from the country's violent past to become a beacon of development. The Agenda for Prosperity, launched in July 2013, anticipates that Sierra Leone will become a middle-income country by 2035, and a net lender within 50 years, with 80% of its population above the poverty line. Following three consecutive peaceful elections (2002, 2007, 2012), Sierra Leone was recently classified as a 'Low Income State' and is no longer considered as a 'Fragile State' by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). However, in alignment with DfID's and the OECD's above-depicted definitions of state fragility, the thesis still considers the country to be fragile. The significant achievements in Sierra Leone since 2002, notwithstanding, the country is still in the lowest ranks of the Human Development Index (HDI) and various challenges remain. Part II of the thesis will further delve into this point.

V. Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into three main sections, Part I: *Theorising, Analysing and Assessing Civil Society in Peacebuilding and Development Processes*; Part II: *Civil Society in Sierra Leone. Exploratory Case Study* and Part III: *Peacebuilding and the Depoliticisation of Civil Society in Sierra Leone*.

Part I sets the theoretical, conceptual and analytical scene for the thesis as a whole. It critically reflects upon how civil society is theoretically approached in current peacebuilding and development discourses, fills conceptual gaps and suggests an analytical framework to be applied to the case study of Sierra Leone. More generally, Chapters 1, 2 and 3 are intended to challenge common theoretical and practical perceptions as to how scholarship and practice currently approach, analyse and assess civil society as actors with specific functions in peacebuilding and development processes.

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[9] For more information see: http://unipsil.unmissions.org/, last visit 12.05.2014.

Chapter One starts off with a recapitulation of and critical reflections on recurrent peacebuilding and development discourses in relation to the civil sphere in fragile states. In identifying areas that warrant further examination within ongoing peacebuilding and development discourses, it arrives at the following conclusions that will inform the ensuing discussions of the thesis as a whole. First, research and practice continue to operate on the basis of a westernised usage of the term even though the boundaries of the "state" and "civil society" can be blurred and hazy in non-Western fragile states. Hence, alternative approaches towards civil society are an extension of liberal values and idea(l)s rather than paving the way towards new analytical dimensions and avenues. While current discourses clearly state the need to give voice to alternative, oppressed actors, most authors do not analyse these alternative voices (cf. Paffenholz 2010). This is unfortunate, as precisely those voices can lay the groundwork for new alternatives. Similarly, Chapter 1 argues that recurring debates tend to overlook a striking phenomenon when it comes to strengthening the civil sphere: the depoliticisation of civil society landscapes in fragile states. Ongoing debates on and around the issues of local ownership, self-determination, cultural particularism and everyday resistance did actually not bring about new insights as to how those political voices from below are socially engineered. In this regard, political culture, as a hitherto unexplored terrain, is expected to provide new insights regarding the matrix and fabrics of conflict ravaged societies. The political culture of a society is not only a contributing factor towards depoliticisation but also opens up the space to rethink how we define and approach the concept of civil society in non-Western environments.

Chapter Two responds to and builds on the theoretical engagements in Chapter 1 by bringing forward the argument that when it comes to our understanding of civil society in the non-Occidental developing world, research and practice has to shift settled modes of thinking. In setting up some conceptual parameters for the remainder of the thesis, it will put forward a broad definition of the Western usage of the term. It will then continue to highlight how the diffusion of norms, that is to say, how a liberal interpretation of the concept of civil society became the operational and definitional baseline for many leading international organisations (IOs) and other international actors engaging in the rebuilding of fragile states. In challenging a liberal usage of the concept in post-conflict sub-Saharan African states, it will point to the need to shift

settled modes of thinking and acknowledge that meanings of civil society have to be placed in a historical, contemporary and local context. This is a necessary first step in order to address the thesis' overall question of why civil society actors are at risk of being gradually depoliticised. This further implies the need to question our objective thinking and accept local characteristics that are already part of, and grounded in, existing experiences. Against this background, it suggests a matrix of factors to better approach and contextualise (most) sub-Saharan African civil societies. The matrix is expected to provide useful insights into the political culture and social fabrics of a society and how political activism, agency and voice are socially engineered.

Chapter Three sets forth how the thesis will analytically and methodologically examine the depoliticisation phenomenon in the empirical Part II. It first provides an overview of the main international mechanisms and frameworks that support but also evaluate the effectiveness of civil society in developing countries and fragile states. In doing so, it addresses two simple yet important questions for the remainder of the thesis. First, who are the typical *actors* that ought to be strengthened, (re-)built or (re-)constructed based on a Western and liberal notion of civil society? Second, what *functions*, activities and tasks are these actors usually expected and funded to carry out and perform? While the thesis does not flesh out policy-oriented recommendations on the effectiveness of civil society actors, or what civil society has to or should contribute to peace and development of a fragile state, it will make use of both (*actor* and *functional*) perspectives in its own distinct way. Actor-oriented frameworks are used to facilitate an understanding of the characteristics of civil society while simultaneously widening the space for voices from below. Functional approaches, on the other hand, are applied to classify and characterise their activities. A combination of both approaches will be used as a methodological tool to assess and explain why civil society actors in Sierra Leone are at risk of being depoliticised through the functions they are funded to carry out.

In applying the theoretical and analytical framework set out in Part I of the thesis, the ensuing empirical Part II will then illustrate why settled modes of thinking about strengthening Sierra Leone's civil sphere need to be reconceptualised. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 place Sierra Leone's present-day civil society landscape into a postcolonial

and socio-historical context and elaborate why the country's civil sphere, despite liberal peacebuilding and development efforts, lacks agency and voice.

Chapter Four reaches far back into history in order to delineate how social and political features of Sierra Leonean civil society evolved under completely different circumstances in time and space. Accordingly, it will provide a short introductory background to the demographics and current developmental status of the country. It then continues to briefly delineate Sierra Leone's early precolonial and colonial history and the country's societal structures of the civil sphere therein and highlights how the civil sphere became gradually more formalised, mainly by the Krio society under the influence of British colonial rule. Hence, the chapter sets the historical scene for ensuing discussions about the bifurcated state and how colonialism sowed the seeds for a primordial and civic public in the same land. As pointed out by Harris (2013, p.166), while the British colonial administrative method of "indirect rule" reconfigured local political hierarchies through capitalist and governmental penetration, many societal features in the form of political and social practices remained or were even strengthened, including: chieftaincy, spiritual beliefs, judicial and land practices or secret societies.

Chapter Five delineates how the country's civil society landscape evolved from 1951 until the end of the civil war in 2002. From independence onwards, liaisons between civic groups and the government were either suppressed or co-opted by a corrupt regime. In many instances the societal logic of neo-patrimonial power hierarchies also infiltrated civil society actors (e.g. Sierra Leone's Labour Union during Stevens' rule). Nonetheless, Sierra Leone experienced notable moments of democratic openings (such as the student protests in 1977 and 1991 or the public demonstrations in 2000), stemming from a politically active and mainly Freetown-based civil sphere. All in all, the country's civil society landscape surfaced as a supressed yet politically active and, later, also humanitarian actor. At the same, time the century-long accumulation of grievances in combination with a number of tragic events transformed fragments of an emerging youth culture (thus, segments of the civil sphere) into a bloody rebellion. In this regard, Chapter 5 expounds how Sierra Leone's civil war emerged and was fought between several different fractions, what role civil society played in it and, more importantly, how the war changed the political leeway,

influence and agency of the civil sphere. The analytical framework presented in Chapter 3 will be applied to identify what kind of actors appeared and which functions they undertook. Overall, the war created an exceptional vacuum in which CSOs could mushroom and emerge. The 1990s were characterised by a resurgence of a vibrant CSO landscape with an interest in establishing peace and making the transition towards democracy and sustainable development. However, in spite of Sierra Leone's vibrant and politically active civil sphere during the war, only a few selected CSOs were actually able to contribute to the peace negotiations at a national level.

Chapter Six commences with a short background to the most crucial developments during the country's peacebuilding and development phase and the role, as well as involvement and reconstruction, of civil society therein. Its main intention is to flesh out the characteristics of civil society as we encounter them in Sierra Leone today. Particular attention will be paid to voices from the civil sphere and how Sierra Leonean's perceive their own civil society landscape themselves. In this context, the chapter identifies and discusses a striking phenomenon. Despite growing attention and financial support towards local CSOs and a very vibrant civil society during and shortly after the war, in the later stages of the peacebuilding process, Sierra Leone's civil sphere appears to be "toothless", "dormant" or "inactive" – phrases repeatedly used by interviewees. What is more, field research also revealed that civil society in Sierra Leone struggles with fragmentation, a top-down mentality among CSOs themselves and regionalism expressed in a salient urban–rural divide. In further examining what caused this depoliticisation phenomenon during the country's peacebuilding and development phase, Chapter 6 also elaborates on the interplay of local ownership and the influence of the international community. Lastly, the analytical framework presented in Chapter 3 will be once more applied to critically assess the empirical data gathered in both field research stays. It arrives at the conclusion that gradually CSOs emerged as *actors* who fulfil *functions* to complement services of the state. In addition, Sierra Leone's post-conflict phase experienced a noticeable return towards a political culture in which both the civic and the primordial publics strongly intersect.

Part III merges the theory (Part I) with empirical and historical findings (Part II). In doing so, Part III seeks to find explanations for the phenomenon of the

depoliticisation of Sierra Leone's civil sphere, while simultaneously exploring alternative and new entry points towards empowering and strengthening post-conflict societies during the transition from conflict towards peacebuilding and development.

Chapter Seven will advance three main arguments. First, it supports the consensus that civil society has become instrumentalised, serving a broader liberal peacebuilding and development agenda in numerous ways. The reasons for this phenomenon can be located in donors' "cherry picking" (Cubitt 2013) of only well-established actors, but also in weak state capacities (M'Cormack-Hale 2013) or a top-down mentality and bad coordination among local CSOs, to name a few. Second, a deeper inquiry into the cultural particularisms and political culture of Sierra Leone reveals that Ekeh's bifurcated state is very much alive. In other words, Western idea(l)s of participatory approaches and democracy are challenged by a persisting urban-rural divide as well as socially entrenched forms of neopatrimonialism, elite-loyalism and tribalism. This observation should not be misinterpreted as giving a sense that Sierra Leone's civil sphere is not open to or capable of establishing democratic and participatory societal structures. On the contrary, Sierra Leonean society finds itself currently in the midst of renegotiating those various intersections of a primordial and civic sphere. Yet efforts to strengthen the civil sphere concomitant with rigid monitoring mechanisms and evaluation frameworks frequently lack the aptitude to grant such processes enough leeway and time. Third, the effects colonialism has had on African societies are still reflected in the current monopolisation of wealth and power among a few (elites) next to a vast majority living in abject poverty. More concretely, abject poverty, human development and, above all, the lack of education affect civic activism and agency remain a scarcely addressed aspect in peacebuilding and development literature. Critically reflecting upon these entanglements, Chapter 7 argues for the need to re-conceptualise settled modes of thinking in order to further advance our knowledge about war-torn civil spheres in non-Western fragile states. It will explore how a society's political culture, as well as the matrix of local factors discussed in Chapter 2, may enhance our understanding as to how agency and voice is socially engineered. Yet, how values and norms that constitute a liberal civil society are going to be socially entrenched in the long haul should be the task of the Sierra Leonean civil sphere and not the Western researcher or practitioner. Though such an

organic progression cannot take place if the average Sierra Leonean is deprived of basic physiological needs.

PART I

Theorising, Analysing and Assessing Civil Society

in Peacebuilding and Development Processes

Chapter One

Civil society in peacebuilding and development discourses.
A critical assessment.

Scholarship, practice, policy-making and programming in the area of peacebuilding and development have emerged in response to the compelling recognition that conflict and development are deeply intertwined, as are the building of sustainable peace, human security and development (cf. McCandless and Karbo, 2011). There is widespread consensus in academia and amongst practitioners alike that peace cannot be separated from social and economic development and vice versa. Nonetheless, in theory, as in practice, interdisciplinary conversations as well as project and programme implementation remain challenged by different approaches to peacebuilding and development and their respective frameworks (cf. Jantzi and Jantzi, 2009). Remarkably, when it comes to the role or potential of civil society in peacebuilding and development processes, both realms share one common approach: strengthening, supporting, involving and even intervening through local civil society actors emerged as a legitimising toolkit for external efforts to build peace and sustain development. As Verkoren and van Leeuwen (2012, pp. 160–161) emphasise, in the field of development collaboration, during the 1980s, civil society grew to be the preferred instrument of development and it became an alternative to governments in providing development needs. The same can be observed in the realms of peacebuilding. After the end of the Cold War, and through the 1990s, the creation and consolidation of CSOs emerged as a central part of strategies for peace. Consequently, in the literature as well as practice, civil society emerged (with few exceptions to the rule[10]) as an idealised panacea and agent for both development and peace in fragile states.

This chapter reviews and assesses the most frequently occurring peacebuilding and development discussions in relation to the civil sphere. It will first elaborate on

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[10] See, for instance, Holmén's (2010) controversial book, *Snakes in Paradise: NGOs and the Aid Industry in Africa*.

how and why civil society has become an object of reconstruction within the realms of liberal peacebuilding and development assistance. An overview will then be provided of the major critiques of how a liberal agenda, or attempts at societal transformation based on a liberal idea(l), affect local (civil) societies. With the realisation that such a review is far from being extensive, it will highlight some of the most frequently recurring discourses related to the civil sphere in the literature. This critical reflection is intended to set the theoretical scene for the remainder of the thesis. Successively, the chapter arrives at two main conclusions.

First, apart from Africanist scholars and literature (e.g. Orvis, 2001 or Ikelegbe, 2001) only a few peacebuilding researchers have started to question whether Western (that is to say liberal) conceptualisations of civil society are indeed applicable to environments where societal structures differ tremendously, both historically or culturally, from that of the Occidental World (cf. Datzberger, 2015b *forthcoming*). For now, it must be stressed that mainstream research and practice (and most of its critics) continue to apply an intellectualised Western/liberal usage of the term, even though the boundaries of the state and civil society are frequently blurred and hazy in fragile non-Western states. In other words, alternative approaches towards civil society are an extension of liberal values and idea(l)s rather than paving the way towards new theoretical and analytical dimensions. Chapter 2 addresses these analytical voids and outlines in more detail why societal fabrics and political culture should not be overlooked in the attempt to explain causes and effects of depoliticisation occurring in peacebuilding processes in non-Western fragile states.

Second, the chapter also introduces the issue of depoliticisation as a phenomenon that has been sidelined in past and present debates revolving around civil society in peacebuilding and development processes. While Chapter 1 will, for now, only highlight that the depoliticisation probelmatique is a marginalised theme, the empirical Part II will then explain and assess why it has occurred in the case of Sierra Leone.

Moreover, in agreement with the commonly established consensus that post-war civil societies have become instrumentalised to serve a broader liberal peacebuilding and development agenda in several ways, Chapter 1 further sheds light

on another frequently disregarded factor - the political culture of a society. The political culture can not only aggravate depoliticisation effects but also reveal a significant amount of information about how local political voice and consequently the actions and reactions (positive as well as negative) towards democratisation, peacebuilding and development processes are socially engineered.

1.1. Liberal peacebuilding and development approaches towards civil society.

The concept of "liberal peace", broadly defined, goes as far back as classical liberal thought, suggesting that democracy and free trade reduces the incidence of war (cf. Oneal et al., 1996). The *Zeitgeist* of the democratisation processes in Southern Europe and in Latin America, from the 1970s onwards, and the liberalisation of Eastern Europe, since the late 1980s, shaped the pro-liberalisation rhetoric of peacebuilding and development discourse in the early-to-mid 1990s. The appeal of both modern democracy and the free market came to be seen as a panacea and magical formula for peace and development in conflict-affected countries around the world. Therefore, it is worth recalling that liberalism, despite its variants from neo-, to social and moderate, can be roughly characterised by reference to four distinct features or perspectives (Gray, 1995, p. 86). These include *individualism*, which asserts the moral primacy of the person against any collectivity; *equalitarianism*, which confers the same basic moral status on all human beings; *universalism*, which affirms the moral unity of the species; and *meliorism*, which asserts the open-ended improvability of human life, through the use of critical reason. However, soon liberal peace and development interventions had to face the dilemma that non-Western and often century-long suppressed post-conflict societies never experienced a political culture based on freedom, equality and societal as well as political emancipation in the way that it had been cultivated over the centuries in the Occidental World. As the child of modernity and European political theory, liberalism continues to be repeatedly challenged by the nature of conflict-shattered societies – especially outside the Western World. Many of those societies are scarred by the legacies of colonial rule, societal, economic, political and/or ethnical disorder, elite capture and severe poverty. Specifically, the clearly demarcated liberal boundaries of state/society and politics/economics frequently do not match the structure, social stratification and everyday realties of local societies that are supported or (re)constructed based on a liberal ideal.

Realising that peacebuilding and development had to go beyond the sheer technicalities of instituting free market economies, multiparty electoral systems or a broader human rights agenda, international peacebuilding and development actors started to engage in efforts to promote norms reflecting liberal thought patterns, as we encounter them in the West. In practice, such efforts led to externally driven agendas, literally "liberalising" the civil sphere in question by means of all kinds of projects or programming on the ground. To give an example, in 2009, the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF) provided USD 140,000 of funding to Sierra Leone for a project entitled 'Attitudinal and Behavioural Change (ABC) Secretariat' (see United Nations PBF/SLE/A-6, 2010). The project description reads as follows[11]:

> One of the causative factors of the decade long civil war is the negative attitude of Sierra Leoneans towards state property and the citizenry. It is the view of government to change this negative trend by re-orientating the minds of our citizens through continuous engagement and discussions on the need to change their attitude towards work, authority, state property and fellow citizens. There are challenges the country needs to overcome in order to achieve the intended goal; principal among these is the fear of change manifested by the tendency for Sierra Leoneans to continue doing things that are not in the interest of the country.

Project language, such as "re-orientating the minds of our citizens", goes hand in hand with Duffield's (2001, p. 11) general observation that apart from inducing liberal institutions, peace and development programming and interventions are also directed toward "transforming dysfunctional and war-affected societies into cooperative, representative and especially, stable entities". Moreover, as the project description highlights, when it comes to civil society, liberal agendas place less emphasis on the self-determination of a war-torn society and instead focus more on societal transformation of war-affected societies based on liberal idea(l)s. To strengthen this point further, it is worth briefly listing the PBF project's immediate objectives, which included:

1. Citizens understand their roles and responsibilities, and exercise their rights.
2. Sierra Leoneans demonstrate responsibility and commitment to upholding the laws, values and ideals, which promote peaceful coexistence and development in their country.
3. Increased transparency and accountability with enhanced productivity in major sectors of the economy.

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[11] Document: PBF/SLE/A-6/. PBF project documents can be downloaded at the UNDP MPTF website: http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/country/SLE, last visit 05 July 2014.

4. The Attitudinal Change Secretariat is capacitated for sustained project implementation.

In addition, the project implementation encompassed the production and distribution of around 750,000 promotional materials and leaflets, the printing and distribution of approximately 2,000 T-shirts and the broadcast of pertinent discussions on radio and TV.

The Sierra Leone "attitudinal change" project unequivocally exemplifies three essential developments. First, civil society is instrumentalised to serve in the implementation of a broader liberal agenda. As Chapter 3 will elaborate at length, civil society has become an approach, output, outcome and strategy in the realms of peacebuilding and development assistance. Second, the fact that the international community implements "attitudinal change" projects once again reconfirms that peacebuilding and development efforts frequently struggle with societal and cultural particularism, as well as the political culture of a society on the ground. Third, the project's objective of educating Sierra Leoneans about their roles and responsibilities in exercising their rights, hints at the lack of political involvement, influence and activism stemming from the civil sphere.

From a different perspective, the institutionalisation of a liberal agenda in fragile non-Western states presupposes the importing, transplanting and rooting of liberal values and norms to seemingly "illiberal" societies. In doing so, supporting civil society is geared towards the construction of a particular kind of social order, organised around the individual and his or her own rights (cf. Barkawi and Laffay, 2001). It targets peoples' principal beliefs, attitudes, values and ideals, thereby indirectly suggesting what roles the individual, the self, and the community should play in that system. Implicitly, it is about the reformation of the political culture of a society, which depending on a country's socio-economic and historical context, might or might not have led to conflict in the first place. Specifically, a liberal agenda starts from the premise that reforming state-society relations based on the societal norms of liberalism, creates and fosters responsive and legitimate institutions that can effectively deal with the peacebuilding and development process of a conflict-ravaged country. The (re)construction of a strong and vibrant civil society in post-conflict

environments thus became a key component of democratisation, peacebuilding and development efforts led by the international community.

This trend has led to a striking phenomenon, in that (re)building the civil sphere has gradually emerged as a donor driven, rather than endogenous process. The figures speak for themselves. There has been a rapid increase of funds by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation (OECD) countries via Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). While in 1985–1986, funding provided to CSOs amounted to USD 3.1 billion per year, it increased to USD 6.7 billion in 1999 and USD 7.1 billion in 2001 (Debiel and Sticht, 2005, p. 10). In comparison, Department for International Development (DfID) reports that in May 2013, it spent at least £694 million through CSOs in the period of 2011–12, of which £327 million were used by CSOs in DfID's country offices and £367 were channelled through the headquarters level. In total, £154 million went to Africa, £102 million to South Asia, and the remaining £71 million to other countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Libya and Yemen (ICAI, 2013). Likewise, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has established a relationship with over 30,000 CSOs worldwide.[12] Many of them are located in fragile and underdeveloped states and benefit from numerous long-term and short-term funding schemes monitored and administered by agencies such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF), to name the most prominent. Similarly, since 1981, the World Bank has strengthened its engagement with civil society. Projected CSO involvement in Bank-funded projects has grown over the past decade, from 21 per cent of the total number of projects in fiscal year 1990 to an estimated 81 per cent in fiscal year 2009. In addition, the World Bank has increasingly involved CSOs in the formulation of Country Assistance Strategies (CAS) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).[13]

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[12] For more detailed information access: http://www.un.org/en/civilsociety/, last visit 22 October 2013.
[13] For more detailed information access: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20093161~menuPK:220423~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html, last visit 22 October 2013.

The growing attention towards civil society in fragile states undoubtedly turned externally led programming into more inclusive and comprehensive processes. For instance, the second United Nations Secretary General's Report on the Aftermath of Conflict states, under point 36 (2012, p. 11):

> Political or economic exclusion, horizontal inequalities and discrimination undermine sustainable peace. A successful peacebuilding process must be transformative and create space for the wider set of actors – including, but not limited to, representatives of women, young people, victims and marginalized communities; community and religious leaders, civil society actors; and refugees and internally displaced persons – to participate on all aspects of post-conflict governance and recovery. Participation and dialogue enhance social cohesion and national ownership, and they leverage resources and knowledge for peacebuilding existent within post-conflict societies.

The language and rhetoric of the United Nations Secretary General's report clearly recognises complex transitions from conflict to peace as participatory processes, which can be nurtured but not entirely imposed through external assistance. More generally, since the landmark 1992 document *Agenda for Peace*, there has been a 'steady increase in the deployment of localism in the discourse and practice of the liberal peace, together with actions by local communities to harness, exploit, subvert and negotiate the internationally driven aspects of the local turn' (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013, p. 771).

This is not to imply that liberal peacebuilding and development agendas outside the Occidental World do not struggle with their own dilemmas. There is a vast body of literature critically assessing and reflecting upon the past and current practices, and consequently the effects of assisting and strengthening local societies in fragile states, based on the values of liberalism (e.g., Campell, Chandler and Sarabaratnam, 2011; Duffield, 2001; Jarstadt and Sisk, 2008; Newman, Paris and Richmond, 2009; Paris and Sisk 2009; Lederach, 1996, 2010; Richmond and Mitchell, 2011; Wennman, 2010). As Sisk explains (2008, p. 18), dilemmas inherent in liberal peace and development "are often interacting, there is seldom one dilemma at a time, and one dilemma may make another dilemma even more critical". Furthermore, in this regard, the hype on and around the realm of civil society, or the "local turn" (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013), in liberal peacebuilding and development frameworks could not escape from challenging new side effects, in practice, as in theory, directly affecting the civil sphere. "The local turn poses a fundamental challenge to the dominant ways

of thinking and acting about peace. Rather than peace being framed by a historical discourse of Western/Northern power and epistemological advancement, more democratic understandings of peace, politics and the state, as well as of the postcolonial international order, are emerging" (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013, p. 772).

1.2. Critical discourses on liberal peacebuilding and development approaches towards civil society

Critics of a liberal agenda are found in both disciplinary ambits – development and peacebuilding as well as peace and conflict studies. It is worth remembering that development paradigms entered the peacebuilding debates in the early 1990s, when development actors took on new tasks in response to the challenges posed by post-conflict peacebuilding (Paffenholz, 2010, p. 47). Although there is widespread consensus that peacebuilding and development are deeply intertwined, in theory, as in practice, interdisciplinary conversations, as well as project and programme implementation, remain challenged by different approaches to peacebuilding and development and their respective frameworks. Jantzi and Jantzi (2009) addressed this particular divergence in an article entitled "Development Paradigms and Peacebuilding Theories of Change: Analysing Embedded Assumptions in Development and Peacebuilding". They argue that peacebuilding and development discourse evolved along different paths, and at a different time in history. To support their claims, Jantzi and Jantzi contrast three main development paradigms, "modernisation", "growth with equity" and "liberation from dependency", with the peacebuilding theories of change elaborated by Church and Rogers (2006). In doing so, they arrive at an interesting conclusion: "regardless of the variation in the literature, when it comes to development practice, the overwhelming majority of development programmes are modernisation-based followed by a significant minority drawing on growth with equity" (p. 76). Consequently, "it appears that many of the peacebuilding theorists and practice models could be correlated with the modernisation frameworks in development" (p. 78). Against this background, the modernisation-oriented development paradigm (based on the values of liberalism as also addressed in Section 1.1) came under immense criticism from the mid-1970s to 1980s. The profiled proponents of a modernisation paradigm in the field of development include Rostow (1970), Inkeles (1975) and Sachs (2006). The profiled peacebuilding scholars leaning towards modernisation

models are for instance Boulding (1978) and Mitchell (2000). Critics of the modernisation paradigm mainly allege that development should not become a modernisation project and thus emerge as a path for *them* to become *us*. Borrowing Nordveit's words (2009, p.8): "Rarely, do we look at the background of problems and their historic evolution; and even more rarely do we consider the relation between the one and the other". In the search for alternatives, academics and practitioners alike began to question the underlying assumptions of modernisation theory and to implement different development models targeting the civil, and thus the local, sphere. The two most common intellectual streams that emerged out of this endeavour are commonly referred to as the "growth with equity" model and the "liberation from dependency" model. Renowned proponents in the development field of the "growth with equity model" include Schumacher (1973) and Chambers (1997), and in the peacebuilding field experts like Anderson (1999) or Lederach (1995). With regards to the latter, the "liberation from dependency" model, profiled development scholars are Freire (1968), Hope and Trimmel (1984), and Easterly (2001). In the field of peacebuilding profiled prominent scholars are Galtung (1996), Curle (1990), and Fisher and Zimina (2009). Depending on the preferred philosophical ideology and background, these peacebuilding and development paradigms typically synthesise the ideas of social theorists and philosophers of intellectual traditions ranging from Durkheim and Spencer to Foucault, Habermas and Marx. More specifically, both paradigms serve as a "local" lens for interpreting the nature of society, the causes of poverty and conflict and the implied solutions for development and peacebuilding theory and practice (Jantzi and Jantzi, 2009).

The field of peace and conflict studies has a narrower approach. While it is less concerned about developmental issues, it distinguishes instead between five different schools, which can be regarded as middle-level theories of peacebuilding. These include: *the conflict management school*, *the conflict resolution school*, *the complementary school*, *the conflict transformation school* and *the alternative discourse school* (Paffenholz, 2010, pp. 43–64). Even though all of the schools pay attention to the actors from the bottom, the emphasis on the importance of the local sphere finds its origins in Lederach's conflict transformation school. It is the alternative discourse school in particular which continuously points to the weaknesses of all strands. Authors share the claim that the "liberal imperative" (Richmond, 2005,

p. 208) has become a self-referential system, which has long lost its connection to the real world and the needs of people and their experiences of the everyday in peacebuilding and development processes (Paffenholz, 2010, p. 55). Critical voices usually substantiate their arguments by means of a Foucauldian discourse analysis with particular focus on his concept of *gouvernmentalité* or *biopower*, or a Marxist-inspired analysis highlighting social justice and equality. These discussions frequently support or rely on a Gramscian notion of civil society (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1); thereby emphasising the emancipatory or transformative potential of the civil sphere in fragile states (e.g., Bendaña, 2003; Featherstone, 2000; Heathershaw, 2008; Mac Ginty, 2006, 2013; Richmond, 2005, 2013). Recently, the alternative discourse school has dominated, or at least, gained significantly more attention in present peacebuilding and development research. Nonetheless, the core critiques about liberal peacebuilding and development processes (closely related to the above discussed modernisation paradigm) focus not so much on the *what* but the *how*. This specific point is addressed in Roland Paris' seminal article "Saving Liberal Peacebuilding", in which he maintains (2010, p. 354):

> There has been much written in recent years on the need to promote 'alternative versions of peace' that are not rooted in liberal peacebuilding models. On the surface, such writers appear to reject the idea of liberal peacebuilding, but on closer examination many actually embrace variants of liberal peacebuilding.

The same can be observed about the discourse on civil society. Hardly any critic of liberal peacebuilding and development interventions would argue heatedly against established universal values, such as human and civil rights, equality, or more concretely, equal access to education, justice and healthcare, freedom of speech, equal voting rights, children's rights or gender equality. On the contrary, the repeated calls for emancipatory or transformative peacebuilding and development, mirrored in Section 1.1, presents liberal thought patterns of individualism, equality, universalism and meliorism (Gray, 1995). Consequently, it is not the liberal orientation of peacebuilding and development that is the central subject of critique but 'the *illiberal* behaviour of international administrators, including their relatively unconstrained and unaccountable exercise of power and methods that discourage local political activity and participation' (Paris, 2010, p. 355). As far as the civil sphere is concerned, the core critiques are primarily occupied with issues of exclusion, marginalisation or

structural barriers, and unequal power relations (at the local, regional and international levels) – presumably caused by liberal peacebuilding, development practices and elite capture. While some academics (e.g. Mac Ginty, 2011) started to emphasise how imposed liberal orders fuel forms of local resistance (thereby often following Scott, 1987, 1990), others, such as Narten (2009), highlight the issue of potential liberal peace spoilers among the civil sphere. Likewise, Paris, in one of his earlier influential works *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (2004), argues that the challenge for peacebuilders is to promote "good" civil society, while simultaneously restraining its "bad" variant, particularly during the early phases of a peacebuilding mission, when governmental institutions are still being constructed (2004, p. 194). However, his statement leaves an essential question unaddressed. That question is: Who is to determine *good* and *bad*? Are there instances when seemingly *illiberal* loyalties towards paternalistic and neo-patrimonial hierarchies can be justified? Are *illiberal* practices, rituals or customs more context sensitive, or rather destructive, in establishing peace and fostering development (cf. Mac Ginty, 2010)? Foremost, who should set the ethical and legal boundaries of *illiberalism*? In Lidén's (2009) words: "What are the ethical implications of the shortcomings of liberal peacebuilding?"

Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this chapter and the thesis as a whole to do justice to recapitulating all the dilemmas, weaknesses and debates that occur in the literature on and around the interplay of civil society, liberal peacebuilding and development in fragile states. Thus, with the caveat that the subsequent discussion is far from extensive, some of the most frequently reoccurring themes in the literature were singled out to be reassessed and summarised. These include:

- Civil society and the issue of self-determination
- Civil society and the issue of local ownership
- Civil society and the issue of liberal ideas versus cultural particularism
- Civil society and the issue of everyday resistance

While these issue areas are overwhelmingly discussed independently from each other in the literature, it is anticipated that the ensuing sections will make it more evident that within the interplay of civil society and peacebuilding and development, there are still many bridges to be built. Two themes that can be related to the above

discourses in one way or another but which are not prominently discussed topics in the literature include:

- Civil society and the issue of depoliticisation
- Civil society and the issue of political culture

In the following it will be argued that ongoing debates on and around the issues of local ownership, self-determination, cultural particularism and everyday resistance do not actually bring about new insights as to how those political voices from below are socially engineered. In pointing to the issue of depoliticisation as an until now marginalised theme, the issue of political culture is expected to provide new insights regarding the matrix and fabrics of conflict ravaged societies and why they do not match with liberal idea(l)s.

1.2.1. Civil society and the issue of self-determination

Critics generally contend that liberal peace and development processes tend to downgrade local-autonomy, self-organisation and self-government (cf. Barata, 2012). Specifically, the processes of self-determination are frequently criticised for being externally imposed on the less empowered, such as minorities and indigenous peoples. For instance, the international community's engagement in former Yugoslavia is commonly used as a prime example for having violated the principle of self-determination, from the perspective that existing internal borders were changed despite ethnic conflicts inside those territories. History has repeatedly shown that the maxim of self-determination can interfere with several principles required to obtain legitimacy in statebuilding processes. On paper, the principle of self-determination of peoples remains one of the fundamental rights that are firmly established in international law. Chapter 1 of the Charter of the United Nations stipulates, under Article 1(2), that the purposes of the United Nations are:

> To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace.

The Charter reflects both US President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points of 1918 and the Inter-Allied Labour Conference in London in 1918, which state that "It is the supreme principle of the right of each people to determine its own destiny that

must now decide the steps to be taken for settlement". Despite *de jure* recognition, in practice, there are still many legal as well as political issues affecting the autonomy of ordinary civilians in fragile states. The most salient is likely that present international law does not recognise minorities as separate peoples and hence precludes them from invoking the principle of self-determination. What is even more challenging is that there is no legally recognised definition of the term "people" in international law (cf. Gudeleviciute, 2005).

Alongside these legalistic flaws, theoretical as well as practical issues around the maxim of self-determination were already explicitly highlighted in Gilbert Murray's influential essay on the "Self-determination of Nationalities" (1921). For Murray, the real reason why any mass of people has a right to decide their future in a particular way is because they wish it, not because they form a "nation" or a "nationality". He further warned that the principle of "self-determination" inherits a number of practical problems, such as:

- How to determine the limits of the unit which is to exercise self-determination;
- The geographical position of such units, as it may affect the interests of many people outside;
- Self-determination becomes impossible where culturally distinct people are geographically mixed up with some alien nation (e.g., like the Jews were in Poland or Romania, or the Armenians in Turkey); and,
- The strategic interests of a large nation may clash with the desire of a small homogenous group.

According to Murray, the problem of self-determination is therefore theoretically, as well as practically, insoluble. Apart from these conceptual problems, found in the entire idea, political as well as economic interests have gradually weakened the principles inherent in the maxim of self-determination.

The African case perfectly illustrates how borders are "political creations on the basis of the usefulness to those who created them" (Herbst, 1996, p. 692). Ironically, the processes of self-determination in sub-Saharan Africa are primarily associated

with the period after decolonisation, roughly from 1945 onwards. It is repeatedly argued, that independence during that time had produced more unstable societies and stateless refugees than stable states and democracies. However, Herbst's (1989) article on the creation and maintenance of national boundaries in Africa reminds us of two important facts. First, Africa's present political map was drawn between 1885 and 1904, thereby ignoring demographic, ethnographic and topographic factors. Second, since independence, the vast majority of these borders have remained virtually untouched, not because the local populations have been determined to maintain them, but because the system, for the most part, continues to serve the political needs of the former colonialists and present-day African leaders. With the later establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), newly introduced laws and norms once again effectively suppressed the right of self-determination. Herbst therefore concludes, "borders are always artificial because states are not natural creations" (1989, p. 692).

The extent to which the long-term effects of the scramble for Africa and externally imposed borders have caused civil unrest and conflict in the region remains a highly debated point (cf. Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2011). Moreover, the whole thought and ideology behind the concept of self-determination never really mixed well with the social structure and cultural particularism of pre-colonial Africa in the first place. In pre-colonial Africa, political power was exercised over people, not over land or territory. Because of the poor soil and underdeveloped agricultural technology, most communities were either nomadic or semi-nomadic (Goody, 1980). Therefore, the whole notion and concept of self-determination in pre-colonial Africa would have been detached from any territorial claims. In many societies, communal and (semi-)nomadic lifestyles formed the very basis of their survival.

Against this background, the rationale for the Western idea behind self-determination cannot be regarded as an alternative to liberal peacebuilding and development agendas. Rather, as a concept, it is much more an idealistic, if not romantic, extension of it. As a philosophical and intellectual construct of the Western World, it is based on the principle of equal and individual rights. Nonetheless, in practice, vague legal language and the political and economic interests of foreign and local elites and imperialism frequently suppress these aspirations.

If the aim is to understand the dynamics inherent in present sub-Saharan African post-conflict societies better, they should be reconnected with a pre-colonial and colonial past (cf. Chabal, 1996). The entire notion of self-determination (based on liberal ideals) would subsequently gain a new meaning and change its analytical dimensions as well. On the one hand, such a new analytical angle would imply both acknowledging and recognising how identity is distorted and deconstructed over time. On the other hand, an expanded approach would widen the space for a thorough reflection upon how colonialism and the events on and around independence have become an integral part of present sub-Saharan African identities. More importantly, considering how the effects of colonial rule differ between each country, region, society, community and respective coloniser – identity must be embraced in the plural.

1.2.2. Civil society and the issue of local ownership

The dilemma of local ownership is closely related to the topic of self-determination. The concept emerged out of the sentiment that, "the local population must participate in, and indeed own, the reconstruction process from the start" (Orr, 2004, p. 302). Since the early 1990s, the international community has been repeatedly under attack for undermining individual and communal skills, as well as locally rooted and more culturally sensitive approaches, which would actually better correspond with a society's own functions and objectives. In the understanding of Lidén (2009, p. 618), "the failure to generate local ownership of the liberal peacebuilding project is symptomatic of the distance between its 'global' objectives and the local conditions for their realization". For the most part, it is generally argued that locally owned peacebuilding and development processes are more attentive to "highly developed skills and complex webs of social and cultural relationships that are often difficult for outsiders to comprehend" (Fukuda-Parr et al., 2002, p. 8). The concept of local ownership thus assumes that through processes of cooperative and cumulative learning, locals have worked out how to survive in frequently difficult and harsh conditions during the various peacebuilding and development stages (ibid., pp. 8–9).

Accordingly, researchers, and practitioners, warn that the social capital of conflict-affected societies is not frequently acknowledged or incorporated into project

and programme design and that this raises concerns about the lack of local legitimacy in externally led interventions. The international (donor) community clearly took heed of these warnings, and local ownership has become a "near orthodox commitment" (cf. van Billerbeck, 2011). The term has gained immense prominence in current peacebuilding and development rhetoric and practice. For instance, the Secretary General's first report on "Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict" stresses that peacebuilding has to be first and foremost regarded as a "national challenge and responsibility" (2009, p. 4). Within the broader development community, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) guidelines now provide a clear definition of national ownership (2006, p. 147):

> The effective exercise of a government's authority over development policies and activities, including those that rely – entirely or partially – on external recourses. For governments, this means articulating the national development agenda and establishing authoritative policies and strategies. (…) For (aid) donors, it means aligning their programmes on government policies and building on government systems and processes to manage and coordinate aid rather than creating parallel systems to meet donor requirements.

Furthermore, the "UNDP Human Development Index Toolkit for National and Regional Human Development Report Teams" (p. 23) recommends achieving national ownership:

> (…) through a process that draws upon national development actors and capabilities throughout preparation, yielding a product firmly grounded in the country's past and existing development actors and capabilities throughout preparation, yielding a product firmly grounded in the country's past and existing development plans. National ownership implies a commitment to broad, collective ownership encompassing different viewpoints. It also contributes to capacity development. A report rooted in national perspectives inspires trust in the Human Development Report as a source for policy dialogue and development alternatives.

Unquestionably, attempts and approaches to ensure local ownership in peacebuilding and development practice are no longer scarce. Nonetheless, on closer examination, there are a few recurring dilemmas concerning the issue of local ownership and the civil sphere in fragile states.

First, most key documents and literature on peacebuilding and development fail to distinguish between the meanings and implications of *national* and *local* ownership

(e.g.: Donais 2012, UN PBSO[14]). Concretely, the terms *national* and *local*, are used interchangeably and it is not clear whether authors and reports that refer to national ownership include the grassroots level alongside government officials and elites. Barnett, for instance, suggests (2006, p. 110): "If peacebuilders are serious about preparing states for self-governance, then local elites must be included in the reconstruction process". Who exactly belongs to the local elite is a complicated question in the sub-Saharan African context, however. Does it encompass the chiefs and village elders and authorities or is it limited to government officials and local politicians? What about the civil sphere? Thus, both terms not only remain ill-defined concepts but their different nuances and scopes are unclear.

Second, von Billerbeck (2011) elaborates in depth how local ownership and its relation with legitimacy, sustainability and democratisation reveal another plethora of contradictions. For example, its legitimising qualities are complicated by the fact that it is practically impossible to work with all potential owners of the peace and development process. Foremost, according to Billerbeck, actors (in particular the United Nations) that use local ownership as an approach to peacebuilding appear to prioritise norm compliance and diffusion over operational outcomes on the ground. From her perspective, to a much greater degree, local ownership is a normative, almost visionary ideal – rather than a common practice in fragile states. Put another way, local ownership emerged as an imperative moral concept in peacebuilding rhetoric even though its de facto implementation is hampered by several practical, if not political, challenges - which leads to the next point.

Third, peacebuilding and development processes and their analogous funding schemes and allocations are extremely prone to elite capture and corruption – at the state, regional and communal or grassroots levels – thereby affecting the legitimacy of programmes and projects. To that effect, local ownership is further challenged by local customs and social structures (inherited from pre- and colonial times), which are usually not practised in the West. An example can be given by drawing on Labonte's (2008) study on how the Sierra Leone chiefdom system affected peacebuilding

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[14] See also PBSOs workshop report: 'From Rhetoric to Practice: Operationalizing National Ownership in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding." June 2011, retrieved from: http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/national_ownership_report.pdf, last visit 05 July 2014

partnerships that were designed around the principles of local ownership. Funding allocations for peacebuilding projects were channelled through so-called "Village Development Communities". While reviewing several external project evaluations, Labonte made an interesting observation. Instead of strengthening social cohesion and local ownership, the majority of these community-driven programmes tended to aggravate social exclusion, especially among ex-combatants and war-affected youth. The reasons for this could be found in traditional patterns of behaviour based on hierarchical, or better yet, neopatrimonial power structures between the elders and the youth. At the grassroots level, elite capture challenged the project's overall objective to meaningfully enhance the skills, capacities and knowledge of all community members. The project, while locally owned, was based on *illiberal* particularities, as opposed to complying with the norms of ownership along the ideals of liberalism.

Notwithstanding these challenges, there are also, of course, examples when approaches towards enhanced local ownership are successful. Referring again to the case of Sierra Leone, the NGO Fambul Tok has become a widely praised example of how peacebuilding, and in this particular case, reconciliation and social cohesion, can be locally nurtured and somewhat "owned".[15] The NGO was founded shortly after the end of the war, against the background that many Sierra Leoneans were dissatisfied with the reconciliation process induced and steered by the international community. The rural districts outside Freetown especially felt that little had happened to heal the wounds of the civil war. Moreover, the Special Court was viewed as being costly and inefficient, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was generally portrayed as being poorly organised. In 2007, the Sierra Leonean human rights activist John Caulker had the idea of reinstating forms of reconciliation at the community level, as it was practised before the war. These practices generally take place in village ceremonies, around a bonfire, to encourage victims and perpetrators to tell stories about the war, confess to victims, ask for forgiveness and to then be forgiven. Fambul Tok began its work in 2008 and is now active in all 14 of Sierra Leone's districts, enjoying widespread participation and recognition amongst Sierra Leoneans. Given the unique interplay between forgiveness and regret in the scope of traditional forms of

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[15] The work of Fambul Tok was subject of a 2011 documentary film and also featured by the BBC, TEDx, as well as by all major local Sierra Leonean newspapers. Members and beneficiaries are invited regularly to give talks organised by aid agencies, the UN and universities around the world.

reconciliation, local initiatives such as Fambul Tok are frequently used as examples for having a greater long-term potential of a broader acceptance of post-war justice amongst the populations (cf. Ainley et al., 2013).

To recapitulate, this section pointed out that local ownership has arisen as a normative and moral concept that faces many political, practical and conceptual dilemmas when put into common practice on the ground. While there are some successful project-based examples on how local ownership can be implemented in post-conflict states (e.g. Fambul Tok), in the broader context of a country as a whole, the concept still suffers from being ill-implemented and defined. In this regard, local ownership is, once again, not an alternative concept to the liberal peace but rather an intended outcome of it. In its most ambitious form it builds on the aspirations of liberal thought patterns in striving for democratisation and legitimacy stemming from the civil sphere.

From this perspective, the chapter suggests making a clear distinction between local and national ownership when it comes to studying the interplay of civil society and peacebuilding and development. More concretely, local ownership is understood as closely interlinked with the grassroots level and hence also the broader civil sphere. It is approached as a legitimising process that is sensitive towards the cultural particularisms and historical context of a society. National ownership, on the other hand, is understood as closely interlinked with the government and elites. As a concept and approach it is therefore less inclusive of the civil sphere. The proposed distinction shall not idealise or even romanticise the local level over the national level or the other way round. On the contrary, as will be seen in later discussion, neither level is immune to elite capture and corruption. It is not expected that this definitional division will solve all the conceptual and practical dilemmas inherent in the idea of local ownership. Instead, it is seen as a starting point in the quest for alternatives to study the civil sphere in fragile states.

1.2.3. Civil society and the issue of liberal ideas versus cultural particularism

Besides the dilemmas of self-determination and local ownership, current discourse additionally focuses on the moral and ethical aspects of liberal peacebuilding and development. As Dunne accurately maintained (2011, p. 179): "the key question

for Liberalism at the dawn of a new century is whether it can reinvent itself as a non-universalizing political idea, which preserves the traditional liberal value of human solidarity without undermining cultural diversity".

In brief, debates in the literature revolve around questions such as: Can international interventions avoid cultural imperialism while simultaneously protecting and integrating marginalised groups into the peacebuilding and development process? What if local or indigenous idiosyncrasies, traditions and customs violate universal recognised norms (cf. Mac Ginty, 2010)? In a lecture entitled, "What is the Ethics of Peacebuilding", Lidén (18 January 2007) formulated these recurring dilemmas, inherent in peacebuilding and development processes, along the lines of:

- The liberalisation of culture versus building on existing culture
- The liberalisation of power versus the conservation of existing power structures, and
- The liberalisation of gender patterns versus the preservation of existing gender patterns

Lidén is aware that his list is nowhere near extensive and that it still leaves a lot of room for opposing dilemmas. For instance, the dilemma of supporting conventional religious institutions versus stronger integration of local religious leaders and faith-based organisations could be included. Lidén's lecture resulted in a subsequent article on the ethical implications of the shortcomings of liberal peacebuilding operations (2009). Here, he critically examines the normative and theoretical potential of three ideal types: a *re-liberal* peacebuilding process that prescribes a more coercive approach, a *social* peacebuilding process that emphasises local agency and the promotion of socioeconomic rights, and a *multicultural* peacebuilding process that roots peace in indigenous norms and institutions (Ibid., 2009, p. 616). While Lidén's analysis proposes the social ideal type as a political theoretical approach to peacebuilding, he admits that "the challenge for peacebuilding theory is to make the premises and objectives of these practices more explicit and allow them to inform the politics of peacebuilding as well as ethical choices for the implementation of better policies" (ibid., 2009, p. 632).

More broadly, as is the case with practitioners, scholars frequently point to the growing bureaucratisation of peacebuilding and development assistance, which repeatedly undermines the potential of local societies to sustain the peace and foster development in conflict-affected societies. Denskus (2007), for example, provocatively states that "peacebuilding does not build peace", as post-conflict rehabilitation has lost any sense of context or the people in that context. For him, peacebuilding processes are caught up in dichotomies and preconceived perceptions. His arguments go hand in hand with earlier assessments, such as the work of Sawyer (2005), who examined the peacebuilding process of Liberia in depth. Being a Liberian himself, Sawyer brings attention to the fact that the Liberian Joint Needs Assessment, which was prepared by the National Transitional Government for Liberia, the United Nations and the World Bank, was disappointingly quiet on the critical question of what Liberians themselves possess, even in their state of misery. Sawyer thus urges a move towards asking different questions, such as: How have the Liberian people coped with the collapse of their state and all its consequences? What residual institutions sustained them? Moreover, what potential do these offer for post-war recovery (2005, p. 58)? Sawyer focuses attention on the different response mechanisms that civil society organisations and initiatives have to offer. In addition, he concludes that despite the devastation of recent years, Liberia still has a considerable pool of human and social capital, which post-conflict reconstruction should not ignore – if it is to be sustained over the long-term (see also Pham, 2006).

Peacebuilding and development practice responded to these challenges and harsh criticisms with an increased focus on programming and funding for community-based approaches (CBA). The work of Lederach (1995), in particular, became influential in shaping and promoting CBAs in fragile states. This is especially so for INGOs, such as Peace Direct,[16] which made it their overall goal and objective to enable local people to find their 'own solutions for their own problems and conflicts'. In practice, this means that CBAs seek to "empower local community groups and institutions by giving the community direct control over investment decisions, project planning, execution and monitoring, through a process that emphasises inclusive participation and management" (Huma, 2009, p. 4). Programmes and projects usually target issue areas,

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[16] For more information, see: http://www.peacedirect.org/uk/about/, last visit 6 November 2013.

such as security, socioeconomic recovery, media, communication and civic education, transitional justice and reconciliation, heritage and cultural preservation. Chapter 3 will provide an in-depth discussion of the different forms that CBAs can take – ranging from associations to community based organisations (CBOs) and village leadership. For now, it is worth noting that CBAs surfaced as a much-hyped tool and instrument among aid agencies, international organisations and INGOs alike. For the most part, INGOs (and the international organisations and Western governments that fund them) hold positive outlooks of the potential of indigenous and traditional approaches to peacebuilding, as they promise and give hope to produce a better (thus long-lasting and locally owned) peace.

Against this background, Mac Ginty (2008, 2010) carefully analyses current efforts to tailor peacebuilding and development into more context-specific and culturally sensitive approaches. With the goal of understanding these peacebuilding processes from a different perspective, he looks into indigenous and communal forms of peacebuilding and weighs their potential as well as their pitfalls. In doing so, he is careful not to romanticise the emerging trend of reviving practices of traditional and indigenous approaches to peacebuilding. Instead, Mac Ginty provides a sharp reflection on the rediscovery and the advantages as well as the inherent difficulties of indigenous and traditional forms of resolving conflict. He labels traditional and indigenous methods of conflict resolution as "organic peacebuilding", in that they have the same perceived advantages as organic farming: sustainability and independence from expensive and artificial additives (in the form of external peace support interventions), therefore, it originates locally. Still, as stressed earlier in reference to Lidén's (2007; 2009) work, Mac Ginty finds that local or indigenous methods of conflict resolution are not always consistent with the recognised norms and principles of the Western World, in the sense that they can be either deeply violent (e.g., vigilantes, mobs and lynching) or exclude women from the process and thus hinder the mainstreaming of gender equality. Therefore, indigenous practices have frequently been "genetically modified" to serve a liberal peace compromise. Similarly, Boege (2011) also asserts that traditional approaches are frequently 'conquered' by external actors, only to be placed in the framework of Western concepts of what *ought* to lead to sustainable peace and development.

For the most part, the literature on the dilemma of liberal ideas versus cultural particularism once again illuminates the complexity of understanding and assessing the role and potential of the civil sphere in fragile states. The dichotomies of liberal versus traditional values and practices continue to be widely debated – on philosophical as well as practical grounds.[17]

Against this background, it must be emphasised that current research tends to avoid one uncomfortable question: do war-affected societies always have to pull the rabbit out of the proverbial hat and provide us with their own (culturally more suited) solutions to any given dilemma at hand? This is not to say that local societies are unable or uncreative in dealing with the challenges in the aftermath of a conflict. Instead, this thesis will bring forward the argument that those who are affected seldom cause the dilemmas that are occurring in peacebuilding and development processes. In fact, from a historical perspective, many of these seemingly *illiberal* practices were actually introduced during colonial rule. Some of the atrocities committed in the sub-Saharan African civil wars (e.g., cutting off people's limbs) were also widely practised by the Belgium colonial empire under the rule of King Leopold II (1835–1909). Together with the legacies of colonial rule, current global and structural barriers have continued to challenge local societies. Therefore, can Western donors really expect local societies in fragile sub-Saharan African states to find their own local solutions to externally introduced challenges, such as trade barriers (affecting local labour markets) and international immigration law? These aspects not only trigger potentially new forms of internal conflict, but they also render the slogan "African solutions for African problems" close to irrelevant.

1.2.4. Civil society and the issue of everyday resistance

As the previous debates have shown, peacebuilding and development research relentlessly forces us into a corner full of even more puzzling questions. New dilemmas emerge out of old ones, thereby generating completely new bodies of literature. Sections 1.2.1–1.2.3 emphasised that critics of liberal peacebuilding and development interventions share one common theme, and that is how liberal agendas

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[17] Recently, several scholars found a theoretical refuge in the concept of hybridity. See, for instance, Mac Ginty, Roger (2010): *International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance: Hybrid Forms of Peace (Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies)*, Palgrave Macmillan. Or, Richmond, Oliver P. and Mitchell, Audra (2011) *Hybrid Forms of Peace: From Everyday Agency to Post-Liberalism*, Palgrave Macmillan.

are internationalised rather than context-specific, culturally sensitive or localised. Enquiries into how the civil sphere copes with, absorbs and reacts to liberal values, which are brought about via external aid on a daily basis, are closely connected with the issue of local ownership or cultural particularism. In particular, de Certau's (1980) *The Practice of Everyday Life* and Scott's (1987, 1990) reflections of everyday resistance gained immense popularity in current peacebuilding and development research. Their approaches have been adopted as a way of framing local resistance to the liberal agendas of donor governments and the international community. Some of those discussions will be briefly described below.

Critics argue that among the several (unintended) consequences arising out of an externally-imposed liberal agenda in fragile states, most interventions fail to engage with the everyday lives of the very people affected, thus treating locals as subjects rather than citizens. In Richmond's words (2009, p. 557), "the 'liberal peace' is undergoing a crisis of legitimacy at the level of the everyday in post-conflict environments".

Overall, there is a widespread consensus in the literature that liberal peacebuilding and development interventions are provoking legitimate resistance and opposition from those who are directly affected by the implementation of a liberal agenda in fragile states (Dudouet, 2011; Galvanek, 2013; Mac Ginty, 2010; Richmond, 2009, 2011). In the context of the critique of liberal peacebuilding and development interventions, resistance is commonly understood as a reaction taking on various forms. It is far from being a uniformly used term and it depends heavily on context and time. Scholars typically grant themselves a certain definitional flexibility when it comes to a common usage. Resistance can range from violent actions by peace "spoilers" (cf. Narten, 2009) to more subtle, non-violent or even invisible variations (cf. Dudouet, 2011; cf. Scott, 1987, 1990). Following Scott, resistance embraces both collective as well as individual acts of resistance (1985, pp. 290). Mac Ginty further maintains that (2010, pp. 403–404):

> Just as most liberal peace implementation is subtle (for example, multiple small-scale governance projects), resistance to the liberal peace may also be subtle. It may take the form of non-cooperation, not necessarily in a wilful sense but based on a calculation that life would be easier without the entanglements that exposure to liberal internationalism

might bring. (…) Local actors might also choose to cooperate with certain aspects of the liberal peace while resisting, subverting or ignoring other aspects.

Finally, scholars pay additional attention to the intentions behind specific acts of resistance. For Scott, these intentions gain significantly more importance than their actual consequences, recognising that many acts of resistance may fail to achieve their intended result (Scott, 1985, pp. 289–292). "Where there is strong evidence for the intention behind the act, the case for resistance is correspondingly strengthened" (ibid., p. 290).

In some way, the concept of everyday resistance to a liberal agenda surfaced as an alternative site of knowledge for peacebuilding (cf. Richmond, 2009; Galvanek, 2013): be it to simply recognise resistance for what it is, or for developing creative ways of responding to various acts of resistance and modifying current initiatives accordingly (Galvanek, 2013, p. 15).

As an approach to examining the ill-beings of a society exaggerated, or even caused, by liberal interventions for peacebuilding and development, resistance is deeply interlinked with the local sphere. Accounts of local resistance usually reflect the voices from below: the powerless, the marginalised and discriminated people. For Galvanek (p. 11–12), these voices include :

> (…) not just those of women and migrants, but also the poor, the slum-dwellers, the refugees, those caught up in and suffering from conflict in general, the oppressed and discriminated, and in its most general form, those that are referred to as the 'locals'. It is on these levels of society and among these groups – which have been historically overlooked or forgotten – that we can witness (often unconscious) resistance to their social, political or economic situations.

In this context, it is worth briefly highlighting the World Bank's fascinating, yet frequently unrecognised, book trilogy, *Voices of the Poor*, published between 2000 and 2001. The study gathered the opinions of 60,000 poor women and men in over 60 countries worldwide, asking how they would eradicate poverty and improve their lives. Even though the project's overall objective was not to look into forms of resistance from the local sphere it is, indirectly, nevertheless an extremely useful and context-specific account on the circumstances that can cause or trigger acts of resistance. For instance, in response to the question regarding what interviewees

perceive as "ill-being", the most common answers were (Narayan et.al. 2000b, p. 23): material deprivation, physical ill-being, bad social relations, vulnerability, worry and fear, low self-confidence, and powerlessness, helplessness and frustration. Likewise, there are significant commonalities in the way poor people describe their lives: a sense of powerlessness and voicelessness; the precariousness of their livelihoods and a lack of security; isolation, humiliation and lack of connections to resources and opportunities, and gender inequality.[18] Even though these perceptions of poverty may not be entirely novel, they are still useful in sensitising one's understanding of why resistance is caused not only by material but also by physiological wellbeing. Clearly, the weighting of these dimensions varies significantly by location, individual(s), time and personal circumstances. Unfortunately, not many follow-up studies have been undertaken and critical (or alternative) discourse remains largely detached from these findings. This observation also corresponds well with Paffenholz's general criticism (2010) that authors who argue that we need to give voice to alternative, oppressed actors do not actually analyse these alternative voices. In her view, given that the main focus of these studies continues to be the liberal peace and how the international community suppresses local actors, there seems to be an inherent contradiction to the very alternative discourse for which these authors advocate (ibid., p. 56).

Overall, there is no doubt that the burgeoning interest in acts of resistance to liberal agendas in fragile states is of extreme value when it comes to studying the (re)construction of the civil sphere. They constitute a form of political action in contrast to processes of political deprivation as will be outlined in the ensuing section. Acts of resistances also illuminate how a liberal peacebuilding and development agenda is socially accepted and absorbed. Nonetheless, for many research projects and studies, and this is also the case for the thesis at hand, it would go far beyond the scope and research intent to focus on acts of resistance to such a narrow degree. This is not to say that the current discourse regarding resistance should be sidelined in research and practice as a whole. Instead, they can serve as an important reminder to become

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[18]   For   more   detailed   information   visit: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/0,,contentMDK:20622514~menuPK:336998~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:336992,00.html, or watch the documentary at: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/0,,contentMDK:22283349~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:336992,00.html, last accessed 4 November 2013.

more observant of the subtle reactions and actions of locals regarding liberal practices to strengthen and support civil society.

1.2.5. Civil society and the issue of depoliticisation

All of the previously discussed discourses are widely debated topics in the peacebuilding and development literature. Inevitably, they will be recurring themes in the empirical Part II of the thesis. Especially self-determination, local ownership and forms of everyday resistance presuppose a liberal understanding of civil society that is vibrant and politically active in order to challenge authorities, alert about injustices and advocate for specific concerns and needs. But what if cultural particularisms or, as will be discussed later, the political culture and nature of a society are not going to stir up the fire required for political engagement and influence? Why do local societies lack this kind of influence and voice? A phenomenon that surprisingly remains only marginalised in research on peacebuilding and development processes is the issue of depoliticisation. This void is striking and it is here where the thesis wants to make an original contribution to ongoing debates by drawing on the case study of Sierra Leone. Beforehand, it is essential to clarify how the term depoliticisation will be approached and conceptually used. In the scope of the thesis, depoliticisation is defined and understood as:

> *A process that removes specific actors (civil society or, more broadly the civil sphere) gradually from any form of political influence. As a consequence, processes of political deprivation affect the political nature and culture of a society while at the same time the political culture of a society can also influence the degree of political activism or willingness to advocate for a need or cause. Depoliticisation can also reflect or even cause political neutralisation expressed in the sheer lack of interest in politics. Whereas liberalism would recognise a political civil sphere as independent from the state, a depoliticised civil sphere would no longer be an independent and legitimising watchdog of or advocate for specific governmental actions and policies. Instead, actors are prone to being instrumentalised by the state or other external players to serve a government's agenda and political aims.*

Only a few authors have hinted at the depoliticisation effects occurring during several stages of peacebuilding and development endeavours. The most common argument highlights that civil society actors are manoeuvred into activities and areas in which they undertake duties that complement or carry out functions that the

government is too weak, incapable or unwilling to perform (Goetschel and Hagmann 2009, Holmén 2010, Howell and Pearce 2002, Verkoren and van Leeuwen 2012). In carefully assessing civil society actors and functions, Chapter 3 and Part II of the thesis will discuss this phenomenon in significantly greater detail as well. Two notable academic contributions supporting this claim are Goetschel and Hagmann's (2009) article "Civilian Peacebuilding: Peace by Bureaucratic Means?" and Verkoren and van Leeuwen's (2012) article "Complexities and Challenges for Civil Society Building in Post-conflict Settings."[19] Both pieces share the same line of reasoning. They blame externally-led peacebuilding processes for depoliticising social transformation from below. However, all of these authors leave it open for the reader to further contemplate *how* the political bargaining power of weaker social groups as well as the social reproduction of peacebuilding and development processes can best be approached, understood and assessed. All the same, they limit their argument to the influence of external actors alone. Although the thesis recognises the instrumentalisation of the civil sphere as one dynamic connected to depoliticisation effects, it yet identifies two additional dynamics that reinforce processes of depoliticisation as well. The first one refers to the political culture of a society, how it was socially constructed in the course of the history of state formation and how it affects the political involvement of the civil sphere today. The second one is concerned with abject poverty, human development and above all the lack of education, and how all of these affect activism and agency from below. Successively, the thesis will elaborate on both factors to a much greater extent.

For now it is worth stressing that the issue of depoliticisation should not be treated too lightly. In many post-conflict societies, an imposed liberal agenda led to a gradual retreat of the state, thereby shifting more and more responsibilities towards the civil sphere. Since the late 1970s, the radical neoliberal transformation in Latin America has served as a case in point. In most Latin American countries, civil society has surfaced as a parallel actor next to the state in the midst of a weakening public welfare system (Mentan 2010). The most striking example is probably Haiti, which is infamous for being a "Republic of NGOs" (Kristoff and Panarelli, 2010). After India,

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[19] There are also a few – but not many – contributions in the development literature, e.g., Pearce's chapter on "Manufacturing Civil Society from the Outside: Donor Interventions" in Howell and Pearce's (2002) book *Civil Society and Development*.

it has the second highest number of CSOs (international and local) per capita in the world. Current estimates of the number of CSOs operating in Haiti, prior to the earthquake in 2010, range from 3,000 to as many as 10,000 (ibid.). This additionally undermined the Haitian government in carrying out several of its own responsibilities. It further led to the dilemma of whether the country should move towards a system of shared responsibilities between CSOs and the state in the realm of social welfare. In short, Haitian CSOs are overwhelmingly more occupied with providing social services than campaigning and advocating for better social policies and the provision of service by the state.

Although the situation in sub-Saharan Africa is not (yet) nearly as extreme as in Haiti, the majority of local CSOs no longer serve (in a liberal interpretation) as political and emancipatory actors to campaign for the establishment of stronger governmental social policies. On the contrary, they are gradually co-opted into providing services that were previously considered the responsibility of the state (cf. Verkoren and van Leeuwen, 2012). Even if local CSOs benefit from funding schemes targeting "attitudinal change" or advocate for liberal values, such as human rights, their activities tend to train or educate the local population as opposed to challenging local politics, behaviour, and traditions that stand in stark contradiction to universal human rights. Paradoxically, project design and implementation based on liberal conceptions of the civil sphere frequently limit local civil societies from independently engaging in the domains of social life in which both public opinion and opposition can be formed. As will become more evident in the case of Sierra Leone, liberal attempts to support and strengthen the local civil society landscape have become a vicious circle of aid dependency, severely affecting the establishment of a public social welfare system and shifting responsibility towards the civil sphere. The subsequent chapters of the thesis will illuminate how this not only affected the (re)construction of the civil sphere in Sierra Leone, but also how other factors, such as political culture and poverty, further aggravate depoliticisation effects during the peacebuilding and development phase.

1.2.6. Civil society and the issue of political culture

A common theme in the previous sections revolved implicitly and explicitly around the issue of political change and why it should be attuned to local and cultural

characteristics in conflict-ravaged societies. In Goetschel and Hagmann's words (2009, p. 68): "the idea is thus not to determine whether or not peacebuilding works, but to understand (…) how it is reproduced socially". The fundamental question is therefore: What can peacebuilding and development research and practice potentially learn from the historical, cultural, social and consequently the political matrix of a conflict-ravaged society? A deeper enquiry leads inevitably to the disciplines of political science and sociology. This disciplinary intermezzo gave birth to the concept of the "political culture" of a society, which was famously coined and defined by Almond and Verba as (1963, p. 12):

> (…) political orientations – attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system. We speak of a political culture just as we can speak of an economic culture or a religious culture. It is a set of orientations toward a special set of social objects and processes.

Over the past decades, the political culture of a society came to be seen as a key variable in determining how and when a political system moves closer or further from the perfect ideal of democracy (Diamond 1994). Specifically, a political agenda only gains legitimacy at the domestic level if it is based on a political culture cherishing specific values, beliefs, orientations and norms. Diamond further contends, 'the development of a democratic culture cannot be taken for granted as a natural by-product of democratic practice or institutional design' (1994, p. 7). Nonetheless, the issue of political culture is complicated by the fact that the social groups within a society do not necessarily share the same political culture, nor are these values and beliefs evenly distributed throughout the population (Diamond, 1994). Every society consists of various subcultures, which should caution researchers against applying a too deterministic approach towards the political culture of a society.

Therefore, given the complexity of the concept and how political culture differs within societies, Almond and Verba suggest further distinguishing between three patterns of political cognition: participant, subject and parochial. A participant is assumed to be aware of, and informed about, the political system in both its governmental and political aspects. A subject tends to be cognitively oriented primarily to the output side of government: the executive, bureaucracy and judiciary. The parochial tends to be unaware, or only dimly aware of the political system in all of its aspects (1963, p. 79). Clearly, their distinction should not exclude certain flexibility

for greyscales and the various overlaps. Their classification, nonetheless, gives rise to several questions that are frequently disregarded when it comes to studying the (re)construction of societal order through liberal interventions in non-Western contexts.

First, mainstream peacebuilding and development research does not focus on the extent to which the political culture in post-conflict sub-Saharan Africa actually differs from the Western ideal. To look at it another way – how significant is political culture when confronted with externally-led liberal peacebuilding and development interventions? On the surface, democratic institutions were more or less successfully (re-)established in most of the fragile sub-Saharan African states. Underneath this surface, the civil sphere remains largely embedded in neo-patrimonial and/or religious networks and tribalism (cf. Ekeh, 1975; Mamdani, 1996; Chabal and Daloz, 1999). Although researchers and practitioners recognise the cultural particularism of a society (see Section 2.2.3 of this chapter), those discourses remain largely detached from a vast body of post-colonial literature focusing on the legacies of colonialism and the bifurcated state, and how both affected and shaped the political culture in contemporary sub-Saharan African societies.[20] The impact of persisting neo-patrimonial networks and tribalism on the political culture of the civil sphere undoubtedly merits further examination. A thorough investigation and reflection of the political culture of a society, and how it is/was historically and socially engineered has the potential to provide an alternative approach in current studies on civil society formation in fragile non-Occidental states.

Second, if the political culture of a society is defined as being closely related to the "attitudes towards the political system", it is questionable whether a liberal understanding of civil society is applicable to the context of sub-Saharan African states. As will be elaborated in more depth in Chapter 2, the intellectual tradition of liberalism embraces the realm of the individual, the very self who strives for personal rights, political freedom and speech. In short, an emancipatory interpretation of liberalism attributes civil society with a transformative character. It is in the nature of any liberal project (no matter whether it targets peacebuilding and development or any

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[20] There are a few exceptions to the rule; see, for instance, Lidén, 2009.

other field) to constantly question the authority of the state and the freedom of the individual therein. Ironically, critics of a liberal peacebuilding and development agenda frequently call for local emancipation and transformation from below; hence, reflecting, instead of opposing liberal thought patterns. This creates intellectual as well as analytical confusion. Nonetheless, the critical literature fails to consider the fact that in the sub-Saharan context, the role of the individual cannot usually be that easily detached from (political and non-political) attitudes towards the community. The argument here is *not* that sub-Saharan African societies do not have emancipatory or transformative features as such. Instead, it is essential to set forth mind-sets (values, norms, orientations) about how to live a responsible communal life; moreover, the political nature of communities can stand in stark contrast to liberal or emancipatory understandings of individuality in the context of a society as a whole.

Third, to a large extent, the issue of political culture is also closely interwoven with discussions on the nature and characteristics of state-society relations. Van Leeuwen and Verkoren (2012) initiated an interesting debate on why the idea of a social contract between the state and society needs to be renegotiated in non-Western post-conflict environments. Both authors rightly caution that neoliberal agendas underlie aspirations for civil society building, drawing on the model of a Western state with an effective bureaucracy that provides for the wellbeing of its citizens. More knowledge is needed about how "indigenous" (understood by the author as non-Occidental) manifestations of civil society acquire legitimacy and maintain their own forms of accountability (2012, p. 87). In further advancing van Leeuwen and Verkoren's points, the thesis additionally contends that a renegotiation of the social contract needs to recognise that these indigenous peculiarities (or the cultural particularism) of state society relations surfaced in a completely different manner and time in history than in the (neoliberal) West. Numerous debates on the effects of colonial rule offer a great entry point to anchor and interlink current peacebuilding and development research more thoroughly with the past (e.g., Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999; Mamdani, 1996; Mbembe, 2001). As mentioned earlier, the issue of political culture can tell us a lot about the nature and characteristics of state-society relations. As a domain of social life, it appears to be a promising new entry point to revisit how we approach local societies in fragile non-Western states. All the same, it opens new avenues towards a more thorough understanding of the opposing tensions between the

individual and the community, and between particular and universal values – hence liberal interests.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was twofold. First, it served as a background chapter on the most frequent theoretical and practical dilemmas in the current discourse about liberal peacebuilding and development approaches towards the civil sphere. Second, it looked at both the discourse and the issues with a critical eye and sought to identify areas that reward further (re-)examination in scholarship and practice.

It highlighted how the realms of peacebuilding and development experienced a noticeable shift towards the civil sphere in the past two decades. Civil society not only emerged as an agent for peace and development but also as an object of reconstruction based on liberal idea(l)s. Despite well-intended ambitions to ensure inclusiveness in liberal peacebuilding and development processes (Chapter 3 will further take up this point), externally-led efforts are repeatedly challenged by the legacies of colonial rule, cultural particularism and the political culture of local societies in fragile sub-Saharan African states (see Part II). As a result, peacebuilding and development actors gradually engaged in activities that cultivated, or engineered, societal transformation from the bottom-up. At the same time, buzzwords such as self-determination, local-ownership and cultural particularism have arisen in scholarship and practice, promising to ensure a more emancipatory model of peacebuilding and development. Even though these concepts have a longstanding theoretical tradition and practical usage, it was argued that they continue to be ill-defined and flawed, if not ambiguous terms. When related to questions of legitimacy in the sub-Saharan African context of rebuilding fragile states, they reveal a plethora of both practical and theoretical contradictions. Consequently, the discourse drifted into a philosophical impasse revolving around Dunne's overarching question: Can liberalism even reinvent itself as a non-universalising political idea that preserves the traditional liberal value of human solidarity without undermining cultural diversity? It may be impossible to resolve this issue on practical and philosophical grounds. For now, researchers as well as practitioners have found refuge in exploring the possibilities of cultural particularism, also understood as "traditional" or "alternative" forms to build peace and sustain development. It is repeatedly argued that peacebuilding and development assistance have to be more context-specific and culturally sensitive. Nonetheless, since practices

may interfere with the ethics of liberal and universal idea(l)s, we are also cautioned not to over-romanticise the potential of the local sphere. Similarly, discourses on local resistance remind us to become more observant of the subtle reactions and actions of locals concerning liberal practices to strengthen and support civil society.

As the discussions on self-determination, local-ownership, cultural particularism and everyday resistance reveal, the ongoing discourse (e.g.: Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013) does not really offer alternative options to liberal agendas in fragile states. Rather, they are an extension, if not idealistic version, of liberal values and idea(l)s (Paris, 2010). Whereas the current discourse clearly states the need to give voice to alternative, oppressed actors, most authors neither analyse these alternative voices (Paffenholz, 2010, p. 56) nor examine how/where they are socially engineered. This is unfortunate, as it is precisely those voices, and the ways in which they are socially manufactured, that can lay the groundwork for new alternatives in peacebuilding and development theory and practice. It is here where the thesis makes a new contribution to the field. Sections 1.2.5 and 1.2.6 highlighted two issues, which although inextricably intertwined, hitherto remained only marginally explored in the literature and research: the issue of depoliticisation; and the political culture of the civil sphere in peacebuilding and development processes. Until now, the mainstream as well as the alternative discourse has largely failed to address a striking paradox. Namely, even though peacebuilding and development efforts are directed towards (re)constructing civil societies based on liberal idea(l)s (individualism, equalitarianism, universalism, meliorism), their implementation practices can have, even if unintentionally, depoliticisation effects on local civil society landscapes. Chapter 3 and Part II of the thesis will elaborate on this phenomenon in significant depth. It is not that there are no political or activist voices from the civil sphere; it will instead be argued that these voices are not frequently represented through the formal institutional setting of CSOs. In addition, ongoing debates on and around the issues of local ownership, self-determination, cultural particularism and everyday resistance did not actually bring about new insights as to how those political voices from below are socially engineered. In this regard, political culture, as a hitherto unexplored terrain, is expected to provide new insights regarding the matrix and fabrics of conflict-ravaged societies. The political culture of a society may be not only a contributing factor towards depoliticisation but also open up the space to rethink how we define and

approach the concept of civil society in non-Western environments. The following chapter will therefore critically reflect upon the import of a liberal notion of civil society in fragile non-Occidental states. In doing so, it will build an important conceptual and analytical bridge between Chapter 1 and Chapter 3. In expanding on some of the most salient local factors that shape and socially construct beliefs and orientations of the civil sphere in (most) sub-Saharan African states, it points to the need to shift established modes of thinking when it comes to civil society outside the Occidental World.

Chapter Two

Conceptualising civil society in the Western and
sub-Saharan African contexts.

'Any fixed definition of the content of the concept "civil society" would just freeze a particular moment in history and privilege the relations of social forces then prevailing. Rather than look for clearer definitions, we should try to understand the historical variations that have altered the meanings of the concept in the ongoing dialectic of concept and reality.' (Cox 1999, p. 5)

Chapter 1 established that critics of liberal peacebuilding and development endeavours have, until now, failed to suggest alternative ways of approaching the concept of civil society outside the Occidental world. Chapter 2 fills in this conceptual gap as a necessary and preliminary step to address the thesis' overall question of why civil society actors in post-conflict environments are at risk of being gradually depoliticised. It synthesises theoretical discourses with the purpose of substantiating one of the thesis' main claims: the cultural matrix and political culture of a society and how it differs from liberal idea(l)s should not be overlooked. To be more precise, in the attempt to explain the causes and effects of depoliticisation occurring in peacebuilding processes in non-Western fragile states (Part II and III of the thesis), the political culture and social fabrics of a society can reveal a lot about how political activism and agency are socially engineered.

Against this backdrop, Chapter 2 sets up some conceptual parameters for the remainder of the thesis. It will put forward a broad definition of the Western usage of the term in order to challenge a liberal usage of the concept in post-conflict sub-Saharan African states. The first section provides a succinct overview of how civil society emerged as a concept and intellectual construct in Western philosophical thought. It aims to briefly elaborate and delineate why commonly agreed definitions of the term remain quite vague in Western political science and philosophy. In doing so, it would go beyond the scope of this Chapter to fully engage in the vast number of discourses on civil society, which have been summarised in greater detail by so many

others[21]. This section will, nevertheless, attempt to do justice to the main scholarly contributions to define the term and find some definitional common ground for ensuing discussions. How a liberal notion and understanding of civil society also to a great extent shaped the language of international peacebuilding and development actors will be delineated in Section 2.2. Building on the definitional and philosophical discourses of Section 2.1, it will point out that the international donor community increasingly operates based on the philosophical and analytical tradition of Tocqueville, as opposed to a Gramcsican notion (c.f. Verkoren and van Leeuwen, 2013). While Tocquevillean tradition underscores the importance of organised groups of citizens in maintaining peaceful social relations and a functioning democracy, the intellectual strand informed by Gramsci emphasises the transformative and emancipatory role of civil society in which citizens have an active role in shaping the character of the state. The last section will then critically examine what Lewis (2001) calls the "usefulness" of the concept of civil society in non-Western contexts with a special focus on sub-Saharan Africa. It will be argued that civil society as it emerged as a philosophical construct of the Occidental world never really matched realities of social and political life in equatorial Africa. In setting out some distinct features of sub-Saharan African civil societies as they evolved over history, space and time, the chapter introduces a matrix of factors that shape the civil sphere in (most) sub-Saharan African states. This matrix will serve the thesis as a rough character sketch of the political culture operating behind, next to, in interference with, and at times even in conjunction with a liberal political culture that informs peacebuilding and development process.

2.1. On the Western conceptualisation and understanding of civil society

In the history of political thought civil society is probably one of the most theoretically, rhetorically and semantically contested concepts. Yes, as Kaldor notes (2003: p. 2): "The ambiguity of this term is one of its attractions". As the history of western political thought has shown, many theoretical and intellectual constructs build on different understandings and interpretations of the very idea of civil society. Concepts such as democracy, social contract, social capital or political culture (to

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[21] Notable and comprehensive contributions on the evolution but also interpretation of the concept were made by Cohen and Arato (1994); Hall (1995); Gellner (1994); Keane (1988, 1998); and Chambers and Kymlicka (2002).

name but a few) would not have emerged in intellectual history without the various definitions, approaches and interpretations of the role, purpose and functions of civil society. The idea of civil society is based on a broad intellectual consensus that a society - and every individual therein – has the ability to liberate oneself from imposed political, economic and religious structures. In short, as a product of liberal, political but also societal and cultural emancipation, the conceptualisation of civil society remains an ongoing process.

One of the first conceptual notions of civil society appeared in Aristotle under the term *politike koinonia*, (political society / community), which was later translated in Latin as *societas civilis*. *Politike koinonia* stood for a public ethical-political community of free and equal citizens under a legally defined system of rules. Law itself, however, was strongly interwoven with the perception of the virtues of society and the individual as such. It was seen as an expression of an ethos or, in other words, a common set of norms and values. The participation of citizens (with the exception of women and slaves) was therefore central to political decision-making ('ruling and being ruled'), further assuming that everyone shares the same set of goals based on a single way of life. Although the Aristotelian account did not distinguish between the state, market and society, it set in motion the idea that civil society was in and of itself a 'good thing'. Thus, it was precisely this normative approach and conception of civil society that shaped the tradition of European political philosophy and thought (Cohen and Arato 1994, pp. 83–86).

The classical understanding that civil society was bound with the state remained well into the eighteenth century. To be a member of a civil society meant to be a citizen – a member of the state – and thus, obligated to act in accordance with its laws and without engaging in acts harmful to other citizens (Keane 1988, p. 35–36). The conceptualisation and philosophical usage of civil society experienced its first drastic shift during the period of the Enlightenment in the late eighteenth century. John Locke, often cited as the transitional figure in the early-modern reorientation of social thought, was amongst the first philosophers who understood civil society as an entity in its own right, thus co-existent to the state, but not yet as a separate sphere (Seligman 2002, pp. 14–20). Following this, Enlightenment thinkers (such as Charles de Montesquieu, David Hume and Adam Smith) championed the idea of civil society but

dismissed the classical tradition of civic virtue, despite their admiration for its moral qualities (Hall 1995, p. 10). Shortly after, in the period from 1750 to 1850, various political thinkers (e.g. Kant, Ferguson, Fichte, Hegel, Marx, Paine and Tocqueville) dwelled upon the subject of civil society and the limits of state action.

The first clear distinction between civil society and the state originated during the time of the Scottish Enlightenment, but it also occurred in the Anglo-American world against the backdrop of the American Revolution. One of the leading thinkers was Thomas Paine, who believed in a naturally self-regulating society. Paine's *Common Sense* but also the *American Bill of Rights* and the *French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*, all perceive society as the sole source of legitimate authority and juxtapose an individualistic, egalitarian society against government (Cohen and Arato 1994, p. 89). Probably one of the most fully developed accounts of civil society in this era can be found in Alexis de Tocqueville's *De la démocratie en Amérique* (1835 Volume I, 1840 Volume II). Tocqueville saw civil society as a form of politically active and independent association[22]; more precisely, life outside the household. Simply put, for Tocqueville these civic associations not only provide an opportunity for citizens to exchange views (e.g., free dissemination of news), but also serve as an autonomous platform to nurture civic virtue and to keep a close eye on the government. More generally, what was of major concern for all social theorists from the eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries was the positing of a unified vision of the social order that also recognized the legal, moral and economic autonomy of its component parts. The idea of civil society emerged at the beginning of this period as just such a solution (Seligman 2002, p. 27).

With thinkers such as G.W. Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx – notwithstanding their sometimes conflicting philosophical viewpoints – the conceptualisation of civil society once more gained a new dimension. For Hegel, civil society cannot exist until the peoples have outgrown the *Naturzustand* (natural impulse), and in *The Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (1820), he argues that the individual gains freedom in the state. Seligman (2002, p. 25) interprets Hegel in the sense that he resolves civil society into the existent and ethical (universal) entity of the state, as opposed to Marx, who

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[22] See in particular: Tocqueville, 1835, Volume 1, Chapter VII (pp. 191–198) and 1840, Volume II, Chapter VII (pp. 115–120).

resolves it into itself. For Marx, civil society develops only within the bourgeoisie, which is largely interlinked with the political society (or superstructure) and consequently disregards both. In his essay *On the Jewish Question* (1844, 234) he holds that:

> Only when real, individual man re-absorbs in himself the abstract citizen, and as an individual human being has become a species-being in his everyday life, in his particular work, and in his particular situation, only when man has recognized and organized his 'force propres' as social forces, and consequently no longer separates social power from himself in the shape of political power, only then will human emancipation have been accomplished.

Although known as a follower of Marx, Antonio Gramsci differed from Marxist viewpoints and developed his own ideas in his *Prison Notebooks.* In the 'Organisation of National Societies' Gramsci distinguishes political society from civil society by explaining the latter as "[…] the hegemony of one social group over the entire nation, exercised through so-called private organizations like the church, trade unions, or schools." (p. 383) and continues that: "it is above all in civil society that intellectuals exert their influence". As Michael Bratton (1994, p. 55) put it – Gramsci's political society is the embodiment of force and his civil society is the manufacturer of consent. Thus, Gramsci does not, in fact, acknowledge that in reality the political society and the civil society often overlap. Nevertheless, he emphasises the transformative, if not emancipatory, role of civil society. Rather than providing a balance to the government, civil society strives to reform the government to bring about fairer social relations (Verkoren and van Leeuwen, 2013, p. 161).

That associations, clubs, churches and also the family can, and in fact do, promote antidemocratic and illiberal ideas was the horrible experience in the events before, during and after World War II. It was a vibrant and well-organised civil society that gave birth to and nurtured the Nazi movement in the Weimar Republic while, simultaneously, a high level of associational participation in pre-war Italy bred the votes for Mussolini. In challenging neo-Tocquevillean accounts of civil society, Sheri Berman discusses in detail how a robust civil society actually helped scuttle the twentieth century's most critical democratic experiment – Weimar Germany. She argues:

[…] Weimar's rich associational life provided a critical training ground for eventual Nazi cadres and a base from which the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) could launch its *Machtergreifung* (seizure of power). Had German civil society been weaker, the Nazis would never have been able to capture so many citizens for their cause or eviscerate their opponents so swiftly. (1997, p. 401)

In other words, it was during that time when the concept of civil society somewhat lost its idealistic flavour. In the aftermath of World War II, critical theorists questioned *why* people assemble in antidemocratic or even racist groups, as opposed to the more conservative or right-wing fraction of thinkers, who focused on *how* to contain such movements within the bounds of the law (Chambers 2002, pp. 100–105). It seems that the aftershock of World War II led Western civil societies to a more active experience of what it meant to be a member of a society, and not a pure ideological envisioning of it. In other words, civil society underwent a process of self-actualisation, and normative discourses on state–society relations became secondary. Supported by the advancement of technology and the growing dissemination of news and new media, such civil activism was reflected in the anti-nuclear, anti-Vietnam and civil rights movements, as well as in various student protests and the 1968 revolution.

The second major conceptual, as well as more visionary, transformation of the notion of civil society was largely due to dissident intellectuals in communist Eastern Europe. In an uproar against totalitarian regimes, revisionists, such as Jan Tesař, Václav Havel and György Konrád, expressed in various forms that the communist project was exhausted and would leave no room for human rights – as famously manifested in initiatives like KOR (Polish Workers' Defense Committee) or Charter 77 (Keane 1998, pp. 19–23). Mary Kaldor perfectly summarises all these events by describing the conceptual transformation of the term around the year 1989 as: "[…] a radical extension of political and personal rights, which led to the demand for autonomy, self-organisation or control over life and consequently arose as a global concept". (2003, p. 76)

She further argues that these demands for transformation went beyond the state, and in that new civil society actors found it necessary and possible to make alliances across borders and to address not just the state, but international institutions as well.

At the same time, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, discourses on civil society were significantly shaped by Jürgen Habermas' accounts of communicative power and the public sphere. The latter is perceived by Habermas as the mediating sphere between the state and society (1986, pp. 231–236). He describes it as the domain of social life in which public opinion can be formed. Public opinion originated in places like coffee houses and salons or within the bourgeois society in the late eighteenth century. During the twentieth century, this free exchange of opinion climaxed through the vast dissemination of information in newspapers, periodicals and radio and TV programmes (and more recently also the internet). For Habermas, public opinion can be formed only if a public that "engages in rational discussion exists" (1986, p. 232). Civil society is accordingly composed of more or less spontaneously emergent associations, organisations and movements. These movements are sensitive to societal concerns and resonate in the private sphere, to then be extended and transmitted to the public sphere (Habermas 1989, pp. 231–236; Habermas 1996, pp. 329–387).

After the fall of communism, the 1990s came to be the golden era for civil society movements, associations and organisations, fuelling fruitful and vast debates on the role of non-governmental organisations in local, national and global spheres. The number, involvement and activities of INGOs (international non-governmental organisations) and CSOs expanded worldwide. This can be observed from the rapid increase of funds by OECD countries via NGOs. In 1985–1986, the funding provided amounted to USD 3.1 billion per year and increased to USD 6.7 billion in 1999 and USD 7.1 billion in 2001 (Debiel and Sticht 2005, p. 10). According OECD statistics from 2013, funding further increased to USD 19.3 billion in 2011.[23] Civil society became a fashionable but also overused, political, philosophical and phenomenological tool-kit for exponents from the new left, to neo-liberal, to more conservative strands. The idea of civil society is often posited as a panacea while taking on many different meanings related to many different countries or regions.

To sum up, the concept of civil society has attracted much attention in political theory and thought. In order to contest and discuss the consequences of applying such understandings to sub-Saharan African post-conflict countries, a broad definition of

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[23] Data retrieved from OECD: http://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/Aid%20for%20CSOs%20Final%20for%20WEB.pdf, accessed 03.09.2014. As

how the term is presently approached in the West seems necessary. In this regard Christoph Spurk's (2010) definition is a very useful start as he finds some conceptual common ground in a general differentiation from the state/political, economic and private spheres. His characterises civil society as (2010, pp. 8–9):

> […] a sphere of voluntary action that is distinct from the state, political, private, and economic spheres, keeping in mind that in practice the boundaries between these sectors are often complex and blurred. It consists of a large and diverse set of voluntary organizations – competing with each other and oriented to specific interests – that are not purely driven by private or economic interests, are autonomously organized, and interact in the public sphere. Thus, civil society is independent from the state and the political sphere, but is oriented toward and interacts closely with them.

Seen from this perspective, civil society thus becomes the public realm between state, market and family. That this triangular interplay requires a healthy balance is one of the central points made by Chris Brown, who holds that (2000, p. 13):

> There is very little margin for error here – if the state is too extensive it will strangle civil society at birth, too weak and private institutions will compete for its role as provider of order; if people are too much involved in each other's lives then they will lose the sense of distance needed to preserve civility, too little involved and they become part of an atomised "mass society."

Hence there is a broad consensus that a suitable definition should draw a line between the realms of state, market and civil society, but still leave enough analytical and interpretational leeway for the ambiguities inherent in the concept. Above all, Lewis reminds us that (2001, p. 12):

> The concept of civil society contains within it the seeds of contradiction in being both unitary and divisive, and prescriptive and aspirational, but it nevertheless leads us to focus on changing structure and process.

In this regard, this thesis will not understand civil society as a static conception but rather as a constantly evolving and ever-changing societal progression. That further implies that civil society is a process and not a result or endpoint. Such an approach helps to acknowledge the ambivalent nature of the term, concept and overall intellectual idea. Above all, one has to accept that every society (and in fact individual) forms a conglomerate of partly *good* and partly *bad*, *positive* and *negative* or *constructive* and *destructive* components or all of them together. This is of particular relevance when engaging with post-conflict societies in the context of the

many dynamics inherent in, but also caused by, peacebuilding and development processes.

Nonetheless, the intention here is not to refrain from a broad and general working definition. On the contrary, some conceptual common ground is essential for the remainder of the thesis whose aim it is to examine the consequences of applying a liberal notion of civil society in the sub-Saharan African context. In reflection of the definitions and conceptual discourses delineated above, the concept of civil society as it emerged as an intellectual construct and idea of Western Enlightenment thought will be broadly defined and understood as:

> *Independent from the state, political, private, and economic spheres but in close interaction with them; a domain of social life in which public opinion can be formed; and as a process and not an event.*

2.2. Definitional framings of civil society by the international community

The above-depicted liberal notion and understanding of civil society shaped to a great extent the language of international peacebuilding and development actors in their attempts and efforts to strengthen and support the civil sphere. More generally, the events in and around 1989 have had not only a great impact on civil society formation and organisation - globally and locally - but also intensified civil society interactions with international fora, institutions and organisations. Initiatives like the World Alliance for Civic Participation (CIVICUS) serve as a case in point with respect to their global efforts to reinforce and support the "virtual expansion of citizen participation in every region of the globe."[24] Clearly, the growing dialogue with civil society actors but also their increased involvement led to a gradual norm diffusion of what and who civil society ought to be and do, be it within the boundaries of a single state or worldwide. Chapter 1 alluded to the promotion of a specific civil society landscape (based on the values of liberalism) by the international community in fragile states. Chapter 3 will further advance these arguments and critically reflect upon the specific instruments and frameworks that were put in place to strengthen, support,

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[24] The overall idea behind CIVICUS is to create a global alliance of individuals and organisations which might strengthen civil society institutions, advocate for the cause of civil society among the world's decision-makers and stimulate dialogue among civil society organisations and across the non-profit business and public sectors. For more detailed information about the work and purpose of CIVICUS access: https://civicus.org/about-us-125/brief-history, last visit 21.01.2014.

evaluate and monitor civil society in fragile states. Beforehand, it is necessary to delineate and critically reflect upon how the concept is currently used and engrained in the language of the international (donor) community. Hence, this section will briefly outline how civil society is defined by some of the most central international actors engaged in peacebuilding and development processes within fragile states.

Recently, many international organisations (and their respective policy and research departments) have started to build a bridge between scholarly research and policy-oriented analysis (as did universities with IOs). The World Bank, for instance, adopted a definition of civil society developed and disseminated by leading research institutes.[25] As a result the Bank defines civil society as:

> (T)he wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations.

The UNDP's Strategy on Civil Society and Civic Engagement uses a similar definition but explicitly stresses that civil society also constitutes citizens acting individually and collectively. Thus, by contrast to the World Bank's definition, civil society is not restricted to civic associations alone. In the same way, DfID's Civil Society Department emphasises that civil society is more than just NGOs and includes a wide range of actors (thereby listing more or less the same set of actors as we can find it in the World Bank's definition). Interestingly, CIVICUS' working definition is less detailed and perceives civil society as "the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests. (…) citizen action should be voluntary, rather than through compulsion" (2013, p. 10).

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[25] The Bank's website lists: University of California, University of Sussex, John Hopkins University, London School of Economics, CIVICUS, One World Network and Development Gateway, see: World Bank, Defining Civil Society, online source: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20101499~menuPK:244752~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html, accessed 21.01.2014

All definitions, no matter how precise, extensive or vague, apply a liberal understanding of the concept. As the previous section has shown, liberalism is far from being monolithic in its philosophical positions and how civil society is understood and approached therein. Verkoren and van Leeuwen's (2013) critical discourse on civil society in contemporary peacebuilding perfectly illustrates this point. The authors identify two main analytical traditions with regards to how donors approach the civil sphere. The first one builds on the classical work of Tocqueville which, as outlined already in Section 2.1, underscores the importance of organised groups of citizens in maintaining peaceful social relations and a functioning democracy. In placing strong emphasis on the right to form civic associations, civil society is approached through the lens of associational life. Civil society serves as a watchdog but also strengthens democracy and thwarts any form of tyranny. The second one builds on more European-oriented traditions, reflecting the work of Gramsci and to a larger extent also Habermas in emphasising the transformative role of civil society and the active role citizens may have in shaping the character of their state. The main focus is on emancipating citizens in any given environment. For Verkoren and van Leeuwen, European institutions give more emphasis to emancipatory perspectives than American ones, although recently the American tradition has started to gain prominence in Europe as well (p. 161 et seq.). Their distinction seems to have a degree of traction. The World Bank, (perceived here as a donor based on an American intellectual model considering the dominant role of the US government therein), refers indeed mainly to organisational or associational forms of the civil sphere. By contrast, DfID's Civil Society Department's Operational Plan 2011-2015 embraces both Tocqueville's and Gramsci's notions of civil society.. The plan states "for lasting development and change, the UK Government recognises the value of a vibrant and active civil society" (2012, p. 2). The document highlights the words "vibrant" and "active" in bold which can be easily interpreted in two ways. For some, it may well resonate with an emancipatory notion of civil society in equating vibrant with transformative features. For others, civic associations (in Tocqueville's tradition) need to be active and vibrant in their role to represent civil interests and check on government actions. The UNDP's definition can be also characterised as in between both intellectual traditions. Even though the focus is mainly on the various organisational forms civil society can take, their definition still leaves enough leeway for the individual being both part of and within the civil sphere. However, contrasting

definitional rhetoric with practical implementation, Chapter 3 and Parts II and III will make it more evident how donor language and funding allocations diverge. External support mainly targets more formalised actors i.e. CSOs or CBOs, thereby boosting instrumentalisation as well as depoliticisation processes affecting the civil sphere. This additionally explains why enthusiastic – yet often vague - donor language and definition do not always meet the expectations of proponents of a more transformative and emancipatory approach, in particular the alternative discourse school.

2.3. Civil society in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa

Civil society as it evolved as an intellectual construct of the Occidental world, never really matched the realities of social and political life in equatorial Africa. The daily lives of Africans are informed by three distinct legacies: precolonial traditions and institutions; colonial economic, social, and administrative structures; and frameworks designed during the anticolonial struggle (Chazan 1993, pp.67 - 105). When compared to other non-Western regions (Asia, Latin America or the Middle East), the concept of civil society gains many additional complex layers from the impact of historical, political, cultural and economic characteristics and developments. In this sense, a descriptive and prescriptive focus on the potentials or promises of civil society in peacebuilding and development processes of sub-Saharan Africa risks a disregard for both the continuing stigmatisation of a century-long slave trade and the effects of colonial rule. In the case of West Africa, for instance, Hahonou and Pelckmans (2011) find that the legacy of slavery continues to shape present everyday lives of millions of citizens, as well as the political landscape in countries such as Benin, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Nigeria or Burkina Faso. Evoking slavery, they argue, brings shame and in some instances even leads to societal marginalisation. The quasi silence surrounding the issue of slavery and the impact it has had on contemporary state and society relations was also neglected by colonial administrations and by most postcolonial governments (pp. 144-145). During colonial rule, African societies were once again bereft of their own, self-created or 'African' way of socio-cultural evolution. In Howell and Pearce's words (2002, p. 179):

> By carving up territory into distinct spheres of influence and subjugating diverse societies
> to external political domination, colonial powers were able to fragment and reconstitute
> the fabrics of pre-existing societies and reconstruct the physical boundaries of political
> order. The colonial state in sub-Saharan Africa sought to justify its rule through a

paternalistic discourse of civilizing modernization and racial superiority. Using missionaries and anthropologists to invent and classify ethnic categories and unify languages, the colonial rulers not only extended their hegemonic control but also reshaped the structure and consciousness of African society.

Ethnic divisions, tribalism, clientilism and patrimonialism were fuelled and impelled by colonialism and consequently led to a severe fragmentation but also impoverishment of local societies. In turn, decolonisation resulted in more civil wars than 'civil' societies. As initially argued by Mamdani (1996), upon independence, sub-Saharan African societies continued to struggle with racial or ethnical privileges and unequal patterns of power and resource allocation as well as little tolerance for political opposition. Independence, in Mamdani's view, deracialised the state and its institutions but, surprisingly, not civil society. The latter, he argues, continued to be socially constructed based on racial and ethnic categories. Historically accumulated privileges, an urban / rural divide, and direct and indirect (customary) rule and law not only challenged democratisation processes later on but also fuelled ethnic tensions (pp. 13-34).

Strikingly, in post-conflict sub-Saharan Africa, most externally-steered efforts to bring about peace, democratisation and development in the region only marginally question the effects of century-long oppression when it comes to the (re)-construction and formation of local civil societies. Current societal configurations, as well as state-society relations, are often not consistent with a Western notion of civil society that – ideally – contributes to a country's peacebuilding and development efforts by liberal means.

With the risk of repeating what has already been stated in Chapter 1, it seems that the majority of peacebuilding and development literature (in both scholarly and practitioners' circles) studying the relationship between civil society and peacebuilding and development processes is detached from a considerable body of literature that generally questions the appropriation of the concept of civil society in non-Western environments (e.g.: Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Chatterjee, 2004; Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999; Ferguson, 2006; Ferguson and Gupta, 2002; Harbeson, Rothschild and Chazan, 1994; Ikelegbe, 2001; Kaviraj and Khilnani, 2001; Lewis, 2001; Lumumba-Kasongo, 2005; Mamdani, 1996; Orvis, 2001). In alignment with

Mamdani, there is a continuous need in current practice and scholarship for an analysis of civil society (and in fact empirical enquiry) that allows understanding it in its actual formation, rather than as a promised agenda for change (1996, p. 19). With that said, the succeeding paragraphs critically review some of the main scholarly contributions as to how civil society in sub-Saharan Africa is conceptually approached. Subsequently, a matrix of local factors that shape and socially construct the civil sphere in (most) sub-Saharan will be introduced. This matrix will be of particular use in Parts II and III in order to explain how the social fabric and political culture of a country can aggravate depoliticisation effects during peacebuilding processes as well.

Lewis' (2001) discussion on the usefulness of the term is a good starting point in recapitulating approaches towards civil society in the sub-Saharan African state. He is one of the few who dismantles and analyses civil society from four distinctive viewpoints in the African context. The first one approaches civil society as "prescriptive universalism" in that civil society serves as a normative idea aiming at strengthening and building democracies around the world. The second one describes civil society as a "Western exceptionalism" and asserts that the concept emerged at a distinctive moment in European history and thus cannot be applied in the postcolonial African context. The third notion perceives civil society as an "adaptive prescription", as the idea is potentially relevant to non-Western contexts but has to take on different meanings at the local level and should not, therefore, be applied too rigidly. The fourth position puts the whole debate into question and even goes so far as to cast doubt on its relevancy because of its use as an organising principle by colonial administrations. He concludes that civil society can have so many multiple meanings, ranging from an "all-purpose placeholder" to emerging aspirations of local level activists. His article therefore argues for an analysis of civil society as it actually exists, in order to understand its *real* characteristics and structures rather than prescribing them. His understanding clearly relates to a civil society *in* as opposed to a civil society *for* Africa model (see World Bank 2007), and it is here where the matrix of local factors will further advance this approach.

By contrast, for other scholars civil society is simply non-existent in the sub-Saharan African context. To give a few examples, in the early 1990s Harbeson et al., (1994, pp. 1–2) built on the hypothesis that:

(…) civil society is a hitherto missing key to sustained political reform, legitimate states and governments, improved governance, viable state-society and state-economy relationships, and prevention of the kind of political decay that undermined new African governments a generation ago.

Quite similarly, Chabal and Daloz (1999, p. 21) perceive civil society as an "illusion" in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa and argue that the state is so poorly institutionalised, so weakly emancipated from society, that there is very little scope for conceptualising politics as a contest between a functionally strong state and a homogeneously coherent civil society. By drawing on the examples of Kenya and Zambia, Bratton (1994, pp. 64–71) considers civil society as necessary for political transitions in sub-Saharan Africa. He nevertheless concludes on a less positive note by stating that (1994, p. 71):

> [T]here is a strong likelihood that political regimes will re-emerge in African countries in which inter elite dynamics drive decision-making and in which popular forces and organizations are again systematically excluded. The ascendancy of civil society may prove to be short-lived, and any popular upsurge may be followed quickly by widespread citizen disillusionment with the return of politics as usual.

Even if unintentionally, all these accounts indirectly contrast the regulation of social and political life in postcolonial Africa with state society relations as we encounter them in the West, thereby mirroring what Lewis (2001) categorized as the prescriptive approach. In this perspective, civil society is once again understood as a normative, if not even hypothetical, construct that *ought* to achieve or contribute to something. This is unfortunate, as "different circumstances produce different meanings" (Jenkins 2001, p. 251). Next to the essential question of whether civil society exists in sub-Saharan Africa (or whether it is a missing key, illusion or non-existent), it is equally important to ask what being an African citizen in the twenty-first century actually means and involves. This goes hand in hand with Allen's observation, who finds that civil society in sub-Saharan Africa appears to be merely an ideological construct (1997, p 337):

> [A]part from the grant-seeking NGOs and the academic, it is proponents of the 'liberal project' who need civil society: western governments, their associated agencies, multinationals, and IFIs. Africanists can dispense with it: 'civil society' forms part of a large body of general concepts that have appeared briefly to illuminate analysis but which are too diffuse, inclusive and ideologically laden to sustain illumination: nation building, modernisation, elite, dependency, disengagement – even, perhaps, ethnicity.

Allen's statement gives rise to certain questions; for example, to what extent is civil society artificially constructed or instrumentalised by external actors through specific funding schemes, capacity building programmes or training targeting local civic associations/organisations (see Chapter 3 of the thesis)? To what degree does civil society emerge organically – that is to say, in its own formation, manner and pace (see Chapter 7 of the thesis)?

It seems important to note at this point, however, that local actors do not necessarily disregard external influence and support for CSOs. Thus, recalling Lewis' (2001) adaptive approach, appropriating a Westernised concept of civil society is not necessarily perceived negatively among local actors. To give an example, during a workshop organised by the International Peace Institute (IPI), seven civil society activists from the Great Lakes Region raised the concern that:

> Many governments in the Great Lakes Region view the work of CSOs with suspicion and sometimes subject civil society leaders to severe harassment and intimidation. States often create barriers by constructing laws to insulate their actions from scrutiny or to curtail CSO activities. In some cases, civil society leaders are labelled agents of foreign interests or proxies of political opposition in order to justify hostile action from the government. (2004, p 1)

It is worth noting that local CSOs also sometimes disregard national elites or governments for following and implementing Westernised agendas or priority plans - frequently with regards to economic revitalisation and natural resources management. Lumumba-Kasongo (2005) further contends that it is not that Africans would not appreciate the ideas or principles of liberal democracies, but it's that the process of creating rules, norms and institutionalisation has been hijacked by the political elite. In his view, *this* democracy and its processes have not been able to address the core issues of African societies, such as the equitable distribution of resources, social justice, employment, gender equality and individual and collective rights (2005, p. 202). This has led to a new form of imperialism and, ironically, in some instances even resulted in a nostalgia about colonial rule. The exact same observation has also been made by Easterly (2007, p. 237), who refers to a comparable nostalgia with regards to minority white regimes in Zimbabwe.

Lastly, the triple legacy of precolonial, colonial and postcolonial times severely shaped the dynamics and formation of local political culture, which in turn challenges

democratic transitions after independence. Recalling Chapter 1's definition of the concept, political culture is understood here as a people's predominant beliefs, values, ideals, sentiments, and evaluations about the political system of its country, and the role of the self in that system (Almond and Verba 1963, Diamond 1994). Moreover, political culture - like identity - has to be approached in the plural. In the absence of examples of genuine state consolidation in the sub-Saharan African context, political culture patterns have come to reflect differing degrees of stateness over history, space and time. This has further resulted in various forms of state society-relations in the region (Chazan, 1993, pp. 67 - 105). Seen from this perspective, Ekeh's (1975) famous two publics of the bifurcated state are still very much alive (see also Chapter 4). In his influential essay "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement" he presents the argument that colonialism led to the creation of two distinct publics – the primordial and the civic. Their dialectic relationship shaped the civil sphere of colonial and later on also post-colonial African states. It is worth repeating, that Ekeh associates the primordial public with a pre-colonial societal order, values, traditions and belief systems. The civic public, on the other hand, refers to the societal order introduced by colonial administration and ideologies. Thus, the bifurcated state emerged out of the complex relationship between the two publics in that "colonial ideologies of legitimation denigrated African societies and cultures and glorified European colonial rule, while African bourgeois ideologies of legitimation accepted colonial ideas and principles to justify the leadership of the elites in the fight against colonialism and the inheritance of the postcolonial state" (Mentan 2010, p. 187).

Contemporary sub-Saharan Africa sustains a variety of political cultures while struggling to establish a public and political realm based on the liberal societal moralities of the West. In other words, present attempts to restructure the foundations of the relationship of official organs and institutions and the civil (legitimising) sphere in peacebuilding and development processes face at least two distinct political cultures on the ground. The first one can be described as a 'still to be constructed' liberal political culture through the institutional reformation processes based on liberal ideals. It is the political culture of the future - a normative and constantly evolving construct, to be instituted and socially engrained in the course of the peacebuilding and development process. The second one is a persisting (in some instances, however, slowly fading) political culture - a (by)-product of precolonial and colonial times. It is shaped by the cultural matrix of the civil sphere in present sub-Saharan Africa as it

emerged over the past centuries. As a result peacebuilding and development efforts are confronted with several points of intersection of different political cultures within the realm of the civil sphere. It remains to be further explored in the scope of the thesis, what kind of frictions or new opportunities these intersections create for local post-conflict societies? Chapter 7 will revert to this point.

To summarise, it has been argued that civil society in sub-Saharan African post-conflict countries represents much more than a normative and terminological fad. Chapters 1 and 2, but also later-presented findings from interviews conducted in Sierra Leone which are assessed and discussed at length in Parts II and III, informed the following matrix of factors to better approach and contextualise (most) sub-Saharan African civil societies. These include[26]:

- Slave trade and colonial legacy

- Urban versus rural areas

- Local versus elite ownership

- Influence and support of IOs and INGOs

- Neo-patrimonial networks and chiefdom systems

- Ethnic and religious organisation and religious leaders (including belief systems and magic)

- Intergenerational power imbalances

- Gender relations and equality

- Cultural identities

- Life circumstances (e.g. living conditions, health, nutrition, education)

The above list represents a matrix of local factors that shape and socially construct the values, beliefs and orientations of the civil sphere in (most) sub-Saharan African states. In essence, it can uncover a lot about the political culture operating behind, next to, in opposition to and at times even in conjunction with a liberal political culture that informs peacebuilding and development process. All of the above listed factors will inform the historical and empirical discussions of Parts II and III of

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[26] This list is, of course, far from being extensive and the author does not exclude the fact that there is room for improvement. Hence this chapter reserves the rights to further amend these factors in the course of future research projects and critical examinations.

the thesis. They are essential aspects to consider in illuminating how political voice (from the civil sphere) is socially engineered but often not articulated via more traditional forms of civil society formation and civic association in a Tocqueville tradition - that is, a constantly growing political associational life or CSO landscape. Section 3.1 in Chapter 3 and Part II will further expand on this point and elaborate how in Sierra Leone CSOs have become instrumentalised, if not depoliticised, to serve a broader liberal peacebuilding and development agenda. At the same time, it is expected that the matrix helps avoiding a too deterministic perception of Sierra Leone's civil society, which can vary across the country and ethnicities. It basically lays the groundwork in the search for alternatives to advance our understanding of post-conflict civil societies in the sub-Saharan African region, while still leaving enough leeway for local and cultural particularism (be it at village, community, district or country level).

Conclusion

While Chapter 1 highlighted some of the most recurring theoretical problems and challenges in strengthening the civil sphere in non-Western fragile states, this chapter sought to fill in a conceptual gap in current peacebuilding and development literature: It expounded why a classical Western liberal-individualist model of civil society is continuously challenged by cultural particularism within fragile states outside the Occidental world. Any theoretical (mis-) usage, so it was suggested, has to be carefully questioned and re-examined. The argument that the nature of civil society in post-war sub-Saharan Africa can be understood only through a local lens is of course not entirely new (e.g.: Ferguson 2006; Jenkins 2001; Lewis 2001, Mamdani 1996). By contrast, the positive but also negative effects as well as consequences of appropriating westernised/liberal, normative and/or prescriptive notions of civil society to the region remain less explored – in peacebuilding and development theory as well as in practice (Datzberger 2015a, *forthcoming*).

Correspondingly, the chapter highlighted how the diffusion of norms, that is to say, how a liberal interpretation of the concept of civil society, became the operational and definitional baseline for many leading IOs and other international actors engaging in the rebuilding or fragile states. Yet, as the last section of this chapter pointed out, there is clearly a need to shift settled modes of thinking and acknowledge that

constantly changing meanings of civil society have to be placed in a historical, contemporary and local context. This highlights the need to take into account local characteristics that are already part of, and grounded in, existing experiences. Even though some scholars find the concept of civil society rather inaccurate for the sub-Saharan African region, the thesis holds that civil society does exist, though in its own specific societal configurations and organisational (and political) formations. Such an approach requires respect for historical, cultural, structural and ideological characteristics. It also recognises that civil society encompasses much more than an institutionalised, officially registered associational life in a Tocqueville understanding and tradition (e.g. CSOs or NGOs often in collaboration with INGOs or other external actors). It not only opens up the space for alternative approaches but also gives rise to several new questions. For instance, how has the war and peacebuilding and development process changed the concept/formation of civil society in Sierra Leone (see Chapters 5 and 6)? How is civil society "artificially" (re-)constructed if not instrumentalised by external peacebuilding and development actors (see Chapter 6)? Does it merge or further deepen the gaps of a bifurcated political culture of the civil sphere (see Chapter 7)? Either way, how is political voice socially engineered at the local level (see Chapters 6 and 7)? How can these voices be better heard and reflected in the peacebuilding, democratisation and development process of a country as a whole? All these questions will be addressed in Parts II and III of the thesis. They are concomitant with the empirical puzzle of the thesis to examine the paradox of why the Sierra Leonean civil society landscape (in the form of CSOs) seems to be gradually depoliticised - despite numerous efforts by the international community to actually strengthen it. To further substantiate this claim, Chapter 3 will depict some of the technical and practical dimensions of present peacebuilding and development to engage with the civil sphere. After a critical assessment of international frameworks to support civil societies in fragile states, it will outline how the thesis attempts to analytically and methodologically explain the depoliticisation effects of a liberal peacebuilding and development agenda in the case of Sierra Leone.

Chapter Three

Civil society *actors* and *functions*
in peacebuilding and development practice

In setting out the theoretical scene for the empirical Part II, Chapter 1 identified the issue of depoliticisation as an under-researched and assessed phenomenon when it comes to studies about civil society in peacebuilding and development processes. Chapter 2 then argued that a westernised usage of civil society needs to be re-negotiated in the non-Occidental world. It elaborated how the cultural matrix and socio-historical fabrics of a society differ from liberal idea(l)s and why this should not be overlooked when it comes to assess why the Sierra Leonean civil society landscape is at risk to of being gradually depoliticised. Chapter 3 sets out how the thesis will analytically and methodologically examine this phenomenon in Part II.

Sections 3.1 and 3.2 will first provide an overview of the technical and practical dimensions in strengthening the civil sphere. In charting the most prominent international engagement mechanisms targeting civil societies in fragile states these sections will put forward one central point. Namely, in the realms of peacebuilding and development, civil society emerged as an output (= an *actor* to be strengthened) thereby serving a particular outcome (= *function* e.g.: democratisation, mainstreaming gender equality and human rights or sustainable development). Civil society not only became a partner to be taken seriously by the international donor community, but also surfaced as an indicator to measure the "effectiveness" of peacebuilding and development interventions on the ground. Externally introduced monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms increasingly impact and shape the formation of local civil society landscapes in fragile states. Over time, civil society has become an object of reconstruction based on a liberal agenda for development and peace (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1). This has led to a gradual conversion of the civil sphere into an operational baseline for externally steered objectives and interventions. As Howell and Pearce put it (2001, p.117): "Civil society strengthening programs, civil society units, advisers, partnership projects – all these attempts to operationalize and put into

practice civil society – reflect the underlying 'instrumentalization' of civil society." In other words, Chapter 3 expounds how local civil society *actors* became a means to an end in being strengthened and capacitated to ultimately provide *functions* that serve a national (but not necessarily local) peacebuilding and development agenda in fragile states. Against this backdrop, Section 3.3 will elaborate on two simple yet important questions for the remainder of the thesis. Firstly, which actors is it exactly who ought to be strengthened, (re-)built or (re-)constructed based on a Western and liberal notion of civil society? Secondly, what functions, activities and tasks are these actors usually expected (and funded) to carry out and perform? In addressing these questions, it is the overall objective of this chapter to explain and outline how actors- and functional-oriented approaches are combined, used and applied to examine the thesis research question in the case of Sierra Leone.

3.1. International frameworks to support civil society in peacebuilding and development practice

Section 1.1 of Chapter 1 advanced the argument that civil societies in non-Western fragile states are subject to (re-)construction based on the values of liberalism. At the same time the peacebuilding and development (policy and research) community reached a broad consensus that civil society is an important key actor in the transition from fragility to peace and prosperity. The constantly increasing attention
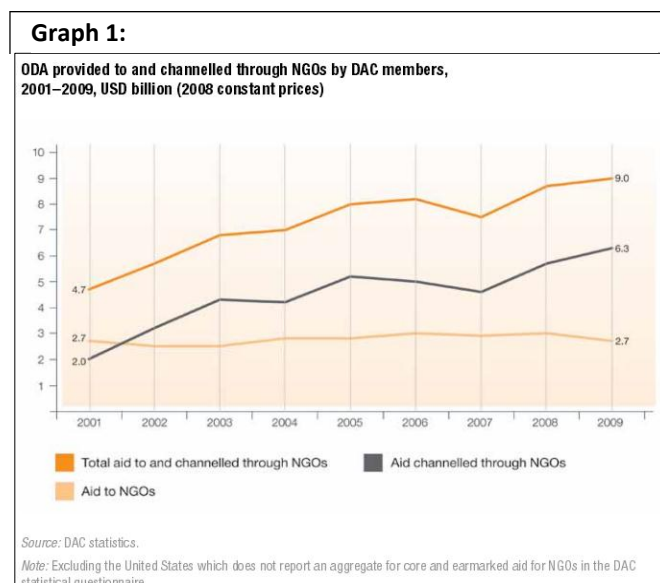
Graph 1:

ODA provided to and channelled through NGOs by DAC members, 2001–2009, USD billion (2008 constant prices)

Total aid to and channelled through NGOs   Aid channelled through NGOs

Aid to NGOs

Source: DAC statistics.
Note: Excluding the United States which does not report an aggregate for core and earmarked aid for NGOs in the DAC statistical questionnaire.

towards the civil sphere is also noticeable in the concomitant amounts of funds from institutions like the World Bank, U.N. or DfID (see Section 1.1). The OECD-DAC Graph (2011) on the above reinforces the earlier figures in illustrating how funding channelled through CSOs increased by proverbial leaps and bounds from 2001-2009.

At the international level, the space for civil society in fragile states was widened significantly within donor policy and practice after the High Level Aid

Effectiveness forum in Paris (2005) and subsequent meetings in Accra (2008) and Busan (2011). The first two outcome documents are known as the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (2005) and the *AAA - Accra Agenda for Action* (2008). Currently there are 137 countries (incl. territories) and 28 International Organisations[27] adhering to the *Paris Declaration* and *AAA*. In total, 14 INGOs or CSOs[28] were present at the high level forum in Paris. In the main, these instruments can be seen as guiding principles for the majority of donors and institutions in their peacebuilding and development assistance. Although both stress the need to strengthen the engagement with CSOs, the OECD was not satisfied with this vague approach and further pushed the issue. In critiquing the *Paris Declaration*, as well as the *AAA*, for not fully recognising the potential of the civil sphere in developmental processes, it responded to this void with an extensive volume entitled *Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness* (2009). In one of its recommendations, the OECD urges the multi-stakeholder community to ensure that CSOs are as effective as possible at what they do, both as development actors and as aid actors more specifically. In order to achieve a certain degree of effectiveness it emphasises the need for 'recognition and voice' in the view that CSOs are frequently not perceived as (2009, p. 13):

> (…) development actors in their own right, with their own priorities, programmes and partnership arrangements. It [the *Paris Declaration & AAA*] thus failed to take into account the rich diversity of players in a democratic society and failed to recognise the full range of roles played by CSOs as development actors and change agents.

The OECD report was successful to some extent. Next to other (non-OECD) initiatives, it influenced the agenda of the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness

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[27] These include: African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest, Economic Commission for Africa, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, GAVI Alliance, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Organisation of the Francophonie, Millenium Campaign, Nordic Development Fund, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, OPEC Fund for International Development, United Nations Development Group, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, Commonwealth Secretariat, Council of Europe Development Bank, Education for All Fast Track Initiative, European Investment Bank, Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Inter-American Development Bank, International Monetary Fund, Islamic Development Bank, New Partnership for Africa's Development, Organization of American States, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, World Bank;
[28] These include: Africa Humanitarian Actions, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Comité catholique contre la faim et pour le développement, Comisión Económia (Nicaragua), EURODAD, Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation, Tanzania Social and Economic Trust, AFRODAD, Canadian Council for International Cooperation, Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité, ENDA Tiers Monde, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Reality of Aid Network, and UK Aid Network.

(HLF-4), which took place between 29 November - 1 December 2011, in Busan, South Korea. In an initial draft of the outcome document, it was stated under point 19 (OECD 2011, p 9):

  a) Civil society organisations play a vital role in shaping development policies and new partnerships, overseeing their implementation. They also provide services in areas that are complementary to or go beyond those provided for by states. Recognising this, we will:
  b) Implement fully our respective commitments to enable civil society organisations to exercise their roles as independent development actors, with a particular focus on an enabling environment that maximises the contributions of CSOs to development.
  c) Encourage CSOs to implement practices that strengthen their own effectiveness, accountability and contribution to development results, guided by the Istanbul CSO Development Effectiveness Principles.

Interestingly, the final version of the outcome document, known as the *Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation* (1.12.2013), did not include point 19. Nonetheless, CSOs are for the first time officially recognised as full and equal participants next to traditional donors, governments or South-South co-operations, BRICS or private actors. In particular, paragraph 16 states: "A growing range of actors – including middle-income countries, partners of South-South and triangular co-operation and civil society organisations – have joined others to forge a broader, more inclusive agenda since Paris and Accra, embracing their respective and different commitments alongside shared principles." Besides, as Weijer and Kilnes (2012, p.4) highlight, the acknowledgment of an increased role for CSOs was also heavily lobbied for by civil society itself.

It is noteworthy, that the HLF-4 in Busan officially created more potential space for civil society in the context of fragile states. A new partnership, the *New Deal*, was established by an inclusive coalition of fragile states, donor countries and civil society (in total over 40 countries and organisations are part of the *New Deal's* 'International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding'). Despite already existing commitments through the Paris Declaration (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008), the *New Deal* emerged out of the recognition that current ways of working in the specific context of fragile states need improvement. In 2013, one in four people in the world still live in countries affected by conflict, fragility and/or violence. It is estimated that, by 2015, half of the world's people living on less than USD 1.25 a day will live in

fragile states (The Washington Communiqué on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, 19.04.2013). The initiative's own website describes the *New Deal* as "an innovative framework that identifies key peace- and statebuilding priorities and supports country owned and country led transitions from fragility and conflict to peace and development".[29] As for civil society, the *New Deal's* key document recognises that "an engaged public and civil society, which constructively monitors decision-making, is important to ensure accountability" (p. 2). It further stresses the need for capacity building of civil society and promotes a country-owned vision and plan in close consultation with civil society actors.[30]

Upon closer examination it is evident that the *New Deal* re-invents the wheel as opposed to offering a novel approach towards the civil sphere in fragile states. Its specific focus on conflict-affected countries notwithstanding, it does not differ from earlier instruments for engagement with civil societies in peacebuilding and development processes, as promoted *inter alia* by the U.N., the OECD, DfID or the World Bank. To give an example, point II (p.2) of the key outcome document stipulates that there should be one national vision and one plan to transition out of fragility. "This vision and plan will be country-owned and –led, developed in consultation with civil society and based on inputs from the fragility assessment."[31] Language promoting inclusiveness can also be found in much earlier frameworks such as the IMF's and World Bank's PRSPs or in the strategic frameworks for peacebuilding of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. Taking into account its fairly recent launch, it remains to be seen how and whether the *New Deal* will make an impact on strengthening the civil sphere in fragile states.[32]

3.2. Measuring civil society's effectiveness in peacebuilding and development practice

Taken as a whole, international frameworks engaging with civil society in fragile states are generally occupied with three main aspects: inclusiveness; capacity

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[29] See: www.newdeal4peace.org, last visit 26.11.2013

[30] The document can be downloaded at: http://www.newdeal4peace.org/wp-content/themes/newdeal/docs/new-deal-for-engagement-in-fragile-states-en.pdf, last visit 26.11.2013

[31] See: http://www.newdeal4peace.org/wp-content/themes/newdeal/docs/new-deal-for-engagement-in-fragile-states-en.pdf, last visit 30. 11. 2013

[32] See also Weijer and Klines (2012, pp. 4-5) for critical reflection of how civil society is approached in the scope of the New Deal.

building; and effectiveness. While operating on a liberal paradigm as to how civil societies ought to be (re-)constructed and strengthened, all three aspects are also deeply intertwined. Inclusiveness (or as the OECD put it "recognition and voice") depends largely on the capacity of civil society thereby impinging on the effectiveness of these actors on the ground. Peacebuilding and development practice of the past three decades has shown, however, that this is much easier said than done. Despite international aid-effectiveness frameworks, experts within and outside the development community are still frequently complaining about how inefficiently and inadequately donor money is eventually spent (e.g.: Easterly, 2007; Hanlon et.al., 2010; Moyo, 2009; Pollman, 2010a, 2010b,). The Busan HLF-4 talks partly addressed these criticisms and focused, in one of their numerous thematic issue sessions, exclusively on accountability and ownership.[33] However, the devil often lies in the detail and in the particular case of the HLFs (from Paris to Accra and Busan) the detail is in the word "effectiveness". The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term effectiveness as "the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result".[34] The crunch question, though, is: what is a desired result and for whom? As for now, almost all Western donors, institutions or agencies measure effectiveness through key variables relating to outputs and outcomes which are expected to lead to a desired impact (again, mainly based on a liberal agenda). UNDEF (United Nations Democracy Fund), for instance, operates with a logical framework mapping the logical path from activities (=outputs) through intended objectives (=outcomes) to anticipated impacts (medium and long term). Their approach is similar to other U.N. funds (e.g. UNPBF) and leading development assistance institutions or INGOs. In the realm of civil society in fragile states, the outputs (meaning project or programme activities), can range from capacity building, to various training sessions or in-country consultation events, among others. It is noteworthy that M&E frameworks already surfaced long before the Busan HLF-4. M&E was promoted since the early 1990s, as a new domain and toolkit to measure the effectiveness of donors, their implementation partners and beneficiaries' activities alike. According to the UNDP *Handbook for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results* (2009, p.181):

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[33] The practical as well as theoretical contradictions of local ownership were already pointed out in Chapter 1 (Section 1.2.2) and shall therefore not be further subject to debate.
[34] See: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/effectiveness, last visit 2.12.2013

> Each monitoring and evaluation activity has a purpose. UNDP places great importance on monitoring and evaluation because, when done and used correctly, they strengthen the basis for **managing for results,** foster **learning** and **knowledge generation** in the organization as well as the broader development and evaluation community, and support the public **accountability** of UNDP. (Emphasis in original)

In this light, civil society too has become part of the log-frame and emerged as an object of measurement based on predetermined outputs, outcomes and impacts. After the HLF-3 in Accra, an *Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness* was set up in September 2010 with the intention to (outcome document, 2011, p 2):

> (…) create a shared framework of principles that defines effective CSO development practice and elaborates the minimum standards for an enabling environment for CSOs, while at the same time promoting civil society's essential role in the international development system.

The final version, officially known as *The 8 Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness*, provides the foundation for the *International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness*, which was endorsed in June 2011 at the 2nd Global Assembly of the Open Forum in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The 8 Principles are the result of an extensive worldwide consultation process with thousands of civil society organisations (national, regional and thematic consultations), undertaken by civil society itself.[35] According to the Istanbul Principles for CSO development effectiveness (2010), CSOs are effective as development actors when they:

a) Respect and promote human rights and social justice
b) Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women's and girl's rights
c) Focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation
d) Promote environmental sustainability
e) Practice transparency and accountability
f) Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity
g) Create and share knowledge and commit to mutual learning
h) Commit to realizing positive sustainable change

The Istanbul Principles, as well as the OECD (2009, p.16), further hold that the effectiveness of civil society depends largely on the enabling environment and policies. For the OECD, particular elements worthy of attention include: the regulatory and legislative environment; the openness of government and donors to engaging with CSOs, the transparency and accountability with which information is shared; and the

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[35] For more detailed information access the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness website: http://cso-effectiveness.org/istanbul-principles,067, last visit 2.12.2013

CSO community's own collective mechanisms for self-monitoring, accountability and collaboration (ibid. p.16). Clearly, the Istanbul Principles as well as the OECD operate on a Western and liberal notion of civil society. They target civil society as actors who ought to contribute, and manifest pre-determined long-term impacts based on a liberal agenda frequently implemented in non-Occidental fragile states.

On the positive side, M&E frameworks or principles to measure the effectiveness of civil society enhance the transparency of interventions to re-build or strengthen the civil sphere. What is probably even more important for researchers and analysts alike, they also generate new knowledge about peacebuilding and development processes and the role of civil society therein. Greater accountability in the form of M&E frameworks or principles of effectiveness comes at a price, however. In the case of peacebuilding and development assistance the costs are amplified technocracy and bureaucracy. Chapter 6 illuminates in greater detail how in the case of Sierra Leone many local CSOs are repeatedly challenged by external bureaucratic structures, log-frames and administrative procedures. In most cases these also differ from donor to donor. In addition, evaluation mechanisms promote a specific landscape of and for civil society with little leeway for a more organic and culturally embedded progression stemming from the local civil sphere. In order to ensure their very own survival and continued existence, local CSOs are expected to generate specific outcomes in order to obtain funding for future projects. This not only creates a great deal of pressure but also pushes CSOs towards a more strategic approach in their activities and areas of engagement. Frequently, this occurs at the cost of greater flexibility in their agenda setting, local political culture and daily procedures.

Despite the creation of universal frameworks on the effectiveness of CSOs in fragile states, donor organisations still vary in their enthusiasm for civil society and in their purposes for which they use the concept. In contrasting the approaches of donors such as USAID, World Bank, UNDP, DfID, and the INGO CIVICUS, Howell and Pearce (2001, pp. 89-122) discuss at length how civil society is "manufactured" from the outside. Each donor, they contend, has its own route towards engaging with the civil sphere thereby creating its own politics. Even though donor agencies differ in their strategies and in the breadth of actors with which they operate, "they all tend to define civil society in terms of long or short lists of organizations that have the effect

of depoliticizing, sanitizing, and technicising the arena of association" (p. 113). They further hold, "for most donors civil society is a means to an end – be that democratization, economic growth, or sustainable development – rather than an end in itself. It is thus reduced to a technical exercise of coordination, cooperation, and joint effort, depoliticised and neutralized" (p. 117).

To recapitulate, Sections 3.1 – 3.2 as well as Chapter 1, have elaborated that depoliticisation effects can occur as a consequence of liberal peacebuilding and development practice and engagement with civil society. They further explained how M&E mechanisms and pre-determined outputs and outcomes can reinforce this effect. This is still a marginalised topic in current research and only a few authors have started to push the issue of depoliticisation to the fore (i.e. Goetschel and Hagmann, 2009; Howell and Pearce, 2002; Verkoren and van Leeuwen, 2012). However, apart from locating causal explanations in the effects of external interventionism and in the way the international community approaches the civil sphere, there is no further exploration of how local factors that may further aggravate this phenomenon. This is surprising. Findings from interviews in Sierra Leone revealed (see Chapters 5 and 6), the issue of depoliticisation is far more complex than being caused by external interventionism alone. Concretely, the social fabrics, the history of state formation and above all the political culture should not be overlooked. Section 3.3 of this Chapter will therefore suggest an analytical and methodological framework (to be later applied in the exploratory case study of Sierra Leone in Part II) in order to identify and elaborate on locally and socio-historically rooted factors that additionally fortify the depoliticisation of the civil sphere. In short, Section 3.3 introduces an actor- and functional oriented framework to assess the depoliticisation effects that occur in the scope of peacebuilding and development processes in fragile states. Ultimately, this is done in the search for alternative approaches and entry points to strengthen and support civil societies in non-Occidental fragile states. It is also expected to provide insights into how political voice and influence stemming from the civil sphere is socially and locally constituted.

3.3. Civil society actors and functions in current peacebuilding and development practice

Sections 3.1 and 3.2 pointed out that civil society is generally assessed as an actor (beyond and including CSOs), carrying out specific functions in the peacebuilding and development process of a country, be it to evaluate their effectiveness, or their potential to build peace and sustain development. It seems worth repeating that the thesis' focus is <u>not</u> on the effectiveness or what civil society has to contribute to peace and development of a country as a whole. Instead, it looks at how civil society is currently (re)constructed or "manufactured" (Howell and Pearce, 2001) in post-conflict countries and to what kind of unintended consequences this may lead. Ironically, in the quest for alternative approaches towards re-building civil societies in sub-Saharan African fragile states, the thesis cannot refrain from actor-oriented and functional approaches either. Both perspectives are required to examine how and why the civil society landscape is at risk of being gradually de-politicised in the peacebuilding and development process of Sierra Leone. With the discussions of Chapter 2 in mind, it is essential to get a firm grasp of which actors ought to be strengthened, (re)built or (re)constructed based on a Western and liberal notion of civil society. In other words, who are the typical actors and partners in crime for the international donor community? Moreover, what functions, activities and tasks are these actors carrying out and why? This is not to suggest that an actors and functional oriented approach is not limited in one way or another. For this reason the ensuing sections will briefly develop the following:

- How actor's and functional approaches emerged in sociology and influenced peacebuilding and development research and practice
- The strengths and weaknesses of both approaches
- How they are going to inform, methodologically and analytically, Part II and Part III of the thesis.

Broadly speaking, actor-oriented frameworks enhance the understanding of the characteristics of civil society in fragile states, whereas functional approaches are useful in the attempt to classify their activities during the peacebuilding and development process. If combined, both perspectives can inform in much greater detail a 'civil society *in* Africa model' as opposed to 'a civil society *for* Africa model' (see

for instance World Bank, 2007) and consequently examine the *real* characteristics and structures of local civil societies rather than prescribing them. They help us to understand several central aspects of social phenomena inherent in peacebuilding and development processes. On the one hand, an actor-oriented perspective opens up the space for local voice but also the question of who it actually is that belongs to civil society (formally and informally). Hence, it offers a more thorough understanding of the how characteristics differ from a Western idea(l) of civil society. The functional perspective, on the other hand, enables us to identify the various areas of engagement of civil society actors. Here it is interesting to further look at the extent to which these activities are navigated (or not) by the international donor community and INGOs and how they shape present civil society landscapes and their political culture. It should be noted at this juncture, that within the various subfields of social science, actors- and functional oriented approaches are explained, understood, used and interpreted differently. Both perspectives can serve a wide range of epistemological interests and also differ in the way they are methodologically operationalised. For instance, in sociology, an actor- and functional oriented perspective could be applied to shed light on the interplay of how religion (as a function) can strengthen social bonds among individuals and collectives (as actors) in a society. In the scope of the thesis, a combination of both approaches is used to explain and better understand the complex process of rebuilding and strengthening conflict-shattered civil societies. The subsequent Sections 3.4.1 − 3.4.6 dwell upon how actors- and functional approaches are going to inform the analytical framework of Part II and why it is necessary to highlight, identify and critically reflect upon some of the unintended consequences that occur in ongoing efforts to re-build civil spheres in fragile states.

3.3.1. An actor-oriented perspective of civil society in peacebuilding and development processes.

The roots of an *actor-oriented* analysis stretch back to Max Weber's characterisation of social action examining smaller groups within society. The utilisation of actors-oriented frameworks is applied in a diverse range of fields, including anthropology, sociology, psychology, literary criticism, political science or international relations. In development research, proponents (e.g. Long 1990, 2004, or Biggs and Matsaert, 2004) of an actor-oriented approach perceive society as a product of human agency, human activity and self-organising processes. It is concerned

principally with social action and how social action is generated, hindered or constrained. For development sociologist Long (1990, p. 6):

> Underpinning (either explicitly or implicitly) this interest in social actors is the conviction that, although it may be true that certain important structural changes result from the impact of outside forces (due to encroachment by the market or the state), it is theoretically unsatisfactory to base one's analysis on the concept of external determination. All forms of external intervention necessarily enter the existing life-worlds of the individuals and social groups affected, and in this way are mediated and transformed by these same actors and structures.

There is a wide array as to how actor-oriented approaches are applied in social sciences; ranging from anthropological-ethnographic to economic input and output models to stakeholder analysis or behavioural research. For instance, Biggs and Matsaert (2004) use an actor-oriented approach to study how poverty reduction programmes could be further strengthened in the case of Nepal and Bangladesh. For the authors, actor-oriented tools provide practical ways to monitor, document, and assess, and thus legitimise, crucial institutional strengthening activities. They further contend that the use of actor-oriented approaches can change perceptions of development actors, encouraging them to engage with the social and political context of their activities in a productive way. In addition, actor-oriented approaches can also relate to, and in fact often borrow from, social constructivism. Reality is perceived as being constructed through human activity. Social change is consequently the result of the action and interaction of individuals and collectives. A function, policy, institution, strategy, etc. only exists because it is socially constructed by one or more actors. Within a society, actors can be individuals but also formal or informal collectives such as: clubs, secret societies, sodalities, associations, communities, organisations or institutions – to give a few examples.

Against this backdrop, the thesis follows Long (1990, p.16) in applying an actor-oriented approach to determine "the degree to which specific actors' life worlds, organising practices and cultural perceptions are relatively autonomous of, or 'colonised' by wider ideological, institutional and power frames". At the same time, it is used to facilitate an assessment of how and why the civil society landscape is currently composed (formally and informally) in the way in which we encounter it in present-day Sierra Leone. In doing so, it will refer back to the earlier critical discourses about liberal ideas versus cultural particularism or political culture in Chapters 1 and 2. Methodologically, this requires an ethnographic understanding of

everyday life and the processes by which "images, identities and social practices are shared, contested, negotiated, and sometimes rejected by the various actors involved" (Long, 2004 p. 16). Accordingly, social realities are understood in the scope of the thesis as individual and collective perceptions informed by processes of negotiation at several levels and stages in history and time. And it is precisely here where actors-oriented approaches can become "battlefields of knowledge" (ibid. p.15) in that contested understandings, interests and values are pitched against each other.

3.3.2. Limitations and usage of the actor-oriented approach.

The main challenge and, simultaneously, limitation of an actor-oriented approach is that it is of course impossible to capture and match the voices of all actors that are affected in one way or another by the peacebuilding and development process of a country. To the extent possible, the thesis can circumvent this limitation by combining and drawing on qualitative and quantitative methodological tools. More precisely, it provides an excerpt of perspectives, voices and local understandings gathered in the past 4 years. As outlined at length in the introduction and appendix, qualitative data was obtained through interviews with formal and informal civil society members, as well as group observations in Sierra Leone in 2011 and 2012. Apart from that, quantitative data will be presented and assessed in Chapter 5 in the form of an extensive mapping analysis of formally registered CSOs and their areas of engagement. In applying and combining these qualitative as well as quantitative methodological tools, it is expected that an actor's-centred approach, despite its limitations, will still contribute significantly in the attempt to critically examine how civil society is currently (re-)constructed in post conflict countries and how this affects the political voice and influence of the local civil sphere.

3.3.3. Who is a civil society actor? Formal and informal categorisations of civil society.

Not only is there a considerable debate about the meanings and conceptual usage of civil society (see Chapter 2) but there are also several discourses about the distinct categories of civil society. In laying the conceptual groundwork for the thesis, Chapter 2 defined the Western notion of civil society as: "independent from the state, political, private, and economic spheres but in close interaction with them, a domain of social life in which public opinion can be formed, and a process and *not* an event". In a

sense, all of us are civil society and the boundaries between the state, society and the market are hazy and blurred. A government official can also be part of several voluntary clubs and associations. Assuming the same official finds enough courage, hypothetically, he/she can even raise his/her voice and demonstrate against an oppressive regime he/she might be working for. In this regard it is not only the actor that matters but also his/her function and action in a certain context, setting and time. Above all, Chapter 2 (Section 2.3) also highlighted that civil society as it evolved as an intellectual construct of the Occidental World, never really matched the realities of social and political life in equatorial Africa. Clayton accurately reminds us (1996, p. 43):

> Many African colonial and post-independence states attempted to modernise and to replace traditional hierarchies with a new system of government. In this they never entirely succeeded, and in most African states power is shared or interwoven between the central government and its local representatives and a traditional, 'tribal' system; civil society has to find a place in a society which in some ways is more complex than European ones, as the older states have had longer time either to suppress or integrate traditional powers.

Reading between the lines, Clayton clearly echoes Mamdani's (1996) call for analysing more thoroughly the historical processes which have shaped civil society in Africa and the forms these have taken. Therefore, Chapter 2 further suggested that civil society in sub-Saharan Africa, cannot be understood without giving firm consideration to the following factors: the slave trade and colonial legacy, urban versus rural areas, local versus elite ownership, influence and support of INGOs, neo-patrimonial networks and chiefdom systems, intergenerational power imbalances, ethnic and religious organisation and religious leaders, gender relations and equality, cultural identities, life circumstances (e.g. living conditions, health, nutrition, education). Part II of the thesis will elaborate on each of these characteristics at length. Meanwhile, it is worth noting, that a few leading development institutions active in non-Western fragile states (e.g. UNDP or World Bank), started to acknowledge the different genetics and fabrics of civil society in their respective country studies (see, for instance, the World Bank's very useful study on "The Civil Society Landscape in Sierra Leone", 2007). Strikingly, in their peacebuilding and development practice, it is still the "formal western type of civil society groups" (Ibid., p. 10) which gets the most attention. This probably also explains how civil society is officially defined by those institutions (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2). Besides, considering the multitude of actors

involved, supporting civil society has become more and more complex due to the ever-increasing number and type of donors and civil society initiatives (Weijer and Klines 2012). Bearing in mind the earlier-depicted assessment mechanisms and M&E instruments on the "effectiveness" of civil society as well as the growing pressure with regards to accountability, it is apparent why donors generally prefer to support more organised and formalised versions of civil society. Loose, non-registered or "local" traditional forms of civil society are, in the main, the beneficiaries of the work done by those officially registered and M&E checked and audited CSOs. This clearly fosters the creation of an externally manufactured rather than a more organic formation of a civil society landscape that advocates for locally identified concerns and needs. An actor-oriented perspective can therefore not refrain from an assessment of what kind of actors are usually supported and strengthened by the international donor community. Against this backdrop, the thesis comprehends formal versions of civil society as: *INGOs (which can be implementing partners but also donors), NGOs, CSOs, CBOs, Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), unions, youth clubs, sports clubs, associations, artists, formal self-help groups.*

Actors that belong to the informal civil (public) sphere and are usually (with exceptions to the rule) not direct implementing partners include: *Individuals, informal social movements, sodalities and secret societies, "invisible" actors such as informal street clubs, informal associations, youth groups, women's groups or self-help groups.*

Both formal as well as informal versions of civil society in Sierra Leone will be the object of study in the remainder of the thesis. For methodological and analytical reasons, the thesis will make no distinction between the terms NGO and CSO. This decision was made on the basis of "*A note on NGO-CSO terminology*", published by the OECD (2011), in which the organisation convincingly specifies, that:

> Although DAC members have traditionally used the term NGO, more are now using the term CSO. (…) In reporting Official development assistance (ODA) provided to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) DAC members use the OECD statistical reporting directive definition of NGOs as 'any non-profit entity… without significant government participation or representation.' This definition is narrower than the now more commonly used term civil society organisation (CSO), which includes non-governmental organisations among a variety of other organisations.

Similarly, it is important to stress that less formal versions of civil society, e.g. civic associations can differ in social stratification, structure and style. At community level, Haider's work (2009) provides a very useful distinction between five different types of institutions, these are: association, cooperative, civic association, CBOs and village leadership. The focus of the thesis will be mainly on CBOs and associations. Furthermore, civic associations are approached and perceived as (Colletta and Cullen, 2000 in Haider 2009 p.6):

> A group of people, frequently from differing kin groups, who work together for a common purpose and have a visible identity mainly through sectors (e.g. farmers', youth, widows, parent-teach associations). Associations facilitate self-help, mutual help, solidarity, and cooperation. They usually have clearly delineated structures, roles, and rules within which group members operate.

By contrast, CBOs are understood as (Ibid. p.6):

> (…) an organisation that should ideally be representative of the community i.e. membership-based but consequently tending to vary dramatically in size and focus. CBOs may focus on a specific sector (e.g. Village Water Supply and Sanitation Committees) or multiple sectors (e.g. Community Development Councils). CBOs can also comprise the local arm of non-governmental organisations.

In addition to the above definition, the thesis defines CBOs as organisations that operate in urban and rural areas. In many sub-Saharan African countries CBOs are equally as active in cities as they are in villages and can even serve as a stepping stone on the way to becoming a CSO. In some instances, one can also observe the reverse effect and CSOs regress to the status of a CBO due to lack of funding and capacities.

Lastly, INGOs will be not approached as local civil society actors but as actors that influence and shape the local civil sphere in fragile states (see Section 2.1 of Chapter 2). This is not to imply that INGOs are purely external actors from the outside. Field research revealed that INGOs tend to cooperate more intensively with local CSOs than with the GoSL (Government of Sierra Leone) or IOs. Moreover, INGOs are also in closer interaction with locals. Many INGOs hire locals and a large part of INGOs offices on the ground consist of local staff only. It thus appeared that they are far better integrated and in greater interaction with the local sphere than funding programmes led by IOs.

3.3.4. Civil society from a functional-oriented perspective in peacebuilding and development processes.

Functional approaches find their origins in the thought and work of Comte, Spencer and Durkheim, as well as in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century anthropology, notably the writings of Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955) and Malinowski (1884-1942) (Swingewood 2000, pp. 137 – 160). It is Durkheim, however, who is generally cited as the founding father of sociological functionalism. Society is defined by Durkheim as a social fact, an organic whole which is at the same time also moral reality. In its function as a moral structure, society dominates the individual and consequently its various parts function in relation to the whole and not the individual (Swingewood 2000, p. 77). In studying social phenomena, Durkheim was in particular interested in two questions. Firstly, why do societies remain relatively stable? Secondly, how is or can we make social order possible? His way of tackling these issues was to analyse social processes and institutions in terms of their relevant functions for the needs of the system. For Durkheim, social institutions exist merely to fulfil specific social needs (functions). In his book *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895/1982), Durkheim argues that social phenomena can be explained if we separate the "efficient cause" which produces it from the "function it fulfils". Correspondingly, he further specifies that he uses the word "function" in preference to "end" or "purpose", because social phenomena do not generally exist for the useful results they produce. Hence, for Durkheim it is essential to determine whether there is a correspondence between the fact under consideration and the general needs of the social organism. The intentions behind these correspondences are only secondary and the focus should be on the correspondences as such. In his words (1895/1982, p.97):

> The determination of function is … necessary for the complete explanation of the phenomena…. To explain a social fact it is not enough to show the cause on which it depends; we must also, at least in most cases, show its function in the establishment of social order.

While Durkheim clearly distinguishes between a functional and historical analysis, he still acknowledges that a holistic approach of a society requires both. Influenced by Durkheim, subsequent writings of Talcott Parsons or his student and later colleague Robert K. Merton, led to an immense popularity of functionalist approaches among American sociologists in the 1940s and 1950s. Functionalism

simply emerged as *the* sociological method. Its critics, like Gouldner or Mills, accuse sociological functionalism for being an expression of conservative ideology, which fails to provide adequate analysis of social change and social conflict. A functionalist perspective, it is argued, disregards society as a historical and ever progressing process. Social structure, it is further critiqued, is assimilated to a static concept of social solidarity and social consensus. It is precisely this stagnant view of society which probably challenges ongoing discourses on the value of sociological functionalism the most. This is also the case in the realm of peacebuilding and development studies. It is worth repeating that the thesis does not understand civil society as a static phenomenon either. Recalling section 2.1. of Chapter 2, (civil) society is defined as a constantly evolving and ever changing societal progression and consequently approached as a process and not in a Durkheimian sense as a result or endpoint. Merton would have probably counter-argued that sociological functionalism is far from embodying a conservative ideology and that it can be radical and critical at the same time. As a method and approach, according to Merton, sociological functionalism can help us to identify the main weaknesses and "malfunctioning" of specific institutions for satisfying the collective needs of a society (Swingewood 2000, pp. 140 - 141). And it is exactly this aspect of a functional-oriented approach which is useful for the remainder of the thesis. Merton's epistemological argument also indirectly shaped and influenced policy-oriented research as well as various M&E frameworks, studies and practices. As outlined in Section 3.2., in order to measure the effectiveness of civil society, its "functions" (outputs) are usually matched against a broader outcome. Needless to say that pre-determined outcomes or impacts in M&E frameworks have to rely on fixed indicators and a more or less static perception, if the ultimate objective is to measure a project's or programme's failure or success. To give an example, if the outcome is to enhance gender equality in fragile states, one can potentially measure this objective by means of indicators such as the number of workshops conducted, campaigns launched, or females in parliament, schools or other institutions. Now the challenge for achieving a long-term impact lies in the extent to which these norms or standards are really engrained in all of the people's minds and hearts. Instituting gender equality is a long-term goal (or impact) requiring societal progression that can turn in one direction or another at any time, caused by various scenarios or circumstances (e.g. sudden re-emergence of religious fundamentalism). Moreover, when it comes to strengthening civil society in fragile states, thorough

assessments that look beyond the first few years of project implementation are often scarce. Functionalist approaches are indisputably useful in determining current gaps or immediate as well as long-term needs, but they still fall short in examining how other aspects such as political will, political culture, cultural particularism or any other internal and external influences can potentially affect long-term impacts and developments. Researchers and practitioners nevertheless use both its flaws as well as its methodological assets to their own advantage. Without a conservative or static ideology (e.g.: liberalisation based on modernisation models; see Section 1.2, Chapter 1) sociological functionalism would lose its methodological ability to discover the weaknesses and strengths of specific actors – thus, providing a snapshot of the *status quo*. In other words, functionalist approaches serve particular purposes (e.g. identifying immediate or long-term needs or funding gaps) while operating on a more or less linear theory of modernity - the liberal paradigm. In the attempt to assist fragile states to prosper and develop like the peaceful, liberal and rich west, functionalist approaches towards peace and development are therefore quite assimilative in character. For instance, the term "capacity building" has become a key component in any peacebuilding and development agenda. In this regard, capacity building draws not only on a modernisation assumption, but also implies that impoverished societies lack the function (= capacity) to fully manage modern systems or integrate into modern systems in some way (Jantzi and Jantzi 2009). The same can be said about the usage of the term 'failed states'. Poverty, it is assumed, exists since some societies lack the capacities (= functions) to manage modern systems because of *mal*-functions such as, corruption, incompatible cultural or social values, or a lack of expertise. For Jantzi and Jantzi (2009), it appears that many of the peacebuilding theorists and practice models are correlated with modernisation frameworks in development. These modernisation-based or growth-with-equity peacebuilding and development models, they reason, are essentially assimilative in nature. Drawing on a Durkheimian intellectual tradition, assimilation is understood as an endeavour to spread and induce shared understandings of social norms and beliefs. In Jantzi and Jantzi's words: "Development or peacebuilding is implicitly assumed to be a process of assimilating marginalised groups into existing societal structures" (p. 73). In the case of civil society, international frameworks like the Istanbul Principles, attribute civil actors with certain functions (e.g.: promote human rights, embody gender quality, create and

share knowledge etc.) in order to assess their contributions towards a broader peacebuilding and / or development agenda.

In sum, functional approaches, even if not always officially termed as such within practitioners' circles, have gained considerable prominence in current peacebuilding and development practices. Indeed, peacebuilding and development scholars like Paffenholz opted for the functional approach as "it provides the opportunity to identify what is needed prior to an analysis of who has the potential to fulfil these functions in the short, medium, and long terms. It also helps enhance cooperation with existing partners" (2010, p. 429). In scholarship as in practice, functional-oriented approaches emerged as a useful tool for policy-oriented research to identify marginalised areas which deserve greater attention in the realms of peacebuilding and development.

3.3.5. Limitations and usage of the functional approach.

Even Paffenholz, who builds an entire book around a systematic functional-oriented analysis applied to 11 case studies, admits that, general support for civil society and their peacebuilding and development functions cannot replace political action (p.430). As highlighted above, the limitations of the functional approach are obvious. Because of its static view, it disregards the active role played by actors (individual or collective) in the making of the various forms of social solidarity and patterns of social change over time. Although functional models facilitate needs-based assessments for short- and long-term needs, epistemologically, they cannot explain how and why moral values or norms, which supposedly hold society together, are created and by whom (c.f. Swingewood 2000, p. 77-80). Why, despite its epistemological limitations, does the thesis still make use of a functional-oriented approach at all? It is the analytical aspect that is of value in the attempt to characterise the Sierra Leonean civil society landscape as we encounter it today. A characterisation of the past and current functions of civil society is necessary to further substantiate the claim that civil society is at risk of being gradually depoliticised. In other words, civil society is being assigned a role to play within a liberal peacebuilding and development paradigm (or modernisation project). As a result of current practices and frameworks to strengthen the civil sphere in fragile states, civil society actors emerged as contractors to implement specific functions such as complementing government

programmes, or as "watchdogs" to monitor implementation of these programmes. In many instances (not only in Sierra Leone), local CSOs substitute for government agents in fragile states as a way to broaden participation in national development planning (c.f. Weijers and Klines, 2008; Giffen and Judge, 2010).

Methodologically, a functional-oriented approach will be implemented through an extensive mapping analysis (see Chapter 6) listing the areas of engagement (functions) of presently registered INGOs and CSOs in the country. A quantitative and functional-inspired assessment is expected to provide an overview of the functions currently undertaken by local and international CSOs. It shall illustrate how the civil sphere became a service provider as opposed to being a co-creator of a new post-war political agenda in Sierra Leone.

3.3.6. What donors support: Typical civil society functions in current peacebuilding and development processes

The majority of fragile states in sub-Saharan Africa exhibit two distinct features. First, they are marked by abject poverty and underdevelopment. Second, most of the conflicts in the region are, or were, civil wars. Not surprisingly a big chunk of aid money for the civil sphere flows into humanitarian assistance, poverty alleviation, sustainable development projects, or service delivery as opposed to providing funds for civic or political activism at the grassroots level. Donors are required to be neutral actors in their efforts to bring about peace and foster development. Funding allocations for political activities (e.g. opposition to a corrupt government) clearly risk supporting potential peace spoilers. Yet, donors' rhetoric still acknowledges, supports and perceives civil society as *the* democratising force necessary for prosperity and peace. On paper, civil society is generally associated with functions of creation, or promotion of political space next to or in interaction with the government. In practice, however, (as it will be illustrated in the case of Sierra Leone), the largest amount of aid money is allocated to CSOs engaging in service delivery and social development. This is a clear contradiction as to how donors usually portray the functions of civil society in the development process of a fragile state and for which "functions" the money is then eventually spent. In this regard, it is worthwhile to briefly review the various sets of activities and functions ascribed to civil society by some of the most prominent international institutions and policy-oriented researchers.

Being one of the leading institutions advocating for the effectiveness of CSOs, the OECD (2009, p18) lists the following main roles of civil society actors in the development process of a (fragile) country: the creation of space for civil engagement through democratisation, social mobilisation, advocacy, public education, and research, service delivery, self-help, and innovation, humanitarian assistance; and the roles that they play as aid donors, channels, and recipients. Similarly, though a bit more elaborately, the World Bank (2013) highlights the following benefits (or functions) that civil society can bring to development efforts[36]:

- Give voice to stakeholders – particularly poor and marginalized populations – and help ensure that their views are factored into policy and program decisions.
- Promote public sector transparency and accountability as well as contributing to the enabling environment for good governance.
- Promote public consensus and local ownership for reforms, national poverty reduction, and development strategies by building common ground for understanding and encouraging public-private cooperation.
- Bring innovative ideas and solutions, as well as participatory approaches to solve local problems.
- Strengthen and leverage development programs by providing local knowledge, targeting assistance, and generating social capital at the community level.
- Provide professional expertise and increasing capacity for effective service delivery, especially in environments with weak public sector capacity or in post-conflict contexts

The UNDP (2013) similarly identifies collaborating with civil society, at the global, regional and local levels with regards to fighting poverty, building democratic societies, preventing crisis and enabling recovery, protecting the environment, halting and reversing HIV/AIDS, empowering women, fostering knowledge, innovation and capacity development.[37]

Broadly speaking, all three organisations, OECD, World Bank and UNDP, put emphasis on service delivery, social development and poverty alleviation while simultaneously stressing political emancipation as well as strengthening the political influence and voice of the civil sphere. However, as Chapters 5 and 6 will illuminate,

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[36] The World Bank's approaches towards civil society are summarised at: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20093200~menuPK:220424~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html, last visit 25.11.2013

[37] The UNDP's approaches towards civil society are summarized at: http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/fast-facts/english/FF-Civil-Society_EN_2013.pdf, last visit 25.11.2013

in the case of Sierra Leone, the functions of civil society actors that received the most financial support belonged to the category of service delivery and social and communal development. In conducting an extensive mapping analysis encompassing the peacebuilding and development functions undertaken by Sierra Leone's CSOs, the thesis aim is to quantitatively strengthen the claim that civil society actors are in the main complementing service delivery that the Sierra Leonean state or the donor community are unable or unwilling to provide. In other words, the mapping is expected to provide a general idea of the functions currently undertaken by local and international CSOs. It shall illustrate how funding allocations, among other factors, transformed the civil sphere to a service provider as opposed to giving those civil society actors a political voice and space that influences and actively shapes a new post-war political agenda in Sierra Leone.

Conclusion

This chapter first provided an overview of the main mechanisms that support but also evaluate the effectiveness of civil society in developing countries and fragile states. In doing so, it argued that external support fortifies the depoliticisation of the civil sphere in fragile states. While it still remains to be seen what kind of impact the *HLF-4 in Busan* as well as the *New Deal* will have on the ground, they encouraged donors to increasingly apply M&E frameworks as a tool to measure success and failure and, consequently, effectiveness. Accordingly, the chapter reasoned that aid has become a de-personalised and de-contextualised set of indicators. This not only creates a great deal of pressure but also pushes CSOs towards a more strategic approach in their activities and areas of engagement. That this may also occur at the cost of greater flexibility in their agenda setting and therefore hamper their political influence and voice will be a subject of discussion in Parts II and III.

On a more positive note, assessments of the outputs and outcomes of civil society in fragile states do enhance the transparency of interventions and also generate new knowledge about peacebuilding and development processes and the role of civil society therein. Still, universal frameworks and their often highly technocratic M&E mechanisms come at a price. They encourage the creation of a specific civil society landscape in targeting which kind of activities, or functions, local CSOs or CBOs are

to undertake. In a way this has led to an instrumentalisation of the local civil sphere, if not to the creation of a civil society landscape, which is not attuned to cultural particularisms or the socio-historical fabrics and political culture of the society in question. In this regard, international frameworks tend to overlook how multifaceted transitional societies are in their claims, needs and idea(l)s. Neither can post-conflict societies be re-created externally, nor can one assume that every individual of the civil sphere coherently aims at achieving long-lasting peace and development in the same manner and pace.

Equally importantly, the chapter hinted at a salient paradox. On paper (or in theory), civil society is frequently recognised as an independent (and necessary) political actor in the reconstruction process of a fragile state (see also Section 1.1 of Chapter 1). In the same vein, the international donor community as well as research repeatedly ascribes political functions to local civil society actors, such as: democracy promotion, fostering conflict resolution and political dialogue, enhancing participatory approaches or promoting public consensus and local ownership for reforms. Kaldor (2003), for instance, argues that civil society is not a magic formula for successful peacebuilding endeavours, but rather perceives the role (function) of civil society in addressing the problems of conflict, debating and arguing about it and discussing and pressing for possible solutions or alternatives. However, in practice, and this will be debated and analysed in Parts II and III, funding allocations usually do not risk supporting local political activism and voice. Instead, donors tend to provide more resources for training purposes thereby promoting a societal morality of the liberal West (e.g.: human rights). Such an approach does not come as a surprise. Clearly, backing local political activities of any kind could potentially threaten the peacebuilding and development process of a fragile state. Likewise, donors ought to be neutral actors in their attempt to strengthen the civil sphere. Yet it is exactly at this juncture where alternative approaches towards strengthening civil society in fragile states are still scarce. Despite several international and local frameworks and evaluations of civil society actors and their functions, we actually do not know much about how the political culture of civil society is de- and re-constructed in the course of rebuilding failed states and to what kind of long-term consequences (such as depoliticisation) this may lead – in the developmental as well as peacebuilding process. This not only remains a scarcely researched terrain but in bridging theory

with practice, policy-oriented researchers and practitioners usually assess civil society as an *actor* carrying out specific *functions* in the peacebuilding and development process of a country (with the exception of critical peace and development research). While the thesis does not flesh out policy-oriented recommendations on the effectiveness of civil society actors, or what civil society has to or should contribute to peace and development of a fragile state, it will make use of both perspectives in its own distinct way. Actor-oriented frameworks are used to facilitate an understanding of the characteristics of civil society while simultaneously widening the space for voices from below. Functional approaches, on the other hand, are applied to classify and characterise their activities over history and time. A combination of both approaches will be used as a methodological tool to assess and explain why civil society actors in Sierra Leone are at risk of being depoliticised through the functions they carry out.

PART II

Civil society in Sierra Leone

Exploratory Case Study

Chapter Four

Sierra Leone's Society Before and During Colonial Rule

If yu no no sai yu de go yu fo no usai yu comoo'

You must be certain of from where you come
even if you are uncertain of where you will go. (Krio Proverb)[38]

Part I of the thesis examined the multiple dimensions, conceptions, and intellectual meanings and interpretations of civil society and how they are applied, assessed and appropriated. Any firm understanding of contemporary notions of civil society, it was argued, is deeply entrenched in past events and the historical context. As Ekeh notes: "If we are to capture the spirit of African politics we must seek what is unique in them. I am persuaded that the colonial experience provides that uniqueness" (1975, p. 111). The same applies to the spirit of the civil sphere. Despite a few sceptical voices (e.g. Harbeson et.al., 1994; Chabal and Daloz, 1999) doubting whether the concept of civil society is even accurate or applicable in the sub-Saharan African region, Chapter 2 asserted that civil society does exist, though in its own specific societal configurations and organisational (and political) formations. Such an approach, however, requires that due respect to be paid to historical, cultural, structural and ideological characteristics. A matrix of social and cultural factors was presented in order to better approach and contextualise civil society formation in Sierra Leone. Chapter 4 will now fill in the historical blanks. The empirical Part II of the thesis thus commences with a short depiction of Sierra Leone's precolonial and colonial characteristics of the civil sphere. The intention is to place the thesis' research question into a historical context in order to substantiate one of the main arguments made in Chapters 6 and 7. Briefly, in present-day Sierra Leone, the legacies of slavery and colonialism continue to impinge upon the civil society landscape, its political culture, influence, agency and voice.

In exploring the pre-colonial and colonial environment of Sierra Leone from the perspective of the civil sphere, this chapter chronologically demarcates the

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[38] Retained from: Pham, 2006 front page

characteristics of society and the political climate it was surrounded by until independence in 1961. Such a journey through time is expected to further our understanding of how colonial administration effectively created two public spheres, a primordial and a civic (Ekeh 1975), in the same land. Decades-long separation of the Province of Freetown and the hinterland fuelled ethnic divisions, tribalism, clientelism and patrimonialism. The fragmentation between the rural and urban areas fostered historically-accumulated privileges, manifested in the contemporary political and civil society landscape of Sierra Leone.

It should be noted that Chapter 4 is not an all-encompassing and historically detailed retrospective of Sierra Leone's centuries-long reconfiguration of state-society relations. Extensive and factually rich accounts are provided *inter alia* by Conteh-Morgan and Dixon-Fyle (1999), Fyfe (1967), Harris (2013), Joe A.D. Alie (1990) and Pham (2006). In this regard, Chapter 4 will merely outline how the civil sphere was influenced, shaped and affected by the most salient past events to inform discussion and analysis in later chapters.

With that said, Section 4.1 starts off with a short introductory background to the geography, demographics and current developmental status of the country. The two subsequent parts will then briefly delineate Sierra Leone's early precolonial and colonial history. Both pay particular attention to the country's societal structures of the civil sphere therein. Section 4.3 then proceeds with a succinct outline of how the country's civil sphere became gradually more formalised by the Krio society under the influence of British colonial rule. The Krio were dominant in Sierra Leone from the late 18th to the mid-20th centuries and the first who engaged in the creation of civic associations and organisations based on the British model. Subsequently, the last sections engage in a critical reflection about how colonialism sowed the seeds for a bifurcated civil sphere where a primordial and civic public continue to intersect in the same land.

4.1. Sierra Leone: General Background Information

Sierra Leone is located in West Africa and covers a total of 71,740 square kilometres, bordered by Guinea to the north and northeast, Liberia to the south and southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. The climate is tropical, hot and humid

and only experiences two seasons: the rainy season (May – September) and the dry season (March to May). The heaviest rainfalls occur along the coastline and in the south of the country, nurturing dense tropical forests broken by mangrove swamps. The country's total population amounts to 5.6 million (July 2013 est.), which can be further divided into the following ethnic groups: Temne (35 percent), Mende (31 percent), Limba (8 percent), Kono (5 percent), Krio (2 percent), Mandingo (2 percent), Loko (2 percent), and other (15 percent) encompassing refugees from Liberia's recent civil war and small numbers of Europeans, Lebanese, Pakistanis, and Indians. English is the official language (although regular use is limited to a literate minority), Mende is the principal vernacular in the south, Temne is the principal vernacular in the north and Krio (English-based Creole) is spoken by the descendants of freed slaves who were settled in the Freetown area. Krio is the lingua franca and a first language for a considerable part of the population and understood by 97 percent. Sierra Leoneans share different religious views; the majority of the population are Muslim (60 percent) followed by Christians (30 percent) and indigenous beliefs (10 percent). Intermarriages among different religious groups are not unusual and religious violence in the country is very uncommon. Despite steady but slow developmental improvement since the end of the civil war (2002), Sierra Leone remains among the world's poorest countries, ranking 177th out of 187 in the Human Development Index in 2012.[39] At the time of writing, life expectancy at birth is 48 years and only 41 % of all adults are literate. According to the latest index by Save the Children, the country has the third highest child mortality rate worldwide, ranking 174 out of 176 countries assessed.[40] On average, 60 percent of the population are living on less than USD 1.25 a day.[41] One of the major challenges of the country is to improve the conditions for children and young people, who represent the majority of the population (60.9 percent are between 0-24 years old, 31.4 percent between 25-54 years of age while only 4% are between 55-64 years old). In a briefing paper drafted by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) for the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Sierra Leone Configuration in February 2011, it was estimated that about 800,000 youths (60 percent), ranging from 15 to 35 years of age, are either

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[39] See: https://data.undp.org/dataset/Table-1-Human-Development-Index-and-its-components/wxub-qc5k, last visit 04.02.2014
[40] See: http://www.sierraexpressmedia.com/archives/60125, last visit 10.02.2014
[41] See: https://data.undp.org/dataset/Table-1-Human-Development-Index-and-its-components/wxub-qc5k, last visit 04.02.2014

unemployed or underemployed.[42] Three years later, in 2014, the UNDP's estimates are even higher, indicating that a total of 70 percent are presently unemployed or underemployed.[43] The majority of CSOs interviewed in Sierra Leone between 2011 and 2012 also refer to the 70 percent rate.[44] Equally Sierra Leone's President, Ernest Bai Koroma, stated in a speech in London on 18 November 2011 that with regard to the country's socioeconomic development, "For the youth, this was a job poorly done".[45]

4.2. Early History: Society in precolonial Sierra Leone.

Research and writings on the indigenous history of West Africa are frequently challenged by the immense difficulty with regard to source material.[46] There is a shortage of evidence and coherent chronology of narratives especially in the West-African forest zone, where indigenous written records were virtually unknown before the nineteenth century (Hopkins 1973, p.7). The few records and sources which exist about precolonial society estimate that the terrain, known today as Sierra Leone, has been inhabited for at least 2,500 years. Settlers of successive movements from various parts of Africa gradually migrated westwards. According to Pham (2006 p. 2), the Limba are believed to be the oldest inhabitants of the region, followed by the Soso, the Kono and Vai. The Yalunka arrived at the end of the sixteenth century amid conflicts with the Fula and Loko, while the Koranko were settled by the early seventeenth century, as were the Temne, who had originally come into the northwest as traders from the Futa Jallon. Pham further describes pre-colonial society as principally agricultural. Specialised craftsmen were relatively rare and land tenure communal. Membership of the Poro (or Wonde) secret societies for men and the analogous Bondo (or Sande) sodalities for women were important for the initiation and instruction of youth in the ways of tribal culture and belief (ibid. p.2). Many of these pre-colonial

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[42] All UN Peacebuilding Commission Sierra Leone Configuration working papers and official documents can be accessed at: http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/doc_sierraleone.shtml, last visit 04.02.2014

[43] See: http://www.undp.org/content/sierraleone/en/home/countryinfo/, last visit 04.02.2014

[44] In several interviews with CSOs held in June–July 2011 and July – August 2012 in Sierra Leone and also in many informal conversations with Sierra Leoneans the number of 60-70% of unemployed youth was referred to.

[45] For more detailed information see: http://www.worldpress.org/Africa/3837.cfm,

[46] Notable writings elaborating on the pre-colonial history of West Africa are for instance: Asante (2007), *The History of Africa: The quest for harmony*, Routledge, New York, Fage (1978), *The History of Africa*, Routledge New York; Hopkins (1973), *An Economic History of West Africa*, Longman, New York. In addition, a collection of historical documents and academic articles focusing on the country's history can be found at: http://www.sierra-leone.org/history.html, last visit 05.02.2014.

secret societies such as the Bondo are still active and very influential in Sierra Leone. They wield enormous power but few people are prepared to admit that they belong to one, let alone reveal its workings (Lakhani, 2010). During pre-colonial, colonial and to an extent also post-colonial times membership also involved participating in traditional educational institutions. For instance girls belonging to the Bondo society used to undergo a week-long training in the bush as an initiation to the role and responsibilities of socially-respected young women and future wives. They are taught family tasks, such as parenting, cooking and other domestic work, how to make themselves good looking, serve their husbands, respect elders in their community and not to be intimate with a man before marriage. Boys, on the other hand, used to be taught farming skills, how to set traps and guard against danger or how to climb palm trees. Those clearly demarcated gender-based roles and responsibilities still shape Sierra Leone's societal structures.[47] In a long, informal conversation[48], a Temne elder expressed concern about modern (Western) educational systems. In his view they cannot adequately prepare the youth for adult life given that children are entering married life with no preparation and knowledge of their responsibilities as husbands and wives. In interviews with local CSOs, some interviewees actually stressed the importance of this traditional training, next to Western-style educational institutions (e.g. CSO Nr. 2, Nr. 4, Nr. 28).[49] Notably, although traditional forms of education are reportedly waning, the pre-colonial practice of female circumcision (also known as FGM – female genital mutilation) continues to be widely practised and supported across all sectors in society. It is estimated that between 90-94% of all Sierra Leonean women are circumcised. Non-circumcised girls are thought of as being unclean and face tremendous challenges in finding a husband. A failure to be initiated could be a one-way street to social marginalisation, if not stigmatisation (Datzberger, 2012b). Another pre-colonial tradition still prevalent in rural Sierra Leone includes polygamy among men (women are not allowed to have more than one husband). Although illegal under civil law, it is recognised and widely practised under customary law. Especially in the provinces, polygamy continues to be perceived as a sign of virility but equally serves as a means to an end in facilitating manual labour and productivity of farms.

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[47] In 2012, the OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) classified Sierra Leone in an in-between stage of high to medium discrimination. The country is ranked 66 out of 86 non-OECD members evaluated. See: http://genderindex.org/ranking, last visit 19.02.2014. Domestic violence (e.g. wife beating) against women is common.

[48] Held in Freetown, 20.07.2012

[49] See Appendix 1 for date and venue of the interviews.

An additional legacy of precolonial era is the belief in magic, gurus, and curses which marks Sierra Leonean cultural identity.[50] In a video of the country's Fiftieth Independence Anniversary Celebrations at the National Stadium held in late April 2011, thousands of Sierra Leoneans marvelled at magicians who seemed to transform objects into animals and vice versa. In conversations with ordinary Sierra Leoneans (not affiliated with any CSO) many stories were told about leopard men, or soldiers who caught bullets with their teeth during the war. Despite widespread poverty, one can simply not escape narratives that the supernatural is all around. On a long poda poda bus ride for instance, two Sierra Leoneans passionately discussed the difference between natural and artificial time – the latter (so it was suggested) being constructed by humans (and their minds) and the former being the only and real timeless truth.

4.2.1. Pre-colonial nature of chieftaincy systems.

What further makes Sierra Leone's history in the African context quite special are its dense tropical rainforests, sealing it off from the influence of any pre-colonial African Empires. It was not until the middle of the sixteenth century, that the Mane, a Mandingo group exiled from the Mali Empire, established a base at Cape Mount in present-day Liberia. The Mane subjugated their new neighbours and forced them into tributary relationships and, even though short-lived, their domination and influence on subsequent Sierra Leonean history was significant. Mane descendants, today known as the Mende, entered Sierra Leone in the eighteenth century in search of fertile lands and established farming communities around military strongholds. They introduced the first political centralisation in the area alongside weaving, more advanced ironworking and the slave trade (Pham 2006, pp. 2-3). As in most of the sub-Saharan African region, pre-colonial controls of power mainly lay with people and not demarcated land or territory. Societies were not governed on the basis of written rules, laws and policies, but by reciprocal imperatives, decisions of hereditary hierarchy, and religious and cultural mores (Harris 2013, p 19). Moreover, the West African political nature of pre-colonial culture and life was deeply rooted in chieftaincy systems, guided by specific institutionalised traditions with respect to accession to office and performance of functions. As Adjaye and Misawa explain (2006, p.2):

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[50] Reportedly, magic spells or acts of witchcraft were, for instance, commonly practised by the Civil Defence Force during the civil war.

The chief was the political, social, economic, legal and military head of the traditional state. As political head, he was responsible for the maintenance of good order in his state. He was the guardian of the fundamental values of his people and mediated between them and the spiritual forces. He administered tributes, court fines, market tolls, and other revenues. He was also the final arbiter in the administration of justice. It can thus be seen that in the precolonial era chiefs commanded a great deal of autonomy.

Chiefs were mainly appointed based on their hereditary lineages. In instances where multiple candidates qualified for a chieftaincy position, other leadership qualifications would become an essential criterion as well. At times, a system of rotation was introduced which meant that competing houses took turns in choosing a successor. In terms of their legitimacy, precolonial chiefs could not take actions affecting the community without the advice of their elders. According to Abraham (2013, p. 159) there were checks and balances in the political system to prevent, or deal with, the misuse of power by a chief. Secret societies were the most effective socio-political mechanism to sanction any barbarous behaviour of chiefs. This was executed through procedures such as poisoning, murder or, more harmless, de-legitimatisation through the refusal to perform ceremonies (ibid.). Adjaye and Misawa (2006, p. 2) further hold that the chief ruled with the advice of a council that has been variously termed an inner or privy council. Where the system functioned well, these institutional checks safeguarded against dictatorial tendencies. Hence, chiefs ruled by consensus and could be dethroned for violating the trust, sanctions or taboos of the state as well as for incompetence (ibid.). Overall, the traditional functions of chiefs were to protect the lives and property of their subjects, maintain law and order, and make laws for the social and economic well-being of their people (Abraham 2013, p. 159). A chief was expected to be fair, just, kind and generous. Consequently, accumulation for personal purposes was discouraged by the traditional system, as the chief was obliged to redistribute much of his wealth or income (ibid. p. 160). Their pre-colonial status, powers and societal position were severely distorted during the British colonial administration, affecting the societal structures as well as political culture of present day Sierra Leonean society.

4.3. Sierra Leonean Society under Colonial Government

During the age of European expansion, the Portuguese were among the first to establish contacts within Sierra Leone. In 1462, the Portuguese explorer Pedro de

Sintra set foot on West African soil, which would later become Freetown. Inspired by a mountainous West African shore, looming in the shape of a big cat, de Sintra named the newly discovered territory Serra de Leão (Lion Mountains). Soon, the Portuguese built a fort to trade gold and ivory. The English, eager to prevent the Portuguese from establishing a trade monopoly, entered the country in the mid-sixteenth century. From 1550 onwards, the most profitable commodity became humans. In conjunction with the Dutch, the French and the Danes, the slave trade expanded dramatically. It is estimated that between 1761-70, in total 108,100 slaves were exported from Sierra Leone alone, followed by an average number of 62,500 in the subsequent three decades (Fage 2002, p. 266). Whereas in the earliest days of the export slave trade from West Africa, Europeans had occasionally captured some of the slaves themselves, by the eighteenth century it was extremely unusual for slaves to be procured other than by purchase from the established African rulers or from merchants who were themselves often operating under some kind of royal licence or control (Fage 2002, pp. 265-266). Thus, slave trade and foreign exploitation would not have been possible without the help of African chiefs and elders. At the same time, a number of English commercial agents married into local ruling clans and founded Anglo-African families. As Conteh-Morgan and Dixon-Fyle (1999, p. 23) note:

> They defiantly manipulated local connections with the Poro society [secret society of Sierra Leone and Liberia] as they competed against each other, and greatly extended the scale of the slave trade. Their wealth and success, which enabled them to establish towns that were larger and better fortified than those of the older ruling families, made them many enemies. In time, they became an embryonic comprador element in the local population, agents of European capital, and prime costal beneficiaries of the Atlantic slave trade.

Two essential developments led to the creation of a British settlement in 1808, what was to become the Province of Freetown and a British colony in 1896. In the first place, upon the loss of thirteen American colonies, the British were in need of a new economic strategy. The idea was to convert Africans into producers of raw materials for British industry and consumers, instead of exporting the workforce to the former colonies in America. In the second place, with the creation of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade (1787) there was a growing moral discomfort with slavery in general. In part, British philanthropists founded the Province of Freetown with the thought of creating a new home for freed slaves. Although the British government officially banned the slave trade in 1807, it continued to grow in Sierra

Leone. More slaves were carried from Africa in the year 1821 than in any previous year, and the slave trade continued till the mid-19th century. Acemoglu et al. (2013, p. 12) further highlight that in 1923 roughly 15 percent of the rural population was in servitude and frequently local chiefs themselves were large slave owners too. It was not until 1927 when slavery was legally abolished in Sierra Leone, and the country would serve mainly as a homeland for freed slaves.[51] In practice, the law was only gradually enforced and in some places even ignored (Acemoglu et al., 2013, p.12).

Apart from freed African Americans, West Indians and other liberated Africans also immigrated to Freetown between 1787 and 1885, creating a new ethnicity - the Krio. They were given legal recognition as British subjects in the colony in 1853, which meant they had the same equal standing as earlier settlers. The Krio's early contact with Western culture and their access to Western education enabled them to attain a certain measure of wealth and social and economic influence (Kilson 1964, p. 90, Wyse 1989). Many of them attended newly established schools in the colony as well as the renowned Fourah Bay College, which was founded in 1827. The latter was not only West Africa's first university but at times, (notably before the civil war in 1991), also one of the most prestigious educational institutions in sub-Saharan Africa. By 1839, the Krio began to seek opportunities abroad and spread from the Gambia to South Africa and as far off as East Africa (Wyse 1989, pp. 19-32). While further research is needed into the impact the Krio diaspora made on their host societies, they gave rise to a class of educated Africans with relations all over West Africa (ibid.).

In 1863, the British promulgated a new constitutional charter for the colony (which remained unchanged until 1924) leading to the creation of municipal councils and self-government in 1893. Voting rights, however, were limited to small local elites. Concurrently, civic associations to contest these elections emerged. A growing Krio bourgeoisie, looking up to British political culture and society, founded civil committees in the in the Province of Freetown from the mid-19th century onwards. In a way, these first civil associations were predecessors of political parties and / or civil society organisations. Yet, considering that until 1951 the government's decision making procedures were not freely accessible to organised groups of persons, both

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[51] A succinct timeline and history of slavery is provided by Free The Slaves, see: prohttps://www.freetheslaves.net/sslpage.aspx?pid=303, last visit 06.02.2014

political parties as well as CSOs were institutionalised relatively late in Sierra Leone (Kilson 1964 p.93). In due course, these first forms of civic associations became popular vehicles for the Krio population to address particular areas of concern or express specific grievances. Some of the most influential organisations included the Sierra Leone Mercantile Association (founded in 1851), composed of Krio and white merchants. Its main goal was the attainment of favourable trade policies. Hence it sought representation in the colonial legislature and in 1863 one of its members, John Ezzidio, was appointed as the first African member of the Legislative Council under colonial rule (Kilson, 1964, p. 94). The association declined in the mid-1860s and its work was assumed by another pressure group known as the Sierra Leone Native Association (1872-1882). It was later replaced by the Sierra Leone Association (1884-1888) and served as a civil forum for debating matters of general concern (ibid, p.94). Furthermore, the Dress Reform Society (founded in 1887) was created as an ethnic consciousness group whose members adopted loose-flowing African garments to emphasise their racial and cultural identity. Subsequent notable civil groups included the Sierra Leone Native Defence Force (1908), the Negro Progressive Society (1908), and the African Progress Union (1919). However, with only a few exceptions, the membership of all these associations hardly reached beyond ethnic communities and tribes other than the Krio. Being the most influential "local" society throughout colonial rule, it was also the Krio population who gained an early predominance in politics, albeit vastly disproportionate to its small size (Kilson, 1964 p. 90). However, compared to other British colonies in West Africa the Sierra Leonean Krio never really had quite the same privileged status. Whereas in countries like Nigeria or the Gold Coast (Ghana) the Krio population enjoyed professional employment in agencies of the colonial regime (from being lawyers to doctors), in Sierra Leone, they were largely excluded from these circles. The only privilege given to the Sierra Leonean Krio was the opportunity to serve on the Legislative Council - albeit underrepresented. By means of a very active press the Krio found an outlet in articulating their political views, frustrations and anger about the subjugation to the British. I.A. Omu's article on 'The Dilemma of Press Freedom in Colonial Africa: The West African Example' (1968) elucidates (p. 279):

> African-owned newspapers in the colonial period rivalled the colonial government. Those who conducted them reasoned that, in the absence of a democratically elected government, the press was the most effective constitutional weapon for ventilating

grievances and influencing the trend of events. Given the freedom of the press, which they assumed they were entitled to enjoy as British subjects, their newspapers would each be the guardian of the rights and liberties of the people as well as the interpreter of their ideals and aspirations.

By and large, freedom of the press was never really seriously threatened in any of the British African colonies up to the end of the First World War. This is not to imply that colonial governors and European officials were not averse to the highly critical voices against colonial administration. Rather, the situation of the press at the time presents somehow a curious paradox in that the African nationalist press was practically free yet basically controlled. I.A. Omu explains this contradiction in terms by highlighting a number of factors (pp. 279-281). First, the press served as a channel for opposition in view of the fact that Africans lacked the opportunity to constitute an alternative government. Second, politics was the field to which public attention was almost exclusively directed. Third, a certain prestige value was popularly attached to making criticisms of government, reflecting the indigenous African phenomenon by which outspoken men were held in high esteem. Hence, Africans looked with a mixture of surprise and satisfaction upon their fellow countrymen who unhesitatingly assailed the seemingly all-powerful governor. Lastly, critical perspectives served the economics and sales figures of newspapers. By 1900, the Sierra Leonean population had no fewer than thirty-four newspapers at different times.

After the Province of Freetown became the first Crown Colony in 1808, it would take nearly 100 years before the British also took over the Sierra Leonean hinterland. With the aid of several "treaties of friendship" the land upcountry was proclaimed a British protectorate in 1896. As noted by Harris (2013, pp. 9 – 46), the expanded colonial state helped to delineate state-society relations. The political and societal status of the Krio was weakened and the chiefs in the annexed Protectorate were given more power.

However, initially, almost every chieftaincy responded to the British administration with armed resistance. The most rampant instance was the Hut Tax War in 1898, - a countrywide revolt against an introduced flat rate on households immediately imposed after the loss of political sovereignty. The Hut Tax War would be the only large-scale military resistance to colonialism in Sierra Leone. Civilian resistance continued but took on various new forms, such as for example the afore-

mentioned critical press. Likewise, the formation of political organisations and an active trade union movement spurred many strikes and rioting in the capital.

In the rural areas, the main targets of hostility were the tribal chiefs who had gradually established close ties with the colonial administration. Upon annexation the British divided the country into five districts, each headed by a district commissioner. Incapable of administering the Sierra Leone hinterland, and reluctant to commit the resources necessary to be able to do so, the colonial administration assigned traditional rulers of natives the authority of a paramount chief, who in turn were put in charge of subordinated local chiefs. It was a cheap and pragmatic policy for the British to rule the natives through their own leaders and local chiefs. Put differently, the autonomy given to the chiefs was not in relation to their pre-colonial status or to maintain traditional structures and culture but rather enabled the colonial government to bring the territories beyond the Province of Freetown under their control. Chiefs would derive their legitimacy entirely from the colonial government and ironically, the institutionalisation of "native custom" typically made chiefs less accountable than precolonial leaders had been (Acemoglu et al., 2013, pp. 8-9). This system of indirect rule led to a strict hierarchy of chiefs classified by grades and class. It allowed the colonial administration to control all sectors of society without deploying a large number of colonial officials (Adjaye and Misawa 2006, p. 3). Needless to say, the power given to indigenous rulers went far beyond the limits traditionally assigned to them. Paramount chiefs bore the responsibility for collecting taxes, and providing both policing and the local labour force. Soon chieftaincies became the source of arbitrariness and corruption which served the British as an excuse to dethrone, depose or punish some chiefs (ibid. pp. 23-4). Antagonists were immediately replaced with locals who were believed to be more cooperative and loyal to the colonial rule. All of this clearly distorted the pre-colonial rule of family-based hierarchies, clans and traditions. Acts of local resistance were inevitable and duly occurred throughout the 20th century. They took on the form of rioting or attacks directed against tribal chiefs in various communities and regions across the country.

The legacy left by colonial administration and legislation still affects the civil sphere and civil society landscape in Sierra Leone. To date, a ruling family in Sierra Leone is recognised as one that was established before the time of independence in

1961 (Acemoglu et al., 2013, p. 10). The way in which Sierra Leone's interior was divided sowed the seeds for a persisting urban and rural divide in many respects. While the colonial administration brought prosperous areas outside Freetown under customs control, it was reluctant to invest in policing or any form of rural development. More than a hundred years later, this two-tier approach still challenges and marginalises local civil society organisations in rural areas of the country (see Chapters 6 and 7). The 2004 report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) accurately states in Chapter One of its Report (Volume Two)[52]:

> Rather than constructing a unified Sierra Leonean state, the colonial government effectively created two nations in the same land. The colonial capital Freetown, known as the Colony, and the much larger area of provincial territory, known as the Protectorate, were developed separately and unequally. The colonial government formalised the common law practised in the Colony yet neglected the development of customary law in the Protectorate, thus producing two separate legal systems that persist to the present day. The impact of colonial policies and practices, including those relating to citizenship, ownership of land, land tenure rights and conflict of laws, was far-reaching. People in the Colony enjoyed vastly superior social, political and economic development and access to vital resources such as education. The divide between the two entities bred deep ethnic and regional resentment and destabilised the traditional system of Chieftaincy.

Several important events stemming from the civil sphere preceded Sierra Leone's independence. On the one hand, the gulf between the Krio elite and the majority of the population further widened. This was also the case for the Colony (Freetown) and the Protectorate (surrounding hinterland). Krio influence slowly began to wane when Lebanese immigrants and traders from Europe gradually gained more economic dominance in Freetown and upcountry. On the other hand, frustrations among the natives in the provinces about joblessness or low wages as well as lack of access to education grew apparent. To vent their anger, educated rural elders created the Committee of Educated Aborigines (CEA) in 1922. The CEA's main mission was to advocate for a redistribution of the governmental resources to rectify the comparative backwardness of socioeconomic conditions in the Protectorate. Their efforts were soon successful, leading to a new constitution in 1924, which introduced an amended formation of the Legislative Council, consisting of twelve formal and ten informal members. Of the ten informal members, two represented European commercial, banking, and general interests; the other eight represented African interests. Sierra Leonean members included five Krio on behalf of the Colony and

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[52] The full report can be accessed at: http://www.sierraleonetrc.org/index.php/view-report-text-vol-2/item/volume-two-chapter-one, last visit 08.02.2014

three paramount chiefs (two Mende and one Temne) on behalf of the Protectorate (Pham 2006, p. 24). An important legal consequence of the new constitution was that the distinction between Colony and Protectorate lost its significance and therefore paved the way for a united Sierra Leone (Thompson, 1997 p. 4). Both representatives of the Colony's Krio elite as well as the newly appointed paramount chiefs used their new status during debates to advocate for the interests of their respective constituencies (Pham, 2006, pp. 24-25). On the whole, the vast majority of the Sierra Leonean population remained underrepresented, however. For Kilson (1964 p. 90), the sociological consequences of the colony-protectorate division have substantially influenced the postcolonial as well as post-war development of party politics in the country. The long-standing predominance of the Krio, combined with their condescending attitude towards protectorate Africans, stimulated a deep-seated antagonism among educated protectorate groups (ibid. p. 90). Between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, pressure groups, proto-political parties, and proto-nationalist parties were formed with the aim of influencing the colonial government in the interest of their often non-Krio members. These early organised political groups can be regarded as Sierra Leone's antecedents of later political parties. One of the first proto-nationalist groups against colonial administration was the Sierra Leone Branch of the National Congress of British West Africa (SLNC), formed in 1920. The SLNC developed liaison with other groups, for instance teachers' associations, women's clubs, church groups, and trade unions. It also employed a variety of political techniques for pursuing its goals which included public meetings, protest marches, submission of memoranda to the colonial government, deputations to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and participation in the election of three representatives to the Legislative Council (ibid. p. 95). In 1938, the Sierra Leone Youth League (SLYL) eclipsed the SLNC. In stark contrast to the SLNC, the SLYL served as a political arena for the vast majority of underrepresented segments of the population (e.g. lower level professionals, the unemployed or labourers). Its founder, I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, studied in the Soviet Union in the early 1930s and gave the SLYL a strong Marxist touch. Within a year of its founding the League claimed some seven thousand members and entered into politics. Two of their demands were concerned with African representation in the legislature and universal adult suffrage (Pham 2006, p. 25). It was precisely on the grounds of the SLYL's Marxist and militantly anticolonial orientation that the colonial administration imprisoned I.T.A. Wallace during World War II.

Unable to recapture its earlier dynamic quality during the post-War period, the SLYL was absorbed by one of Sierra Leone's first political parties, the Krio-dominated UPP (United Progressive Parity). Instantly, an opposition party, the SLPP (Sierra Leone People's Party) was formed in April 1951. Most of the SLPP's leadership was drawn from the descendants of traditional ruling families in the protectorate, especially the Mende. With the emergence of the SLPP another amendment of the constitution occurred in 1951, laying the groundwork for decolonisation. By the late 1950s, the UPP was in the backseat when the British chose only SLPP members to serve on the Executive Council. Despite this initial success, the SLPP soon experienced internal frictions resulting in the formation of Sierra Leone's second largest party the APC (All Peoples Congress) - a breakaway group who refused to uphold elections before Sierra Leones independence on 27 April 1961. Henceforth, Sierra Leone's political landscape and political culture would be continuously marked by the power struggle between the two factions. Today, Sierra Leone's multiparty system is divided along the lines of local ethnicism. While mainly Mende from the southern region in the country support the SLPP, the APC derives its electoral constituency from the majority of Limba and Temne based in the north. For the Sierra Leonean scholar and Professor of Political Science (University of Richmond), Jimmy D. Kandeh, one of the reasons why Sierra Leone's multiparty system fell back into some sort of tribalism can be located in the fact that there are no major ideological differences between the two parties.[53] Chapter 6 will further delve into the argument about how ethno-politicisation also impinges upon the country's present civil society landscape and the political culture thereof.

4.4. Discussion & Analysis: The civil sphere before independence

Undoubtedly, exploring Sierra Leone's cultural particularism (see Section 1.2.3. of Chapter 1), or differently put, cultural identity and its societal characteristics, is a tricky undertaking. In an informal conversation, a local human rights activist uttered that Sierra Leone lost its identity and therefore its traditional cultural norms and values as soon as the slave trade and later colonisation overshadowed the history of the country. Yet, certain traditions, beliefs, and cultural practices persisted and can be seen in variations of neo-patrimonial systems, chieftaincies (even if severely distorted during colonialism), and the retention and ongoing formation of secret societies. All of

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[53] Interview held 15.08.2012, in Freetown.

them are reflected in Chapter 2's presented matrix of local factors that shape and socially construct the values, beliefs and orientations of Sierra Leone's present civil sphere.

Thus, to revert to the question prompted in Section 1.2.6. (Chapter 1): What can peacebuilding and development research and practice potentially learn from the historical, cultural, social and consequently political matrix of a conflict-ravaged society? To begin with, the above review of Sierra Leone's pre- and colonial societal order hopefully laid the groundwork for a clearer understanding of why Ekeh's (1975) "two publics in Africa" are still very much alive in present Sierra Leone. With the British settlement and the emergence of a Krio elite, the civil sphere was slowly but steadily divided along the dualities of a primordial and civic public.[54] In many ways the Sierra Leonean experience of colonialism is the history of the clash between the British and an emergent African bourgeois class – the Krio (c.f. Ekeh 1975). Feeling ashamed of Africa's alleged "backwardness", and aspiring to Western culture, the Krio appeared as an urban-based, educated elite alongside a mainly illiterate, rural based, "native" population. First, civic associations in the mid-19th century were principally grounded on the Krio's eagerness to beat the British at their own game. In Ekeh's language (p. 103): "The African bourgeois class has a precarious foundation. It fought alien rulers on the basis of criteria introduced by them". Despite the assimilation of British political culture and ideals, the Krio were still heavily opposed to colonial administration. Strikingly, while claiming to be competent to rule, they missed one essential key: "traditional" legitimacy stemming from the broader native population. The tragic irony behind the "African bourgeois ideologies of legitimation" (ibid. p. 96) is that in order to override the colonial rule, the Krio bourgeois class depended heavily on colonialism for its very own legitimacy. The same was the case for chiefs, whose legitimacy derived entirely from the British administration.

In retrospect, however, the far bigger challenge for the Krio turned out to be the tribal dynamics behind the processes of the first political party formations as they occurred shortly before independence. In the main, the SLPP as well as the APC drew their leading membership and political power from ruling families, their respective

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[54] This argument was also stressed by Jimmy D. Kandeh in an interview held 15.08.2012, in Freetown.

secret societies (and sodalities) and chiefs in the Protectorate. This clearly undermined the Krio's past political influence and dominance in the Legislative Council. In other words, with the outmanoeuvring of the Krio elite from politics, Sierra Leone's political landscape experienced a predominance of patronage and clientelism, based on ruling families as they were strengthened during and shortly before the end of colonial rule. Naturally, these dynamics also affected the "two publics" of the civil sphere, in that there is a constant intersection of primordial and civic (or liberal) societal features. Above all, civil society continues to be captured, or at least influenced, by chiefs and efforts to strengthen it might just strengthen the control of the chiefs over it (Acemoglu et al., 2013, p. 35). In the wider African context, Ekeh (1975) also asserts that civic associations do not belong to the private realm (meant civic public) but are an integral part of the primordial public. As such, they do not complement the civic public in a Western (liberal) understanding but instead subtract from it, to a greater or lesser degree, to the benefit of the primordial public. Chapter 7 will, in particular, elaborate on this point.

Conclusion

Earlier (Chapter 2), the thesis contended that the total extension of a Western notion of civil society – that is, *independent from the state, political, private, and economic spheres but in close interaction with them; and a domain of social life in which public opinion can be formed* – can only be made at conceptual and theoretical peril. Accordingly, the aim of Chapter 4 was to demarcate the societal and political features of Sierra Leonean civil society that evolved under completely different circumstances in time and space. As pointed out by Harris (2013, p.166), while the British colonial administrative method of "indirect rule" reconfigured local political hierarchies through capitalist and governmental penetration, many local features such as political and social practices remained or were even strengthened, including: chieftaincy, spiritual beliefs, judicial and land practices or secret societies. The subsequent Chapters 5, 6 and 7 will unfold how the legacies of colonial rule still impinge on the civil sphere, respectively on its political leeway, landscape and voice. These distinct features also presuppose the need to re-think to what extent civil society *actors* and *functions* (see Chapter 3) differ from externally introduced and prescribed idea(l)s.

Chapter Five

Lumpen Youth, Civil War, and Conflict Resolution.
Civil Society Shortly Before and During the War in Sierra Leone[55]

"We were barefoot soldiers trying to negotiate the peace".
Mr. Ahmed Muckson Sesay, Director OPARD-SL

The preceding Chapter 4 sought to reinforce the thesis' argument that as a concept civil society has to be first and foremost embedded in the history of a country to really hold the key to understanding and explaining the dynamics of non-Occidental civil societies. In the case of Sierra Leone, state-society relations are entrenched in the experiences of the slave trade and colonial rule and manifested in the bifurcated nature of politics and societal fabrics. Cultural and socio-political characteristics were reshaped and distorted by the colonial experience while certain "traditional" features continued to thrive.

Chapter 5 will now critically reflect upon how Sierra Leone's civil sphere evolved during the post-colonial era and the many transformative impacts the civil war had on society, its political culture, agency and voice. In doing so, the chapter rests upon the assumption that every society and individual therein is complex and ambivalent by nature. The many inconceivable dynamics of a conflict and war force us to accept that we - as individuals, in groups or as a society - form a conglomerate of *good* and *evil*, although to different degrees at different stages, spaces and times.[56] Seemingly contrary forces within societies, their respective civil spheres, and the very circumstances in which they are embedded can prompt divergent impulses such as

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[55] An earlier version of this Chapter was published (non-peer reviewed) in 2012. See: Datzberger, Simone (2012): "Lumpen Youth, Civil War, and Conflict Resolution. Civil Society Before and After the War in Sierra Leone." in: Journal of Sierra Leonean Studies, Vol 2. Ed. 2, 2012, pp 22-43, non-peer reviewed.

[56] An interesting psychological account of conditions and/or social contexts under which people are kind and helpful to others or, conversely, under which they commit harmful, even murderous acts is for instance provided by Arthur G. Miller (ed.), *The Psychology of Good and Evil*, Guilford Press 2005.

aggression (triggering conflict) and benevolence (nourishing peace and prosperity). In Mac Ginty's words: "War is human and so is peace" (2010, p. 361).

Perhaps even more importantly, in time of crisis, such as a civil war, civil society's agency, role and logic of societal configuration as well as organisation take on multiple and often contradictory dimensions. It is in this context that the following pages intend to unfold how the Sierra Leonean civil sphere was formed, altered and affected by events before and during the civil war. The analytical framework set out in Chapter 3 will be applied to flesh out how civil society underwent several stages of formation and transformation, which in turn impinged on its functions (agency) and actors (characteristics). The aim is to examine how the political culture of the civil sphere was cultivated and altered over the past decades in order to assess in Chapters 6 and 7 how these events affected depoliticisation processes later on. With the aim to apply a "civil society *in* Africa" model as opposed to a "civil society *for* Africa" model (see World Bank 2007), the chapter draws on data obtained from several interviews in 2011 and 2012 in Sierra Leone. An actor-oriented perspective is expected to widen the space for voices from below, hereafter referred to mainly as the civil sphere, as well as to broaden the analytical angle and perspective to civil actors who are not necessarily part of a formally registered CSO or CBO. In placing their accounts in a historical context, their functions shall be assessed to characterise the role, activities and agency of informal and formal civil actors in Sierra Leone.

Much has been written about the civil war in Sierra Leone which sheds light on the different aspects of, and reasons for, the conflict, its actors, and their motivations. The analysis below cannot provide an all-encompassing account of the origins of the conflict, which has been summarised in compelling books by many others (e.g.: Abdullah 2004; Beah 2007; Bergner 2005; Farah 2004; Gberie 2005; Keen 2005; Krijn 2011; Olonisakin 2008; Pham 2006; Reno 1998; Richards 1995, 1996). Rather, the intention is to tell the story from the perspective of the civil sphere with the aim of outlining what kind of events and developments shaped the civil society landscape as we encounter it in present-day Sierra Leone. With this intention, the structure of Chapter 5 will be the following. Section 5.1 critically discusses Sierra Leone's political landscape before the war and how the accumulation of grievances over centuries, in combination with a number of tragic events, transformed fragments of an

emerging youth culture (i.e. a segment of the civil sphere) into a bloodthirsty rebellion. How this war was fought between several different factions, what role civil society played in it, and how the war changed the Sierra Leonean civil sphere will be the subjects of discussion in Sections 5.2 and 5.3. The last part of the chapter, Section 5.4, will then apply the thesis' analytical framework to assess the different actors and functions of civil society *in* Sierra Leone shortly before and during the conflict. By and large, the 1990s were characterised by a resurgence of a vibrant and politically active CSO landscape with an interest in establishing peace and making the transition towards democracy and sustainable development. The war created a vacuum in which civil society actors and activists flourished, advocating for democracy and peace. However, in spite of Sierra Leone's politically engaged civil sphere during the war, only a few selected civil society actors were actually able to participate in the peace negotiations at a national level. The exclusion or cherry picking of specific, mainly Freetown-based, CSOs would continue during the country's later peacebuilding and developmental stage (see Chapter 6). This is one aspect, out of many, that contributed to the depoliticisation process of the civil sphere, even though during the war Sierra Leone's civil society thrived as never before.

5.1. Lumpen Youth Culture and the Emergence of the RUF

The legacy of centuries of slave trading, foreign exploitation, and colonial administration challenged the genuine attempt to cultivate social cohesion, redistribute wealth, and develop local forms of political integrity after independence. There is consensus among scholars and practitioners that the misrule of the All People's Congress (APC) regime from 1968 to 1992 ultimately fostered the rage among socially excluded youth, and eventually led to the Revolutionary United Front's (RUF) guerrilla rebellion and a brutal and protracted war (Richards 1996; Abdullah & Muana 1998; Olonisakin 2008; Davis 2010). The civil war, with all its barbaric acts of violence, is frequently described as a dreadful result of rising corruption, exploitation of youth by a gerontocratic cultural system,[57] the conflicting dualities of a primordial

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[57] Krijn (2011, see especially Chapters 1 and 8) convincingly concludes that one reason why young people joined the RUF or other factions was that they felt betrayed both by local rural elites and the state. One ex-RUF commander who was interviewed by Krijn stated, "The root cause [of the war] was that the elders ignored the youth, both in [the] educational field as well as in the social field. The RUF was a youth movement". (Krijn 2011, p. 226).

and civic public, mismanagement of mineral resources, and neo-patrimonial manipulation of educational and employment opportunities.

After Sierra Leone had established a multiparty system, the country's first leader, Sir Milton Margai of the SLPP, presided as prime minister. He was known for his good-governance principles and was widely appreciated among the population. The situation dramatically changed in 1964 when his brother, Albert Margai, took power. Albert Margai's rule was marked by patronage and a partial ethnicisation of politics that favoured specific ethnic groups such as the Mende (dominating the Eastern and Southern part of the country) over others such as Temne and the Limba (from the Northern parts) (Keen 2005, pp. 14-15, Olonisakin 2008, pp. 10-11).

During the 1930s and '40s, a rebellious youth culture began to evolve in Freetown often described as the lumpen or *rarray* boys. In their study "A Revolt of the Lumpenproletariat" (1998), Abdullah and Muana depict how a lumpen social movement became fertile soil for a lumpen revolution (later the RUF) almost 50 years later. Abdullah portrays these *rarray* boys as predominantly unlettered second-generation city residents, infamous for being in disgrace with local communities due to their anti-social behaviour such as marijuana smoking, petty theft, and violence. Their meeting points where usually in peri-urban spaces called *potes*. When the country's political climate deteriorated again in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, it did not leave these youth groups and political discussions about the political system unaffected. As Abdullah and Muana explain (1998, p. 174):

> As a group they knew the outline of the history of the slave trade and the dehumanization of the African it entailed, and could make connections between the colonial past and neo-colonial present, generally espousing some form of pan-Africanism... Some of the *pote* types had read a little Frantz Fanon and Walter Rodney, bits of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, swallowing undigested passages of Marx and Lenin from cheap or free volumes from the Soviet Progress Publishers.

In the years following APC leader Siaka Stevens' rise to power in 1968, Fourah Bay College (FBC) university students also became part of the *potes*. Their prestige among their ill-educated brothers increased when they initiated several demonstrations in 1977. These student protests entered Sierra Leone's history books by forcing Siaka Stevens to hold elections and lower the voting age to 18. However, they did not stop

him from declaring Sierra Leone a one-party state in 1978. His seventeen-year rule was plagued by injustice, widespread corruption, cuts in social welfare despite lavish spending (especially on the conference for the Organization of African Unity in 1980), and over-centralised power in Freetown. He fundamentally deepened the political, social, and infrastructural marginalisation of rural areas which colonialism had introduced. Railways were simply dismantled without developing rural roads in their place, and local rural governments were abolished leaving traditional chiefs holding office at their pleasure (Davis, 2010, p. 60).

Stevens' rule caused widespread resentment among youth and left deep scars in the political landscape and civil sphere. For Sierra Leonean scholar and historian Joe A.D. Alie, by the late 1970s "civil society was practically dead".[58] Societal initiatives and concerns were simply ignored and civil society under Stevens' rule suffocated. Pham (2006, pp. 144-145) also pointed out how civil society was repressed and harassed by Stevens, in that he co-opted most potential rivals thus weakening Sierra Leonean society's capacity for dialogue over political and economic differences. He refers to the example of the country's principal labour union, the Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC), and describes how Stevens constantly manipulated and sabotaged its members to ensure relative calm in the labour market, thereby thwarting any critical distinction between the state and civil society. In this regard, civil society, among other cultural factors, differed from a Western interpretation and political experience (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1) on one distinct account. Stevens' clientelistic methods of political rule hampered the formation of an independent political, private, or economic sphere. Above all, following Rashid's argument (2004, p. 69), the ongoing economic and social deterioration of the country throughout the 1980s gave further rise to the formation of new radical youth groups (markedly leftist with slogans that were populist, socialist, and pan-Africanist) at FBC.

A significant youth movement at that time was called Mass Awareness and Participation (MAP). MAP, according to Abdullah and Muana's accounts (1998, 2004) was a lose coalition of members from different university clubs who maintained tight links with the lumpen world of the *pote*. Soon anti-government posters and

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[58] Interview held 18.08.2012 at Fourah Bay College, Freetown.

graffiti covered the campus and large parts of the city. With strong support from campus radicals, a young man called Alie Kabba was elected as MAP's student union president while he was away attending an annual Green Book celebration in Libya. To the disapproval of the authorities, rumours quickly arose that the Libyans sponsored MAP's leadership. In addition, some of FBC's students were accused of planning to encamp Libyan mercenaries in their rooms. Consequently, forty-one students were suspended from university in 1985 although neither the university nor the government formally investigated the charge. This prompted violent student protests. Alie Kabba and four other students were arrested but subsequently released and the matter was dropped by the administration (Abdullah, 2004, p. 49; Abdullah & Muana, 1998, pp. 175-176; Rashid, 2004, pp. 80-81).

For Abdullah and Muana, the expulsion of MAP from the college marked a turning point in youth-oriented opposition in Sierra Leone in that (1998, p. 176):

> Henceforth, the baton passed to the lumpen youths and *pote*-affiliated organic intellectuals (some ex-students of FBC and the second campus of the national university at Njala) in numerous study groups and revolutionary cells scattered around the country.

It was at this point in time when embryonic RUF formations started to gain an ideological impetus from rural areas. Krijn (2011) draws attention to the fact that the Bunumbu Teachers College (a rural training college near the Liberian border which received continuous support from UNESCO throughout the 1970s and 1980s) also shaped the mindsets of soon-to-be RUF members. Despite the fact that some of Bunumbu's graduates voluntarily joined the RUF, its contribution to student radicalisation in Sierra Leone has been neglected in several debates given that the RUF has been often described as a movement without any ideological content (Krijn 2011, p. 21).

In 1985, six years before the RUF launched its first attack, Siaka Stevens handed over the presidency to his army commander, Major-General Joseph Momoh. Momoh promised to instil discipline in public life and improve the living conditions for Sierra Leoneans. In light of the preceding student and youth protests, he also tried to solicit support from lumpen youth but without any major success. All in all, his governance proved to be no better (and perhaps even worse) than Siaka Stevens' rule. The

economy and public services virtually collapsed, and external debt climbed to 86 percent of GDP (compared to 17 percent of GDP in the 1970s). The 1989 structural adjustment programme did not receive international financial support because the government failed to demonstrate its commitment to reform. In the hope of attracting corporate foreign investment, Momoh initiated two military operations in 1989 to evict illicit miners from the diamond mines (Davis, 2010, pp. 60-61).

For Reno (1998, p. 121), Momoh's militarily operations further marginalised the semi-destitute illicit diamond miners and motivated many youths to later join the RUF. The tensions leading to war continued to build. While the country saw itself in the midst of an economic downturn, Allie Kabba and some other exiled radicals deepened their Libyan connections. Some of the expelled students were now in exile in Ghana, and they recruited youth from Sierra Leone for military and ideological training in Bengahzi. Among them was Foday Sankoh, a former army corporal who was detained in 1971 for plotting against Siaka Stevens. Everyone who undertook military training in Libya between 1987 and 1988 became part of the very early formation of the RUF. It was in 1988 that Sankoh first met guerilla fighter and future Liberian President, Charles Taylor, in Libya. Taylor encouraged Sankoh to join the NPFL (National Patriotic Front of Liberia), which was initially founded as a pan-African movement. They made a deal that Sankoh would help Taylor to overthrow Samuel Doe's regime in Liberia, and in exchange Taylor would help the RUF to launch an armed struggle. It was in Taylor's particular interest to support the destabilisation of the Sierra Leonean government because of its support for the international community's peacekeeping efforts in Liberia (Abudullah, 2004, pp. 56-57; Krijn, 2011, p. 217; Richards, 1996, p. 2-4).

When the movement started to plan its first counter-insurgency a couple of its members considered it to be too risky and ill designed. Consequently, some members, including Alie Kabba, dissociated themselves from the RUF. Alie Kabba later stated that this was the moment when the way opened for the "wrong kind of individuals" to became part of the RUF (Abuallah & Muana, 1998, p. 177).

Experts, however, disagree as to whether the RUF lost its ideological base at this point in time, and therefore also to what extent it was politically driven to pursue a

specific agenda or interests. The Sierra Leonean scholar Gberie (2005), argues that the RUF did not have the cadres, ideological orientation, or the political base to be transformed into a serious political organisation. In his view the movement was largely conceived as a mercenary enterprise that never evolved beyond "banditism". This was, for him, the very reason why its transformation into a political party after the war was doomed to failure. Similarily, for Abullah and Muana (1998, 2004) as well as Bangura (2004) the RUF lost its ideological credibility as soon as the organic intellectuals withdrew from the project. The RUF, they argue, started as an urban radical left-wing movement of students, but their lumpen followers soon became a "lumpen guerilla force" consisting of an uneducated underclass from the *potes.* Krijn (2011) vehemently criticises Abdullah's account and emphasises the fact that the majority of RUF members were from rural areas and not urban or peri-urban spaces. Strikingly, Krijn's interviews disclose that the majority of the RUF were Mende speakers, and that most of the early RUF volunteers had their origins in the Kailahun and Pujehun Districts (2011, p. 241). Hence, for Krijn the RUF rebellion was both a symptom of, and an attempted answer to, the socioeconomic crisis of rural youth (2011, p. 11).

Both Richards (1996) and Krijn (2011) believe that the RUF had a political ideology - albeit a simple-minded one. Their principles were expressed in the movement's manifesto called "Footpaths to Democracy – Towards a new Sierra Leone".[59] That the RUF had, and made use of, a manifesto indicates that the movement had, or at least wanted to follow, some sort of ideology. For example, reference is made to ending forms of exploitation:[60]

> In our simple and humble ways we say, "No more slave and no more master". It is these very exploitative measures instated by so-called central governments that create the conditions for resistance and civil uprising.

Likewise, the RUF repeatedly called for free education and medical care, collective farming, a people's court, and a system of promotion based on merit. Such

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[59] It should be noted that the authenticity of this document has been questioned many times. Rumour has it that the document was ghost-written by two Ghanaians who were employed by the independent, UK-based peacebuilding organisation, International Alert (Krijn, 2011, 127, footnote 57). The RUF would – so it was assumed – share with them their core concerns and aspirations to be written down in the manifesto.

[60] A full version of *Footpaths to Democracy* is available at: http://www.sierra-leone.org/AFRC-RUF/footpaths.html, last visit 20.02.2014.

an egalitarian (yet meritocratic) agenda inspired many young people from the civil sphere to become part of the movement during its initial stages. Also, contrary to many portrayals of the RUF, Krijn found that a large part of the RUF cadre underwent some sort of education.

For Keen (2005, pp. 39-47), the RUF also shows some indication of expressing an ideological position, even though it was in stark contrast with their actions, which included horrendous atrocities against civilians, widespread abduction, forced recruitment, exploitation, sexual violence, and drug abuse. As Fithen and Richards put it: "the RUF represents a paradox. It claimed to have ambitions for a more just society, and yet ended up a random and arbitrary killing machine" (2005, p. 123). In this context, Ahmed Muckson Sesay, director of the CBO OPARD-SL (Organization for Peace Reconciliation and Development - Sierra Leone), refers to a statement he repeatedly heard during his mediation efforts with rebels when they were asked why they committed such atrocities:[61] "War was even in the Bible, when there was a war innocent people had to die." Krijn explain the connections between violence and ideology , noting (2011, p. 219, footnote 9):

> It is a heroic assumption to conclude that an ideology is a guarantee against atrocity or mass civilian deaths at the hands of insurgent or revolutionary movements. History shows us rather the opposite: the stronger the ideology, the more victims. The rural-autarkic ideology of the Khmer Rouge movement in Cambodia caused the deaths of more than one third of the population. Mao's Cultural Revolution cost millions of lives. The mother of all revolutions, the 1789 French Revolution (birth of French rationalism) was soaked in blood, and it soon started to 'eat its own men'. It is possible that the problem with the RUF, as with the movements mentioned here, might be not its lack of ideology (and intellectuals), but that the cadres were blinded by too much ideology.

It is beyond the scope of the thesis to engage in a more detailed discourse as to what extent the RUF was driven by too much ideological or political thinking, or whether one could seriously compare their guerrilla attacks with the French Revolution. Yet, it should be acknowledged here that although the RUF operated only on the basis of an ill-formulated and badly communicated manifesto, it nevertheless set out some aims and ideas for the future. Still, the magnitude of brutality committed by the RUF is difficult to comprehend. In this context, Keen (2005) contends that

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[61] The interview was held on 04.07.2011 in Masiaka, near Mile 91. The rebels attacked Mile 91 a total of 19 times in the period from 1994 to 2000. The role of OPARD-SL in the peace process will be further discussed towards the end of Section 5.2. on the civil war.

feelings of shame and humiliation among marginalised youth were ultimately expressed in acts of horrific violence as a way of communicating grievances. He echoes the thinking of US psychiatrist James Gilligan. In his essay about the triage of "Shame, Guilt and Violence" published in 2003, Gilligan holds that feelings of disrespect, including the lack of self-love, can lead to irrational and non-justifiable behaviour. It is worth noting in this regard, that the issue of respect was raised many times in the scope of several interviews and informal conversations with youth groups and clubs conducted in Sierra Leone in 2011 and 2012. Feelings of mutual and self-respect were not only perceived as important but also interlinked with the peacebuilding, if not reconciliation process, of the country as a whole. Hence, in alignment with Keen (2005), it is argued that, greed with regard to the country's resources (most notably diamonds) played only a secondary role in the RUF's nascent stage.[62] In fact, the majority of authors agree that the rebellion's motives were rooted in decade-long socioeconomic grievances. Although the RUF gained control over diamond mines and their revenues in due course to fund their violence and rebellion, diamonds did *not* cause, but rather perpetuated and protracted the war.

In sum, Stevens' and later Momoh's political repression left no room for an inclusive political dialogue between the state, civil society actors, and the civil sphere. Democratic openings in the form of student demonstrations did not lead to a political outlet for ordinary civilians (in particular youth groups) to blow off steam and form a potent and serious opposition to the state or at least make their voices and concerns heard. When the RUF emerged as a vicious rebellion to overthrow the APC regime, its poorly communicated ideology gave rise to the hypothesis that Sierra Leone's civil war was not fought on the basis of a specific political aim, interest or democratic cause. It was though, the political suffocation of the civil sphere, the lack of agency and voice alongside a century-long accumulation of grievances that provided the fertile ground for a violent resistance driven by a vague political agenda. Section 5.4.1

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[62] The 'greed versus grievance' debate was famously introduced by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler in a World Bank Policy Research Working Paper published in 2000 arguing that "Conflicts are more likely to be caused by economic opportunities than by grievance" (2000, p. 91). Many scholars including Keen 2005 and Zack-Williams 2010) criticise Collier vehemently for "dismissing the grievances of the masses against imperialist and domestic exploitation, corruption, and totalitarianism" (Zack-Williams, 2010, p. 22). Gberie, despite describing Sankoh as "nothing more than a functionary within a vast network of warlord economies that was controlled by Charles Taylor" finds an explanation for the root causes of the war in the nature of the state itself and "near-criminal" APC misrule (2005, pp. 152–155).

will further take up on this point in analysing Sierra Leone's civil society actors after independence and during the war as a whole.

5.2. Sierra Leone's civil sphere during the civil war

> "You can go", the man repeated, waving his hand this time. "Go, go, go!" I stood up slowly and turned my body toward the soccer field. "Wait!" the rebel hollered. I stood motionless as a couple of the boys grabbed guns from their backs and pointed them at me. I waited for the older rebel's order to shoot. Instead, he walked in front of me. "You must choose a punishment before you leave," he said. "Like what?" I mumbled. Tears I could no longer hold back streamed down my face. "Which hand do you want to lose first?"… "Please, please don't do this to me" I begged one of the boys... "If you are going to chop off my hands, please just kill me," I begged them. "We're not going to kill you," one boy replied. "We want you to go to the president and show him what we did to you. You won't be able to vote for him now. Ask the president to give you new hands…" It took three attempts to cut off my left hand… I sank to the ground as the boy wiped the blood off the machete and walked away. As my eyelids closed, I saw the rebel boys giving each other high-fives. I could hear them laughing. As my mind went dark, I remember asking myself: "What is a president?" (*Kamara 2008, pp. 39-41*).

It is estimated that about 27,000 Sierra Leoneans have been disabled or have had one or more of their limbs amputated, about 50,000 people lost their lives (UNFPA estimates about 60,000[63]), and one million people were displaced during the 1991-2002 civil war.[64] In an interview with the Fifty/Fifty Group the director refers to a case when she had to take care of a four-month old baby whose legs were cut off by the rebels.[65] In other words, atrocities committed by the RUF and other armed groups had no limits.

The gruesome war in Sierra Leone was complex, involved different armed groups, and crossed the war-ravaged Liberian and Guinean borders. Kaplan famously described the *Zeitgeist* of the situation in the mid-1990s as (1994, p. 9):

> [A] microcosm of what is occurring, albeit in a more tempered and gradual manner, throughout West Africa and much of the underdeveloped world: the withering away of central governments, the rise of tribal and regional domains, the unchecked spread of disease, and the growing pervasiveness of war.

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[63] See UNFPA (29.05.2006) http://www.unfpa.org/public/cache/offonce/home/news/pid/174, last visit 13.02.2014.
[64] See IRIN News (24.10.2011): http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=94037, last visit 13.02.2014.
[65] The Fifty/Fifty Group is a local CSO - interview held on July 5th, 2011, in Freetown.

On 23 March 1991, about 100 guerrilla fighters invaded Sierra Leone from Liberia at Bomaru, Kailahun District, thereby kicking off a civil war that would (with interruptions) progressively engulf the entire country. It is assumed that the majority (if not all) were NPFL (National Patriotic Front of Liberia) fighters, who would be permanently lent out to Sankoh's forces by Charles Taylor (Keen, 2005; Krijn, 2011).[66] Soon they gained control over eastern Sierra Leone aiming to overthrow the president, Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh of the APC. Ironically, earlier in the same year, amid mounting external and internal pressures (such as the earlier mentioned student protests) to end the 1978 one-party rule, Momoh finally gave in and adopted a new constitution, thereby opening a way out of the country's political stagnation through the restoration of a multiparty electoral democracy. Ultimately, his reforms came too late to preserve Sierra Leone from the mayhem that was to blight the country for more than a decade.

From the very beginning of the war, the national forces of the SLA (Sierra Leone Army) lacked the capacity, resources, discipline, and attitude to successfully defeat the rebel movement. In order to assist the government, an Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) force was deployed to defend against the RUF rebellion. However, it was slow to reach across the country (Olonisakin, 2008). By 1992, the RUF posed a serious threat to the diamond-mining areas in Kono. The situation further deteriorated, when - frustrated by poor payment, bad conditions, and lack of logistical support - a group of SLA junior military officers launched a successful military coup. President Momoh fled the country leaving the 25-year-old Captain Valentine Strasser to become the world's youngest Head of State. He established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) and remained in power for four years. Initially, the RUF were expected to form a coalition with the new government and many civilians hoped the rebellion would simply peter out (Keen, 2005, pp. 94-95). Exactly the opposite occurred. Strasser's rule repudiated the rebel movement so the RUF vowed to continue the war despite being weakened and

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[66] Despite the general belief that the first attack was a joint RUF-NPFL effort, Krijns's interviews reveal that it was not the RUF that actually initiated the first attack. One of Krijns's informants from the ex-RUF cadre stated: "Before the war some Liberian rebels were trading with the Sierra Leonean army, because by that time Liberia was already in a war. But some of the Sierra Leonean guys cheated the rebels, so these rebels entered Sierra Leone and the conflict started. Of course the RUF all the way planned to attack Sierra Leone, but according to my information they wanted to wait a few months longer. But this incident speeded up the whole thing" (2011, pp. 62-63).

dislodged from its strongholds, except for an enclave in the Gola Forest. Before they could take over diamond mining areas and plan their next big offensive, which was to take place in 1994-95, it was necessary to rebuild forest camps and raid army stores to train new teenage cadres and abductees (Richards, 1996; Fithen & Richards 2005, pp. 120-121). The NPRC was not only the RUF's enemy during the civil war but it would soon also deprive the RUF of its main sources of recruits: the marginalised, unemployed youth, street children, and petty criminals. It is estimated that the NPRC was able to expand the army from a pre-war figure of 3,000 or 4,000 to between 15,000 and 20,000 by 1993 (Krijn, 2011, pp. 64-65).

In the case of the RUF, young volunteers from the more remote parts of Kailahun and Puhehun Districts were joining the rebels. But when stories of atrocities spread, the movement quickly ran out of willing supporters and was forced to recruit mostly by capture (Fithen & Richards, 2005, p. 126). Many of the captives were the age of primary school children and easy to brainwash with RUF ideologies (mainly through a mix of drugs composed of cocaine, gunpowder, and marijuana). According to the Global Child Soldier Report of 2008, after the war, about 6,774 children took part in a Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme. Statistics also reveal that 3,710 children had been with the RUF, 2,026 with the pro-government Civil Defence Forces (CDF), 471 with the Sierra Leone Army, 427 with the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), and 144 were with other factions or non-affiliated.[67] Not all of the former child-soldiers benefited from DDR programmes and it is estimated that roughly 10,000 children had to fight in the war.

In the course of his rule, Strasser increasingly lost control over his own army. His recruits (as mentioned above) were not only ill-trained but their loyalty was questionable. It was later estimated that about 40 percent of Strasser's soldiers had either deserted or defected to the rebels. A number of presumed rebel attacks were actually committed by rogue military units. Soon, the local press began to report about so-called "s*obels*" – soldiers by day, rebels by night (Keen 2002, p. 8; Pham, 2006, p. 94).

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[67] For more information about child soldiers see:
http://www.childsoldiersglobalreport.org/content/sierra-leone, (last visit 17 November 2011).

Due to the SLA's collusion and ongoing RUF attacks, traditional hunting militias started to defend their villages, families, and goods. In 1997, these militias formed the Civil Defence Force (CDF), mainly composed of the *kamajoisia* of the Mende group, *gbethis* and *kapras* of the Temne, and the *donsos* of the Kono (Hoffman 2007).[68] It is noteworthy, that the CDF constitutes a militia which was raised from the civil population in the rural areas and therefore presents an interesting intersection of both the primordial and civic public. The ensuing Section 5.4.1 ("Civil society *actors* after independence and during the war") will further analyse this phenomenon. At first the *kamajoisia* clashed with the NPRC on a number of occasions, but as the NPRC soldiers became more corrupt and less reliable, Strasser sought their support and deployed 500 Kamajoisia fighters on the war front in Kenema and Kailahun Districts in March 1994 (Gberie, 2005, p. 85). Later on, he recruited the South African mercenary firm, Executive Outcomes, to wage war against the rebels.

In the midst of continued attempts to counter the RUF insurgency, various political groups and CSOs pressured the NPRC to relinquish power to an elected civilian government at the beginning of 1996 (Pham, 2006, p. 113). At a conference held in Freetown in August 1995, it was hotly debated whether a peace settlement should come before elections or vice versa. Participants included the INEC (Interim National Electoral Commission), political leaders, and civil society representatives. The RUF was invited to the conference, but did not send a representative as they were against elections taking place without a prior peace settlement. Five months after the conference, Brigadier-General Maada Bio replaced Strasser in a bloodless coup. Due to persistent demand for democratic elections Maada Bio had no choice but to hand over power to an elected government. These elections were to be held in March 1996 (Oloniasakin, 2008, pp. 17-19, 136). The RUF's rage at the upcoming elections was expressed in intensified attacks on civilians, notoriously mutilating and amputating limbs without discrimination. The violence received scant media attention, especially

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[68] The CDF's role and functions during the war caused a lot of controversial debates among officials and academics. For some, such as the Sierra Leonean scholar Lansana Gberie, the CDF was an "extraordinary phenomenon" as it emerged as an organisation stemming from the civil sphere to protect civilians who were oppressed by rebel attacks (Ainley et.al., 2013 pp. 21-22). However, others, like Human Rights Watch, stress that the CDF committed the same war crimes, crimes against humanity and violations of the laws of war and of the Sierra Leonean state as other warring parties during the civil war. For this reason, the Special Court for Sierra Leone investigated whether the CDF should be considered as a military organisation with a system of military command and control. Based on (again disputed) expert testimonies the court indicted three high rank CDF members.

the cutting off of people's hands in a gruesome response to SLPP's canvassing slogan: "The future is in your hands". Despite the RUF's atrocities, SLPP leader Ahmad Tjan Kabbah became the newly-elected president (Pham, 2006, p. 115).

Eight months later, in November 1996, Kabbah engaged in peace talks with the RUF in Abidjan. Although he declared a ceasefire and the army stood down, the CDF (assisted by Executive Outcomes) continued to attack RUF bases during the negotiations. The RUF signed the Abidjan accords but because of the CDF's assaults, the leadership was unable to reach out to its field commanders who were still scattered all around the county (Fithen & Richards, 2005, p. 120). In short, the Abidjan Peace agreements were doomed to fail before the ink had dried. Even greater chaos and destruction was to come and no superior international assistance was in sight. Seven years later, the final report of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) stated:

> The United Nations (UN) and the international community abandoned Sierra Leone in its greatest hour of need during the early 1990s. Lack of foresight by the UN and the international community resulted in the hastily prepared and ill-conceived Abidjan Peace Accord in 1996.[69]

Despite Kabbah's government turning around the economy from a negative growth rate of minus 6.4 percent to a positive rate of 6.0 percent in just one year (Gberie 2004, p. 144), these changes were not really to the benefit of the broader public. A locally conducted opinion poll six months after the election showed severe disappointment in his performance, citing indicators such as growing hardship and poverty (Reno 1999, p. 138). Furthermore, Kabbah refused to renew Executive Outcomes' contract beyond January 1997, mainly due to pressure by the IMF to better control government spending. In retrospect, this was a fatal decision as it led to another coup on 25 May 1997, known as "Bloody Sunday". The coup was not only the dreadful result of Sierra Leone's further deteriorating military situation, but it was also based on resurfacing tensions between the SLA and the *kamajoisia*. A small group of heavily armed soldiers in civilian clothing stormed Freetown and freed about 600 prisoners; some of them were the country's most notorious criminals. Among them

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[69] Section "Findings" paragraph 372, see http://www.sierra-leone.org/TRCDocuments.html, last visit 13.02.2014.

was Major Johnny Paul Koroma, who had previously served as head of Strasser's security operations unit before becoming a *sobel*. Kabbah was forced into exile in Conakry. The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) announced the formation of an Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) with Major Johnny Paul Koroma as its chairman. The AFRC declared the rebel war to be over, presented itself as the new government and proclaimed the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, who was in detention in Nigeria at the time, as the Vice Chairman of the Council. Sankoh became the deputy leader of the country and a joint AFRC/RUF leadership was ready to rule Sierra Leone (Gberie, 2004, pp. 143-153; Pham, 2006, pp. 122-123).

The junta was condemned in Sierra Leone and internationally. Locally, the vast majority of ordinary Sierra Leoneans expressed their opposition simply by staying at home, refusing to go to work even after repeated threats of dismissal by the AFRC/RUF. Likewise, members of the National Union of Sierra Leone Students (NUSS) started to plan a massive demonstration against the military junta, gaining widespread support from the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), the Sierra Leone Women's Forum (SLWF), and many other civic organisations (e.g. the Inter-Religious Council, the Labour Congress and the Teachers' Union). The anger among AFRC/RUF soldiers about civil protests was intense. In August 1997, just about everyone on the streets of Freetown was attacked with machetes, sticks, and live bullets (Gberie, 2004, pp. 153 - 157).

A few civil society associations and initiatives proved to be successful in their efforts to establish peace. For instance, the IRCSL (Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone) formed in early 1997 by the country's religious leaders played a significant behind-the-scene role in facilitating communications between warring parties throughout the war and peace process (Pham 2006, pp. 147-148).

According to Oloniasakin, the determination of "Sierra Leonean civil society mustered a will of steel [which was] perhaps one of the principal factors that endeared some key international actors, not least Tony Blair's newly elected government in the UK, to Sierra Leone"[70] (2008, p. 22). The nationwide passive resistance resulted in the formation of the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), an assembly of almost all the pressure groups, CSOs, and the local militias (*kamajoisia* and *kapra*).

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[70] In July 1997, the AFRC-led government was officially suspended from all Commonwealth meetings.

The latter formally constituted the MRD's armed wing – the CDF (Gberie, 2004, pp. 153-154).

In interviews with several CSOs (e.g. Nos. 4, 6, 12 and 29, Appendix 1) conducted in 2011 and 2012 it was mentioned that during the war, society in Sierra Leone was united like never before in that everyone shared a common objective: to establish peace. Correspondingly, in a conversation about the concept of civil society, a representative from the Sierra Leonean Association for NGOs (SLANGO) made an interesting point:

> Civil society is very fragmented. However, that is what makes civil society to be civil society and one has to accept that civil society is diverse and complex. You cannot have a united civil society unless you have a common enemy.[71]

In another interview with the Campaign for Good Governance (CCG),[72] it was pointed out that most of the formal civil society actors (i.e., official organisations, associations, and alliances) emerged during or immediately after the war. While the civil sphere was constantly subjected to suffocation from independence onwards, Sierra Leone's civil society landscape exploded during and after the conflict. For the Women's Partnership for Justice and Peace (WPJP)[73], if there was one positive result of the war, it was certainly the emergence of local CSOs and politically active human rights activists.

At a global level the disapproval of the junta was articulated in three United Nations Security Council (UNSC) statements in May, July, and August 1997. In addition, help was offered by the OAU in order to support ECOWAS's efforts to restore President Kabbah. In September of the same year, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1132, which imposed a total oil and arms embargo and authorised ECOWAS to ensure its implementation by using Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) troops (Olonisakin, 2008, p. 23, 136).

Sustained international, national, military, and civic pressure forced the AFRC/RUF to sign a new Peace Plan on 23 October 1997 during a meeting in Conakry. Its implementation, once again, was undermined by the legendary unpredictably of the junta (Gberie, 2004, pp. 161-163). In February and March of

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[71] Interview held with SLANGO in Freetown, 5 July 2011.
[72] Interview held with CCG in Freetown, 7 July 2011.
[73] Interview held with WPJO in Freetown, 4 July 2011.

1998, the Nigerian-led West African intervention force ECOMOG successfully managed to restore Kabbah's presidency and drove the AFRC/RUF from power. Forced to go back to the bush, the ex-junta regained strongholds in Kailahun District and further strengthened its supply lines to Liberia (Fithen & Richards, 2005, p. 121).

Once the Kabbah government was reinstated it immediately declared a state of emergency. In addition, considerable media attention was given to the fact that Kabbah had contracted the British private armed force, Sandline International, to defeat the junta. Sandline's involvement was harshly criticised as a violation of the UNSC sanctions and arms embargo. As a consequence, the British had to withdraw their High Commissioner from Sierra Leone. The affair was not only embarrassing for all parties involved, but it also initiated ongoing debates about the role of private security companies in regional conflicts in the absence of credible international military intervention (Pham, 2006, p. 134). In July of the same year, the UN established an Observer Mission (UNOMSIL) and sent out seventy observers. The AFRC/RUF kept attacking regions in the north, east, and south and managed to win back the diamond-rich Koidu. Sankoh returned from detention in Nigeria to Sierra Leone but was sentenced to death for treason in October 1998. The ARFC/RUF's armed response to Sankoh's conviction was the infamous Operation No Living Thing. On 6 January 1999, the rebels launched a bloody assault in Freetown, killing an estimated 7,000 people and committing widespread atrocities. All UNOMISL personnel were evacuated and Kabbah's government was given no option but to cooperate with the ARFC/RUF.

5.3. Conflict Resolution and the agency of civil society therein.

After the 1999 attacks, Kabbah's government was under pressure to negotiate with the rebels. On 25 May 1999, Kabbah and Sankoh signed a ceasefire agreement in Lomé, Togo, leading to a power-sharing agreement in July of the same year. From the very beginning the Lomé negotiations were dominated by the rebel's strategic advantage. The Sierra Leonean government, as well as the international and regional actors, were demoralised and just wanted an end to the war. As Zack-Williams aptly notes (2010, p. 30):

> Clearly, the Lomé chickens had come home to roost: by hurling a democratically elected government into negotiations with a bunch of armed thugs, the latter felt empowered to go to the whole hog.

International mediators from the UN, OAU, ECOWAS, the Commonwealth, the United Kingdom, and the US assisted in the talks. Civil society involvement was limited with the exception of the IRCSL whose role was recognised in Article VIII of the agreement. All other CSOs were granted observer status (particularly the Sierra Leone's Women's Movement for Peace) but none of them were permitted to actively participate in, or even raise any concerns during, the negotiations. The final outcome was a triumph for the RUF and its fighters. In a nutshell: the GoSL acceded to the RUF's demand for a blanket amnesty; Foday Sankoh was made chairman of the Strategic Mineral Resources Commission and the RUF obtained a further eight cabinet posts; the ex-junta, in return, promised to release abducted civilians, disarm, and to be reintegrated into the Sierra Leonean Armed Forces as well as to reconstitute itself into a political organisation (Olonisakin 2008, p. 138).

Not surprisingly, the RUF's immunity from prosecution resulted in a great deal of criticism (within and outside Sierra Leone). The preamble of the agreement refers to the commitment and promotion of "full respect for human rights and humanitarian law", which, quite obviously stands in stark contrast with Article IX, paragraph 3 of the accord, that stipulates: [74]

> To consolidate the peace and promote the cause of national reconciliation, the Government of Sierra Leone shall ensure that no official or judicial action is taken against any member of the RUF/SL, ex-AFRC, ex-SLA or CDF in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives as members of those organisations, since March 1991, up to the time of the signing of the present Agreement.

This controversial element of the agreement refelected the lack of a strong international demand for accountability for human rights abuses in the course of the civil war (Zack-Williams, 2010, p. 29). It equally reflects the immense pressure exerted over Kabbah during the negotiations by all parties involved. He expressed his silent protest, nonetheless, during the signing ceremony of the Lomé accords by bringing a child with him whose arm had been amputated by the RUF (Robertson 2002, p. 467).

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[74] The full version of the Lomé Peace Accord can be downloaded from: http://www.sierra-leone.org/lomeaccord.html, last visit 14.02.2014.

At about the time that the Lomé negotiations took place, the newly elected government of Nigeria pushed for a negotiated settlement of Nigeria's participation in ECOMOG in Sierra Leone due to rising costs and increasing unpopularity of Nigerian soldiers. Since the beginning of ECOMOG's deployment, Nigeria contributed 90 percent of the troops and had to bear most of the estimated US$ 1 million *per day* costs (it is worth mentioning that at that time ECOMOG was deployed, 65.6 percent of all Nigerians were living on less than US$ 1.25 a day).[75] Nigeria's persistent calls to receive any kind of support from the US or UN remained unfulfilled. In Oloniasakin's words (2008, p. 87):

> Nigeria and ECOMOG were left to dominate the Sierra Leone scene for a long period with little or no attention from the international community. When the UN was eventually ready to engage more actively, these regional actors felt they were being dispossessed of their rightful role in a situation where they had for so long borne the costs.

Also, considering the corrupt nature of the Nigerian regime, it was speculated that most of Nigeria's funds never reached the military forces in Sierra Leone (Pham 2006, p. 135). Among others, Keen notes that some ECOMOG forces were involved in diamond smuggling (2005, p. 224). Thus, Nigeria's wish to bring its military support to an end was not unexpected, but it also weakened Kabbah's position further. All the poorly planned solutions and assistance from the regional and international arena, combined with the January 1999 attacks, signified an important wake-up call for the international community to finally take the situation in Sierra Leone more seriously (Zack-Williams, 2010, pp. 28-30).

The UN's response was officially outlined in the Lomé accords. In October 1999, the United Nations Mission to Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was deployed with 6,000 troops; this was later raised to 17,500 making it one of the UN's largest and most expensive peacekeeping missions with a total expenditure of US$ 2.8 billion.[76] It replaced UNOMSIL and led to ECOMOG's withdrawal in May 2000. From its very beginnings UNAMSIL faced several difficulties, as the RUF simply did not respect, and actually ignored, the Lomé agreements. On a couple of occasions UNAMSIL faced the embarrassment of its blue helmets being disarmed by the RUF as opposed to

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[75] This percentage is indicated in the UNDP's Human Development Report Nigeria 2008-2008, page 64, Table: 3.1 Incidence of Poverty by Sector and Zones from 1980 -2004, available at: http://www.ng.undp.org/documents/NHDR2009/NHDR_MAIN-REPORT_2008-2009.pdf, last visit 13.02.2014.
[76] See: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unamsil/facts.html, last visit 13.02.2014.

them disarming the rebels. Soon, the mission was dubbed "UNAMSILLY". In May 2000, the history of UNAMSIL reached its darkest hour when, shortly after ECOMOG's withdrawal, 500 peacekeepers were taken hostage by the RUF.

Yet ordinary Sierra Leoneans would not surrender. On 6 May 2000, women's groups gathered outside of the RUF rebel leader's house demanding the release of the UN peacekeepers. Freetown was geared up for a large demonstration against Sankoh. Two days later, on 8 May 2000, about 30,000 people, including members of the parliament, joined the protests. Although UNAMSIL troops were stationed at Sankoh's domicile they completely lost control over the situation when his bodyguards started to fire into the crowd. Twenty people were killed and dozens injured. Sankoh escaped but was seized and arrested on 17 May in Freetown (Olonisakin, 2008, p. 60).

Immediately after the bloody demonstrations, the British deployed troops in Sierra Leone, ostensibly to evacuate British citizens. Supported by naval ships and air force planes, they eventually successfully reinforced the UNAMSIL contingent. In early July, some of UNAMSIL's soldiers who were still being held hostage by the RUF were freed. Illegal checkpoints in the Occra hills were cleared by August 2000, and the strategic junction town of Masiaka was recaptured.

Events as they happened in rural towns like Masiaka are often overlooked. BBC correspondent, Mark Doyle said, "over the past decade of war [Masiaka] has changed hands between various armed factions countless times".[77] Masiaka serves to illustrate that without civil society involvement the conflict might have been protracted and lasted much longer. In the summer of 2011, a long interview was held near Masiaka with Mr Ahmed Muckson Sesay, director of OPARD-SL. The organisation was started in 1999 as a voluntary organisation (later becoming a CBO and then CSO) by local farmers to help promote peace. Between 1994 and 2000 the rebels attacked their town in total 19 times. Given that a few community members knew some of the rebels, OPARD-SL was able to initiate talks with the RUF. Later, the organisation would also serve as a mediator among all warring parties. "We were barefoot soldiers trying to negotiate peace", said Mr Muckson Sesay in the interview. His efforts were duly

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[77] See BBC article from 7 August 2001: "Sierra Leone road trip: Freetown to Masiaka", http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/1478041.stm, last visit 13.02.2014.

acknowledged in an official letter written by UNAMSIL's then Commanding Officer, Colonel Khusahl Thakur:[78]

> *My dear Bro Muckson* [handwritten] … Your active mediation and indulgence reinvigorated and revitalized the sagging relationship between the RUF and UNAMSIL. This subsequently facilitated in strengthening the ties and retrieval of UN equipment captured by RUF in May 2000. As we bid adieu, I would pray to God Almighty to shower all the happiness, wellbeing and prosperity on you, your entire staff and the besieged residents of Sierra Leone. I am sure that you will exult in your endeavours and usher in the much needed peace to Sierra Leone.

According to Mr Muckson Sesay, OPARD-SL's efforts during and after the conflict were never really acknowledged in official peace ceremonies. The reminders of OPARD-SL's brave and year-long endeavours are UNAMSIL's letter in Muckson Sesay's office and a peace monument an hour and a half's motorbike ride from Masiaka. In other words, although the conflict was eventually resolved through a massive international (British) intervention, one major aspect remains largely unnoticed; that is, negotiating the peace in Sierra Leone was initiated and constantly influenced by a series of initiatives stemming from the civil sphere. Masiaka is just one out of many examples where ordinary Sierra Leonean's proved their courage and their commitment to peace. For instance, another famous example can be made in reference to the activities and work of Fambul Tok[79] founder John Caulker, who first became a human rights activist as a student leader during the war in Sierra Leone. He infiltrated rebel camps disguised as a rebel in order to pass along information to international organisations such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch.[80]

Besides, as stressed in interviews with other CSOs such as the EFSL (Evangelic Fellowship of Sierra Leone) or the Fifty/Fifty group, civil society also provided all kinds of relief, humanitarian aid, and assisted refugees in internally displaced person (IDP) camps. Some of these locally established organisations received external funding to ensure continued support. Interestingly, the EFSL (which was founded before independence in 1959 in contrast to the majority of CSOs who emerged during

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[78] A copy of the letter was given to me during the interview.

[79] Fambul Tok (Krio for "Family Talk") emerged in Sierra Leone as a face-to-face community-owned program bringing together perpetrators and victims of the violence in Sierra Leone's eleven-year civil war through ceremonies rooted in the local traditions of war-torn villages. It provides Sierra Leonean citizens with an opportunity to come to terms with what happened during the war, to talk, to heal, and to chart a new path forward, together. See: http://www.fambultok.org/what-is-fambul-tok,

[80] Retrieved from: http://www.fambultok.org/about-us/staff-profiles, last visit 04.09.2014.

or shortly after the war) feels that local ownership of the process was much greater during the war than it is now during the country's peacebuilding phase. This point was also made by other CSOs. Chapter 6 will return to this point.

In August 2000, the RUF announced that Issay Sesay would replace the imprisoned Foday Sankoh as its leader. Two months later, on 10 November 2000, the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement was signed, reaffirming the commitments made at the Lomé Peace Agreement in July 1999. It welcomed the "emergence of a new leadership within the RUF".[81] The RUF, once again, had to agree to return all captured weapons and participate in a comprehensive DDR program. An arms destruction ceremony was held in Freetown on 17 January 2002. UNAMSIL concluded the disarmament process and the following day the war was officially declared over.

5.4. Discussion & Analysis: Civil society *actors* and *functions* during the war.

When examining how Sierra Leone's civil sphere developed and changed after independence and during the war, one finds many shades of grey as well as colours that change over time. It was a fragment of the civil sphere (the disillusioned youth led by a middle-aged Sankoh with Taylor's assistance) that triggered – *not* to be mistaken with caused - the war. Simultaneously, a large part of Sierra Leonean society courageously stood up to resolve it and/or provided relief.

Any democratic opening stemming from the Freetown-based civil sphere between 1961 and 1991 saw itself immediately repressed by an autocratic regime. Once Stevens declared Sierra Leone a one-party state in 1978, he successfully infiltrated civil society circles by co-opting or sabotaging those who could be a potential (and influential) opposition to state policies. Needless to say, Stevens' political power relied heavily on neo-patrimonial and clientelistic networks which depoliticised parts of the country's emerging civil society landscape. It would take almost a decade for Sierra Leone's civil society to recover from Stevens' autocratic rule, and to push for a multiparty system and a new constitution, which was finally adopted by president Momoh in 1991. Sadly, by the time the constitution was legally effective, the civil war had already commenced. In order to understand how the war

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[81] The full Abuja agreement can be accessed at: http://www.sierra-leone.org/ceasefire1100.html, last visit 13.02.2014.

affected and altered the civil sphere, it is important to stress at this point, that CSOs' activities and agency would reach far beyond the political realm. According to SLANGO, long before the war started CSOs gave warning signs, such as alerting the government about grievances with regards to health care, education, corruption, or malfunctioning justice systems. Stevens', as well as Momoh's, suppression and suffocation of the civil sphere was basically a one-way street to a war waiting to happen. From a different perspective, one could argue that the formation of the RUF in its very nascent stages was also a warning signal in itself. The actions and behaviour of disgruntled and disillusioned youth from the *potes* and rural areas and/or seditious students on university campuses reflected their frustrations regarding the mismanagement of the country, if not the entire region. Shortly before independence, ordinary citizens from rural and urban areas, students, and lumpen youth fed into a guerrilla rebellion without even taking part in it later on. The oppression, grievance, exploitation, corruption, and forlornness of a century, fuelled resistance against anyone who seemed to maintain the system, including the government, chiefs or corrupt elders. Yet the majority of early RUF members, such as Ali Kabba, were not determined to maim about 27,000 civilians, forcefully recruit 10,000 child soldiers, and kill thousands of innocent people. Can we explain the RUF's pattern of behaviour simply with the argument that the wrong kind of individuals gained greater influence over the time? Partly, but not entirely. Initially, not all RUF commanders encouraged their fighters to commit horrendous atrocities. Likewise, it became more and more difficult to differentiate rebels from *sobels* and other warring parties. In a way, the emergence of civil rebellions like those of the RUF and the collusion with armed forces later on was also an accumulation of anger, resentment, and shame (Keen 2005) from centuries of oppression (see Chapter 4). The RUF appeared from the country's civil sphere as a horrific expression of historically-accumulated privileges, grievances and a century long rural/urban division. Correspondingly, Krijn (2011) finds that most of the voluntary RUF recruits came from a rural underclass descending from client or previous slave families who despised "free-borns". Interestingly, although the rule of every single pre-war president reflected the organisational logic of patronage and a partial ethnicisation of politics that favoured ethnic groups, Sierra Leone's civil war was never about ethnicity or tribalism as such.

In this regard, all of the above observations give rise to an essential question when it comes to the study of the civil sphere, namely: considering that civil society never really had a fair chance to establish itself as a clear opposition to the state, how can we conceptualise, or at least get a better grasp of, the politics and political culture and voice of civilians? Put differently, how did the civil war alter the agency and political leeway of civil society actors? Did it lay the groundwork for the depoliticisation of the civil sphere later on (see Chapter 6)? How did centuries of suppression and conflict affect the political culture of the civil sphere as a whole? In the quest for answers, the analytical framework presented in Chapter 3 will be applied to shed light on the characteristics but also agency of the Sierra Leonean civil sphere shortly before and during the war.

5.4.1. Civil society *actors* after independence and during the war

From independence onwards, Ekeh's (1975) two publics ran like a golden thread through Sierra Leone's societal structures. On the one hand, primordial cultural traits continued to exist, such as: secret societies, sodality and polygamy, hierarchical forms of societal organisation through chieftaincy systems or gender relations. On the other hand, the pro-Western political culture cultivated by the Krio during colonial rule laid the foundation for a civic public aspiring to assimilate 'modern' societal structures, culture and life. Next to political activism at FBC, slowly but steadily, a few more civic associations and/or CBOs or CSOs emerged by the late 1980 (e.g. ARD – Association for Rural Development, founded in 1986 or the NMJD – the Network Movement for Justice and Development, established in 1988). However, the majority of long-standing and well-funded organisations were created during the 1990s such as: CADO (Community Animation Development Organisations) established in 1990, the CCG (Campaign for Good Governance) founded in 1996 or the Fifty/Fifty Group, created in 1997.

Strikingly, it was during the conflict when in the absence of large-scale humanitarian assistance, local civil initiatives simply mushroomed out of necessity. Over time they became more formalised, organised, structured, and recognised in Sierra Leone. To repeat the WPJP's earlier-referenced statement: "If there was one positive result of the war, than certainly the emergence of local CSOs and human rights activists". In many instances these organisations would start off as small

voluntary initiatives or CBOs and later (after 2002, in the peacebuilding and development phase) convert to the status of a CSO. The fast growing numbers of CSOs gives rise to the underlying assumption that all these actors would eventually lay the basis for a more participatory political landscape and engagement with the state during the peacebuilding and developmental phase. Surprisingly, a few years into Sierra Leone's post-war period, one does not encounter a purely independent CSO landscape that acts as an effective watchdog of the state. Chapter 6 will further elaborate on this development.

Another striking yet disputed phenomenon that occurred during the war is the CDF, which constitutes an interesting intersection of both the primordial and the civic public. To begin with, it is important to stress, that the CDF is understood as a militia that was "raised from the civil population to supplement a regular army in an emergency"[82] and not as a military organisation or conventional army.[83] Following Hoffman's (2007) detailed, and to an extent also anthropological, study of the CDF's social fabrics, the CDF exemplifies much more the militarisation of a social network. Hence, the difficulty in the case of the CDF is to make sense of the complex intersections of the civil and political realm and workings in Sierra Leone's primordial public. As Hoffman describes it, "(…) politics at the district, chiefdom, and town levels has much greater impact on the average person's daily existence than do events at the national level" (p. 648). Accordingly, the CDF was organised by chiefs at the community level to resist the cruelties committed by the RUF and other players.[84] The CDF thus surfaced as a paramilitary response of civilians who felt that the state military was either unable or unwilling to defeat the rebels. In this regard, one of the CDF's primordial features included the Mende *kamajoisia* (next to other traditional fighters) commonly referred to as kamajors, who constituted the largest force of the CDF. Mende *kamajoisia* are specialised hunters who firmly believe in magic, occult

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[82] This definition was taken from the Oxford Dictionary, see: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/militia, last visit 22.02.2014.
[83] The Prosecution of the SCSL made great use of the expert testimony of Colonel Richard Iron, who was in charge of an experts report on the CDF command structure. His findings continue to be highly contested in public debates and the literature. More information can be obtained from: http://wcsc.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/SL-Reports/044.pdf, last visit 22.02.2014.
[84] According to Hoffman's (2007, pp 641 -642) research, the CDF originated in the Liberian capital Monrovia among a group of expatriate Sierra Leoneans producing propaganda for the exiled SLPP during the 1997-8 interregnum. Also Gberie points out that it is actually not that well known that the CDF was largely composed of refugees who were displaced in camps because of rebel attacks (Ainley et al., 2013 pp. 21-22).

and secret 'medicines' alongside the use of firearms. Moreover, in Mende mythology, the kamajors' very identity is predicated on the protection of villages (Ibid. p.642). Hoffman further explains that (p. 647):

> In contexts where the exercise of violence becomes synonymous with the demands of citizenship, adult manhood, or economic survival (all of which were true of the kamajors), these kinds of non-military, but temporarily militarized social institutions are a more logical entry point for both understanding and engaging the sodalities which constitute the conflict zone.

In common with the vast majority of Sierra Leoneans, the Mende *kamajoisia*, the Temne *gbethis* as well as the *kapras*, and the Kono *donsos* belonged to secret societies (predominantly the Poro). The CDF's first intersection with the civic public occurred after the election in 1996, which brought the Mende-dominated SLPP back into the government's office. This was an essential turning point for the CDF in two ways. Firstly, when the co-founder and leader, Chief Sam Hinga Norman, was appointed the SLPP's Deputy Minister of Defence, the CDF could no longer be accredited the status of a strictly 'civilian' or paramilitary defence force. Secondly, and building on the first point, Norman's political status led to a general (public) perception of the CDF as the SLPP government's actual security force. Consequently the CDF perfectly illustrates how the boundaries between the primordial and the civic public are blurred within the political sphere and how they were altered in the course of complex events, such as the civil war in Sierra Leone.

Apart from civic formations such as CBOs, CSOs or the CDF, the war also led to the creation of many informal civic self-help groups, taking on the shape of street or youth clubs or any other form of civil informal association. One example can be made with regards to a Freetown-based club called Street Life Family (SLF), initially founded under the name Peacemakers shortly after the war in 2002.[85] The club is the brain child of Mr Ahmed Tejan Kabba, who, struggling with the consequences of the conflict and poverty himself, reached out to the youth of his community with the simple message: "Together as one" (the slogan of the club).[86] Throughout its existence the club became a social support system for its members and persists to this day. Such

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[85] The club and several of its members (individually and in group format) was interviewed several times during my stays in 2011 and 2012.

[86] Interview with Mr Ahmed Tejan Kabba, held on 27.06.2011 in Freetown.

actors, meaning civic support systems, or self-help groups are no exception in Sierra Leone.[87] The functions as well as agency of these clubs will be discussed in more depth in the ensuing Chapter 6.

Lastly, one major actor since independence and throughout the war is Sierra Leone's urban (ie Freetown) civil sphere itself. This manifest itself in the many public uprisings, demonstrations (e.g. FBC student demonstrations in 1977 or the public protests in front of Sankoh's house in 2000), the youth and student movements as well as acts of public resistance (in particular people's refusal to go to work after the AFRC/RUF leadership was announced in 1997). Until the end of the war, civil group action on a very large scale (in some instances up to an estimated 30,000 participants) constituted forms of major public resistance against political and societal power structures (be they primordial or civic) imposed on the broader public (also primordial and civic) of Sierra Leone.

5.4.2. Civil society *functions* after independence and during the war

As Section 5.4.1 pointed out, between independence and during the war, Sierra Leone's civil sphere emerged as a political and humanitarian actor at the same time. Its political functions were manifested through group activism and mobilisation in resisting political and societal authority and control. Besides, many individuals and local organisations surfaced as mediators between warring factions to negotiate the peace at the very local level (e.g CSO Nos. 4, 13, 45, 49). To use SLANGO's words, "During the war CSO's were involved with communities, undertook counselling services, and had been hand-in-hand with the broader peace process by providing first-hand information from the very local level".

From the late 1980s and early 1990s onwards, alongside political activism (understood hereafter as a function in the sense of agency), more and more civil actors started to provide humanitarian and developmental aid as well as service delivery. A phenomenon which would later (during the country's peacebuilding and development phase) also fortify the depoliticisation of Sierra Leone's civil society landscape, and in a broader sense, the civil sphere as such (see Chapters 6 and 7). In the absence of large

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[87] Today the SLF has about 50 members (mainly young men) who support each other in several areas. A short online article about SLF (Datzberger 2011a).

scale humanitarian and developmental assistance, civil society actors simply fulfilled functions the state or international community did not sufficiently provide. To give a few illustrative examples, one rural organisation, APEM (Association for Peoples Empowerment), was founded as a local CSO during the war in Bo. This CSO's initial objectives were to help displaced women, reach out to refugee camps and provide these women with small micro credits.[88] Similarly, the Fifty-Fifty group assisted rape victims, amputees, and children and soon started to collaborate with many other women's organisations that emerged shortly before or during the war. Another example includes GEKO (German Kooperation). Despite its confusing name, GEKO is in fact a local organisation that came into existence in 1999 towards the end of the war with the aim to rehabilitate the North of the country. In an interview, the associate director stressed that one of the main reasons why it became a CSO was based on the fact that there were no other ways to officially obtain funds for their activities and initiatives.[89] This probably further explains why several CBOs gradually converted into the status of a CSO during or shortly after the war (for instance the CDHR, Centre for Democracy and Human Rights, is one out of many).

In short, not only did (and still do) these CSOs/CBOs provide all kinds of relief, humanitarian, and developmental aid, but some of them (individual activists and CSOs alike) also used their social capital and primordial networks (connections to rebels or armed forces) in a continuous mediation effort to resolve the conflict at the very local level.[90]

In addition, Ms. Francis Fortune described the wartime period as a key moment for CSOs and civil movements to arise. In her view, it was not the international community who initiated the creation of these CSOs but ordinary Sierra Leoneans themselves.[91] Even though funding allocations played an essential part, most projects and activities were initiated locally. At the same time, Fortune also noted that local CSOs saw themselves repeatedly excluded from essential peacebuilding decision-making processes at the macro level. Their participation and political (activist) function at peace negotiations at a nationwide scale was extremely restricted,

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[88] Interview held on 25.07.2012 in Bo.
[89] Interview held on 18.07.2012 in Freetown. GEKO's name originated from the fact that it initially received funds from German donors. Even though its sources of funding are now generated through different channels, it opted to maintain its name.
[90] This point was, in particular, stressed by Francis Fortune, previous (2006-2012) Africa Director at Search for Common Ground in Sierra Leone. Interview held on 11.07.2011 in Freetown.
[91] Interview held on 11.07.2011 in Freetown.

especially with the ICRSL as the only actor present during the Lomé talks. This clearly hampered the political agency (or function) of CSOs in the course of the several attempts to establish peace. To what degree exclusion impinged upon the political culture and voice of Sierra Leone's CSO landscape in the later stages of the peacebuilding and development process of the country will be the subject of debate in Chapters 6 and 7. For now, it is worth mentioning that the majority of rural CSOs expressed salient concern about a 'pseudo' inclusion of only a few selected, mainly Freetown based organisations in important decision-making processes and events after the war.

The mushrooming of Sierra Leone's CSO/CBO landscape in a time of crisis led to an interesting ancillary effect (or function): both the primordial and the civic public gradually intersected within the civil sphere. This is an interesting phenomenon that frequently continues to be overlooked, in particular when it comes to the study of civil society in sub-Saharan African fragile states. Whereas the above-mentioned functions, such as protecting civilians, conflict mediation, humanitarian and developmental assistance, service delivery or social cohesion are widely acknowledged as peacebuilding and development functions of civil society (see Section 3.6.6 of Chapter 3), the transformation of the conflict-affected (primordial) civil sphere through the emergence of a more formalised civic public merits further examination. Sections 3.3.4 – 3.6.6 (Chapter 3) highlighted that functional models usually focus on needs-based assessments for short- and long-term needs in the peacebuilding and development process of a country. In so doing, they usually fall short in elucidating how and why moral values or norms, which supposedly hold society together (or not), are socially engineered over time. This is an aspect which should not be dismissed in the case of Sierra Leone, as its primordial and hence also political culture was (and to an extent still is) based on the organisational logic of patronage (see Chapter 4). In other words, the intersection of social, political and economic relations and spheres shape the political culture of the society and the way it functions to this day. Chapter 6, and in much greater detail Chapter 7, delve into questions of how the emergence of a civic public intersected with the primordial public (and vice versa); but also how these new forms of state-society relations have affected Sierra Leone's political culture and voice since the end of the war in 2002.

Conclusion

From independence and throughout the period of the civil war, liaisons between civic groups and the government were either suppressed or co-opted by a corrupt regime. In many instances, the societal logic of neo-patrimonial power hierarchies also infiltrated the civic public (e.g. Sierra Leone's Labour Union during Stevens' rule). Nonetheless, Sierra Leone experienced notable moments of democratic openings (such as the student protests in 1977 and 1991 or the public demonstrations in 2000), stemming from a politically active and mainly Freetown-based civil sphere. Roughly ten years after Stevens declared Sierra Leone a one-party state in 1978, student activists again challenged local politics, state behaviour and societal structures marked by a self-enriching gerontocracy. They called for a full return to multiparty rule, and in some cases, even for a revolution. As Mitton (2013, p. 327) accurately observes: "It was within this environment that the RUF launched its 1991 invasion, with leader Foday Sankoh vowing to overthrow the APC regime of Joseph Momoh". Put another way, better health care, access to education, good governance, containment of corruption – all of these issues were raised by ordinary citizens, student groups, civil society groups, and to an extent also by the rebels. The civil sphere as a whole (encompassing both its *evil* and *good* components) strove for social justice, albeit expressed through extremely divergent, and in the case of the RUF, also incomprehensibly horrific, actions. In the course of an emerging war-economy not all of the rebels and *sobels* favoured an end to the war, contrary to the broader public. The latter stepped up in various formations and efforts to call out for peace. At a collective level, thousands of civilians gathered to demonstrate for peace and conflict resolution. Locally, many single individuals played crucial roles in providing relief and promoting peace and mediating between warring parties in their respective communities. In a 2006 CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for the Republic of Sierra Leone, the authors hold (p. 21)[92]:

> The 1990s was therefore, characterised by a resurgence of a vibrant civil society in Sierra Leone whose interest was ensuring a transition towards democracy. This renaissance pointed to the fact that despite attempts on the part of certain regimes in Sierra Leone to oppress its progressive development, they did not succeed. It needs to be mentioned that the civil society was not completely voiceless on the anti-democratic policies pursued by previous administrations in Sierra Leone. However, it lacked coordination, independence, credibility and neutrality and its activities did not affect significantly, the socio-economic

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[92] The report and analysis was conducted by the Sierra Leonean CSO Campaign for Good Governance in collaboration with Christian Aid.

and political spheres of the country, until comparatively recently. Philosophically however, one could argue also that the various activities of civil society since the mid-sixties laid the basis for the nineties.

Regardless of Sierra Leone's vibrant and politically active civil sphere before and during the war, only a few selected CSOs were actually able to observe the peace negotiations at a national level. In other words, despite civil activism, those groups saw themselves repeatedly excluded from important decision-making processes and peace negotiations at the national level.

To conclude, Sierra Leone's rapidly growing civil society landscape emerged under the pressures of a civil war. In time of crisis, there was the sheer need for civilians to respond to the many humanitarian and developmental needs themselves. Likewise, the country's political culture was constantly confronted by the gradual intersection of both the primordial public and civic public which colonialism had distorted. These events still affect Sierra Leone's present-day civil sphere. Several interviewees emphasised that ethnicisation of politics, as well as tribalism in Sierra Leone's present political landscape, was never as prevalent as it is today.[93] Similarly, Francis Fortune, argues that since the end of the war, "Sierra Leoneans are now finally working from being subjects to becoming citizens", - especially among the younger generation. On a more optimistic note, Mitton's research finds that (2013, p. 328) "Although the political system remains troubled by problems of corruption and exclusionary patronage, it is nevertheless far better suited to steering youths away from violence that the pre-war one-party state that stifled dissent." Yet, in acknowledging that Sierra Leone's society is deeply entrenched in the intersections of a primordial and a civic public, one of the essential crunch questions seems to be whether Sierra Leone will be able to move beyond, or at least in conjunction with, the legacies of colonial rule. According to SLANGO[94]:

> Sierra Leone needs to find now its own way of democracy. Each democratic country found a balance of equation – and so needs Sierra Leone.

Such a democratic equation may come at compromise, however. Chapter 6 will explore in detail why the formalised, politically active and organised civil sphere and

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[93] In particular, interviewees Nos. 40 and 62.
[94] Interview held on 5 July 2011, in Freetown.

civil society landscape that developed during the war, ultimately lost its active, independent and "liberal" flavour later on.

Chapter Six

Sierra Leone's Civil Society *Actors* and *Functions* during the Peacebuilding and Development Process

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"Now that Sierra Leone has resolved the conflict we all have to ask ourselves: What
comes after the peace?"
Ms. Gladys Gbappy Brima
Founder and co-ordinator of the Women's Partnership for Justice and Peace (WPJP)

Chapter 5 provided an overview of how Sierra Leone's civil sphere became more formalised and organised throughout the conflict. Both the mushrooming of more visible and recognised civil society actors but also various public protests and marches suggest that the collective wish to establish peace intersected with primordial societal features such as tribalism, regionalism as well as ethnical, political or neo-patrimonial loyalism. Ordinary civilians formed associations with the aim of helping the most vulnerable but also to fight for an end of the civil war. Especially in the later stages of the conflict, local civil initiatives surfaced as noticeable actors next to crumbling state structures. Within a few years, informal and often loose grassroots movements turned into registered and formal organisations. Some of them are still internationally recognised and well-funded (e.g. CSO Nos. 1, 3, 7, 12, 19 or 32) while others are continuously struggling to exist (CSO and CBO Nos. 15, 16, 25, 29, 43, 45). In addition, many informal civic support systems, associations, or clubs emerged simply out of necessity. Sierra Leonean civil society is characterised by a very young population and lively youth club culture. On the whole, Sierra Leoneans have a longstanding tradition of associating as a form of social interaction in everyday life. This is, in particular, manifested in the century-long existence of secret societies, as well as the vast number of clubs, sodalities and, later, self-help groups as well as formally registered CSOs, CBOs, and various types of associations.

When tracing the evolvement of Sierra Leone's civil sphere over the past ten years, it is important to acknowledge that primarily, it was not the international

community that fuelled civic activism during and shortly after the war. If anything, ordinary people proactively initiated several activities on the ground to assist their fellow citizens in adversity, to warn about human rights abuses and to negotiate or campaign for peace. Over time, increased funding commitments spurred many civic actors to formally register as CSOs thereby stimulating the creation of a specific civil society landscape as we encounter it today in Sierra Leone. In addition, many INGOs took local civil society actors under their wing and international aid agencies engaged in efforts to build and strengthen CSOs' capacities. But despite good intentions the growing attention towards Sierra Leone's civil sphere created a salient paradox: although current efforts support and strive for the (re-)creation of an active, vibrant – 'liberal' – citizenry, that "understands their roles and responsibilities, and exercise their rights" (PBF/SLE/A-6), international donor support has not empowered civil society actors in such a liberal way. That is, recalling what was set out Chapter 2, to understand civil society as *independent from the state, political, private, and economic spheres but in close interaction with them; a domain of social life in which public opinion can be formed*. Instead, Chapter 6 will explore how Sierra Leone's vibrant and active civil society landscape during and shortly after the war appears to be currently largely characterised by tribalism, regionalism, ethnicism and political party loyalism, if not co-optation. In the course of two field research stays in 2011 and 2012, many interviewees described Sierra Leone's civil society as being no longer able to engage independently with and influence state politics. In addition, to a large extent civil society appears to be neutralised to serve and complement a national developmental agenda supported and co-steered by the international community. This is a surprising development in many ways, considering the vibrancy of the civil sphere during and shortly after the war. It is thus worth asking: what has happened to Sierra Leone's civil society since the end of the conflict and should international peacebuilding and development assistance really bear all the blame?

In the quest to find some answers, Chapter 6 identifies and elaborates on three main phenomena that affect civil society's political agency and voice. The first one is the instrumentalisation of civil society outlined in Chapter 3. Gradually, civil society emerged as an *actor* that fulfils *functions* the state's institutions are too weak to, or incapable of, providing. In other words, past and ongoing peacebuilding, democratisation and development efforts encourage civil society actors to complement

the country's broader developmental agenda instead of actively influencing and thematically shaping it (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2.5; Chapter 3, Sections 3.1 and 3.2). Second, Sierra Leone's post-conflict phase experienced a noticeable return towards a political culture in which both the civic and the primordial publics intersect. Chapter 4 elaborated on the historical context of how and why colonial administration effectively created two nations in one land. The civil sphere in Sierra Leone is definitely different today than it was during or shortly after the war. More precisely, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3), the societal dynamics of Sierra Leone's civil sphere cannot be understood and analysed without giving firm consideration to a number of factors and dynamics: the slave trade and colonial legacy; urban versus rural areas; local versus elite ownership; influence and support of IOs and INGOs; neo-patrimonial networks and chiefdom systems; ethnic and religious organisations and religious leaders; gender relations and equality; cultural identities; and lastly life circumstances (e.g. living conditions, health, nutrition, education). Third, in the wake of these entanglements civil society in Sierra Leone currently appears to be "toothless", "dormant" or "inactive" – phrases repeatedly used by interviewees. In short, civil society in Sierra Leone struggles with fragmentation, a top-down mentality among CSOs themselves and regionalism expressed in a salient urban – rural divide.

The first section of Chapter 6 provides a short background on the most crucial developments during the country's peacebuilding and development phase and the role as well as involvement of civil society therein. Section 6.2 will then continue to flesh out the characteristics of civil society as we encounter them in Sierra Leone today. Particular attention will be paid to voices from the civil sphere, how Sierra Leoneans perceive their civil sphere themselves. This section further elaborates on the interplay between local ownership and the influence of IOs and INGOs as well as why civil society is at a potential and serious risk of being depoliticised. Lastly, the analytical framework presented in Chapter 3 will be applied once more to critically assess the empirical data presented in the following pages.

6.1. Background: Civil society during Sierra Leone's peacebuilding and development phase (2002 – 2013)

When the war in Sierra Leone came to an end, the general life expectancy was only thirty-nine years. About 70 percent of all schools had been destroyed in the

fighting, and only eighty out of five hundred health centres were functioning to some extent. The country was (and still is) ranked near the bottom of the HDI, the adult literacy rate was less than 25 percent, and child mortality rates were shockingly high (Smillie 2009, p. 18). "Roads are slowly rebuilt but many people don't have the money to use them", said a Sierra Leonean UN professional in an informal conversation in 2012. He supports more than 10 people with his average managerial salary (based on local not international payment standards). Informal support systems based on the earnings of only one member of a big family or clan are fairly standard.

Throughout the 1990s, Sierra Leone was often labelled as a "forgotten emergency" by international aid agencies and donor communities - with good reason. The country has a historical record of comparatively low donor interest (especially during the conflict) and has been an 'aid orphan' for decades (Smillie 2009, p. 15–28). For example, Smillie's assessment of the 2005 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report on Fragile States reveals that Japan, Spain, Germany, and Canada collectively spent USD 195 million in Senegal and only USD 15 million in Sierra Leone (2009, p. 24). In the years following the peace process, funding commitments did not increase dramatically. Looking at the latest "OECD Sierra Leone Report on International Engagement in Fragile States (2011)", Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Sierra Leone in 2009 totalled USD 437 million. It averaged 33.5 percent of the Gross National Income (GNI) in 2007, falling to 19.1 percent in 2008 (due to the financial crisis), and rising slightly to 23.0 per cent in 2009. The OECD further states that a consultative group meeting in late 2009, led by the World Bank (WB) and the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL), resulted in pledges that amounted to a stable continuum of the current levels of funding of USD 300 million per annum (OECD p. 21–22). Also, the latest report of the final evaluation of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) in 2011 (p. 23), found that there is a "substantial funding shortfall in Sierra Leone", if agreed peacebuilding efforts are to be sustained over the next few years.

With respect to civil society, finding information on funds allocated directly to local CSOs during Sierra Leone's peacebuilding and development phase is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. While no official figures are available from donors' reports such as the OECD, UNDP or World Bank, according to M'Cormack-Hale (2013, p

141-142), in 2006 CSOs together with INGOs received, in total, 26 percent of non-ODA and ODA assistance to carry out activities in Sierra Leone. In the case of DfID there is more transparency. In 2005 the UK set up a flagship project called ENCISS (Enhancing the Interface between Civil Society and the State to improve Poor People's Life). During its first five years of its existence (2005 - 2010), it cost the British government almost £8.5 million with a commitment for a further £4.5 million between 2011 and 2013 (Cubitt 2013, p.101). In June 2013, the head of DfID announced an extension of the project for a fourth year.[95] Cubitt's research also reveals (ibid.):

> Locals argued that the initiative was 'never evaluated by civil society as a need' nor the conceptual framework shared with them. People felt the agenda was 'imposed' and this created strong resistance. The animosity may have been influenced by the government's successful manipulation of the project which was originally designed to strengthen just the demand side of governance not the supply side. In the outcome, ENCISS failed to produce an effective strategy for state/society engagement.

She continues to describe ENCISS procedures as a "long, costly and poorly accountable chain" and locals felt that the funding was channelled through overwhelming bureaucratic structures, wiping out a large proportion of the budget promised for civil society building activities (p. 103). At the time this chapter was written, no other recent data was available in order to provide a clearer picture on the amounts of funding earmarked for, or directly allocated to, local CSOs in the past ten years - either by the international community, bilaterally, through INGOs or altogether. That said, the above-mentioned 26 percent allocated in 2006 seems to be a considerable share of the cake. At the same time, some interviewees (e.g. CSO Nos. 6, 8, 24, and 46) stated that access to funding was much easier in the years shortly after the war than now. CSOs felt that funding for civil society activities and actors had been declining for the past five years or so. In addition, once international donor support dwindles, many local CSOs struggle to find alternative ways of generating funds and financial independence. In some instances CSOs were also asked a sub-question:[96] whether they had already an alternative strategy ("plan B") to generate funds after donors withdraw? Only one organisation (No. 32) presented a concrete,

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[95]   See: https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/head-of-dfid-sierra-leone-speaks-at-national-civil-society-forum, last accessed 05.05.2014.
[96] Not listed in Appendix 2.

and by now successfully implemented scheme.[97] In the main, the majority of all interviewed CSOs stressed the lack of both capacity and of opportunities to find new or additional sources of incomes. CSO No. 29 further noted "the majority of people who run or work for CSOs have side jobs so that they can survive".[98]

The above-listed figures on shortages of funds and burdensome bureaucratic procedures are not intended to cast Sierra Leone's peacebuilding and development process in a negative light. On the contrary, since the end of the civil war the country has actually experienced quite positive achievements which also affected the civil sphere. According to the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), Sierra Leone's post-conflict economic performance has been strong. "Real Gross Domestic Product is projected to expand by a staggering 50 percent in 2012, driven by a jump in iron ore production, but even without that the economy is projected to grow by 6 percent per annum on average during 2012-2014."[99] In addition, Sierra Leone has made important gains in the strengthening of its post-conflict democracy and progress towards self-sufficient administration of its electoral system and conducted three general elections in 2002, 2007 and 2012 in addition to Local Council elections in 2008 and a number of by-elections (UNDP, 2014)[100]. However, despite peaceful elections and economic growth, looking at the country's poverty profile as a whole, the results for the broader population are rather mixed. The GoSL's third Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP-III) states (2013, p. 12)[101]:

> The decline in poverty was most pronounced in the urban areas outside Freetown, with a reduction from 70.9% in 2003 to 39.5% in 2011. Poverty in Freetown increased from 13.6% to 20.7% in 2011. Despite the increase in poverty in Freetown, urban poverty as a whole decreased from 46.9% in 2003 to 31.2% in 2011. Rural poverty also declined from 78.7% to 66.1% but remained high relative to urban poverty over the same period. Hence, poverty remains pervasive in rural areas.

Section 4.1 in Chapter 4 provided additional details on the country's current developmental situation, in particular with regards to Sierra Leone's human development indicators. It is worth repeating though, that currently 70 percent of

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[97] CSO No. 32 generates an income through a locally run and owned restaurant as well as selling different types of goods manufactured by trained youth and other beneficiaries of their projects.
[98] Interview held 31.07.2012 in Freetown.
[99] See: http://www.sl.undp.org/content/sierraleone/en/home/countryinfo/, last visit 04.03.2014.
[100] Ibid.
[101] See: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Agenda%204%20Prosperity.pdf#page=3&zoom=auto,0,819, last visit 04.03.2014.

youth are unemployed or underemployed. "People continue to live by the day", it was recurrently stated by several CSOs, CBOs and individuals during interviews and informal conversations.

Although the brutal civil war in Sierra Leone was formally declared over on 18 January 2002, post-conflict reconstruction plans were already developed long before that time. Despite the failures of the Lomé Peace talks (in 1999), the international community, in conjunction with the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL), orchestrated the creation of several instruments to bolster the peacebuilding process of the country. Chapter 5 provided more detailed information on the rather limited involvement of civil society. The Lomé Peace Agreement, even if disregarded by the RUF, set the groundwork for the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 2002. Furthermore, and upon request of the GoSL, the UNSC's Resolution 1315 commenced negotiations to create a Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) in August 2000. The SCSL differed in two respects from other ad hoc tribunals and courts. Firstly, it was not a mechanism imposed upon the Sierra Leonean government by the international community. Secondly, its jurisdiction embraced both international criminal law and crimes under Sierra Leonean law (Pham 2006, p. 158). The TRC, as well as the SCSL, started their work in July 2002, just shortly after the first post-war presidential and parliamentary elections were held on 14 May 2002. The SLPP overwhelmingly won the elections, and its leader Ahmed Tejan Kabbah was re-elected president. Two years later, in 2004, the national DDR (disarmament, demobilisation, and rehabilitation) process was concluded.[102] According to CSO No. 12, civil society was not really involved in setting up essential developments that guided and shaped the peacebuilding process. "Many institutions which were created in conjunction with the international community are detached from the locals, such as the SCSL or the TRC. The majority of people, also the educated ones are not even aware of their [the SCSL and TRC's] concrete work areas" (CSO No. 12).

In 2005, the UNAMSIL officially ended its work, and the focus of the UN changed rapidly from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and development. UNAMSIL

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[102] It encompassed a total of 72,490 combatants, demobilised 71,043 people, offered 63,545 the opportunity to take part in reintegration programmes, and took care of 6,845 child soldiers (Solomon and Ginifer 2008, p. 2).

was succeeded by the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) - established by the UNSC to assist the government in further consolidating peace and build on the previous work accomplished by the peacekeeping mission. UNIOSIL terminated its mission in December 2006, and in 2007, Sierra Leone became (next to Burundi) one of the first two pilot countries of the then newly created United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).[103] The first "Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework" was presented in December 2007 at one of the PBC's "country-specific meetings". The framework serves as a basis document for the PBC's work and efforts in the country. With respect to civil society involvement, the PBC's website states[104]:

> Civil society may engage with the PBC and its related activities in a variety of ways. At UN headquarters, civil society organizations are encouraged to attend meetings of the Commission and may informally contribute to the PBC's work by providing written submissions to the PBC members and the Peacebuilding Support Office. Civil society organizations may also participate in certain meetings of the PBC country-specific configurations, often called NGO informal briefings. In countries receiving advice from the Commission, national and local civil society organizations are encouraged to engage in national consultations on the peacebuilding frameworks. Civil society representatives may also periodically participate in meetings of the PBC and serve as members of the Joint Steering Committees, which oversees the Peacebuilding Fund.

In practice, throughout the PBC's engagement with Sierra Leone, local civil society representation and involvement was extremely weak at UN HQ level.[105] First, the PBC's Sierra Leone organisational committee, as well as its country-specific configuration, do not officially include local civil society representatives.[106] Instead, if

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[103] The PBC was established (upon the request of UN member states) to assist post-conflict countries in transitioning from war to peace and to move towards sustainable development. Its role within the UN family became: "(1) bringing together all of the relevant actors, including international donors, the international financial intuitions, national governments, troop contributing countries; (2) marshalling resources and (3) advising on and proposing integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery where appropriate, highlighting any gaps that threaten to undermine peace". See PBC website at: http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/, last visit 02.03.2014.

[104] See: http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/structuremember.shtml, last visit 06.03.2014.

[105] This is based on the author's professional work experience for the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (UNPBSO) from 2007-2010 as a consultant and later Associate Peacebuilding Programme Officer.

[106] The PBC's country-specific configurations consist of the members of the organisational committee (that is: seven members elected by the General Assembly; seven members selected by the Security Council, seven members elected by the Economic and Social Council, five top providers of military personnel and civilian police to United Nations missions, five of the top providers of assessed contributions to United Nations budgets and of voluntary contributions to the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, including a standing peacebuilding fund), as well as the country under consideration, countries in the region engaged in the post-conflict process and other countries that are involved in relief efforts and/or political dialogue, as well as relevant regional and sub-regional organisations; the major financial, troop and civilian police contributors involved in the recovery effort;

CSOs would like to actively partake in the process, they have to follow "Provisional Guidelines for the participation of civil society in meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission, submitted by the Chairperson on the basis of informal consultations" (see: PBC/1/OC/12). Putting aside that most local civil society actors in Sierra Leone do not have regular access to the internet, the highly technical language of the document may pose an additional challenge as well. This leads to the second point, namely, the majority of local CSOs in Sierra Leone not only lack the capacity and time but also diplomatic skills, influence and knowledge to proactively initiate dialogue and advocate for their concerns at UN HQ level. As a result, local civil society actors are implicitly and explicitly, depoliticised at the international level in that their political influence, agency and voice is severely challenged by the above-outlined structural barriers.

Sierra Leone became not only one of the first two countries on the agenda of the PBC, but also of its funding arm, the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), which was created to fill critical funding gaps in the early stages of recovery from conflict. The PBF's Joint Steering Committee (JSC) comprises, among others, two local CSOs (alongside representatives of the government and international community). However, in several interviews, the majority of CSOs neither believed that their voice was represented through the PBF's JSC nor that the money was efficiently spent. Reasons can be found in the top-down mentality of UN agencies in Sierra Leone but also in the lack of co-ordination and communication among civil society actors themselves (CSOs and CBOs, but also any other form of association or club) at the local level. Several CSOs described the Sierra Leonean landscape as "fragmented" and badly coordinated, despite the existence of the umbrella organisation SLANGO (Sierra Leone's Association for Non-Governmental Organisations). The exact same observation was also made in 2006 in the scope of a CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for the Republic of Sierra Leone (2006). Conducted by the Sierra Leone CSO Campaign for Good Governance (CCG) in collaboration with Christian Aid, the study identifies "poor communication network between CSOs" as one of the main weaknesses in Sierra Leone's civil society

the senior United Nations representative in the field and other relevant United Nations representatives, such regional and international financial institutions as may be relevant. More information can be obtained from: http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/structuremember.shtml, last visit 06.03.2014.

landscape. They further specify "CSOs have poor communication between themselves. Some are even reluctant to share information on their respective programmes and activities. This lack of communication has a negative impact on the effectiveness of CSOs" (p. 82-83).[107] Partially, one finds an explanation in the fact that many CSOs have to compete for funds from external donors. Additionally, the PBF's JSC also mirrors a certain top-down mentality among local CSOs themselves. The participating CSOs who joined the bargaining table are longstanding, capacitated, well-funded and run by educated elites. As of March 2014, the PBF allocated USD 50.12 million (approved budget, real-time) in total through its two facilities (the PRF Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility and the IRF Immediate Response Facility), with one project (in the total amount of USD 140,000)[108] specifically targeting the capacity building of CSOs to evaluate and monitor PBF projects implemented by civil society actors on the ground.

Only a few months after the PBC and the PBF started to engage in the peacebuilding process of the country, the UNSC (United Nations Security Council) established the United Nations Peacebuilding Mission in Sierra Leone, known as UNIPSIL.[109] In the course of several interviews, some Freetown-based CSOs highlighted the difficulty of collaborating with UNIPSIL, in particular during the early stages of the peacebuilding process. As characterised by CSO No. 13:

> UNIPSIL excluded CSOs from the process. When CSOs approached them and asked for more transparency, the mission told them that their strategy was secret. The entire process was male-dominated anyway. UNIPSIL collaborated a lot with political parties — in the end, this is their way of double standard setting. Likewise, DfID cut off many local CSOs

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[107] The report can be downloaded at: http://www.civicus.org/new/media/CSI_SierraLeone_Country_Report.pdf, last visit 11.03.2014.

[108] More information can be obtained at: http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00071612, last visit 04.03.2014.

[109] The missions mandate involved both political and development activities, such as

Providing political support to national and local efforts for identifying and resolving tension and threats of potential conflict, whatever the source;

Monitoring and promoting human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law; including efforts to counter transnational organised crime and drug trafficking;

Consolidating good governance reforms, with a special focus on anti-corruption instruments such as the Anti-Corruption Commission;

Supporting decentralisation, reviewing the 1991 Constitution and the enactment of relevant legislation.

Closely coordinating with and supporting the work of the Peacebuilding Commission as well as the implementation of the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework and projects supported through the Peacebuilding Fund;

See: http://unipsil.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=9613&language=en-US, last visit 02.03.2014.

from direct funding. It was certainly a missed opportunity for using the core capacity of local CSOs. Hence, there are many structural but also individual barriers for local CSOs.

In its very early stages, the World Bank's (WB) and International Monetary Fund's (IMF) engagement in assisting the government in drafting three consecutive Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) seemed to be more inclusive. The first PRSP, known as "Sierra Leone Vision 2025", covering the period of 2005 - 2007 was designed to address the restoration of national security, good governance, economic revitalisation, and provision of basic goods to the most vulnerable groups.[110] The process for the preparation also included participatory poverty assessments (PPA) and civic engagement, the latter was led by two CSOs. PPAs were carried out in 42 communities reaching out to all districts and a total number of 8,591 community members. According to the PRSP-I the objectives were to (p. 15):

> a) Create awareness of the PRSP process and contribute to understanding of the underlying principles.
> b) Compliment ongoing initiatives through the creation of a communication environment
> c) Provide information on poverty related issues and appropriate strategies for addressing them from the perspective of the poor and CSOs, and
> d) Monitor the process of formulation, implementation and recommend corrective actions.

One of the participating CSOs, the Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) organised sensitisation workshops on the PRSP in all 14 administrative districts. The sensitisation covered over 1,500 participants from a broad spectrum of civil society and the citizenry, including youths, women, disabled persons, government officials, traditional and religious leaders, ex-combatants, war victims, students, etc. (IMF 2005, p. 15). The main objective of these sensitisation programmes was to spur the emergence of voluntary regional and district civil society groups known as PRSP Task Teams (ibid.). All the same, the process included planning workshops at national and local levels to sensitise stakeholders.

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[110] Prior to the PRSP-I, a first interim PRSP was already put in place in 2001. In 2003, the WB assisted the government with financial assistance in the total amount of USD 105 million, including USD 40 million in the form of grants. The required budget for the PRSP-I was USD 1.62 billion. Yet, total donor disbursements for the period of the PRSP-I amounted only to USD 975 million, hence creating a funding gap of USD 645 million. Furthermore, in 2006, Sierra Leone reached the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) completion point and became eligible for substantial debt relief (Davis 2010, p. 118). More information can be found at: https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr05191.pdf, last visit 04.03.2014, as well as in the 'Agenda for Change' document, p 1-38.

Although none of the CSOs interviewed made a particular mention of the WB and IMF's inclusive strategy, the PPAs nonetheless illustrate how the PRSP-I sought to kill two birds with one stone. On the one hand, the process aimed to give a voice to the people most affected while encouraging civil society actors to complement but also promote a national agenda towards peace and development at the very communal level. On the other hand, it also sought to strengthen those civil society actors, based on a liberal model, through the creation of an environment of communication between an independent society and the state.

Shortly after the 2007 elections, the new APC-ruled government under President Ernest Bai Koroma presented the second PRSP-II, called "An Agenda for Change".[111] Remarkably, information about civil society involvement in the preparatory process or about their perspectives and voice is less transparent. The final document simply reads "The institutional mechanism for developing the Second PRSP included central and local government, civil society groups, development partners, parliamentarians and national consultants" (p. 25). Thus, it leaves it unclear as to whether PPAs and sensitisation programmes also continued in the second stage.

Sierra Leone's present and third PRSP, covering the period of 2013-2018, clearly sets the tone for a pure developmental agenda and moves beyond the country's peacebuilding phase. Its vision is to become a middle-income country with 80 percent above the poverty line by 2035 (GoSL PRSP-III, 2013, p. xiii). Prior to the launch of the PRSP-III, President Ernest Bai Koroma initiated the "Sierra Leone Conference on Development and Transformation" (SLCDT), which took place in Freetown from January 30 through February 1, 2012. During the country's fiftieth independence anniversary, the President had announced that Sierra Leoneans should come together "to chart a path to transform the country to middle-income status in the next twenty-five years and a donor country status in fifty years" (Conference Report Volume 1 2012, p. 9). About 450 officials and experts gathered to discuss the future and developmental issues of the country. The conference was steered by a committee composed of the president himself, the chief of staff, and representatives of all

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[111] It was estimated that Sierra Leone would require almost USD 2 billion for implementation of PRSP-II. At the time this chapter was written, no official figures with regards to current funding gaps were available.

recognised political parties, statutory institutions, CSOs, and professional associations. In order to ensure that the views of ordinary Sierra Leoneans were also reflected in the conference programme and outcome, the event was preceded by nationwide activities, such as focus group discussions, essay competitions, and TV/radio phone-in and discussion programs, as well as online platforms. Despite this broad outreach, critics interjected that the event was yet another political tool to help promote Ernest Bai Koroma's and the APC's campaign before the upcoming elections in November 2012. Above all, the required funds for the conference (in the total amount of roughly USD 192,000[112]) were covered by the government.

After the SLCDT's outcome documents were presented to the parliament, the president set up a committee to coordinate the drafting and development of the Agenda for Prosperity. As for civil society involvement, the final document states (GoSL PRSP-III, p. 10):

> Although CSOs were represented in the Pillar Working Groups and they usually participate in regional and national consultations, CSOs were consulted as a special focus group and given the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the process of finalizing the document. To this effect, a half-day consultative workshop was conducted with a representative group of CSOs and their consolidated comments and recommendations have been reflected in the document.

Reading through the PRSP-III it is not apparent what kind of civil society recommendations or contributions fed precisely into the final version. More generally, during interviews CSOs had different views on the SLCDT and the way in which civil society was enabled to contribute and influence the agenda. Whereas some Freetown-based CSOs were highly satisfied with the overall outreach and involvement, the majority of CSOs interviewed in the rural areas expressed discontent about the process. In some instances interviewees in the rural areas were not even aware of the SLCDT and what purpose it served. Two interview partners, CSO No. 19 and No. 29, mentioned that it was up to the government to decide which CSOs were invited to participate. A few Freetown-based organisations pointed to the fact that some CSOs also used the SLCDT as an occasion to enter political "corridors of power". For instance, the director of a very active women's organisation (CSO No. 5), interviewed in 2011, switched sides and became a political actor in 2012. CSO No. 19, who

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[112] In Le 832,241,821 (see Conference Report Volume II, Annex 1) – conversion rate as at 11.03.2014.

participated as one of the key civil society actors in PRSP-I, further noted that representation was extremely low as only one CSO was invited per thematic sector, which was found not to be an adequately suited bottom-up approach to really have an impact. Even though the first PRSP clearly made an effort via PPAs to reach out to the rural areas and give a voice to the poor and most disadvantaged, PRSP-III seemed to be less inclusive. There is a clear marginalisation of rural based CSOs and the broader citizenry, which somehow indicates that little by little the legacies of colonial rule are once again shimmering through.

Although civil society involvement was overwhelmingly described as weak, the SLCDT's main focus on developmental related areas seemed to be adequately timed. During both field research stays, CSOs, CBOs, youth groups and several other interviewees (see full list in Appendix 1) were asked if they believe that peace is established and the country has already reached a pure developmental stage. Their answers are depicted in Chart 1, encompassing in total 132 responses across the country, gender and classes. Whereas

Chart 1: From Peacebuilding towards Devleopment (local perceptions from 2011 and 2012)

- Peace is still fragile
- In-between PB and Development stage
- Development stage

24 % · 18 % · 58 %
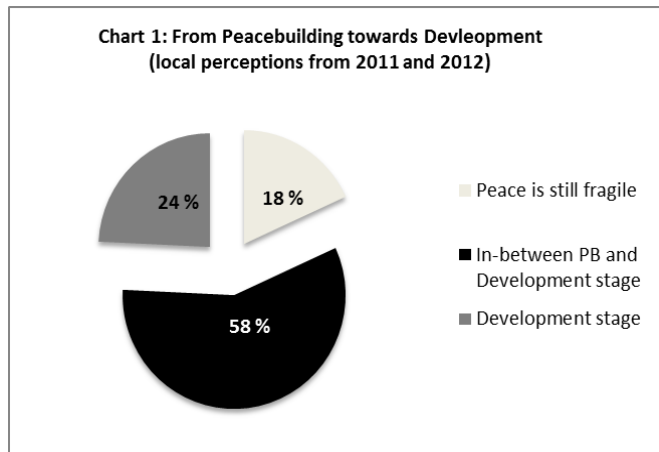
views may have changed in the course of the past two years, between 2011 and 2012, for the majority (58 percent), the country was still in an in-between stage. Some raised concerns about the November 2012 elections and the elections in 2017, describing them as a litmus test for the peace process of Sierra Leone. A few expressed concern about past gang fights in Freetown or occasional, yet brutal, Forah Bay College demonstrations as a potential threat. Others again counter-argued that violent youth is a global problem, not limited to Sierra Leone. Of the 18 percent who perceived the situation in the country as still fragile, the main reasons were overwhelmingly located in concerns related to youth unemployment.

Even though Chart 1 represents only a very small segment of the Sierra Leone population, it captures the current spirit of optimism in the country manifested in the desire to leave the conflict-shattered past behind and hope for a better future. In a public opinion poll conducted by the Freetown-based Centre for Development and Security Analysis (CEDSA) in 2009[113], the majority felt that their living conditions will improve in the course of the next five years. While several interviewees noticeably emphasised improvements in areas concerned with infrastructure development (electricity or road construction) most of them expressed concern about slow advances with regards to human development, in particular education.

In the main, Sierra Leone's transition from conflict to peace and development is frequently portrayed as a shining and much praised example of post-conflict recovery supported, and largely led, by the international community.[114] Following three consecutive peaceful elections (2002, 2007, 2012), Sierra Leone was recently also classified as a "Low Income State" and is no longer considered a "Fragile State" by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In March 2013, the UNSC extended UNIPSIL's mandate for the last time until 31 March 2014 when the mission transferred all its responsibilities to the Sierra Leone UN Country Team (UNCT).[115] The latter has taken over UNIPSIL's remaining peacebuilding efforts (e.g.: strengthening of democratic and human rights institutions or security sector reform). Shortly before UNIPSIL's departure, the SCSL also officially finished its work on 31 December 2013. In early March 2014, the UN officially launched a "new phase of support in Sierra Leone with the transitioning of its political mission to a more development-focused UN presence".[116] For UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, "Sierra Leone represents one of the world's most successful cases of post-conflict recovery,

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[113] Featured in the work of Simpson (2010 p. 161-171). CEDSA's public opinion poll interviewed college students in 2008 and adults in Freetown, Bo, Kenema, and Makeni in 2009.
[114] See for instance: UN News Centre (2014a): "Sierra Leone is a success story built on steady progress, Security Council told", 26.03.2014, see: http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47437#.U0Pz-VfpeQE, last visit 08.04.2014.
[115] See: http://unipsil.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=jh9sCOJResY%3d&tabid=9611&language=en-US, last visit 02.03.2014.
[116] UN News Centre (2014a), 'Closing political office in Sierra Leone, UN shifts focus to long-term development', See: http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47278&Cr=sierra+leone&Cr1&keepThis=true&TB_iframe=true&height=650&width=850&caption=UN+News+Centre+-+Top+Stories#.Ux7m4pyluQE, last visit 11.03.2014.

peacekeeping and peacebuilding".[117] The UN's engagement in the country will be now predominantly based on its Development Assistant Framework (UNDAF). Correspondingly, the GoSL priorities outlined in the PRSP-III (2013-2018) include: diversified economic growth, managing natural resources, accelerating human development, international competitiveness, labour and employment, social protection, governance and public sector reform, gender and women's empowerment.

All of these positive achievements notwithstanding, experts from academic and practitioners' circles still find that the country's smooth transition from peacebuilding towards development should be taken with a grain of salt. In a roundtable discussion on the future of Sierra Leone, held at the London School of Economics and Political Science in December 2013, invited speakers characterised the country's peacebuilding and development track record as largely positive yet cautioned against a too enthusiastic and monolithic assessment.[118] Among others, panellists arrived at the conclusion that the degree of capacity varies tremendously across government departments thereby impeding the ability to function effectively. It was widely acknowledged, however, that significant strides have been made in terms of achieving civil and political liberties. For instance, Sierra Leone expert Lisa Denney, from the ODI (Overseas Development Institute), pointed to some important improvements in the security sector and citizens' willingness to use institutions such as the Sierra Leone Police (SLP). Then again, while conducting field research in Sierra Leone, in an interview with CSO No. 16, it was mentioned that this newly established trust is not yet build on firm ground and that the SLP needs to be still far more professional and disciplined. Based on the director's own experience with projects involving the SLP,

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[117] Ibid.

[118] The event was organised by Simone Datzberger, Viviane Dittrich and Luisa Enria and took place on 6 December 2013 at the LSE. The roundtable brought together academics, researchers and practitioners to address and critically assess the challenges as well as emerging opportunities in the ongoing peace-building and development process of the country. The former Chairman of Sierra Leone Diaspora Network (SLDN) UK, Ade Daramy, chaired the roundtable discussion, which consisted of experts ranging from various disciplines and professional backgrounds: Sneha Baljekar (Postgraduate Adult Nursing Student, Sierra Leone Student Partnership representative, King's College London), Nana Busia Jr. (Former Senior Advisor on International Human Rights Law & Head of Access Justice Programmes, U.N. Sierra Leone), Lisa Denney (Research Officer, Overseas Development Institute), David Harris (Lecturer in African Studies, University of Bradford), Francis Ben Kaifala Esq (Barrister and Solicitor, Partner at Wright & Co) and Alexandra Malet (Postgraduate Adult Nursing Student, Sierra Leone Student Partnership representative, King's College London). A short article about the event can be accessed at:
http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2014/02/14/from-peace-building-towards-development-opportunities-and-challenges-for-sierra-leones-future/, last visit 06.03.2014.

CSO No. 16 made reference to ongoing cases of impunity from prosecution (as did also panellists at the LSE roundtable event), mainly as a result of tribalism or bribery - the latter predominantly occurring because of low salaries. Similarly, the former Senior Advisor on International Human Rights Law & Head of Access Justice Programmes, UN Sierra Leone, Nana Busia, described the interface between state and civil society as weak; a societal situation that he felt arose as a long-standing outcome of state formation in the country. His remarks subtly hint at the legacies of colonial and post-colonial rule. They not only match well with the historical and analytical background discussion of Chapters 4 and 5 of the thesis at hand but also reconfirm one general closing observation among participants, that is: presently, "Sierra Leone lacks an activist civil society". By and large, civil society seems to be still at the periphery of policy-making, with only a few exceptions to the rule. Although deliberately interposed as an overstatement, Sierra Leone-born lawyer, Francis Ben Kaifala Esq even called for a civil revolution taking on the form of impartial civil engagement at the political level, though not, of course, by means of violence.

6.2. Sierra Leone's present civil society landscape: characteristics, challenges and agency.

One of the most striking findings during both periods of field research was that a large majority of interviewees depicted Sierra Leone's civil society as very lively and vibrant during and shortly after the conflict yet expressed that it became dormant and politically inactive later on. For a Sierra Leone academic at FBC (interviewee No. 61), Sierra Leone's civil sphere is characterised by tribalism, political party loyalism and no independent press.[119] Civil society, in the lecturer's view, is "toothless" and lacks "a pro-active focus" and initiatives. The turning point when CSOs appear to have changed in character was often located by respondents in the time after the 2007 elections. As interviewee No. 63, a Sierra Leone scholar and historian, observes: [120]

> With the change of government in 2007 civil society has taken a back row. For instance [refers to CSO No. 12] took a back seat. They focus now more on the reform of the chiefdom system and don't give prominence to issues such as corruption or issues of service delivery. They should challenge the government more. Also, a lot of local CSOs have started to align themselves with the government, even women's groups that used to be very active [refers to CSO No. 7] are now taking a back seat.

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[119] Interview held 15.08.2012 at Fourah Bay College, Freetown.
[120] Interview held 18.08.2012 at Fourah Bay College, Freetown.

This observation also extends to Sierra Leone's pre-war student movements and lively political activism that took place and shaped the university culture as well as political climate and environment over decades (see Chapter 5). FBC, once the country's intellectual and political vanguard and *de-facto* opposition to Siaka Stevens' one-party state has become silent during the country's peacebuilding and development phase. As Gardner (2014) notes, the university itself has slid into apparently irreversible decline.[121] "Material conditions have atrophied almost continuously since the civil war ended in 2002, and campus accommodation is now uninhabitable to the extent that even students from the farthest provinces are denied lodgings."[122] In an informal conversation, a young (foreign) lecturer at FBC expressed a sense of frustration as repeatedly computers donated to the university usually disappear only within two weeks' time. In Gardner's words[123]:

> In such circumstances, one might expect to find the students in fighting spirit. Yet despite being equipped with a collective history that boasts the remarkable events of 1977 – when 'No College No School' demonstrations spread from FBC and forced Stevens to hold elections and lower the voting age to 18 – students at FBC today rarely challenge the university administration and almost never confront the government on national issues.

Instead, political party loyalism, tribalism and ethnicism have eaten deeply into student life. Sierra Leone scholar interviewee No. 63, was also asked what in his view caused this recent development of an inactive, if not dormant and depoliticised civil society, be it among CSOs, students or more generally the public sphere. In reply he commented that:

> If you have a liberal regime that is open to criticism civil society can flourish. Otherwise, it tends to be passive. In Sierra Leone the newspapers are champions for the government. For example, Awareness Times or Standard Times used to be very critical, in the last 18 months or so it became the mouthpiece of the government.

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[121] Tom Gardner is a postgraduate student at Oxford University. He is currently making a documentary on the subject of student politics at Fourah Bay College, past and present.
[122] Blog post by Gardner, Tom (18.02.2014), entitled: "Fourah Bay College: The decline of Sierra Leone's 'Oxford in the Bush'", published by Sierra Leone expert Mats Utas see: http://matsutas.wordpress.com/2014/02/18/fourah-bay-college-the-decline-of-sierra-leones-oxford-in-the-bush-by-tom-gardner/, last visit 10.04.2014.
[123] Ibid.

The current vanishing freedom and impartiality of the press was not only re-confirmed in interviews but also during several informal conversations.[124] Furthermore, on 21 October 2013 Reuters reported that the Sierra Leone editor of the *Independent Observer* and a local journalist were arrested by the SLP for publishing an article which compared President Ernest Bai Koroma to a rat. The event stirred many concerns over press freedom in the country.[125] Almost simultaneously, the latest Freedom's House study (2014) held that Sierra Leone's status declined from "Free" (in 2012) to "Partly Free" (in 2014) due to persistent problems with corruption and lack of transparency.[126]

Despite several allegations about the freedom of the press, the vast majority of CSOs did not feel hindered from operating freely in Sierra Leone. Only one organisation (CSO No. 40) made mention of incidences in which the CSO's website was repeatedly attacked after publishing discoveries of corruption by the state. At the time the interview was conducted the website was not accessible either. In the same breath, CSO No. 40 noted that the organisation cautioned youth about two elements in the pre-election period of 2012. These included the media and civil society. "Both institutions are supposed to be independent in Sierra Leone but in reality both of them are politicised" [CSO No. 40][127] – meaning that they are more loyal to the political parties than actually being an independent watchdog of state politics, or advocate for particular causes and rights.

Correspondingly, several CSOs pointed to the fact that some individuals use the status of their organisation as a stepping stone to enter state politics or benefit from governmental support in one way or another. When posed the question, "*How would you describe civil society in Sierra Leone?*" (see Question 1, Appendix 2), some of the most salient answers in this regard included:

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[124] In particular in conversations with Sierra Leonan and scholar Jimmy Kandeh while in Sierra Leone in 2012.

[125] http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/21/us-leone-rat-idUSBRE99K0QN20131021, last visit 19.03.2014.

[126] See: http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2014#.UyQ12ZyluQE, last visit 15.03.2014.

[127] Interview held 13.08.2012 in Freetown,

Table 1. Question 2 (Appendix 2): **How would you describe civil society in Sierra Leone?**
"Civil society in Sierra Leone is influenced by the government. In general civil society is not too powerful. Civil society is supposed to be an opposition to the government, but actually, it is not."   [CSO No. 18]
"Some CSOs are simply a mouthpiece of the government. They take on sides and are highly political [meant as allied with one of the two main political parties]." (…) "In some meetings the government jokingly refers to civil society as 'evil' society, when CSOs make people aware of their rights and challenge authorities." [CSO No. 20]
"Only a few organisations are vibrant and strong. The majority needs to have a clearer focus, direction, credibility and accountability." [CSO No. 12]
"People only make noise for their own agenda but not for other issues, given the bad economic situation of the country. Project proposals often differ from the truth and represent a different picture to justify proposals." [CSO No. 14]
"There is a tendency of CSOs in taking sides. CSOs only exercise politics if it fits their interest. Sixty per cent of CSOs only talk. Forty percent of all CSOs act on their own interest. A lot of CSOs are dormant by now. Sierra Leone has many briefcase CSOs. There is a lot of corruption going on." [CSO No. 16]
"Not all of civil society in Sierra Leone is political [meant as allied with the government in one way or another]. Some are sponsored, others are not. Some are playing the music of the government, those can't be seen as civil society. When they go on radio they call themselves a niche, but they are not. Some of them praise officially the government on the radio." [CSO No. 19]
"That is a difficult question. It is difficult to distinguish between civil society and state actors in Sierra Leone. A good number of CSOs are too close to the state actors, there are a few vibrant ones but there are the ones that are absorbed in politics." [CSO No. 25]
"Civil society in Sierra Leone is faulty and fragmented. You have lots of divided societies. They don't speak in one voice." [CSO No. 1]

Notably, a few interviewees gave critical yet far more moderate answers. For CSO No. 6, "civil society is very fragmented but this is also what makes civil society to be civil society. One has to accept that civil society is diverse and complex". Similarly, interviewee No. 60 argued: "To some extent civil society is active. The difficulty is they act in their own interest and not in common. (…) Some are purely

independent, others are partisan". Another director (CSO No. 10) described the characteristics of Sierra Leone's civil society landscape as mixed and not homogeneous. "Some are capacitated - but there are not many of those - and some are well organised and others are not. That is why more capacity building is needed" (CSO No. 10). For a rural CBO (No. 44), "Sierra Leonean civil society is the voice of the grassroots level, which should be the intermediator between the grassroots and the government."

A recent study conducted by OXFAM on "Civil society engagement with political parties during elections" (2013) reached out to political parties in Sierra Leone in order to gather their views on the activities and work of local CSOs. In sum, political parties indicated that "*credible*" [emphasis added] CSOs have presented and preserved an image of honesty, independence, neutrality and non-partisanship in their engagements. Political parties also referred to the existence of numerous so-called 'briefcase CSOs' (2013, p.18). These were defined by local focus group discussion members of the OXFAM study as (p. 18):

> (…) a CSO that has registered with the appropriate government agencies or departments, but whose office and operations are actually limited to the briefcase of its founder. Moreover, these CSOs have either fictitious or inactive board members, and their founders sometimes falsify documents to secure funding. When they succeed in doing so, they usually have to rely on family members and/or friends to carry out the CSOs activities. In many cases the founder also functions as director, administrator, accountant and human resources manager. The sole purpose of these CSOs is to serve the interests of individuals.

The occurrence of briefcase CSOs was also mentioned by several interviewees the author has spoken to. The scope of the issue became even more evident while trying to reach out to local organisations during both research visits. Frequently officially registered CSO were either not visible or their offices seemed to have vanished despite office signs outside the house. Residents were occasionally able to provide some background information about the idle organisation in their building. Their stories usually ranged from the short-lived existence of the CSO due to shortage of funds to not noticing if the office was officially operating. According to CSO No. 29, many CSOs also change their address or disappear as there is no structured funding. In addition, interviewees reasoned that increased donor support implicitly encouraged locals to found a CBO or CSO for no other purpose but income generation.

6.2.1 Issues of corruption and challenges with the civil sphere at community level

When interviewees were asked about a potential solution to the corruption problem they identified the need for a better organisational platform. Among others, CSO No. 5 made reference to an already existing civil society monitoring group, which was set up by the Anti-Corruption Commission to train local CSO staff members in how to monitor anti-corruption practices and reports. The commission also presented a three-year strategic plan. But according to CSO No. 2, even though the Anti-Corruption Commission and the GoSL are well aware of the issue both remain silent. It is speculated that some of the investigators enriched themselves in the same manner as CSOs did but "they were all covered because of their connections with the Ministry of Justice" (CSO No. 2).

Certainly, studying and analysing the civil sphere in peacebuilding and development processes is a constant balancing act of one's own objective thinking. The recent hype regarding the realm of civil society and the "local turn" (see Chapter 1) in research and practice created an understandable inclination to idealise if not romanticise local initiatives in several respects. Yet, "corruption is in human nature" (CSO No. 12) and occurs at all levels, from the top to the very bottom, from the global North to the South. In the case of Sierra Leone's civil sphere there is yet another component that further completes the general image: abject poverty. When visiting and talking to communities in Sierra Leone, inevitably the question comes to mind whether there are instances when corruption within the civil sphere can be justified, or at least, its occurrence better understood. Apart from the emergence of briefcase CSOs as a source of income, corruption occurs also at the very local and community level. CSO No. 1 believed that among others, community development funds are the core of the problem. For the period of project implementation, chiefs are frequently given access to the resources, and consequently funds are not always properly disbursed or allocated. To put it in another way, Labonte's (2008) earlier referenced findings (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2.2) were reconfirmed in the course of many conversations – formal and informal. Apart from the corrupt behaviour of elders and chiefs, neo-patrimonial power structures and clientelism, explanations were also given in reference to persisting unequal gender relations as well as low levels of education and illiteracy among the weaker segments of a community. In further expanding on the

issue, CSO No. 24 alluded to some essential aspects about the societal configurations, fabrics and workings of community everyday life:

> Most of the leaders in communities are very old from 70-90 years old. By the time they were young many things were not in practice, for example gender sensitivity. They still believe that men have to be decision makers and that they have to be in charge of everything. Likewise, young people's opinions or views are not respected. Youth have no rights. One has to tackle these issues when working with communities. You need to sensitize elders and undertake a lot of trainings to counter this kind of attitude. The power of elders can hinder the development of a community.

Putting intergenerational power imbalances aside, CSOs and CBOs additionally pointed to many other challenges they regularly encounter in their work with local communities. These include:

- Expectations of beneficiaries are too high
- Low participation
- Inaccessible or hard to reach
- Syndromes of aid dependency
- High illiteracy rates (in particular among women)
- Lack of synchronicity among CSOs when they engage with the same community.

Lastly, efforts to strengthen and empower the civil sphere are also amplified by the extreme poverty of the population. "Before you even start talking, people ask you already: What do you have for me?" (CSO No. 29).[128] Especially in Freetown, according to CSO No. 29, civil society actors encounter the difficulty that people neither have the time nor the leisure to "listen to your talk". Their first priority is to make an income in whatever way they can. Needless to say, CSOs often provide incentives (e.g. food and beverages) before they even start with their work. In short, widespread poverty affects political activism, if not mobilisation strategies, for a particular cause in several respects. CSO No. 19 further sheds light on the fact that, it is "difficult to get them concerned about certain issues. People live by the day. Understandably, they are only concerned about their own daily bread". Apart from what CSO No. 19 termed as "hardwork", that is facilities and services of any kind, people in the communities don't seem to be interested in the "softwork" of CSOs,

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[128] Interview held 31.07.2012 in Freetown.

meaning advocacy for a particular cause but also workshops and training sessions. Overall, it often remains overlooked in studies about the relationship of civil society, peacebuilding and development, how poverty as well as illiteracy can affect political activism stemming from the civil sphere. Chapter 7 will further elaborate on the argument of how abject poverty can hamper political agency and voice and as a result fortify the depoliticisation of a country's civil sphere.

6.2.2 Local ownership, agency and external influence through IOs and INGOs

Numerous signs in the streets of Freetown, but also in rural areas, indicate that several Western INGOs and IOs make these places home to their offices. The author's

Chart 2: Number of local CSOs and INGOs (as of March 2014)
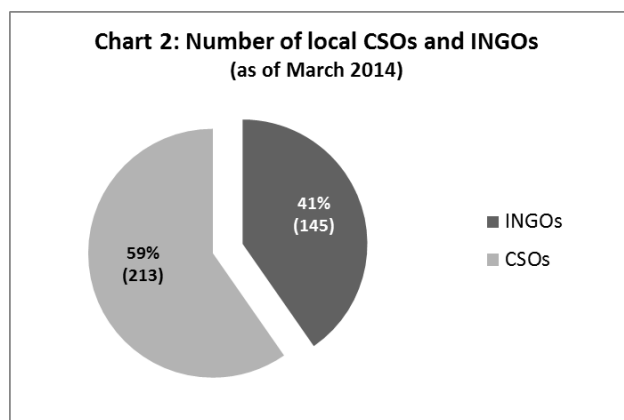
mapping analysis, presented in the Methods section (Introduction of the thesis but also in Appendix 3), finds that local CSOs still outnumber INGOs with a total of 213 being recognised as officially registered. The number of INGOs active in Sierra Leone is still remarkably high, with a total of 145 organisations.[129] This is not unusual if one compares the INGOs' presence to that in other sub-Saharan African Least Developed Countries (LDCs).[130]

Interviews further revealed that a significant number of local CSOs are not only funded by the international community but also by INGOs. In addition, a large majority of CSOs either serve as implementing partners or were set up by INGOs. Given the timeframe and scope of the thesis, it seemed unmanageable to quantitatively assess how many of these 213 registered local CSOs are implementing partners, and respectively, how much external funding they receive. Consequently, the thesis had to revert to qualitative means of measurement in the form of expert interviews. Against this background, all interview partners were approached with the question (see

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[129] Repeating what has been already set out in the section on methodological challenges and limitations, the author cannot exclude the fact that some of the local CSOs listed in Appendix 3 are either briefcase organisations, have moved down to the status of a CBO or are no longer active. However, if it was evident that an organisation did not (or no longer) exist, or a new one emerged, the list was updated accordingly and was last updated in March 2014.

[130] There is also a high number of INGOS in other non-African LDCs, most notably Haiti.

Appendix 2): *Would you say that external actors (such as INGOS, IOs or even global media) have enabled or challenged the work of your organisation? If so why?* As the analysis below will show, their experiences varied across sector, by donor and appeared to be very mixed.

All in all, the following aspects were commonly listed as positive results from the collaboration with external/international donors and INGOs:

- Provision of funding and/or equipment
- Capacity building, workshops and various types of training
- Assistance in creating tighter networks with other organisations
- Support to build up a good reputation
- Discipline CSOs and their staff to be more accountable

In several cases, interviewees gave detailed accounts of successful donor input. For example, CSO No. 26 emphasised that UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) introduced the idea of sending homeless children from children's centres back to their communities. This is of particular importance in the context of Sierra Leonean culture as these children would otherwise face tremendous challenges in the future to become part of a community again.[131] Most CSOs seemed very receptive to collaboration with, but also training by, Western staff of INGOs or IOs. One well-funded CSO (No. 36) even stated that they do not encounter any challenges with their donors, as "we correct our mistakes as we go along". According to CSO No. 16 "the way INGOs or internationals work serves as a role model for local CSOs". Also a rural based CBO (No. 44) noted that, "Donors even educate you about your own culture. They feel for the people here". A surprisingly high number of interviewees noted that they trust the international community more than the GoSL.[132] More generally, several CSOs indicated that they can learn something from the West but they "should contextualise it to local realities" (CSO No. 3). The ensuing section 6.2.4, and in greater detail also Chapter 7, will delve into this particular statement and address issues of political culture, and cultural particularism and whether they are truly Sierra Leonean solutions

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[131] UNICEF's approach further included supporting the families taking care of the child and regular follow-ups on the child's situation.

[132] Many expressed great sympathy for President Ernest Bai Koroma but felt that most of the ministers and chiefs were the prime cause of continuous dishonesty, embezzlement and fraud.

to present developmental problems in the country. At times, staff of the same organisation had different views on donor support. For instance, whereas one project officer (CSO No. 20) described the collaboration with UN donors as "very positive", one of his colleagues seemed to be more critical.

The positive achievements of donor support notwithstanding, respondents equally referred to several challenges concerning their collaboration with IOs, aid agencies, governments and INGOs. These included:

- Lack of access to funding (in particular in rural areas)
- Discontinuous funding, cuts in running projects / programmes or abrupt donor withdrawal
- Funding criteria are too rigid
- Expectations of donors are too high
- Timeframes are not always realistic
- Difficulties in adapting to external management systems (e.g. format of project proposal and other documents)
- Donors do not always consider all aspects of expenditure (in particular administration costs)
- Lack of ownership

The above-listed challenges can be related to the issue of depoliticisation of Sierra Leone's civil society landscape in both the narrower and broader senses. Generally, issues such as funding criteria, expectations of donors, timeframes or the difficulty to adapt to external management systems are an indication of the difficulties to act in accordance with the international frameworks to support civil society in peacebuilding and development practice presented in Chapter 3. Local CSOs are under a certain pressure to meet specific objectives (outcomes) so that their activities (outputs) will have an anticipated impact in the short-, medium- or long-term. This clearly affects their political agenda (if any) and general work pace. Building on that point, lack of ownership was a recurring theme in many interviews. The majority of CSOs felt that local ownership in terms of agenda-setting, project design and implementation appeared to be far more flexible during the conflict than at the later stages of the peacebuilding and development process. This may, even if only partially,

also explain why Sierra Leone's civil society landscape was frequently described as very active and lively during and shortly after the war, and "dormant" later on. It is also noteworthy that local ownership was predominantly more of an issue raised by Freetown-based organisations. Table 2 depicts some of the most salient answers in this regard.

Table 2. Question 6 (Appendix 2): **Statements referring to lack of ownership**
"We would like to see our core values more reflected in our work. [Gave community initiatives as an example]. Also, we are not as independent in our own decision-making processes as we wished. Generally, donors should treat local CSOs with more respect, as local initiatives are culturally more sensitive."   [CSO No. 1]
"CSOs need more local ownership. To give an example, in the case of the UN, most of the money was spent on UN staff, equipment, or administrative costs."   [CSO No. 2]
"There should be definitely more local ownership. Local leaders should have more ownership in the rural communities, and more projects are needed to enable them to build capacities. There is also a strong need to ensure better coordination amongst international and local actors and initiatives."   [CSO No. 3]
"There is a pressing need to improve the communication and linkages between top-down and bottom-up actors. This also differs enormously from community to community. There are many problems with regards to the collaboration with INGOs. One of the biggest one is certainly the drafting of project proposals, as they have to be often amended and changed to meet the donors' criteria but not the local one. Local CSOs still face many power constraints."   [CSO No. 5]
"External actors have definitely a big influence when it comes to agenda setting."   [CSO No. 6]
"Sometimes donors don't allow you to use your own ideas. Usually, IOs as well as INGOs don't get involved into the community approach."   [CSO No. 26]
"You have to cut your proposals and design them in a certain way to obtain the funds. At the end of the day your project has to meet the donor's expectations to achieve specific results."   [CSO No. 28]
"Our donors don't promote the job we have done. They present it more as their own work and not what we actually did."   [CBO No. 44]

Contrasting earlier accounts about the benefits of donor support with the above listed statements, one detects a few contradictions. A significant number of

interviewees expressed a clear dissatisfaction about the lack of ownership and power in decision-making processes. Then again, many positive mentions were made with regards to Western support and what there is to be potentially "learned", be it through workshops or any other form of training. To complicate the issue further, CSOs pointed to several implementation dilemmas when they reach out to work with local communities themselves. At first these entanglements may come across as part of the complexities inherent in peacebuilding and development processes. When digging a bit deeper, they provide extremely useful insights for ongoing research on the civil sphere, nonetheless. In the first place, these ambiguous answers and perceptions about local ownership reconfirm some of the earlier arguments made in the chapter trilogy of Part I. In alignment with Paris (2010), none of the interviewees argued against the liberal conception of local ownership as such. Just the opposite; there was a noticeable pro-Western and pro-liberal attitude among interviewees towards external intervention and donor support. In particular, interviews and many informal conversations with youth groups revealed a remarkable (but also unreflective) glorification of the Western world. Points of criticism made by local CSOs mainly revolved around the behaviour of donors, other CSOs, the GoSL or structural and cultural barriers. To put it another way, local ownership was never criticised on a philosophical or intellectual basis, but with reference to its execution on the ground. Issues of trust, corruption, lack of capacities, lack of time and strikingly, cultural particularisms, such as inter-generational power imbalances, appeared to challenge its implementation the most.

The repeatedly perceived lack of ownership also supports earlier claims about the creation of a specific kind of civil society landscape and agenda-setting in the scope of externally-led peacebuilding and development interventions (Chapter 3). As will be more evident in Section 6.2.3 of this chapter, in the case of Sierra Leone, funding allocations led to an instrumentalisation and, as a result thereof, the depoliticisation of the civil sphere. To make use of CSO No. 1's words, "who pays the piper calls the tune". For a large majority of CSOs, external financial aid is concomitant with setting the agenda for their organisation and work. Only in very few instances, CSOs found that they could fully follow their own thematic focus and lead (e.g. CSO No.9, CSO No. 15). In the main, "CSOs lack independence from external donors and cannot sustain themselves. Better capacities amongst locals need to be built" (CSO No. 4). Dependence on funds, and hence the very survival of the

organisation as such, pushes many CSOs into areas of intervention favoured by their respective donors and not themselves. To give an example, CSO No. 29 wrote a project proposal explaining the need for an anti-smoking campaign to be presented to the parliament. In the director's view, it is an issue that leads many youth to the consumption of other drugs, as well as to other health risks. No donor was willing to support this cause and consequently the CSO had to revert to projects targeting reproductive health and malaria.

Moreover, one of the biggest pressures for CSOs is discontinuous funding from their counterparts. Financial support is often project/programme based and not organisation based, again affecting the long-term impact but also survival of CSOs. For instance, CSO No. 17 had to cut projects which were supposed to last five years down to two years. Donors explained that the financial crisis was the main cause. Similarly, CSOs pointed to the fact that big donors such as DfID started to allocate their funds to British INGOs and not local organisations. Poor performance was often named as one of the main reasons for this sudden turn. In CSO No. 24's words, "The irony behind external funding is that if local CSOs become too strong, they put INGOs out of existence". Instead of submitting project proposals on a yearly basis, a more suitable approach, according to CSO No. 24, would be to finance those local civil society actors in such a way that they can become independent from their donors. Though, as mentioned already earlier, when CSOs where asked about alternative ways of sustaining their organisations, the majority could not think of a solution. Only a few interviewees (e.g. Nos. 32 and 34), suggested income generating projects for local CSOs.

6.2.3. Civil society's activities, depoliticisation and the retreat of the state

Both periods of field research underscored that during the conflict and the peacebuilding and developmental phase of the country, CSOs emerged as actors who complemented services the government was either too weak or unwilling to provide (see Section 1.2.5, Chapter 1). "While the CSO landscape exploded during that time, most organisations did not realise that this was to be a constant commitment" (CSO No. 12). In this regard, all CSOs were posed the question: *"Do you think that your organisation covers areas that should be tackled by the government or even the international community? If so – what areas; if not – why?"* (See Appendix 2).

Almost all CSOs answered the question in the affirmative. In addition, their responses also pointed to areas which they believe should be tackled by the GoSL. Activities which were mentioned the most included mainly service delivery, such as:

- Healthcare services, distribution of medicine (in particular in remote areas where the government is not active)

- Water and sanitation

- Support for disadvantaged women, gender equality

- Education (children and adult)

- Trainings, workshops and sensitisation programmes for chiefs and communities

- Community development

- Agriculture

In order to get a much clearer picture of the magnitude and variety of the areas and activities local and international CSOs engage in, every organisation mapped in Appendix 3 was also matched against a set of *functions* (activities). The results are presented in Chart 3.

Chart 3: Local CSOs and INGOs Mapping per Activity
(as of March 2014)
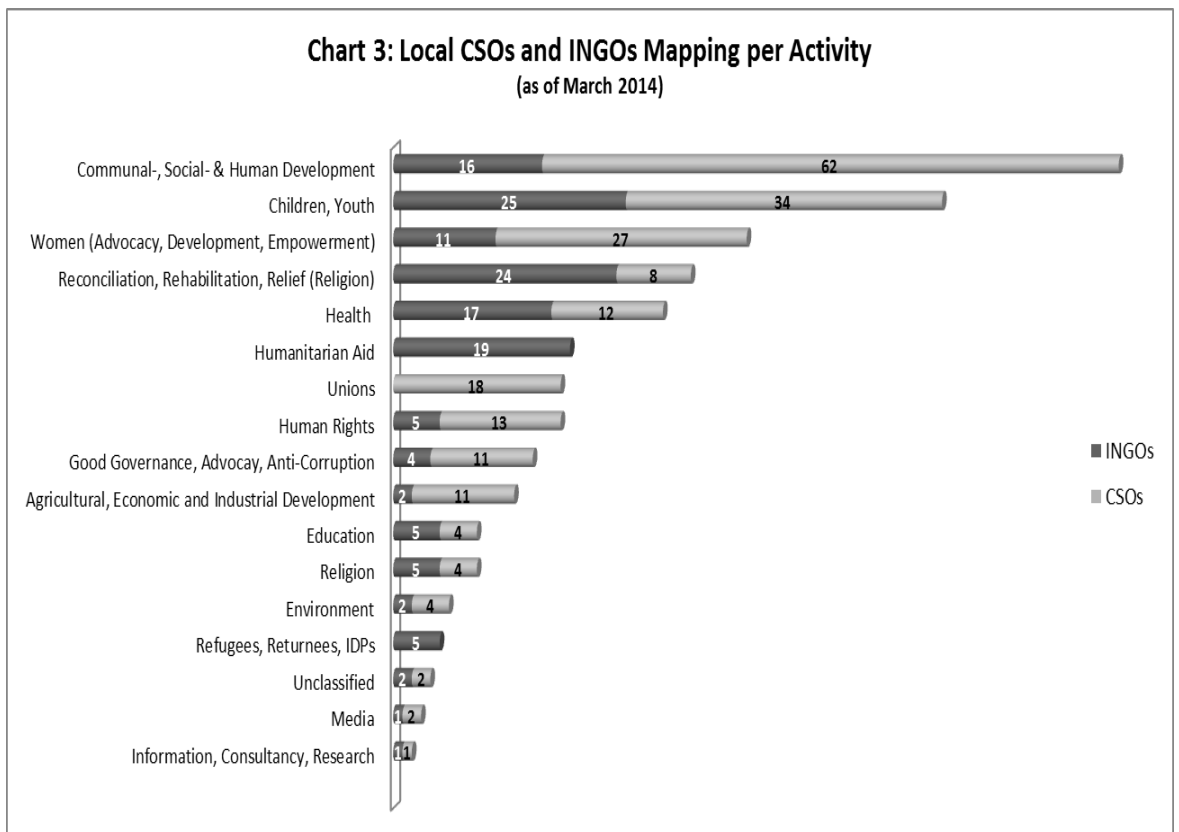
INGOs were deliberately included (coloured in dark grey) in the analysis as they complement state services in the same way as their local counterparts. Besides, many local CSOs are not only funded by INGOs but also serve as their implementing partners – in the long- and short-term. Notably, the overlapping of activities undertaken by some organisations posed the biggest challenge for the mapping exercise. For example, a CSO may target several aspects of community development while also seeking to enhance gender equality or child education. It also works the other way round, in which a CSO's work on gender equality and better access to education may potentially improve community development. In such instances, preference was given to the CSOs main core focus and agenda-setting, while still acknowledging that this compromise may stretch the general image and results depicted in Chart 3.

Taking into account Sierra Leone's low HDI and overall poverty profile, it does not come as a surprise that communal, human and social development appears to be the largest engagement area. The wide spectrum of activities generally includes water supply, nutrition programmes, healthcare, education, rehabilitation plans or stimulating local forms of businesses and employment generation. The high number of local CSOs in this field further suggests two main causalities. The first one relates to the influence of external donors outlined in Section 6.2.2, be it through frameworks, funding allocations or implementation strategies. Secondly, communal and social development initiatives presuppose social and cultural ties which international actors do not have. Local expertise is not only a prerequisite to overcome cultural barriers but also to initiate programmes on the spot and tackle the everyday concerns of individuals in their own language and socio-cultural manner.

The focus on children and youth (ranked 2nd) as well as women (ranked 3rd) echoes the recent shift of priorities over the past decade in the international community's peacebuilding and development work. Since the turn of the millennium, there has been an increased attention towards weaker segments of post-conflict societies and this trend can be also observed in Sierra Leone. This is, in particular, the case with regards to women. Following UNSC resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security in 2000, there has been an avalanche of subsequent UNSC resolutions, agencies, programmes and initiatives for more gender-friendly peace and development

processes around the globe. Gender-markers, as a tool for gauging whether programmes respond to the different needs of women, children and men, have become a standard procedure in project evaluation and implementation. Interviewees frequently noted that they had added a gender component to their projects at the request of their external counterparts.

However, the external push to be more gender sensitive should not distract from the fact that Sierra Leone has longstanding local CSOs advocating for women's rights that were established before and during the war. The country's peacebuilding process has been shaped by various civilian initiatives brought to life and led by women; here the Fifty/Fifty Group or the Women's Partnership for Justice and Peace are just a couple of examples. Shortly after the war, their initial target was for women to take up 30 percent of the seats in Parliament after the 2012 elections in November - without success however.[133] To this day, Sierra Leonean women face tremendous challenges to access government positions and overcome patriarchal power structures.[134] In conversations with women's grassroots associations and CBOs (Nos. 42, 43, and 44) the situation in the North of the country was described as being much harder, impinging on the rights of women the most. Notably, while many of the local women's organisations depicted in Chart 3 engage in activities to provide all kinds of services to women (training, education, micro-finance projects, etc.), the few women's CSOs who are politically active, are in the main well-educated women or from elite backgrounds. On the whole, despite some political activism to improve the rights of women in the country, service delivery dominates the agenda.

Looking at healthcare (ranked 5th), it is important to add that all 29 organisations are solely dedicated to healthcare services and no other activities. If one were to include organisations that provide healthcare next to several other services (in Chart 3 categorised under communal, human and social development) the number would

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[133] Information retrieved from: Datzberger (2012f): "Far from being victims, women's networks have led the way in campaigning for peace and justice, Africa LSE, see: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2012/06/12/far-from-being-victims-womens-networks-have-led-the-way-in-campaigning-for-peace-and-justice/, last vist 10.04.2014.

[134] Jackson's (2014) short discussion on how the award-winning documentary 30% (Women and Politics in Sierra Leone) emphasises the challenges women face in the battle for gender equity, provides more information on the topic. See Africa LSE, http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2014/02/07/whistling-women-gender-space-and-power-paradigms-in-africa/, last visit 10.04.2014.

easily increase up to a hundred. Immediately after the war, Sierra Leone received a lot of support for healthcare from international donors. Over the long haul, however, Lisa Denney and Alexandra Malet find that while the initial response provided urgently needed capacity it didn't provide long term capacity building.[135] Sierra Leone's healthcare is currently provided by the state, private and non-governmental actors. Even though President Ernest Bai Koroma announced a free health-care initiative in 2010 there are still severe shortcomings.[136] New frameworks are badly managed by the Ministry of Health and healthcare is not only underdeveloped in Sierra Leone (lack of medication, infrastructure and retention of trained medical staff) but also corrupt. Frequently patients have to bribe nurses and doctors, thereby bumping up their low salaries, for better treatment. Moreover, health initiatives hailed in the press as groundbreaking, such as free healthcare for under-fives struggle in their implementation. For example, drugs are often not available as they are siphoned off and sold privately. In 2012, it was estimated that 26 percent of all drugs donated to Sierra Leone never reached the health facilities they were destined for.[137] INGOs as well as local CSOs surfaced as an additional service provider to complement and substitute a healthcare system the state is hitherto too weak and incapacitated to provide.

Interviews with local CSOs working on human rights related issues brought to light that, by and large, their activities resemble more service provision (human rights trainings or legal assistance) than advocacy or confronting authorities with human rights violations. One of the main reasons can be located in the fact that Sierra Leone's official law continues to operate side by side customary law - once more an indication of how Ekeh's (1975) two publics continue to intersect. For example, it is no exception that local magistrates turn a blind eye to incidences when young women are forced to marry their rapist as practiced in customary law (CSO No.36). Local human rights activists further mentioned that they rely heavily on the support of international actors. Chapter 7 will assess and discuss more thoroughly how the intersections of the

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[135] LSE Roundtable Event, 06.03.2013.

[136] The estimated cost to implement Sierra Leone's Free Health Care Initiative in 2010 was USD 35.8 million out of which 86.5 percent was provided mainly by the ADB, DfID, UNICEF, UNPFA and the WB. Information retrieved from: World Report, thelancet.com, Vol 381 January 19, 2013. See: http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140673613600744.pdf, last visit 10.04.2014.

[137] Ibid.

civic and primordial public not only shape the political culture of society as such but also hamper political activism and CSOs' advocacy work on the ground.

Taken as a whole, Chart 3 strengthens and substantiates the thesis' earlier claim (Section 1.2.5, Chapter 1), namely, that the majority of CSOs appear to be depoliticised actors who complement or even provide state services. Funding allocations, or externally introduced agendas and work schemes, can influence the degree of political activism if not also the disposition to advocate for a need or cause. In the long haul, depoliticisation processes can additionally reflect, or even lead to, political neutralisation expressed in the sheer lack of willingness to challenge or oppose state policies and their implementation. Similarly, interviews also brought to light that not only CSOs but also Sierra Leone's Unions are very weak and lack the capacity to advocate for their concerns. The thesis' findings correspond well with the aforementioned OXFAM study (2013) which identified several striking challenges for CSOs in trying to influence political parties in Sierra Leone; these are (OXFAM 2013, p. 29):

- Fragmentation among CSOs such that they have an inconsistent voice on issues
- Poor engagement skills, which limit their persuasiveness
- Lack of innovation
- Insufficient human and financial resources to maintain engagement after elections.

Recognising that civil society is a constantly changing societal process and not an end result or outcome, Section 6.2 aimed to depict the status quo. While civil society has become an object of re-construction but also an instrument for project implementation in the country's peacebuilding and development process, the unintended consequences of these efforts remain a scarcely researched terrain. Section 6.3, and in much greater depth Chapter 7, are therefore dedicated to addressing this gap. With the help of the analytical framework presented in Chapter 3, both will critically reflect upon the above-identified depoliticisation of Sierra Leone's civil sphere.

6.3. Discussion & Analysis: Present Civil society *actors* and *functions*

Apart from a few longstanding organisations and associations, the vast majority of Sierra Leone's CSOs emerged out of necessity and a collective will to establish

peace, and not because of externally imposed liberal ideals and agendas. Crucially, this trend has changed during Sierra Leone's peacebuilding and development process. As outlined in Section 6.2.1, the increase of funding commitments not only bureaucratised the collaboration between external donors and local actors but also influenced the agenda-setting of the majority of local CSOs. Interviews also brought to light that project proposals frequently have to be redesigned to comply with external frameworks and different management systems. This clearly confirms general observations made in Chapter 3 addressing the amplified use of M&E mechanisms; the pressure to meet funding criteria established in frameworks; and consequently the unintended creation of a specific civil society landscape which targets specific functions and actors. Furthermore, civil society, be it in the form of a formally registered CSO, or, be it as an individual of the civil sphere (as a beneficiary of projects and programmes) has become heavily dependent on aid and external funding assistance. In a recent publication, M'Cormack-Hale (2013) critiques past and ongoing efforts to re-build Sierra Leone's civil society landscape as "problematic" since democratisation and development objectives actually "undermine the overarching policy objective of rebuilding and strengthening the failed state" (p. 150). In her view, this has led to a counterproductive phenomenon in Sierra Leone: strengthening CSOs did not lead to corresponding increases in state capacity. In agreement with M'Cormack-Hale's analysis, the thesis goes even one step further. It is suggested that Sierra Leone's civil sphere is not only instrumentalised to serve a liberal peacebuilding and development agenda but also experiences a gradual depoliticisation, understood here as removed from the arena and influence of state politics, at both the collective and individual levels. To begin with, weak involvement in important decision-making processes about the country's path from peacebuilding towards development already enfeebled the agency of local civil society actors during the war. Section 6.1 delineated how civil society actors saw themselves repeatedly excluded by international actors who collaborated closely with the GoSL (e.g. UNIPSIL's Joint Vision, but also at UN HQ level). Although the process of Sierra Leone's first PRSP seemed to be more inclusive, this trend took a sudden turn with the new elected government in 2007 which was re-elected in 2012. The few CSOs invited to the bargaining table (e.g. SLCTD, PBF JSC) are usually longstanding, well-funded, well-capacitated and networked, with offices in Freetown. Less capacitated and more remotely located initiatives or grassroots associations are generally not well

represented. In this regard, there is also a certain top-down and bottom-up mentality, if not fragmentation and regionalisation, among local civil society actors themselves, detectable in an urban-rural divide and the lack of agency and influence from less capacitated CSOs. However, it would be far too simplistic to locate the root causes of what was often described as a "dormant" or "inactive" civil society in the international community's peacebuilding and development assistance alone – even if funding allocations and agenda-setting (did) play an essential part. As argued in Chapters 4 and 5, the nature of Sierra Leone's present-day state-society relations is also deeply embedded in the country's history of state formation, most visible in a political culture that embraces and entangles both a primordial and a civic societal sphere. Chapter 7 will take up and elaborate on this point.

6.3.1. Civil society *actors*

Roughly two-thirds of this Chapter captured the voices of local CSOs as opposed to other civil society actors such as informal social movements, sodalities, secret societies, youth and self-help groups or any other informal grassroots association. What might come across as a preferential treatment by the author, in fact mirrors Sierra Leone's civic public as it emerged and was pre-dominantly shaped after the war. In referring to Osusu, labour gangs and sodalities as an embodiment of autonomous (civil) constructions, Cubitt (2013, p. 106) holds that "effective civil society appears to be horizontal and not part of the hierarchical bureaucracy constructed with the help of outsiders". Funding schemes targeting the civil sphere are geared towards formally registered civic formations, be that CSOs, CBOs, FBOs, or any other type of official association. By contrast, the broader civil sphere emerged as a beneficiary of local or international CSOs, and other external donors. Interviews with youth clubs and organisations (Nos. 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55 and 56) further disclosed that informal groups either lack the expertise, skills and/or capacities to raise their own funds for their often vague agendas. In addition, youth clubs entail elements of political loyalism as opposed to keeping a critical eye on the actions of the government. The same observation was also made by Gardner (2014) with regards to FBC student culture and life.

What is more, actors who do not belong to a traditional Western model of civil society are less visible and often difficult to discern. By pure chance the author walked

past an informal local grassroots association of farmers in Makeni (interview No. 43) founded by a female rural community member in 2005. The director obtained free access to land from the government and engaged other women of her community to do farming with her. At the time the interview was held, the association had received a small amount of support from the government but no funding from INGOs or IOs. With the founder being one of the few who can read and write, and with poverty among all members and no permanent staff, the association continuously struggles to capacitate and sustain itself. Thus, a member of society's life circumstances, such as living conditions, health, nutrition and education, also affect their agency and capacity to advocate for their core concerns. For now, the local association's agency is limited to taking care of female farmers while lacking the capacity, influence and skills to raise awareness about their daily struggles and concerns. Low levels of education, high illiteracy rates as well as gender imbalances infringe on society's political agency which in turn spurs depoliticisation from below. As SLF founder Ahamedi Tijan Kabbah accurately put it: "An empty bag cannot stand". People's priority is to take care of their families and provide their daily bread. Their pursuit of self-actualisation and self-empowerment appears to be constantly challenged by the struggles of the everyday.

More generally, the prevailing focus on local CSOs encouraged a civil society landscape resembling Tocqueville's vision of an independent civil society in the form of civic associations (see Chapter 2). For Tocqueville, civil society epitomised non-political actors who maintain a functioning democracy, prevent the fragmentation of society and teach their members to make use of their rights and liberties in a responsible manner. Put simply, a society which is in charge of its own destiny without governmental support and aid. In practice, Sierra Leone's civil society actors are far from this Tocquevillean ideal. First, their main *raison d'être* is service provision to a socioeconomically deprived civil sphere. Second, not only is there political loyalism among some local CSOs but there are also several characteristics where primordial and civic societal features continue to intersect. This is expressed in cultural particularisms such as secret societies, customary law or intergenerational power imbalances, gender inequality and patronage. Hence the primordial public benefits and subtracts from the civic sphere in various ways. This is most evident in widespread corruption and the emergence of briefcase CSOs. Of course, both

corruption and clientelism can be also found in the political and societal cultures of the Western world (see for instance the work of Roniger and Güneş-Ayata, 1994). Yet, in the case of Sierra Lone, corruption is *inter alia* also a result of neo-patrimonial power structures entrenched in all strata of society, though to varying degrees.

Lastly, Sierra Leone's civil society landscape, in the form of registered CSOs, is a constantly moving and shifting societal construct. The thesis' mapping exercise was only able to provide a snapshot of registered organisations. A sudden shift in funding allocations could change the general image rapidly. To give a few examples, CBO No. 45 and No. 46 used to be registered as CSOs until recently, but lack of urgently-needed funding forced them to downgrade to the status of a CBO. Similarly, at the time of writing this chapter the author learned that since the 2012 interviews CSO No. 16 had ceased to exist and CSO No. 29 had to close its Freetown offices and now operates only outside the capital. All of these actors were serious organisations engaging in urgently-needed developmental and communal work. In other words, dependency on aid not only influences CSOs' agendas but also their sheer existence as individual and collective actors.

6.3.2. Civil society *functions*

Sierra Leone's civil society functions, and accordingly activities, changed rapidly during the country's peacebuilding and development phase. Actors known for being peace and human rights activists (e.g. CSO No. 4, CSO No. 35) shifted or widened their focus from reporting about human rights abuses, peace negotiation and mediation towards reconciliation, food security, environmental protection, organic farming, economic empowerment of women and youth, education for the underprivileged, water sanitation or health care. Many local CSOs who came into existence shortly after the war simply responded to society's most pressing needs. Then again, donor requests and standard settings altered initial project proposals and activities as well. While several positive mentions were made with regards to donors' assistance and how they capacitated local CSOs, this collaboration invigorated an interesting dynamic with regards to local ownership. Increasingly, internationally- or locally-led projects started to promote community-driven development programmes. This was addressed in Section 1.2.2 of Chapter 1, as well as in Section 6.2.2 above but is also echoed in the high occurrence of CSOs engaging in communal, social and

human development shown in Graph 2. For M'Cormack-Hale (2013), the irony behind this trend is that "the promotion of community-driven development, where people are still very much responsible for their own development does little to promote a vision of a state that is in touch with people's needs and is meeting them adequately" (p. 150). The thesis adds to this point that current forms of communal development do little to strengthen locals in a Habermasian tradition of empowering the civil sphere to publicly debate and eventually advocate for their own concerns. Instead, while being put in charge of services that could potentially be provided by the state, Sierra Leone's civil sphere is driven into a corner of being a beneficiary who implements projects introduced and monitored by local CSOs, INGOs or other international donors. In doing so, the civil sphere complements, as opposed to actively shaping, the country's developmental agenda. Weak state institution and service provision also fortified the formation of self-help groups as well as street clubs which serve as informal, and often the only social, support systems for their impoverished members.[138]

In this light, the thesis suggests that functions of Sierra Leone's civil sphere resemble state-society relations as promoted in conservative liberalism. That is, a limited welfare state and a society in Tocqueville's wishful thinking of taking control over their own lives and therefore not dependent on the state. Despite the high number of local CSOs, the average individual is too impoverished and faces many structural barriers to have that control (see ensuing Section 7.3 of Chapter 7). To give a brief example: in the search for better opportunities, there has been rapid rural-urban migration flow, in particular among the youth. In the latest UNHABITAT report 'The State of African Cities 2010' it is indicated that 38-40 percent of all Sierra Leoneans live in urban areas. UNHABITAT further estimates that by 2050 this figure will change to 62.44 percent.[139] CSO No. 4 is not alone when stressing that this trend undermines not only food security in rural areas but also leaves the old and aged behind without any care. The Sierra Leonean journalist Madieu Jalloh notes that: "(…)

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[138] The author wrote a short online article on the issue. Datzberger, (2011a): "Voices to the Youth – 'We can see the light but we are not working.'", LSE IDEAS, see: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/ideas/2011/08/sierra-leone-voices-to-the-youth-%E2%80%98we-can-see-the-light-but-we-are-not-working%E2%80%99/, last visit 12.04.2014.

[139] Information retrieved from an online article by the author, Datzberger (2011b): "Sierra Leone - Barefoot soldiers for social justice and peace", LSE IDEAS, see: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/ideas/2011/12/sierra-leone-barefoot-soldiers-for-social-justice-food-security-and-peace/, last visit 12.04.2014.

to say that agriculture is vital to Sierra Leone's economic growth is an understatement".[140] In this regard, CSO No. 18, who belongs to the category of communal, social and human development, made a striking comment referring to the country's mismanaged agricultural resources:

> The government should take care of promoting local farmers and local rice production. It is ironic. Sierra Leone has a vast land of fertile soil but still needs to import rice, the government should encourage citizens to produce rice and become active in agriculture. In fact it is a business opportunity for many as local rice is cheaper than imported one. Also, the government does not encourage internal industry. Sierra Leone has lots of cash crops like coffee or cocoa, but all of these are exported for processing. We should process these crops in Sierra Leone and export them.

By and large, local CSOs support and train Sierra Leoneans to farm rice on their lands as opposed to advocating or pushing the government to change its neoliberal economic course. In interviews, the National Associations of Farmers Sierra Leone (NAFSL) was repeatedly described as weak; so were other unions. Even if there were some sort of activism to challenge the GoSL's course, those initiatives are heavily supported if not monitored and guided by Western INGOs. For instance, in April 2014 Christian Aid published a highly critical report on Sierra Leone's massive revenue losses from tax incentives.[141] What was presented at a first glance as a purely locally driven civil society initiative to challenge the GoSL's tax policies, turned out to be been written and researched by Curtis Research, an independent consultancy based in Oxford, UK. Apart from local CSO network coalitions, the INGOs Christian Aid, IBIS and ActionAid were heavily involved in compiling the report.[142] The good intentions of these Western INGOs notwithstanding, it is a form of political activism not stemming or organically emerging from the civil sphere but a product of externally driven CSOs. This further distracts from an essential and frequently overlooked function of the country's civil sphere. Namely, in a society where the primordial and civic public constantly intersect, it became implicitly civil society's function to re-negotiate the power-relations between those two worlds. Chapter 7 will delve into this point.

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[140] Sierra Leone Express Media, "Massive rural-urban migration and its impact on agriculture in Sierra Leone.", See: http://www.sierraexpressmedia.com/archives/11278, last visit 12.04.2014.

[141] Information retrieved from the Guardian Global Development Blog, see: http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/apr/15/sierra-leone-tax-incentives-foreign-investment-before-poor-ngos, accessed 06.05.2014.

[142] A full version can be downloaded at Christian Aid's website: http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/Sierra-Leone-Report-tax-incentives-080414.pdf, accessed 06.05.2014.

Conclusion

With few exceptions, donors do not risk supporting local activism and therefore giving the most affected a voice. As highlighted in Chapter 1, when it comes to the practical implementation of what appears to be in theory "empowering" for the civil sphere, in practice concepts such as local ownership, cultural particularism or being more sensitive to forms of everyday resistance are challenged by several ambiguities as well as structural barriers on the ground. The argument is not that peacebuilding and development scholarship and practice should refrain from a local-turn in their approach - on the contrary. Rather, it is suggested that a local-turn in scholarship and practice needs to be firmly embedded in empirical research on the ground. As Katherine Boo stated (2012, p. 407): "I believe that better arguments, maybe even better policies, get formulated when we know more about ordinary lives". Analysing those voices from below opens up an entire new perspective on to how peacebuilding and development efforts are not only socially reproduced but also socially engineered. Ongoing forms of clientelism, unequal gender relations or the continuous acceptance of customary law are indications of how the civic and primordial public intersect – despite the civil war and internationally steered peacebuilding and development assistance later on.

As Chapter 7 will further elaborate, these intersections offer a completely new analytical, theoretical but also practical entry point. Empowering the civil sphere is recurrently challenged by the legacies of colonial rule, cultural particularism and the political culture of communal life. At the same time, a large body of literature belonging to the alternative discourse school (see Chapter 1), is challenged by the positive perceptions and descriptions made by CSOs about external (liberal) donor support. More importantly, as will be discussed in Chapter 7, severe poverty continues to be an underestimated factor as an impediment towards societal empowerment from below; rendering any quest for alternatives to a liberal agenda almost irrelevant. Simply put, empowering, strengthening and consequently transforming the civil sphere can be far more complex and frustrating, in practice as in theory, than researchers and scholars generally tend to admit.

To conclude, the lack of political representation and advocacy of CSOs in Sierra Leone are striking turning points in the country's present developmental phase. The

last chapter will assess this phenomenon, but also explore alternatives for strengthening a non-Western civil sphere. It will reflect upon the consequences of applying a liberal notion of the concept of civil society in present peacebuilding and development efforts. In doing so, Chapter 7 critically assesses and examines how the civil sphere is currently the subject of re-construction in post conflict countries, and how this affects local civil society landscapes, their respective political culture and voice.

PART III

Peacebuilding and the Depoliticisation of Civil Society in Sierra Leone

Chapter Seven

(Re-) conceptualising civil society in Sierra Leone

"Once you have freedom of speech and freedom of association we have to ask ourselves:
What comes next? We need freedom after we have spoken."
[CSO No. 3]

Sierra Leone's history of state formation, the decade-long civil war and the ensuing peacebuilding and development efforts shaped the country's civil sphere and social fabrics in seemingly ambiguous ways. If compared to societies in the West, it is a country full of socially entangled dualisms grounded in the intersections of primordial and civic everyday actions, realities and spheres. Despite efforts to liberalise societal structures and local politics, primordial and civic juxtapositions linger within the civil sphere to this day. There are numerous examples to better illustrate this point: official law is still challenged by the uncertain and *illiberal* nature of widely practised and accepted customary law. Chiefs are struggling with the power given to local councillors while local councillors may feel a certain loyalty towards their chiefs. Gender equality campaigns are frequently run by women who belong to secret societies favouring the practice of FGM. Hospitals and medical INGOs operate next to traditional medicine men. Youth complain about intergenerational power imbalances and patriarchal societal structures while showering community elders with deference and respect. Thousands of civilians successfully demonstrated for the reinstitution of a multiparty system whereas today Sierra Leone's political parties hardly differ in their ideological viewpoints and beliefs. Liberal values such as democracy and good governance are praised even though clientelism, neopatrimonialism and patronage are tolerated and continue to exist. CSOs complaining about the lack of an active and vibrant civil society are themselves frequently close to political parties and/or local chiefs as well as being heavily dependent on the generosity and agenda-setting of their donors. Above all, externally-led efforts to strengthen and empower local civil society actors by means of a liberal

agenda inadvertently bolstered societal arrangements reflecting primordial features of tribalism, ethnicity and regionalism.

These admittedly quite bluntly delineated dichotomies may at first come across as several contradictions in direct terms. Altogether they actually open up an entire new perspective on to how the legacies of past events and external intervention are eventually socially reproduced over history and time. The war provided a unique yet tragic momentum for local CSOs to emerge. As a result, the succeeding peacebuilding and development phase presented a significant window of opportunities for the international community to reshape and reconstruct state society relations based on the instincts of a liberal paradigm. On the surface, Sierra Leone's civil society landscape prospered in the form of numerous associations and organisations. Behind the scene, those *actors* appear to gradually forfeit their liberal *functions* of an independent, empowered and participatory civil sphere. This is a striking phenomenon and its multifaceted causal mechanisms, as well as how they are intertwined, remain by and large unexplored. In interlinking the theoretical, analytical, historical and empirical accounts of Parts I and II, this last chapter will return to the thesis' overall research question at hand:

Why are civil society landscapes in non-Western fragile states at risk of being gradually depoliticised?

In developing a response, the chapter will advance three main arguments. First, in further advancing the work of Howell and Pearce (2002), Verkoren and van Leeuwen (2012), Cubitt (2013) and M'Cormack-Hale (2013), Section 7.1 supports the commonly agreed consensus that civil society has become instrumentalised to serve a broader liberal peacebuilding and development agenda in numerous ways. Causalities explaining this phenomenon can be located in donor's "cherry picking" (Cubitt 2013) of only well-established actors; but they can also be found in weak state capacities (M'Cormack-Hale 2013) or a top-down mentality and bad coordination among local CSOs, to name a few. Second, Section 7.2 argues that a deeper inquiry into the cultural particularisms and political culture of Sierra Leone reveals that Ekeh's bifurcated state is very much alive. In other words, Western idea(l)s of participatory approaches and democracy are challenged by a persisting urban-rural divide as well as

socially entrenched forms of neopatrimonialism, elite-loyalism and tribalism. This observation should not be misinterpreted as giving a sense that Sierra Leone's civil sphere is not open to, or capable of, establishing democratic and participatory societal structures. On the contrary, as it will be argued later, Sierra Leonean society finds itself currently in the midst of renegotiating those various intersections of a primordial and civic sphere. Yet efforts to strengthen the civil sphere concomitant with rigid monitoring mechanisms and evaluation frameworks frequently lack the aptitude to grant such processes enough leeway and time. Third, the effects colonialism has had on African societies are still reflected in the current monopolisation of wealth and power among a few (elites) next to a vast majority living in abject poverty. More concretely, Section 7.3 sheds light on how abject poverty, human development and above all the lack of education affect civic activism and agency. This remains a scarcely addressed aspect in peacebuilding and development literature. Comparing a sub-Saharan African post-conflict country's society to Maslow's famous "Hierarchy of Needs" (1943), one may question where a physiologically starved society – not to mention the lack of safety and sometimes also love/belonging and esteem its members endure – finds the strength for self-actualisation, self-transformation and self-articulation as it occurs in the Western world? Liberal depictions of civil society consequently risk overlooking societies' key constraints that thwart any form of self-actualisation from taking place.

Critically reflecting upon these entanglements, the last section (7.4) will then address the necessity of re-conceptualising settled modes of thinking in further advancing our knowledge about war-torn civil spheres in non-Western fragile states. It will explore how a society's political culture, as well as the matrix of local factors discussed in Chapter 2, may enhance our understanding as to how agency and voice is socially engineered. This is imperative in the quest for alternatives as to how peacebuilding and development efforts may empower and give a voice to weaker segments of a population to legitimise actions and agendas that affect the country as a whole.

7.1. Instrumentalisation of the civil sphere in peacebuilding and development practice.

Earlier, in Chapter 3, the thesis expanded on how international frameworks targeting civil societies in fragile states are generally occupied with three main aspects: inclusiveness, capacity building and effectiveness. In short, external peacebuilding and development assistance inadvertently converted local civil society actors into objects of measurement based on pre-determined indicators, outputs, outcomes and long-term impacts. Over time, strengthening civil society became an outwardly legitimising strategy for a liberal peacebuilding and development agenda and course. However, most donors and their respective frameworks (e.g. 8 Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness) are not anticipating that funding allocations, as well as implementation and M&E mechanisms, promote a rather restrictive landscape of and for a war-torn and non-Occidental civil sphere to flourish in its own manner and pace. As the empirical data presented in Part II suggests, in the case of Sierra Leone the majority of local civil society actors are repeatedly challenged by externally imposed bureaucratic structures, log-frames and administrative procedures. Then again, donors are struggling with the lack of urgently needed resources and capacities on the ground. As a result there seems to be little leeway for a more organic and culturally embedded progression of a war-torn civil sphere. Less formal actors such as home-grown associations, non-registered CBOs, sodalities or youth groups are to a much greater degree approached as beneficiaries - on rare occasions as implementing partners, but generally not as actors that take charge of their own interests and agendas.

Graph 3 in Chapter 6 (Section 6.2.3) further illustrated that externally-led peacebuilding and development efforts led to an instrumentalisation of Sierra Leone's civil society landscape. Concretely, an extensive mapping analysis of CSOs' functions on the ground showed that despite liberal aspirations of an active civil society in terms of "people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation" (8 Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness, 2010), donor support towards those areas was low. Also, lack of ownership was a recurring challenge for the majority of CSOs interviewed. Probably one of the main reasons for donors' preferences towards communal and social development, and consequently service delivery, can be *inter*

alia located in the many pressing needs of an impoverished, largely unschooled and unemployed society.

Furthermore, the thesis contends that the growing support towards CSOs fortified aid dependency and consequently undermined the capacity of the Sierra Leonean state. In this context, Cubitt (2013) argues that in Sierra Leone, external policy interventions targeting civil society distorted democracy and removed accountability from the local sphere. She concludes (p. 107), "The first step for interventionists is to establish local perceptions of legitimacy and understand how people identify genuine participatory projects themselves". The thesis not only agrees with but also further advances Cubitt's observation on two accounts. To begin with, there is undeniably a salient lack of inclusiveness. Part II of the thesis alluded to numerous incidences when less capacitated, rural, informal or home-grown organisations and associations were repeatedly excluded from important decision making processes affecting the country's overall direction and path. The thesis further indicates that this is also reflected in a certain top-down mentality and urban-rural divide among local CSOs themselves. Correspondingly, Cubitt is most accurate in stating that local voices are not always represented through traditionally funded civil society actors. Chapter 6 elaborated in detail how funding schemes usually target formally registered civic formations as opposed to less formal actors or activists. What is more, non-traditional civil society actors such as informal associations or clubs are often difficult to discern aside from the fact that they lack a reputation of being accountable and experienced partners. However, whereas Cubitt, leans towards an actor-oriented approach (albeit not characterised as such) in stressing how and why donors' cherry picking instrumentalised Sierra Leone's civil sphere, the thesis aim was to interlink actors voices with functional-oriented approaches as well. In doing so, the thesis generated new insights and knowledge as to why local agency and voices from below are at risk of being constantly undermined. It is also here where the thesis identifies a paradox. Regardless of a strong emphasis within the international community's language on empowering local civil societies by means of liberal functions required for a democratic idea(l) (see Chapter 3), in the case of Sierra Leone the majority of civil society actors appear to be neutralised and depoliticised. The historical and empirical accounts presented in Part II also provided new insights to M'Cormack-Hale's and Cubitt's critical stance with supplementary findings. In the

first instance, the thesis contends that local perceptions of legitimacy (as put forward by Cubitt) may not always match with Western researchers' and interventionists' instinctive thinking of a democracy-committed and inclusive civil sphere. Recognising how societal structures were distorted and shaped over history and time is imperative for a better understanding of why war-torn societies are still in the process of renegotiating their own legitimising arrangements from the grassroots to the state level. In line with Acemoglu's (et al., 2013) findings, Chapter 4 highlighted that not only is Sierra Leone's civil sphere captured by chiefs but that efforts to strengthen it might just strengthen the control of the chiefs over it. More generally, the country's economic development heavily depends on the control of local elites over the civil sphere. Similarly, local perceptions of legitimacy depend also on the extent to which the civil sphere submits itself to elites. Ironically, as will be discussed in section 7.2 below, interviews conducted by the author detected a remarkable sense of loyalism towards political parties, elders and chiefs despite widely articulated frustrations about corruption, embezzlement and fraud. In reflection of M'Cormack-Hale's and Cubitt's work, the thesis stresses that it would therefore be far too simplistic, in some instances even unjust, to locate explanations of the instrumentalisation dilemma in the mechanisms of external peacebuilding and development assistance alone. There is a tendency in recent scholarship, specifically among the alternative discourse school, to portray peacebuilding and development practices as endeavours that disregard "the everyday life" of ordinary people and their legitimising voices from below (see Section 1.2.4, Chapter 1). While these criticisms are in many instances vindicated, they nonetheless sideline the importance of thoroughly interlinking those claims with often conflicting perceptions and narratives from the civil sphere. These empirically grounded ambiguities can open up new vistas for a culturally attuned understanding of persisting and accepted societal power structures and how they are socially engineered. The thesis' exploratory case study of Sierra Leone provides several insightful examples in this respect.

First, whereas funding allocations did play an essential part in instrumentalising civil society for a liberal agenda, it was also the local civil sphere that manoeuvred itself into a position to provide services that the GoSL lacked the capacity and/or political will to provide. In the course of both periods of field research the author witnessed how directors of Freetown-based CSOs used their status as a stepping stone

into local politics. This clearly offers a new perspective into how Sierra Leoneans renegotiate or even understand their very own boundaries between civil society and the state. Second, without denying the philanthropic intent and extremely important work of many local civil society actors, working for or founding a CSO is certainly an opportunity for income generation as well as a means of acquiring local prestige. As noted in Chapter 6, the emergence of numerous briefcase CSOs, but also notorious corruption within CSOs, elucidate how ostensible civil actors instrumentalised their own country's mushrooming civil society landscape to make ends meet. Third, from a postcolonial lens, one could even go so far as to argue that civic associations or organisations are, to varying degrees, an integral part of Sierra Leone's primordial culture and life. As such, civil society actors subtract from the civic public to the benefit of their primordial ties (see Chapter 4). Fourth, apart from Acemoglu's (et al., 2013) in-depth study on how chiefs instrumentalise the civil sphere for their own interests, there is a noticeable patronage mentality among local politicians as well. Prior to the 2012 elections, interviewees (CSO No. 16, CSO No.40) referred to several incidences in which politicians took advantage of the desperate situation of disadvantaged youth to 'buy' their votes. The constant lack of economic opportunities and prospects of a better life rendered many ex-combatants and home grown youth clubs prone to co-optation by political elites (Mitton 2013, pp. 329-332). Chapter 6 further alluded to similar accounts to Gardner's (2014) research about FBC students. Instead of opposing or challenging the behaviour and actions of corrupt elders, political party-loyalism dominates the university culture, notwithstanding the many grievances students face in their everyday lives. Undoubtedly, securing the support of Sierra Leone's youth and CSOs also reflects a certain fear among the country's elites of a potential relapse into conflict.

In sum, even though the thesis accedes to the general criticism that externally-led peacebuilding and development interventions instrumentalised Sierra Leone's civil sphere, it also stresses that local dynamics should not be dismissed. A country's political culture, in the shadows of a hitherto bifurcated state, is an often overlooked entry point in the attempt to understand why civil society not only needs to be reconceptualised but also takes on a different dimension in the context of non-Western fragile states.

7.2. Cultural particularism, political culture and the bifurcated state

Section 1.2.3 of Chapter 1 pointed to the recurring debates on the difficulties of tailoring peacebuilding and development efforts to more context-specific and culturally sensitive approaches. It highlighted the dichotomous relationship between liberalism and cultural particularism fuelling many discussions revolving around the ethics of peacebuilding and development interventions (Lidén, 2009). In response to the fierce accusations of cultural imperialism, aid agencies have increasingly engaged in community-based initiatives with the expectation of ensuring a more integrated and inclusive approach. In doing so, CBAs are generally designed in a way that gives communities direct control over investment decisions; project planning, execution as well as monitoring (Huma 2009, p. 4). In the case of Sierra Leone, the local turn is noticeable in the high number of CSOs targeting communal, social and human development as depicted in Graph 3. In their interactions with international partner organisations, local CSOs repeatedly perceived themselves as gateways toward a more culturally sensitised peacebuilding and developmental process. Organisations such as CSO No.4 or CSO No. 5 serve as prime examples. In both cases, their directors are part of the very communities they seek to help. Still, both stressed that communication strategies and patterns of interaction with external actors differ from community to community — some are better involved than others. Correspondingly, the thesis elaborated on the many problems local peacebuilding and development actors encounter when it comes to the implementation of community-based projects aiming to be more culturally attuned. The empirical data presented in Part II revealed that expectations of fostering social cohesion and local ownership are commonly challenged by low participation, syndromes of aid dependency, high illiteracy rates, gender inequality, intergenerational power imbalances and, above all, corruption manifested in neopatrimonialism, clientlism and patronage. Following Labonte (2008) there is indeed a high risk of aggravating social exclusion, particularly affecting women and youth. At the same time, local accounts of their everyday challenges occurring at the very grassroots level led to puzzling results. On several occasions answers given by interviewees appeared to be a contradiction in terms. One interview partner (CSO No. 2) even finished the conversation by saying: "Please take note of the fact that my views are very controversial". However, what appeared at first confusing for a Western researcher's mind-set eventually opened up an entire new perspective about the social and cultural quintessence of Sierra Leone's present civil sphere. The

remainder of Section 7.2 will address these contradictions and how they inform society's political culture. Concretely, particular attention will be given to the following three aspects: chieftaincy systems and communal life (7.2.1); liberal aspirations alongside illiberal customs and traditions (7.2.2); and local perceptions of colonialism and liberal post-colonial interventionism (7.2.3).

7.2.1. Chieftaincy systems and communal life.

To start with, it is necessary to repeat that interviewees, including CSOs, individuals, communities and youth clubs, frequently complained about the corrupt, undemocratic and exclusionary behaviour of their elders and chiefs, as well as injustices evoked by the neopatrimonial nature of chieftaincy systems and customary law. In Abraham's almost cynical way of putting it (2013, p. 173): "With few good chiefs around, it appears that the only effective institution that presently exists in the chiefdoms is extortion by chiefs and chiefdom officials under protection of government officials and politicians. In a literal sense, the chiefdoms are in a state of disarray". Surprisingly, when interviewees were asked if they would like to put an end to the chieftaincy system, or at least remove power from the chiefs, none of them agreed. Sierra Leone's civil sphere is characterised by a salient socially and culturally embedded consensus about the duty to shower community elders and chiefs with loyalty and respect - even though their actions are frequently not to the benefit of all. A short excerpt from an interview with members of the destitute Kroo Bay community will better illustrate this point.[143] During the conversation, a handful of fishermen remonstrated against the embezzlement and corruption of their community elders. In the natural course of the talk they expressed the need for fishing equipment as their work becomes more dangerous by the day. Illegal fishing vessels depleting Sierra Leone's shore line of fish force them to go further out into the sea with fishing boats reminiscent of prehistoric times.[144] Their daily dangerous endeavours claimed many local fishermen's lives. Towards the end of the interview, the fishermen were asked how they would proceed if the community were given the money to buy better equipment so that they could catch more fish and be safe. All of them unanimously agreed that they would distribute the funds through the chief – in spite of the high risk

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[143] Interview held in Freetown, 25.06.2011.
[144] According to the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF), Sierra Leone loses an estimated USD 29 million to IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing every year. See: http://ejfoundation.org/oceans/issues-pirate-fishing, last access 01.05.2014.

of losing the funds to corruption.. Putting the phenomenon of an almost unwavering dutifulness aside, independent actions or decisions of community members would certainly risk social exclusion, enormous tensions, and in the worst case, being expelled from communal life.

More generally, in conversations with local CSOs, chiefs were generally perceived as both facilitators and blockers of the country's peacebuilding and development process. Some CSOs expressed the need for a better reform of the chieftaincies and felt that chiefs should become more educated. Others described it as a "cultural outfit that needs to be maintained" (CSO No. 3). Following Abraham's (2013) insightful discussion about "Chieftaincy and Reconstruction in Sierra Leone" it is perhaps much more than just that. In his view, the institution of paramount chieftaincy is at the heart of Sierra Leone's traditional institutions. Indeed, it not only shapes Sierra Leone's cultural particularism of the everyday but is also an inevitable part of society's political culture influencing ordinary people's behaviour, belief systems, societal structures and ties. Yet, recalling Chapter 4, its traditional roots were severely distorted under colonial governance which misused the chiefs' traditional role, authority, political and social status for its own ends. From independence onwards, especially under Stevens' rule, chiefs were once again instrumentalised as vote-catching tools and their traditional duties further shorn. In an attempt to restore the past, towards the end of the war, Kabbah's administration radically reversed the country's policy towards chiefs.[145] In retrospect, the results of these policies are, by and large, disappointing and in some instances the situation even worsened for weaker segments of the population. For example, the presence of former CDF combatants impeded the restoration of civil authority in some chiefdoms as they saw themselves above the law. In addition, local courts under customary law have degenerated into machineries for exploitation of the poor (Abraham 2013, p. 173). Thomson (2007, p. 23) additionally warns that Sierra Leone's district councils could easily become the tools of central government or the chiefdoms as opposed to presenting an independent development force. In his view, the "Local Government Act", passed in March 2004,

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[145] In October 2002, the government launched a "Task Force on Decentralization and Local Government" supported by the UNDP and the WB. Other international donors also became heavily involved. A council of paramount chiefs was set up to complement district councils as well as to oversee chieftaincy development reforms in consultation with the adult population to make it more 'people friendly'. In addition DfID funded the establishment of a "Governance Reform Secretariat" which introduced a decentralisation section and sought to respond to immediate problems of rural dislocation by facilitating the return of the paramount chiefs (Thomson 2007, pp. 20-23).

created a structure which has many similarities to the one which existed prior to 1972. More precisely (p. 23):

> The district councils are responsible for providing a wide range of services devolved from central government, while the chiefdoms perform other essential local functions, notably the administration of customary land rights, revenue collection and the maintenance of law and order. Moreover, the councils depend for their revenues either on transfers from the centre or on taxes collected by the chiefdoms.

During interviews with CSOs and CBOs, frustrations about the mechanisms of the current chieftaincy system were usually articulated on the subject of customary land rights. To cite a northern-based CBO (No. 45):

> There are cultural customs in Sierra Leone which are outdated, like the land system. Some people are prioritised. (…) I would like to keep the chiefdom system but we have to introduce agreements regarding land issues with the Paramount Chief and the individual.

Sierra Leone's peacebuilding and development phase is considered by international donors, as well as local civil society actors, as an opportune moment of chieftaincy reform. Thus far, post-conflict governments have been reluctant to engage in a thorough reform addressing the central contradictions around the institution. This probably stems from the fear that its rationalisation could make the chiefs less pliable and more independent (Abraham 2013, pp. 178-179). In addition to experts' opinions, many interviewees expressed the urgent need to reform the chieftaincy system to make it more responsive to the social and economic realities at the grassroots level. The strong disposition of local people to maintain it as a "traditional" institution, in spite of its flaws, reinforces the matrix of local factors, identified in Chapter 2, which shape and socially construct the everyday of the civil sphere. Clearly, conceptualising civil society in contemporary Sierra Leone is inextricably linked with the legacies of colonial and post-colonial rule and the fabrics and social workings of neopatrimonial networks and chiefdom systems. Society's widespread acceptance of patronage, clientelism and 'big men' mentalities rests upon a societal logic that interlinks social, political and economic spheres much tighter than in Western societies. For Hoffman (2007) this means, in practical terms, that social networks are crucial to everything from employment opportunities to ritual initiations to individual identity. He continues (p 651):

> Social action needs to be understood not in terms of individual activities but as the mobilisation of social networks. 'People here', writes the anthropologist Charles Piot,

referring to West Africa generally, 'do not "have" relations; they "are" relations. The social being of an individual is measured by the people with whom one has relations of dependence or for whom one acts as a patron. The capacity to maintain a social network (a demonstrable 'wealth in people') is the mark of status.

Put differently, a liberal understanding of civil society is probably most challenged by local perceptions of the role of the individual and his or her relation towards the state and society therein (see Chapters 1 and 2). The individual cannot be that easily detached from political and non-political attitudes affecting communal, if not societal, life. Mindsets (values, norms, orientations) about how to be a responsible community member, as well as the political nature of communities can stand in stark contrast to liberal or emancipatory understandings of individuality in the context of a society as a whole. It is important to stress at this point that the thesis' observation should not be misinterpreted as suggesting that sub-Saharan African societies lack the determination for emancipation and transformation from below. In fact, quite the opposite is the case. Sierra Leoneans are presently in the midst of renegotiating societal intersections of the primordial and civil sphere, and consequently, the nature and characteristics of state-society relations and communal life. This observation can be further substantiated with another ambiguity at hand.

7.2.2. Liberal aspirations alongside illiberal customs and traditions

In addition to the question about the characteristics of Sierra Leonean civil society (Section 6.2), interviewees were asked the question: *How would you define the term and concept of civil society?* (Question 1, Appendix 2).

The preponderance of interviewees associated the concept of civil society with: activism, advocacy work, giving voice and rights to underprivileged and marginalised people (e.g. grassroots communities, elderly and youth). Similar definitions were also made by CSOs who engage purely in service delivery and are not involved in any advocacy work.

Table 3. Question 1 (Appendix 2): **How would you define the term and concept of civil society?**
"Civil society acts on behalf of innocent, poor, grassroots community people, young people and the elderly."   [CSO No. 15]
"Civil society is the voice of the grassroots. It is the inter-mediator of grassroots and the

government. Civil society gives a voice of the grassroots to the government."
[CBO No. 44]
"I would define civil society as all actors that represent various interests, groups, CSOs, CBOs, - but it does not include social clubs or INGOs, the latter are often consider as civil society but they are not. Civil society actors are activists, but not all of them, such as journalists, can consider themselves as such, because they are not independent."
[CSO No. 19]
"Civil society is a pressure group that should represent the marginalised voices of the people."
[CSO No. 22]
"Civil society means to work directly with CSOs, educate people on their civic rights, advice the government and direct people in the best way of being good citizens. But also to push the government to the right ideas."
[CSO No. 26]

Interlacing these answers with the theoretical discourses of Part I, some central observations can be made. Frist, interviewees' responses leaned implicitly towards a Gramscian, and to an extent also Habermasian intellectual tradition. More concretely, emphasis was given to the transformative (Jantzi and Jantzi 2009) role of civil society and the active part it should have in shaping state society relations and the overall democratic nature of a state. At the same time, civil society's role was predominantly perceived as empowering fellow citizens to be in charge of their own future and lives. A significant number of interviewees articulated the need for stronger state institutions. Only one CSO (No. 27) felt that education should be privatised because of the untrustworthiness and extremely low standards of public schools. Apart from that, none of the respondents made an explicit mention with regards to a limited role of the state to further enhance the freedom of the individual, in line with Tocqueville's account of state-civil society relations. As Section 7.3 will further expand, the majority of Sierra Leoneans is de facto not in a socioeconomic position to be in charge of its own destiny without governmental or any other kind of external support. Thus, while generally valuing and upholding traditional or primordial forms of societal organisation and structure (e.g.: the chieftaincy system, secret societies), respondents still embraced a liberal understanding of the concept and term as well. This is an essential aspect to acknowledge if the aim is to understand how Western conceptualisations of civil society are socially reproduced and absorbed. This may also explain why the liberal-minded aspirations of civil society actors are inextricably implanted in a strong intersection of the private, political and economic sphere.

Accordingly, the aim of the thesis was to learn more about culturally attuned solutions in the country's peacebuilding and development process. All CSOs were therefore asked: *The slogan 'African solutions for African problems' became quite popular in the past decade. Do you agree? If so - with regard to your own work - what would an African (Sierra Leonean) solution be?* (Question 5, Appendix 2)

The author's high expectations of gathering fresh and new insights were soon damped by very generic and vague answers. At times, interviewees could not even think of a Sierra Leonean solution that would enhance the situation of their own land. Apart from a few specific accounts of local music, food, herbs or clothes, in the main, community development initiatives were labelled as a Sierra Leonean way of fostering local development. However, this again reflects a liberal rather than traditional mind-set of empowering the grassroots level. Above all, there is also a strong focus on community development by Western donors and INGOs.

Strikingly, even though it is not related to peacebuilding and development practices, a considerable number of CSOs made mention of FGM and the importance of keeping it up as a traditional institution but under much better medical and hygienic conditions. In fact only a small minority of CSOs (Nos. 22 and 33) explicitly noted that they wanted to abandon the procedure. As noted in Chapter 4, FGM for Sierra Leoneans is not simply an act of circumcision and a failure to be initiated could be a one-way street to social marginalisation, if not stigmatisation. Even local women's organisations who actively advocate for gender equality and better representation in the parliament did not speak out against the practice of FGM. The majority have close social ties with secret societies themselves, which is yet another example of the crisscrossing of primordial and civic spheres. This clearly brings back to mind Mac Ginty's (2010) concerns about the illiberal nature of indigenous practices and how they can stand in stark contrast to the principles of the West. Undoubtedly, the issue of illiberal practices clearly drives the Western researcher into a corner where one uncomfortable question can no longer be ignored: to what extent should cultural diversity supersede the pitfalls of importing liberal values and norms? There has been a vast amount of criticism in the literature addressing how cultural imperialism is fortified through interventionism from the West (Datzberger 2015a, *forthcoming*). Nonetheless, concerns about cultural imperialism should not distract from the need to uphold universal norms when it comes to torture practices that violate individuals'

human rights. As CSO (No. 33) put it "Some local traditions are not African solutions such as GBV (Gender-based Violence). One has to filter out the good from the bad ones. […] With regards to improving the situation for women the road is very long. Sensitisation has to happen at the chiefdom level".

Generally, although illiberal customs and traditions are valued and upheld, Section 6.2.2 highlighted that despite numerous challenges, the majority of interviewees seemed yet to be very open and welcoming towards liberal peacebuilding and development assistance and Western donor support.

7.2.3. Local perceptions of colonialism and liberal post-colonial interventionism

Reflecting on the historical events depicted in Chapter 4, one would assume that Sierra Leoneans' bear great resentments towards the West. Centuries of subjugation and distortion of their cultural identities would give them plenty of reason and purpose. In the course of a long interview with a northern-based CBO (Nr.44), the director made an unexpected comment[146]:

> The white men are too clever. We should borrow some of their culture, like for instance their tax system. Long time ago Africans were complaining that the British asked them to pay taxes for their houses, but these taxes are needed in order to develop the country. The white people are here to help us.

The CBOs reinterpretation of the Hut Tax War exemplifies a persisting nostalgia and romanticisation of colonial rule. This is especially noticeable among older, educated and Freetown-based segments of the Sierra Leone population (Section 2.3, Chapter 2). In several informal conversations with elders, the colonial era was usually portrayed as a time when Sierra Leoneans benefited from a fully functioning education system and hospitals. In this context, it is worth reaching back to critical discussions about the interplay of civil society, peacebuilding and development in Chapter 1. More concretely, Section 1.2 commenced with a discourse surrounding the issue of self-determination in current scholarly debates. In alignment with Chabal (1996), it put forward the argument that the dynamics inherent in present sub-Saharan African post-conflict countries have to be reconnected with a pre-colonial and colonial past. This further implies acknowledgement and recognition of how identity was distorted, de- and re-constructed over time. It is precisely here where the thesis identifies another

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[146] Interview held in Kabbala, 08.08.2012.

puzzling development stemming from Sierra Leone's civil sphere. Namely, despite the colonial experience of subjugation, by and large Sierra Leoneans appear to be very welcoming towards the West (most notably the British) and its liberal interventions on the ground. Chapter 6 brought to light that the majority of interviewees trust the international community even more than their own government. Occasionally, the author interjected the sub question, whether the legacy of slave trade and colonial rule is to blame for the miseries that overshadowed the country for so long. CSO No. 40 gave a memorable answer: "Of course we could go on and on and blame the West for it all. But we had over 50 years to fix that on our own. That should have been enough". Similarly, in an informal conversation with a group of young unemployed men sitting and drinking inside the relics of century-old slave tunnels in Freetown, the author wondered how they feel about the past. "This happened a long time ago. We like you white people from the West" they replied.[147] Throughout both research stays, people repeatedly noted that Sierra Leoneans have a very short memory, including with regards to the atrocities committed during the civil war. Many interviewees subtly indicated that Sierra Leoneans want to, and should, finally take matters into their own hands. The argument of the thesis would go one step further in suggesting that colonialism and the events on and around independence are integral parts of people's present cultural identity. Tragically, Sierra Leone's past cannot be reversed and cultural distortion is one of the features shaping the characteristics of the civil sphere. Consequently, the more fascinating question is how Sierra Leoneans generally deal with the past. In some way one encounters a collective consciousness that is reminiscent of Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophical thought. Freedom, in Sartre's famous essay on "Being and Nothingness" (1943), is not only the foundation, or perpetual question of everyone's being but also the conscious decision of how one reacts towards an experience of injustice directly affecting oneself. From this point of view, freedom rests upon our ability to choose our reality and how we perceive the past. There is a remarkable sense of forgiveness entrenched in the Sierra Leonean cultural identity from the Northern to the Southern and the Eastern to the Western parts of the country. Reading through interview transcripts of both stays, Western interventionism is mostly perceived as an opportunity to start anew as opposed to agonising about the

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[147] A short article was written by the author on the subject, see: Datzberger (2012c): "Freetown's "Ajekuleh": Where the Good, the Bad and the Ugly revive memories of a tragic past", LSE Africa: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2012/09/07/freetowns-ajekuleh-where-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly-revive-memories-of-a-tragic-past/, last visit 05.05.2014.

past or fearing cultural imperialism. As a consequence, Sierra Leone's bifurcated state, and hence political culture, not only welcomes Western assistance but is also very open to embracing liberal idea(l)s. Yet, Sartre also contends that freedom has to be a choice in order to manifest as change. This is also expressed in Curle's argument that: (1973, p.119) "A society will develop only as the individuals in it develop their true potential and are prepared to give themselves the social efforts to which they feel personally related and in which they have some rights to control their personal destinies". Sadly, the majority of Sierra Leoneans are still far from having the freedom of choice and face many constraints that thwart any form of societal self-actualisation in the first place.

7.3. Voices from the civil sphere: Education to foster social transformation.

Societal transformation stemming from the very grassroots level in any form whatsoever can only take root if certain basic needs are met. As Thomas Piketty recently put it, "Democracy is not just one citizen, one vote, but a promise of equal opportunity".[148] Despite considerable support from the international community, Sierra Leone remains among the poorest places on earth. Even with economic growth, overall poverty reduction has had only marginal success. Part II of the thesis highlighted that current life expectancy is low, almost half of the population is illiterate, child mortality rates are high and every fifth woman dies from preventable complications during birth or pregnancy – to list only a few of Sierra Leone's present development dilemmas. The country's high dependency on aid, arguably one of the legacies of century-long slave trade and colonial rule, impedes self-sufficient development in various areas and aspects of everyday life. This clearly also hampers grassroots agency and voice. While discussing Sierra Leone's problems of food shortages in the rural areas, CSO No. 5 stated "Peace is food. You cannot have peace when you are hungry". The principles of fundamental human needs are famously defined by Maslow. Simply put, if basic needs such as food, shelter and security are not taken care of, a population will be tremendously weakened in striving for self-actualisation and empowerment. Against this background, Chapter 2 suggested including "life circumstances", such as living conditions, health, nutrition or

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[148] Erlanger Steven (19.04.2014): "Taking on Adam Smith (and Karl Marx)", the New York Times, see: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/20/business/international/taking-on-adam-smith-and-karl-marx.html?smid=fb-share&_r=1, last visit 05.05.2014.

education, in the matrix of local factors that shape the political culture of the civil sphere.

In an attempt to get a much clearer impression about people's everyday concerns and needs, the field research took inspiration from the World Bank's trilogy, *Voices of the Poor* (a brief description was provided in Section 1.2.4). Apart from the quantitative data presented in Chapter 6, the thesis' aim was to give voice to locals and gain more knowledge about the priorities of ordinary Sierra Leoneans during the peacebuilding and development phase of their country. All interviewees were asked the question: *"If you had three wishes for the future of your country, what would they be?"* (Appendix 2, Question 10).

Chart 4: "Wish List" of all Interviewees in Sierra Leone (2011 and 2012)

Category	Percentage
Education / vocational training	20 %
Good governance / stronger state institutions / democracy	11 %
Empower youth / employment generation	9 %
Healthcare / more rights for the disabled	7 %
Empower women / gender equality	7 %
Combat corruption	6 %
Agriculture	6 %
Sustainability / poverty alleviation / better living standards	6 %
Peace is really maintained	5 %
Justice / human rights / freedom of speech	3 %
Reform chieftancy system and customary law	3 %
Vibrant and well capacitiated civil society (CSOs and NGOs)	3 %
Improve trade / private sector / management of natural resources	3 %
Support for sports / artists / music	2 %
Invest in community (or support the club / movement)	2 %
Infrastructure development	2 %
Revitalise economy / support micro enterprises	2 %
Water and sanitation	2 %
Food Security	2 %
Accountable and transparent donors	1 %

Certainly, the answers summarised in Chart 4 are not representative for Sierra Leone as a whole. Rather, Chart 4 epitomises the voices of 179 respondents which include not only CSOs, CBOs and associations but also group interviews with home-grown youth clubs, communities or individuals the author approached and spoke to in the street. The random sampling notwithstanding, responses correspond well with the findings of a country wide opinion poll conducted by the Freetown-based CEDSA in 2009, which also ranked education on top.

All the same, Chart 4 leads to one central observation echoing some of the theoretical accounts of Section 1.2 in Chapter 1. That is that the first three priorities – education, democracy and good governance, and youth empowerment and employment generation - embrace areas of fundamental social change. In other words, they all lean towards transformative rather than assimilative peacebuilding and development paradigms (Jantzi and Jantzi 2009). This is particularly interesting as the root causes of Sierra Leone's structural violence are, next to other factors, manifested in the unequal relationship between the grassroots population and a privileged few. In conjunction with CEDSA's opinion poll, Chart 4 therefore illustrates how ordinary Sierra Leoneans would like to seek autonomy and self-sufficiency to equalise those power relationships. In so doing, the majority of respondents listed education on top. The importance placed on education was not only prevalent during several interviews, but also in the scope of many informal conversations throughout both research stays. An OECD Report (1998) on civil society and international development rightly states that "lack of education stops a great majority of Africans from being citizens in their own right" (p. 117). Schools are indeed the birthplace for a (civil) society to flourish in enabling people at the individual and collective level to articulate and advocate for their concerns and needs. In interviews with youth clubs, education was usually perceived as being empowered to "be" or "become somebody," as was vocational training. The Oxford dictionary defines the verb 'empower' as "make (someone) stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life".[149] The clear wish to have a certain control over their own lives and future was a recurring theme of youth clubs and communities. Yet, for most young people in Sierra Leone such control, as well as the freedom of choice, is a privilege they may never have. In the words of a young unemployed male: "I believe God tests my faith with all these challenges. That is why I will never lose my faith. (…) With all these challenges, people have to smoke marijuana in order to stay at peace".[150] Even those who had the opportunity to attend school are still struggling to find a stable job.[151]

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[149] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/empower, accessed 06.05.2014.

[150] Conversation held in Freetown, 26.06.2011.

[151] Without drifting too far away from the thesis' focus, it is worth briefly mentioning that substance abuse has long been a problem in Sierra Leone – during and even more so after the war. The dire employment situation renders many vulnerable to heavy addiction. According to health practitioners and authorities, Sierra Leone's growing role as a transit route for the global narcotics trade, made harder drugs – cocaine and, to a lesser extent, heroin – increasingly available. Lupick, Travis for Aljazeera (26.01.2013): "Drug traffic fuels addiction in Sierra Leone", see: http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/01/2013121105523716213.html, accessed 06.05.2014.

By and large, the GoSL's response, but also that of the international community, towards the country's public educational systems has been disappointing. Simpson observed in 2010 (p. 168):[152]

> [E]ducation, which is ranked as the most important function of government by the public, is only sixth in expenditures by the Sierra Leonean government. While both the government and international donors believe education is important, there is simply not enough money to support it. Foreign aid has assisted the government in building new schools, but not in paying teachers, providing books, and necessary school supplies, or in lowering school fees necessary to provide universal public education. (…) Almost three-fourths of the adults surveyed responded that taxes and school fees were too high, and more than four out of five believed that prices for goods and services were too high.

Although, there has been a rapid growth with regards to the number of children who complete primary school since the end of the war, there are still deep inefficiencies in the quality of education. Learning in primary school is often minimal and the bribing of underpaid teachers prior to the exam period has become a standard procedure – also in private and international schools. In an informal conversation, a Sierra Leonean director of a private school remarked with an undertone of frustration: "There are public schools in this country I would not even send my dog to". According to the latest World Bank study (2014) on youth employment in sub-Saharan Africa, one of the major challenges is no longer to enrol and send children to school but instead the low quality levels of teaching.[153] In his final statement to the UNSC on 22 March 2012, Michael von der Schulenburg, UNIPSIL's departing ERSG (Executive Representative of the Secretary-General) addressed the issue concluding:[154]

> In the 1960s, South Korea had a lower per capita income than most West African countries; today it is the tenth largest industrial country in the world. Korean President Kim recently explained the secret behind such success is simply education, education, and again education. And my final advice to Sierra Leone would therefore be: invest in your education, invest in universal primary and secondary education, invest in your technical colleges, and invest in your universities. Education would help turn Sierra Leone's natural and mineral wealth into sustainable development, it would help lift people out of poverty, it would help create new opportunities, it would help reduce unfair income distribution, and it could help maintaining a democratic and peaceful society. Freetown was once called the Athens of Africa—why not again?

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[152] Featured in the work of Simpson (2010 p. 161-171). CEDSA's public opinion poll interviewed college students in 2008 and adults in Freetown, Bo, Kenema, and Makeni in 2009.

[153] A full version of the report can be downloaded at: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2014/01/19342178/youth-employment-sub-saharan-africa-vol-2-2-full-report, accessed 08.05.2014.

[154] See: http://unipsil.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ssPP0CjE0Y0%3D&tabid=9634&language=en-US, accessed 06.05.2014.

It is noteworthy that during von der Schulenburg's appointment, from 2008 – 2012, neither UNIPSIL, nor the PBC or the PBF put strong emphasis on education. The PBF implemented one youth project in the total amount of USD 4 million, thereby creating small enterprises, but no substantial support to schools or universities was provided. This is undoubtedly a missed opportunity considering how low levels of education can affect the agency of Sierra Leone's civil sphere and, as a consequence, a society's political culture and voice. Moreover, supporting a LDC's (Least Developed Country) educational system is usually not perceived as an initiative that strengthens or empowers the civil sphere. Hence, the main focus on targeting CSOs distracts from the necessity to empower the civil sphere of a LDC from as early on as possible. This is not to imply that CSOs should no longer be local counterparts of external support. Instead, civil society support should also include additional funding commitments to comprehensively capacitate and reform the educational system of a country.

7.4. Reconceptualising civil society as an alternative route.

The thesis' aim was to set forth the argument that a society cannot be re-constructed, or strengthened, based on an externally introduced idea(l) but instead through building upon the historically, culturally and socially embedded characteristics that are already part of existing societal experiences. Over the past two decades of peacebuilding and development practice and scholarship, civil society emerged as a normative concept, an ethical idea, a vision of the social order that is not only descriptive but also prescriptive in providing a vision of a seemingly good life Seligman (1992, p. 201). Moreover, in view of the inherent contradictions of modern civilisation and state formation in the sub-Saharan African context, one must seriously question the theoretical and empirical possibility of a civil society as it thrived in the West. From this key observation, there are a couple of implications to be drawn. Those implications not only affect society's political culture and therefore agency and voice, but they also offer an alternative outlook on the idea of civil society in the Sierra Leonean context.

7.4.1 Reconceptualising the status of the individual.

A Western version of civil society is organised around the construction of a particular kind of social order cherishing and constantly renegotiating the rights of the individual members of any given society. In non-Western contexts, however, the

historical conditions of a classical liberal individualist conception of civil society is challenged by the societal and primordial fabrics of communal life. As Part II and Section 7.2.1 revealed, the status and the role of the individual is rooted in the communal experience of the everyday. Hence primordial attributes but also the political culture of communal life may supersede an individual's personal freedom or rights. If the aim is to empower and give voice to the very local civil sphere, it has to be first and foremost acknowledged that individual choices cannot be that easily detached from interpersonal ties and attitudes towards the community. Surprisingly, mainstream scholarship and practice are by and large preoccupied with what civil society actors ought to be (e.g. better capacitated, vibrant, independent, empowered, strengthened) or what their functions ought to achieve (e.g. reconciliation, social cohesion, service delivery, democratic legitimisation). In the case of Sierra Leone, in practice, these aspirations led to the reverse effect. To a large extent, Sierra Leone's civil society landscape has taken on the role of a neutralised service provider (see Section 6.2.3, Chapter 6). Partly, this is the case because one essential key aspect continues to be unaddressed, namely: what civil society actually is and entails in a non-Western post-conflict environment. In the attempt to avoid a Western deterministic approach to the country's political culture as to how agency and voice are socially engineered, Chapter 2 suggested a matrix of local factors that test liberal aspirations of the West. Using this matrix, Part II of the thesis then revealed that the tensions and dualisms between individual and communal life, between primordial and civic spheres, between cultural particularism and liberal values, are key factors that shape the political culture and also the very Sierra Leonean reality of civil society.

7.4.2. Reconceptualising civil society *actors* and *functions*.

It was repeatedly argued that in targeting specific civil society actors and functions, external support inadvertently renders post-conflict society into a de-personalised set of indicators in order to measure peacebuilding and development outputs and outcomes. As a result, civil society emerged as a subject of evaluation rather as an actor on its own terms. Local organisations are implicitly and explicitly put into a box full of different criteria which they are expected to fulfil. While Western interventionism was generally welcomed by local CSOs, their managerial systems and M&E frameworks create pressure and tension as well as new forms of cultural distortion. To a certain degree, externally led efforts aiming to strengthen and

empower civil society landscapes de facto fortify Tocqueville's conservative liberalist thinking. In mainly supporting formally registered CSOs, the civil sphere became reduced to a set of predetermined actors fulfilling functions that increasingly undermine the role of the state. Yet, a too rigid focus on "accountable" and specific civil society actors and their functions distracts from the important role played by several other actors of the civil sphere. These include: sodalities, secret societies, informal associations, home-grown youth clubs, Attaya places[155] or even palm wine huts where males regularly gather to discuss their daily concerns and affairs. Those informal and often loose civic formations are equally important in the making and shaping of patterns of social change over time. But in order to give those less formal societal formations more agency and voice their socioeconomic situation has to change - in particular with regards to food, health and education. As interviews summarized in Section 6.2.1 disclose, advocacy is a privilege many cannot afford and the average Sierra Leonean individual is far from taking matters into his or her own hands.

7.4.3. Political culture as a new entry point towards agency and voice.

Reflecting upon the above-depicted entanglements that put Sierra Leone's civil sphere at a risk of being gradually depoliticised (Sections 7.1 – 7.3), it is obvious to ask how the voices of the weaker segments of a population can be better heard. Throughout, the thesis has referred to the aspect of political culture as a potential new entry point in the attempt to strengthen and empower the civil sphere. The political culture of a society can help us to understand how agency from below is socially engineered but also undermined. With regards to Sierra Leone, the country's political culture not only surfaced in a completely different manner in history and time than in the liberal West, but it is also subject to continuous external influence. Put differently, Sierra Leone's political culture is informed by chieftaincy systems and communal life alongside Western interventionism and consequently a clash of cultural particularisms with liberal values and norms. The individual as an autonomous social actor is challenged by a political tradition of the collective as the true ethical and moral entity. Consequently, state-society relations in Sierra Leone are based on belief systems that strongly uphold values of patrimonial communal life. From this point of view, the

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[155] Meeting point for (predominantly) males to drink tea (Attaya), smoke or play any kind of (board) games but also publicly debate and discuss the everyday of communal, political and social life. In a way it is reminiscent of a poor man's version of the continental European tradition of a coffee house culture.

country's peacebuilding and development phase is undoubtedly a unique moment for the civil sphere to engage in actions to advocate for any locally desired societal change. This further implies that strengthening local civil society needs to be sensitive to how Sierra Leoneans themselves renegotiate how primordial and civic value systems are socially and politically manifested and intersect, if not the social contract of state-society relations as a whole. How values and norms that constitute a liberal civil society are going to be socially entrenched in the long haul should be the task of the Sierra Leonean civil sphere and not the Western researcher or practitioner. Then again, as the Sierra Leonean case has unmistakably shown, such an organic progression cannot take place if the average Sierra Leonean is deprived of basic physiological needs.

Conclusion and Further Implications

Any form of conflict, be it a (civil) war, rebellion, revolt, insurgency or civil uprising with the aim of destabilising persisting power structures, builds on the hopes of manifesting socio-political change – in whatsoever type or shape. Ensuing peacebuilding, and consequently also development, processes are, essentially, concerned about affecting the social, structural, political, economic and/or cultural order of a society. Undoubtedly, these are highly complex and lengthy processes interwoven in a web of historical, cultural and geographic characteristics and events. Moreover, instituting socio-political change is ideally nurtured by a legitimising force (the people), by means of peaceful public contestation, deliberation and debate. This in turn presupposes granting all societal segments political agency and voice. Seen from this admittedly liberal perspective, peacebuilding and development are highly socio-political albeit context-specific processes impinging upon the political culture of a society as a whole.

Yet, what if politics, understood as influence, agency and opposition, are removed from a conflict-, peacebuilding and/or development-affected civil sphere? In the simplest terms, people per se do not have the opportunity to articulate their wants and needs. They lack control over their own futures, destinies and lives. The absence of political influence not only accumulates sentiments of frustration and anger but, in the long term, can even trigger new forms of conflict, resistance or violent unrest. As the Sierra Leonean civil war perfectly illustrates, century-long political suffocation of the civil sphere alongside an accumulation of grievances provide the fertile ground for a violent rebellion driven by a vague political agenda and course. However, when the state, and consequently also clientelistic power structures, collapsed, civil initiatives flourished and thrived. The war created an exceptional political vacuum in which numerous individual, collective and informal or formal civil society actors could emerge. Not only did they provide humanitarian relief, but they also jointly advocated for their common political aims: democracy and peace. Initially, civil society actors found themselves receiving funding commitments and external support like never before in their history. That Sierra Leone's vibrant civil society landscape came to be,

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for the greater part, dormant, neutralised and politically weak during the later stages of the peacebuilding process (2007-2013), occurred as a completely unexpected phenomenon.

Surprisingly, the depoliticisation of Sierra Leone's civil sphere has not been the subject of careful deliberation or assessment by academics, practitioners or international and national policy-makers. By filling in this void, this thesis stressed that the depoliticisation of the civil sphere was fortified by the reappearance of societal and cultural particularisms, such as tribalism and neopatrimonialism, in conjunction with the institution of a liberal agenda for prosperity and peace. Whereas a liberal agenda sought to strengthen and capacitate local civil society actors, by and large, those actors became the safety net providing the fundamental public goods and services the Sierra Leonean state is either too weak or unwilling to provide. Efforts to strengthen domestic CSOs led to shared responsibilities, as opposed to local advocacy work for stronger state institutions and reforms, in different sectors (such as education and health). This was accompanied by the fact that Sierra Leone's civil sphere is to a great extent captured by politicians, elders or chiefs. Thus, intersections of a primordial and civic sphere not only deepened the loss of control by the public in policy making but also buttressed the absence of civic contestation to challenge governmental policies. In this regard, one essential but often overlooked function of Sierra Leone's civil sphere today is to renegotiate how not only cultural particularisms but also externally introduced or distorted norms are socially reproduced – over history and time. Building on this argument, the thesis therefore suggested that a socio-historical and postcolonial perspective can help in understanding the main characteristics, as well as political culture and cultural matrix, of civil society *in* and not *for* Sierra Leone.

In order to examine the above-depicted phenomena, the thesis made use of actor- and functional-oriented approaches to thoroughly elaborate how the civil sphere has become depoliticised since the end of the war. Both approaches undeniably fall short on one crucial account. Recalling Chapter 3, they fail to explain how and why moral values or norms are created and by whom. To borrow Gramsci's words "Man is above

all else mind, consciousness - that is, he is a product of history, not of nature".[156] In interpretation of his words, civic agency and voice ignites in people's minds as well as in historically accumulated and cultural values and therefore also in people's daily environment, upbringing and education. The latter, education, is also among the highest priorities for a better future in the view of ordinary Sierra Leoneans. Quite fittingly, it was also Gramsci who repeatedly urged the education of the working class – the poor – with the ambition of amassing organic intellectuals from below. Schools, following Section 7.3 of Chapter 7, can indeed be the birthplace of a flourishing (civil) society, enabling people at the individual and collective levels to articulate and advocate for their concerns. However, Sierra Leone's pressing need for better educational systems should not distract from efforts to find more creative ways of making the voices of weaker segments of the population better heard.

More generally, even though there has been a burgeoning interest among researchers and practitioners regarding the role and potential of civil society in peacebuilding and development processes over the past two decades, the depoliticisation of civil society presents a puzzle to be further examined and explored. It is important to stress that the thesis' aim was not to imply that Sierra Leone's civil sphere might continue to be persistently depoliticised. Rather, the intention was to highlight why it occurred and, above all, why it is an important concern. In other words, when it comes to studying the interplay between civil society and peacebuilding and development in non-Western fragile states, there are several implications and lessons for future research to be drawn from the Sierra Leonean experience. In this context, some of the most salient under-researched themes shall be briefly introduced - with the reservation that the following list is far from being complete.

First, the initial findings of the thesis need to be placed in a comparative context in order to assess whether the Sierra Leonean case is unique, or if there are similar occurrences in other fragile states. Haiti, for instance, already famous for being a "Republic of NGOs" (Kristof and Panarelli, 2010), presents another interesting example. With the risk of repeating what was already set out in Section 1.2.5 (Chapter

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[156] Cited in Martin (2002), op.cit., p. 82

1), the country has the second highest number of NGOs per capita in the world (after India). Current estimates of NGOs operating in Haiti, prior to the 2010 earthquake, range from 3,000 to as many as 10,000. This clearly undermined the Haitian government in carrying out several responsibilities and led to the dilemma of whether the country should move towards a system of shared responsibilities between CSOs and the state. How this further affected the political culture and voice of the Haitian civil sphere remains unexplored.

Second, and building on the previous point, more research is necessary on civil society actors and service delivery in fragile states. Are there clear interlinkages between a growing civil society landscape (including INGOs) and the retreat of the state? If so, what are the political implications for governance in those fragile states? Hence the key question should not only be whether a growing number of CSOs in fragile states improves public service delivery, but crucially, whether and what kind of new forms of governance emerge?

Third, thus far only a few scholars (e.g. Holmén, 2010; Howell and Pearce, 2002) have started to critically and thoroughly reflect upon the burgeoning interest in peacebuilding and development research on and around the civil sphere. Clearly, more research is required in this regard. For instance, we face considerable knowledge gaps about how a growing civil society landscape (including INGOs) impacts the societal and political realms of fragile states in various ways. There is a scarcity of the quantitative and qualitative research focusing on causal relationships needed to examine how the growing number of CSOs positively and negatively affects peacebuilding and development efforts in fragile states in the long term.

Fourth, international frameworks tend to overlook how multifaceted transitional societies are in their societal composition, claims, needs and idea(l)s. Post-conflict societies cannot be entirely recreated by external actors nor can one assume that every individual of the civil sphere coherently aims at achieving long-lasting peace and development in the same manner and pace. As argued in Chapter 3, commonly applied actors- and functional-oriented approaches in peacebuilding and development practice and research need to be challenged to a much greater extent. A too rigid focus on civil society actors, their respective functions and outputs in M&E frameworks and other

assessments, encourages processes which instrumentalise the local civil sphere. This further leads to the creation of a local civil society landscape that is no longer attuned to cultural particularisms and the political culture of the society in question. All the same, more attention should be paid to what kind of civil society landscape donors implicitly and explicitly strengthen and co-create.

Fifth, there is a commonly established consensus in the literature that in the sub-Saharan African context the nature and characteristics of state-society relations differ greatly from those in the West. The shortage of research on whether and how such processes of societal re-negotiation take place and take hold in fragile and non-fragile states, is therefore all the more surprising. This is unfortunate, as a careful observation of such processes of re-negotiation would allow us to get a much better understanding of whether and how externally introduced liberal values and norms are socially entrenched over the long haul.

Last but not least, in many fragile states, as in Sierra Leone, civil society actors see themselves repeatedly excluded from important decision-making processes at the global and local levels in the scope of peacebuilding and development efforts and events. One can, therefore, not avoid asking: how does continuous exclusion, or giving preference to only a few selected CSOs, influence, impinge upon and hamper the political culture and landscape of the civil sphere?

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Appendix 1

NOTE: The numbers indicated in the thesis next to the interviewees (e.g. CSO Nr. 8) have been removed from the list of interviews for the final publication given that some respondents requested anonymity. The identity (= indexing of CSOs etc.) of respondents was only disclosed to the thesis supervisor and examiners. Moreover, the exact day of the interview (as indicated in footnotes within the thesis) has been deleted in the list below and the original order of interviews modified in order to ensure unrecognizability.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4"><p align="center">List of Interviews*</p><p align="center">{25 June 2011 – 11 July 2011 & 8 July 2012 – 31 August 2012}
conducted in Sierra Leone</p></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"><p align="center">Formally Registered Civil Society Organisations</p></td></tr>
<tr><td>Nr</td><td>Name
(39 CSOs and 2 CBOs)</td><td>Notes</td><td>Date / Location</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>50/50 Group
Fifty / Fifty Group</td><td>Interview with director</td><td>XX/XX/2011/Freetown</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>ABC – Development</td><td>Interview with programme officer</td><td>XX/XX/2012/Freetown</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>ACEF – Action for Community Empowerment Foundation</td><td>Interview with programme officer</td><td>XX/XX/2012/Bo</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>ACODI-SL, Agency for Community Development Initiative Sierra Leone</td><td>Interview with programme officer</td><td>XX/XX/2012/Bo</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>Action for Development</td><td>Interview with director of programme</td><td>XX/XX/2012/Freetown</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>AID-Salone</td><td>Interview with humanitarian field officer and administration officer</td><td>XX/XX/2012/Kabala</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>Anti-Violence Movement Sierra Leone</td><td>Interview with director</td><td>XX/XX/2012/Freetown</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>APEM Association for Peoples Empowerment</td><td>Interview with executive director</td><td>XX/XX/2012/Bo</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>ARD
Association for Rural Development</td><td>Interview with programme officer</td><td>XX/XX/2012/Freetown</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>AUCAYD
Artists United for Children and Youth Development</td><td>Interview with director</td><td>XX/XX/2012/Freetown</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>AYPAD
African Youth for Peace and Development</td><td>Interview with director</td><td>XX/XX/2011/Freetown</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>CADO
Community Animation and Development Organization</td><td>Interview with director</td><td>XX/XX/2011/Freetown</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>CADO – Northern Region Office</td><td>Interview with field operation officer</td><td>XX/XX/2012/Makeni</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>CAHSEC – Community Action for Human Security</td><td>Interview with director</td><td>XX/XX/2012/Makeni</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>CCG
Campaign for Good Governance</td><td>Interview with national coordinator</td><td>XX/XX/2011/Freetown</td></tr>
<tr><td>XX</td><td>CDHR – Centre for Democracy and</td><td>Interview with manager and</td><td>XX/XX/2012/Makeni</td></tr>
</table>

	Human Rights. Makeni Branch	programme officer	
XX	CDHR – Champagne for Democracy and Human Rights. Kabala Branch	Interview with project manager	XX/XX/2012/Kabala
XX	CEDA Community and Development Agency	Interview with director	XX/XX/2012/Bo
XX	Crusaders Club Ministry	Interview with director (and 2 additional staff members)	XX/XX/2011/Freetown
XX	Democracy Sierra Leone (DSL)	Interview with national coordinator	XX/XX/2012/Freetown
XX	EFSL Evangelic Fellowship of Sierra Leone	Interview with officer for advocacy	XX/XX/2011/Freetown
XX	Fambol Tok	Interview with district coordinator	XX/XX/2012/Makeni
XX	FAWE, Forum for African Women Educationalist	Interview with coordinator	XX/XX/2012/Kabala
XX	GEKO – German Kooperation Sierra Leone	Interview with associate director	XX/XX/2012/Freetown
XX	GEMS Grassroots Empowerment for Self-Reliance	Interview with director	XX/XX/2011/Freetown
XX	HAIKAL	Interview with director	XX/XX/2012/Bo
XX	Help a Needy Child in Sierra Leone	Interview with programme officer	XX/XX/2012/Bo
XX	Help-SL – Hands Empowering the Less Privileged in Sierra Leone	Interview with 2 programme officers 1 director of gender section	XX/XX/2012/Bo
XX	JHR – Journalists for Human Rights	Interview with senior staff	XX/XX/2012/Freetown
XX	MADAM, Mankind's Activities for Development Accreditation Movement	Interview with executive director	XX/XX/2012/Makeni
XX	MARWOPNET Mano River Women Peace	Interview with co-founder (interview took place at UNHCR building in Freetown)	XX/XX/2011/Freetown
XX	NMJP – Network Movement for Justice and Development	Progamme director	XX/XX/2012/Bo
XX	OPARD-SL Organization for Peace, Reconciliation and Development – Sierra Leone	Interview with Director	XX/XX/2011/Mile 91
XX	PACT. Partners for Community Transformation	Interview with programme officer	XX/XX/2012/Makeni
XX	PEACE-SL	Interview with director	XX/XX/2012/Bo
XX	PRIDE-SL	Interview with director	XX/XX/2012/Bo
XX	SfCG (INGO) Search for Common Ground	Interview with director / Africa SfCG is an INGO but it was recommended by several local CSOs to interview this particular organization given their local outreach and expertise	XX/XX/2011/Freetown
XX	SLANGO Sierra Leone Association for Non-Governmental Organizations	Interview with senior staff member, SLANGO serves as an umbrella organization for local NGOs	XX/XX/2011/Freetown
XX	SWAASL, Society for Women and AIDS Africa	Interview with programme director	XX/XX/2012/Freetown
XX	WANEP West African Network for Peace	Interview with National Network Coordinator; WANEP coordinates in total	XX/XX/2011/Freetown

		60 local CSOs	
XX	WPfP Women's Partnership for Peace	Interview with founder and national coordinator	XX/XX/2011/Freetown

Community Based Organisations and Local Grassroots Associations			
XX	Grassroots Education for Development (For Women)	Interview with director	XX/XX/2012/Kabala
XX	Helping Hands-SL	Interview with coordinator and founder	XX/XX/2012/Kabala
XX	Laneh Kura Farmers Association	Interview with director	XX/XX/2012/Makeni
XX	Network Movement for Youth and Children Welfare, NMYCW	Interview with director and two programme officers	XX/XX/2012/Freetown
XX	Women's Urban District Farmers	Group interview with 15 female district farmers (most of them widows),	XX/XX/2011/Freetown

Community Interviews			
XX	Kroo Bay - Freetown	Group interview with ex-combatants, female prostitutes and fishermen, 12 participants	XX/XX/2011/Freetown
XX	Mile 91 (near Masiaka)	About 10 young community members	XX/XX/2011/Mile 91

Youth Clubs / Youth Organisations (informal) / Gangs			
XX	Black Man Blood (club)	Club has 16 members, 5 participated in group interview	XX/XX/2011/Freetown
XX	Blackstreet Boys (Youth Group / Club)	Interview with several members	XX/XX/2012/Freetown
XX	Central One Youth Organisation	Interview with 5 members	XX/XX/2012/Kabala
XX	HOT – House of Thinking	Interview with one member	Several group / individual interviews in the period from 07/2012 - 08/2012/Freetown
XX	ICON Brothers (club)	Two interviews with all 18 members	XX/XX/2011/Freetown XX/XX/2011/Freetown
XX	SLF Street Life Family (club)	Total number of membership unclear as members 'come and go', average number about 50, several group interviews were conducted with up to 25 members	Several group / individual interviews in the period from 06/2011 - 07/2011/Freetown Several group / individual interviews in the period from 07/2012 - 08/2012/Freetown
XX	The CRIPS (club / gang) also known as 'The Blues' or CCC alias Cent Cost Crips	Total number membership unclear (according to head of club 'hundreds'), group interview with about 30 members	XX/XX/2011/Freetown

XX	US Boys	Interview with one club member	XX/XX/2011/Freetown
		Other	
XX	Bombali District Youth Council	Interview with chairman	XX/XX/2012/Makeni
XX	Commonwealth Adviser	Interview with Commonwealth Adviser	XX/XX/2012/Freetown
XX	Female Paramount Chief	Interview with female Paramount Chief of GBO Chiefdom	XX/XX/2012/Bo
XX	Forah Bay College	Interview with lecturer at Peace and Conflict Study Centre	XX/XX/2012/Freetown
XX	Fourah Bay Colleague	Interview with Joe A.D. Alie, Head of Department of History & African Studies,	XX/XX/2012/Freetown
XX	Jimmy Kandeh	Interview with Sierra Leonean scholar Jimmy Kandeh (University of Richmond)	XX/XX/2012/Freetown
XX	Sierra Leonean Youth Commission	Interview with Youth Commissioner	XX/XX/2012/Freetown

* Note: This list does not include several individual interviews with people not formally involved in the work of a local CSO. Occasionally interviewed staff **requested anonymity** with regards to the information shared. In some instances I interviewed more than one staff member of the respective organisations or club's listed below. In certain cases I also conducted group interviews. Hence the number of CSOs, CBOs, Youth Clubs etc. does not equal the number of people interviewed.

Appendix 2

Interview Questions
(During both field research stays)

1. How would you define the term and concept of civil society?

2. How would you describe civil society in Sierra Leone? *(Sub-questions: Is it separated from the state / government? Does it form public opinion? How big are the differences between urban and rural areas? Is it a legitimating source for state power?)*

3. In your view, what are the main cultural, structural and ideological characteristics of post-war civil society in Sierra Leone?

4. What impact do civil society initiatives have on the peacebuilding / development process? – What impact does your organisation have? *(Sub-question: Would you say that CSOs complement or in the long run might even replace external interventions?)*

5. The slogan 'African solutions for African problems' became quite popular in the past decade. Do you agree? If so - with regard to your own work - what would an African (Sierra Leonean) solution be?

6. Would you say that external actors (such as INGOS, IOs of even global media) have enabled or challenged the work your organisation? If so why?

7. Do you think that your organisation covers areas that should be tackled by the government or even international community? If so – what areas – if not – why?

8. What is democracy to you? Is there a Sierra Leonean way of democratic rule?

9. What does social justice mean to you?

10. If you had three wishes for the future of your country what would that be?

For academics / government officials:

1. How would you define the term and concept of civil society?

2. How would you describe civil society in Sierra Leone? *(Sub-questions: Is it separated from the state / government? Does it form public opinion? How big are the differences between urban and rural areas? Is it a legitimating source for state power?)*

3. In your view, what are the main cultural, structural and ideological characteristics of post-war civil society in Sierra Leone?

4. What role and impact do civil society initiatives have in the peacebuilding / development process? *(Sub-question: Would you say that CSOs complement or in the long run might even replace external interventions?)*

5. The slogan 'African solutions for African problems' became quite popular in the past decade. Do you agree? If so - with regard to the work of CSOs in Sierra Leone – how do they work towards an African solution – if so how?

6. What impact do external actors have (such as INGOS, IOs of even global media) on local CSOs in Sierra Leone?

7. If you had 3 wishes for the future of your country what would that be?

Appendix 3

Mapping of INGOs and CSOs active in Sierra Leone
(compiled by Simone Datzberger in May 2011, updated in August 2012 and March 2014)

Data for the mapping analysis was retrieved and compiled from:
- UNIPSIL (United Nations Integrat+4:4ed Peacebuilding Support Office Sierra Leone) - see: http://unipsil.unmissions.org,
- OSSA (UN Office of the Special Advisor on Africa) - see: http://www.unorg/africa/osaa/ngodirectory/dest/countries/SierraLeone.htm
- Global Hand - see: http://www.globalhand.org/en/search/organisation?page=1&search=Sierra+Leone
- Directory of Development Organizations Sierra Leone, Volume I.B. / Africa, Edition 2010 - see: http://www.devdir.org/africa.htm
- Accountability Alert Sierra Leone (93 Fort Street, Freetown, 232 076/033 611 685 030, aalert@aalert.org,), see: www.aalert.org/NNGO.html)

Activity	Type	Name
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	AAH - Action Against Hunger
Communal & Social Development	CSO	ABC-Development
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	ACF - Action contre la Faim (Sierra Leone)
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	ACF - African Christian Fellowship (Sierra Leone)
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	Action for Development
Communal & Social Development	CSO	ACODI - Action for Community Development Initiative
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	ActionAid International (Sierra Leone)
Good Governance, Advocacy, Anti-Corruption	CSO	Action Plus
Education	INGO	AED - Adult Education for Development
Agricultural, Economic and Industrial Development	CSO	ADO - Agriculture Development Organization Sierra Leone
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	ADRA - Adventist Development and Relief Agency International
Children, Youth	INGO	AEJT - Association des Enfants et jeunes Travailleurs (Sierra Leone)
Refugees, Returnees, IDPs	INGO	AFCON - African Concern International
Development	INGO	AFMAL - Associazione con I Fatebenefratelli per I malati lontani (Sierra Leone)
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	Africare (Sierra Leone)
Agricultural, Economic and Industrial Development	CSO	AGF - Agro-Galliness Farm (Sierra Leone)

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Health	CSO	AGFAHD - Action Group for Family Health and Development
Development	CSO	AHDSR-SL Advocates for Human Development and Self Reliance of Sierra Leone
Human Rights, Justice, Rule of Law	INGO	AI - Amnesty International - Sierra Leone Section
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	AIMS - Africa International Mission Services (Sierra Leone)
Children, Youth	INGO	All As One (Sierra Leone)
Communal & Social Development	INGO	Alpha Foundation, Inc. (Sierra Leone)
Religion	INGO	AMA - African Muslims Agency (Sierra Leone)
Communal & Social Development	CSO	AMNEet - Advocacy Network Movement
Agricultural, Economic and Industrial Development	CSO	APEGS - Agriculture Production Extension and General Services (Sierra Leone)
Communal & Social Development	CSO	APEM - Association for people's Empowerment (Sierra Leone)
Refugees, Returnees, IDPs	INGO	ARC - American Refugee Committee
Development	CSO	ARD - Association for Rural Development
Communal & Social Development	CSO	ASCOD - Association for Sustainable Community Development (Sierra Leone)
Development	CSO	AsFSES - Association for Food Security and Environmental Services
Refugees, Returnees, IDPs	INGO	ASPIR - Association of Sport of the Improvement of Refugees / Returnees
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	BCSL - Baptist Convention Sierra Leone
Health	CSO	BCAASL - Business Coalition Against AIDS in Sierra Leone
Children, Youth	CSO	Ben Hirsch Memorial Child Care Centre
Development	CSO	BREDA - Brethren Relief and Development Agency
Children, Youth	INGO	CAD - Children's Aid Direct
Communal & Social Development	CSO	CADO - Community Animation and Development Organisation
Communal & Social Development	CSO	CADS - Centre for Alternative Development Strategies

Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	Calmin - Calvary and Liberation ministries of Sierra Leone
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	Camp Women's Multi-Purpose Organization
Communal & Social Development	CSO	CARD Community Action for Rural Development
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	CARE International
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	Caritas - NCDCO National Catholic Development and Caritas Office
Communal & Social Development	CSO	CASOPA - Community Action Support Organization for Poverty Alleviation
Religion	CSO	Catholic Youth Organizaiton
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	CAUSE Canada - Christian Aid for Under-Assisted Societies Everywhere
Children, Youth	CSO	CAW - Children Associated with the War
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	CCFF - Canaan Christian Fellowship Fund
Agricultural, Economic and Industrial Development	CSO	CCOTU - Central Confederation of Trade Unions
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	CSO	CCSL - Council Churches of Sierra Leone
Children, Youth	CSO	CCYA - Center for Coordinator of Youth Activities
Development	CSO	CDS - Campaign for Development and Solidarity
Development	CSO	CDU - Civic Development Unit
Communal & Social Development	CSO	CEDA - Community Empowerment and Development Agency
Communal & Social Development	CSO	CEFORD - Community Empowerment for Rural Development
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	CEM - Current Evangelism Ministries, Women's Network for Peace
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	CSO	CES - Christian Extension Services (Sierra Leone)
Development	INGO	CESTAS - Centro di Educazione Sanitaria e Tecnologie Appropriate Sanitarie (Sierre Leone)
Good Governance, Advocay, Anti-Corruption	CSO	CGG - The Campaign for God Governance
Health	CSO	CHASL - Christian Health Association Sierra Leone
Environment	CSO	CHECSIL - Council for Human Ecology in Sierra Leone

Development	CSO	CHIDO - Chibuzor Human Resource Development Organization
Children, Youth	CSO	Children's Forum Network
Children, Youth	INGO	Child Fund International Sierra Leone
Children, Youth	CSO	ChildHelp Sierra Leone
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	Christian Aid (Sierra Leone)
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	CSO	CINDA - Christian in Action Development Agency
Communal & Social Development	CSO	CIP - Community Initiative Programme
Media	CSO	CMET - Center for Media, Education and Technology
Children, Youth	CSO	CMFO - Christian Mission Foster Homes For Orphans
Development	CSO	CoFoSL - Circle of Friends Sierra Leone
Development	CSO	COMPASS - Community Mobilization of Poverty Alleviation and Social Services
Development	INGO	Concern Worldwide
Children, Youth	CSO	Conic Children's Home
Development	INGO	COOPI - Cooperazione Internazionale (Sierra Leone)
Health	INGO	Copwanb - Care of Pregnant Women and New Born Babies
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	Cord - Christian Outreach, Relief and Development
Reconciliation and Rehabilitation (Religion)	CSO	CORD-SL - Counterparts in Rehabilitation in Siera Leone
Development	INGO	Cordaid (Sierra Leone)
Development	CSO	Conservative Society Sierra Leone
Children, Youth	INGO	COTN - Children of the Nations
Reconciliation and Rehabilitation (Religion)	INGO	CR - Conciliation Resources
Children, Youth	INGO	CRC - Child Rescue Centre Sierra Leone
Communal & Social Development	CSO	CREDO - Community Research and Development Organization
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	CRS - Catholic Relief Services
Unclassified	CSO	CSM - Civil Society Movement Sierra Leone
Good Governance, Advocacy, Anti-Corruption	CSO	CSPEC - Civil Society Peace Building Engagement Committee

Environment	CSO	CSSL - Conservation Society Sierra Leone
Reconciliation and Rehabilitation (Religion)	INGO	CVT - Center for Victims of Torture
Agricultural, Economic and Industrial Development	CSO	DADA-SL Destiny Agricultural Development Association
Children, Youth	INGO	DCI - Defence for Children International - Sierra Leone
Development	CSO	DIP - Development Partners Initiative
Religion	CSO	Echoes of Mercy
Development	INGO	ECLOF International - Sierra Leone
Information, Consultancy, Research	CSO	EDRA - Consultancy
Environment	INGO	EFA - Sierra Leone (Environmental Foundation for Africa)
Religion	CSO	EFSL - Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	ELCSL - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone
Children, Youth	INGO	ERM - Enfants Refugies du Monde
Education	INGO	ERNWACA - Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa
Religion	INGO	FAHOCHA - Faith, Hope, Charity Foundation
Reconciliation and Rehabilitation (Religion)	CSO	Fambul Tok
Communal & Social Development	CSO	FARDASL - Friends of Africa Relief and Development Agency Sierra Leone
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	INGO	Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	Federation of African Muslim Women's Associations
Development	INGO	FHM - Family Homes Movement
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	The Fifty-Fifty Group of Sierra Leone
Human Rights, Justice, Rule of Law	INGO	FIND - Foundation for International Dignity
Development	INGO	FIOH - Future in our Hands Education and Development Fund
Religion	CSO	FLM - Fountain of Life Ministires
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	FOWED - Forum for Women's Empowerment and Development
Environment	INGO	FoE-SL Friends of the Earth
Good Governance, Advocacy, Anti-Corruption	CSO	FORDI - Forum for Democratic Initiatives

Reconciliation and Rehabilitation (Religion)	INGO	FORUT - Sierra Leone
Refugees, Returnees, IDPs	INGO	FRC - Finnish Refugee Council
Children, Youth	CSO	Friends of Waldorf, Sierra Leone
Children, Youth	CSO	Good Shepherd Orphanage / School
Development	INGO	GEKO - German Kooperation Sierra Leone
Education	CSO	GEL - Generating Group Empowerment through Learning
Human Rights, Justice, Rule of Law	CSO	GEMS - Grassroots Empowerment for Self Reliance
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	GGEM - Grassroots Gender Empowerment Movement
Human Rights, Justice, Rule of Law	INGO	Global Rights
Health	INGO	GLRA German Leprosy Relief Association
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	GOAL - Sierra Leone
Environment	CSO	Green Scenery
Development	CSO	GFR - Grass Roots Finance
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	GR-WEB Grassroot Women's Empowerment Bureau
Communal & Social Development	CSO	Haikal Foundation
Children, Youth	INGO	HANCI - Help a Needy Child International
Health	CSO	HARA - HIV and AIDS Reporters Association
Agricultural, Economic and Industrial Development	INGO	HCF - Hastings Community Farm
Health	CSO	Health for all Coaltion - Sierra Leone
Health	INGO	Health Poverty Action (former Health Unlimited)
Health	INGO	Helen Keller International
Communal & Social Development	CSO	HELP SL - Hands Empowering the Less Privileged in Sierra Leone
Children, Youth	CSO	HFHC - Home for Homeless Children
Health	INGO	HI - Handicap International
Health	INGO	HKI - Helen Keller International
Development	CSO	HRDO - Human Resource Development Organisation
Human Rights, Justice, Rule of Law	INGO	HRW - Human Rights Watch
Development	INGO	IAS - Initiative pour une Afrique Solidaire
Education	INGO	IBIS - Education for Development
Information, Consultancy, Research	INGO	ICG - International Crisis Group

Humanitarian Aid	INGO	ICMC - International Catholic Migration Commision
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross
Children, Youth	INGO	International Christian Youth Exchange
Education	CSO	IEARN - Sierra Leone (International Education and Resource Network)
Good Governance, Advocacy, Anti-Corruption	INGO	IFES - International Foundation for Election Systems
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	IFRC - International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	IIRO - International Islamic Relief Organisation
Health	INGO	IMC - International Medical Corps
Unclassified	INGO	IOGT - International Organisation of Good Templars
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	IRC - International Rescue Committee
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	CSO	Inter Religious Council
Children, Youth	CSO	IYF - Independent Youth Forum
Religion	INGO	Jesus Evangelistic Encountering
Development	CSO	JEESDO - Jees Development Organizaiton
Development	CSO	KADDF - Kailahun District Development Foundation
Communal & Social Development	CSO	KADDRO - Kambia District Development and Rehabilitaiton Organisation
Children, Youth	CSO	KAYDO (Kafoima Youth Development Organization)
Communal & Social Development	CSO	KCDA - Karo Community Development Association
Unclassified	CSO	KENDDRA
Children, Youth	CSO	KEYDA (Kenema Youth Development Association)
Human Rights, Justice, Rule of Law	CSO	LAWCLA - The Lawyers Centre for Legal Assistance
Development	INGO	LCD - Leonard Cheshire Disability
Development	INGO	LemonAid Fund
Development	CSO	LEXES (Livestock Extention and General Services)
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	LIFE - Life for Relief and Development

Development	INGO	LLP - LifeLine Network, the Nehemiah Project
Children, Youth	INGO	LSCP - Leonet Street Children Project Inc.
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	LWF - Lutheran World Federation
Human Rights, Justice, Rule of Law	CSO	Manifesto' 99 Human Rights
Health	INGO	Marie Stopes Society (SL)
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	MARWOPNET - Mano River Women Peace
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	MCSL - Methodist Church of Sierra Leone
Health	INGO	MdM - Medicos del Mundo Spain
Health	INGO	Mercy Ships Aberdeen Women's Centre
Health	INGO	Merlin - Medical Relief International
Communal & Social Development	CSO	MICDP - Mabasima Integrated community Development Project
Communal & Social Development	CSO	MOCDP - Mohal community Development Programme
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	Mount Carmel / Church Women's Assocition
Unclassified	CSO	MoP - Missioners of Peace
Development	CSO	MoRRD - Movement for Resettlement and Rural Development Volunteers
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	INGO	Mother's Union - Sierra Leone
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	MRWDA - Moawoma Rural Women's Development Association
Health	INGO	MSF - Medecins Sans Frontieres - Belgium
Health	INGO	MSF - Medecins Sans Frontieres - France
Health	INGO	MSF - Medecins Sans Frontieres - Holland
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	INGO	MSI - Marie Stopes International
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	MWA - Muloma Women Association
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	MUWODA, Muloma Women's Development Association
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	NABFAO / SL - National Breastfeeding Advocacy Organisation

Good Governance, Advocacy, Anti-Corruption	CSO	NAC - National Accountability Group
Religion	INGO	NAC - New Apostolic Church
Development	INGO	National Council of Cheshire Services
Health	CSO	National Council for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency
Development	CSO	NDO - Ndegbormei Development Organisation
Development	INGO	NEHADO - New Harvest Development Organization
Development	INGO	NELIDS - New Life Development Services
Children, Youth	CSO	Nenneh's Children Fund for Sierra Leone
Health	CSO	NETHIPS - Network of HIV Positives in Sierra Leone
Good Governance, Advocacy, Anti-Corruption	CSO	NEW - National Election Watch
Human Rights, Justice, Rule of Law	CSO	NFHR - National Forum for Human Rights
Refugees, Returnees, IDPs	INGO	Ngopee Foundation
Health	CSO	NHAC - National HIV and AIDS Coalition
Agricultural, Economic and Industrial Development	CSO	NIDFO - National Industrial Development and Finance Organisation
Communal & Social Development	CSO	NMJD - Network Movement for Justice and Development
Refugees, Returnees, IDPs	INGO	NRC - Norwegian Refugee Council- Sierra Leone
Agricultural, Economic and Industrial Development	CSO	NUFPAW - National Union of Forestry, Plantations and Agricultural Workers
Human Rights, Justice, Rule of Law	CSO	ODHR - Organisation for Development and Human Rights
Education	INGO	OFAL - Organization for the Advancement of Literacy
Communal & Social Development	CSO	OHDRAD - Organization for the Homeless, Disabled and Rural Development
Communal & Social Development	CSO	OREINT - Organization for Research and Extension of Intermediate Technology
Reconciliation and Rehabilitation (Religion)	CSO	OPARD-SL Organization for Peace, Reconciliation and Development
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	Oxfam GB

Communal & Social Development	CSO	PACE - Partnership Action for Community Empowerment
Communal & Social Development	CSO	PACT - Partners for Community Transformation
Communal & Social Development	CSO	Partnership for Justice
Agricultural, Economic and Industrial Development	CSO	PASCOFAAS - Pa Santigie Conteh Farmers Association
Children, Youth	CSO	Peacelinks
Human Rights, Justice, Rule of Law	INGO	PFI - Prison Fellowship International
Children, Youth	INGO	Plan International
Health	INGO	PPASL - Planned Parenthood Association Sierra Leone
Health	CSO / NGO	PPF-SL Peoples Prosperity Foundation
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	Pentecostal Assembly of the World (Inc) Mission
Children, Youth	CSO	Pikin to Pikin
Health	CSO	PORSHE - Promotion of Reproductive Sexual Health and HIV Education
Media	CSO	Premier Media Consutancy Limited
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	PROWA - Progressive Women's Association Skills Centre
Reconciliation and Rehabilitation (Religion)	CSO	PUDRA - Pujehun District Relief and Rehabilitation Agency
Children, Youth	CSO	Pujehun Youth for Development
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	PWJ - Peace Winds Japan
Agricultural, Economic and Industrial Development	CSO	RAP - Rescue Argriculture Programmes
Development	CSO	RA-SL - Rural Aid Sierra Leone
Development	CSO	RAP / SL Rescue Auxiliary Partners
Children, Youth	INGO	Real Aid
Children, Youth	INGO	Right To Dream
Children, Youth	INGO	Right To Play
Development	CSO	RODA - Rofutha Development Association
Communal & Social Development	CSO	RRCDO - Rokel Rural Community Development Organization
Children, Youth	CSO	RYDO - Rural Youth Development Organisation
Children, Youth	INGO	Save the Children UK
Communal & Social Development	INGO	SfCG - Search for Common Ground
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	SFFHN - Seed Faith Fund for Humanitarian Needs
Children, Youth	CSO	SFYDP - Safer Future Youth Development Project

Environment	CSO	SHARE - Save Heritage and Rehabilitate the Environment
Education	CSO	Sierra eRiders
Education	CSO	Sierra Leone Adult Education Association
Human Rights, Justice, Rule of Law	CSO	Sierra Leone Business Forum Association
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	Sierra Leone Market Women Association
Health	CSO	Sierra Leone Prevention Maternal Mortality Association
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	Sierra Leone Relief and Development Outreach Inc.
Children, Youth	CSO	Sierra Leone Scout Association
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	Sierra Leone Women Development Movement
Development	CSO	SIGA - Sierra Grassroots Agency
Health	INGO	Sightsavers International
Development	CSO	SILPA - Sierra Leone Poverty Alleviation
Health	CSO	SLAB - Sierra Leone Association of the Blind
Health	CSO	SLAD - Sierra Leone Association of the Deaf
Media	CSO	Sierra Leone Association of Journalists
	CSO	SLANGO - Sierra Leone Association of Non Governmental Organizations
Education	CSO	SLAUW - Sierra Leone Association of University Women
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	SLAWW - Sierra Leone Association on Women's Welfare
	CSO	SLLC - Sierra Leone Labour Congress
Agricultural, Economic and Industrial Development	INGO	SL-OIC - Sierra Leone Opportunities Industrialisation Centre
Unclassified	CSO	SLRWO (Sierra Leone Returnees Welfare Organization)
Communal & Social Development	INGO	SLRCS - Sierra Leone Red Cross Society
Education	CSO	SLTU (Sierra Leone Teacher's Union)
Children, Youth	CSO	SLYED - Sierra Leone Youth Empowerment Organization
Children, Youth	INGO	SMT - Salone Microfinance Trust

Development	CSO	Social Awareness and Development Movement
Children, Youth	INGO	SOS Children's Villages
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	SRC Spanish Red Cross
Development	INGO	SSLDF - Swiss Sierra Leone Development Foundation
Children, Youth	INGO	Save the Children
Development	CSO	STDG - Sustainable Technology Development Group
Education	INGO	SPW Students Partnership Worldwide
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	INGO	SWAA - Society for Women and AIDS in Africa International
Development	INGO	Tearfund (Sierra Leone)
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	Terra Tech Foerderprojekte e.V. Sierra Leone
Good Governance, Advocacy, Anti-Corruption	INGO	TI - Transparency International - Sierra Leone
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	INGO	UMW - United Methodist Women
Children, Youth	INGO	UNOY - Sierra Leone Network (United Network of Young Peacebuilders)
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	URWA - United Rural Women's Association
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	INGO	VOW - Voice of Women
Communal & Social Development	INGO	VWASL - Voluntary WorkCamps Association (Sierra Leone Chapter)
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	WAMCS - Women's Agro Marketing Cooperative Society
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	WAND - Women's Association for National Development
Communal & Social Development	CSO	WAPEP-SL - War affected populations empowerment program
Children, Youth	INGO	War Child
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	INGO	WCRWC - Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	WCSL - Wesleyan Development and Relief Agency
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	INGO	WFT - Women's Finance Trust Ltd.
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	WHI - World Hope International
Development	INGO	Wilkins Foundation
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	INGO	WILPF - Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	WOCEGAR - Woman Centre for Good Governance
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	Women in Crisis Movement
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	Women's Forum
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	INGO	Women Peace and Security Network(WIPSEN)-Africa
Humanitarian Aid	INGO	WR - World Relief
Reconciliation and Rehabilitation (Religion)	INGO	WRF - World Rehabilitation Fund
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	CSO	WSSG - Women's Solidarity Support Group
Children, Youth	INGO	WVI - World Vision International
Children, Youth	CSO	Yearn for Peace Sierra Leone
Children, Youth	CSO	Youth Development Movement
Children, Youth	INGO	YEDEM - Youth Empowerment for Development Ministries
Communal & Social Development	CSO	You and Me Fourah Bay Development Organization
Religion, Development, Reconciliation, Relief	INGO	YMCA - Young Men's Christian Association - Sierra Leone
Women (Advocacy, Development, Empowerment)	INGO	YWCA - Young Women's Christian Association of Sierra Leone