



Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness

Paris Declaration and Principles?

1. Should emphasize *development* effectiveness over aid effectiveness.
2. (US only) Should restore civilian capacity and authority to manage foreign assistance.
3. Should strengthen capacity of local civil society to address development challenges, deepening democracy with focus on social justice.
4. Should generate more balanced development strategies responsive to citizens' needs.



Competing **Narratives**

- Civil society as conduit for citizen voice.
- **Civil Society as “box to check.”**
- Civil society as countervailing force.
- **Civil society as co-opted “partner” to state.**
- Civil society as space for civic engagement and collective action for democratic change.
- ***Uncivil society as breeding ground for conflict.***



Civil Society Challenges

1. African civil society accountable to “partners” (Northern NGOs and donors), not citizens.
2. Highly competitive “market” works against Northern-African NGO “partnerships.”
3. African NGOs regarded as consultants or small businesses with economic interests.
4. Donor-funded institutional strengthening focused more on satisfying donor needs.



Civil Society Challenges, continued

5. Donors ignore foreign policy incoherence; forget their primary partner is government.
6. Authoritarian regimes limit voice, right of association, enact repressive legal frameworks to “assure accountability” with impunity.
7. Paris Declaration gives authoritarian poor performers a free pass; incentive to change?



Where Is the Private Sector?

- 1. Asymmetric access:** increased access for FDI in domestic markets without commensurate African access to foreign markets.
- 2. Crony capitalism:** state uses its power to limit market access to its allies in private sector.
- 3. Skewed loyalties:** Private sector lacks interest in or “culture of” philanthropy.



Definitions of Civil Society

Current definitions drawn from:

- Habermas: Public institutions need inputs from more than just wealth and political elites.
- Gramsci: civil society as countervailing force to overweening state.
- Walzer: space of uncoerced human association and relational networks – formed for family, faith, interest and ideology – that fill that space.



Definitions of Civil Society, continued

How to define civil society: what it is (actor-based) versus what it does (functional)?

- Given plethora of actors in overlapping areas, a *functionalist* definition may be more useful.
- Motivate action taken by individuals, non-formal groupings – *civic engagement*.
- Drive collective action for common good and systemic reform – *civil society*.



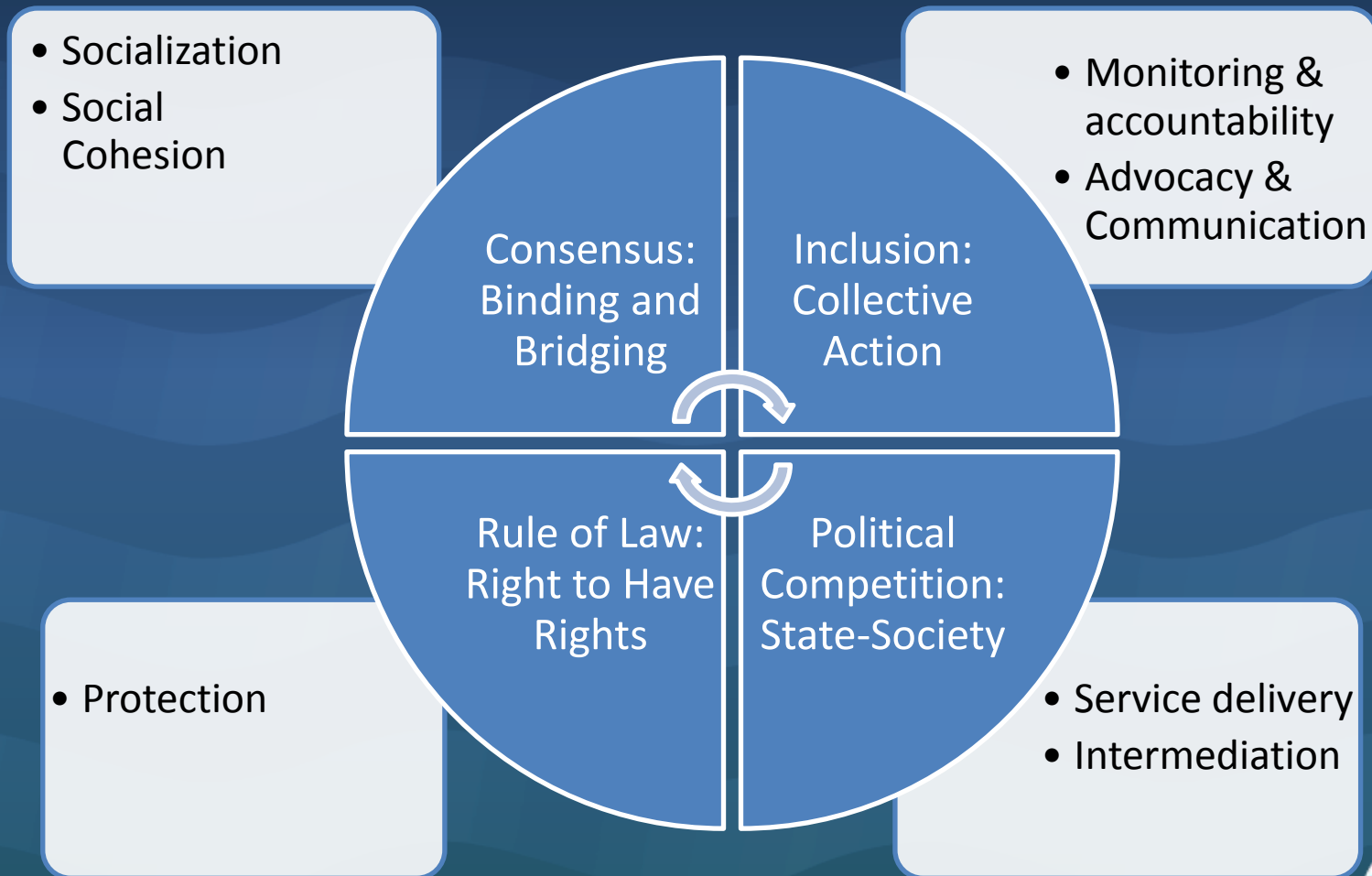
Civil Society's Core Functions

1. Protection
2. Monitoring and accountability
3. Advocacy and public communication
4. Socialization and building socio-political consensus
5. Conflict sensitive social cohesion
6. Intermediation and facilitation
7. Service delivery

Taken from Paffenholtz, T. (ed.). 2010. *Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Renner Publishers, Inc.



Strategy and Sequence for Supporting Civil Society Functions



Question to Explore

How can external assistance engage citizens in civic action and enable civil society to support strengthening democratic institutions?



Framework for Analysis

1. Define key functions of civil society
2. Describe African context
3. Provide recommendations from experience in the field at three levels
 - a) Grassroots: Bottom-up demand
 - b) Intermediate: Middle out alliance-building
 - c) Apex: Top-down supply



Strategic Levels of Intervention

Elites: Top-down
supply of
democracy,
reform

Professional classes:
middle-out alliance
building

Grassroots communities: bottom-up
demand for democracy, reform, etc.



A. Socialization

1. Definition: Formation and practice of democratic attitudes among citizens to develop tolerance, mutual trust and ability to compromise and resolve conflicts non-violently – *binding*.
2. African Context: Negotiating modernization, while retaining “traditional” cultural norms.
3. Recommendations:
 - a) build on African values of social nature of humanity, working for the communal good.
 - b) integrate values-based education into curricula.
 - c) integrity pacts, codes of public conduct.



B. Building Social Cohesion

1. Definition: Engagement and participation in voluntary associations to strengthen bonds among citizens across socio-cultural identities.
2. African Context: Elite-manipulated contestation.
3. Recommendations:
 - a) people-to-people approach: focus on socio-economic connectors.
 - b) supporting organic development of networks of change agents.
 - c) civil society leaders confront uncivic behavior, elite manipulation.



C. Monitoring and Accountability

1. Definition: Monitoring activities of the state apparatus and government authorities, both central and local, and holding them to account.
2. Context: Predatory states, neo-patrimonial regimes, systemic corruption.
3. Recommendations:
 - a) public expenditure tracking surveys, citizen report cards, other social audits.
 - b) institutionalize citizen oversight, participation mechanisms.
 - c) downward political accountability.



D. Advocacy & Public Communication

1. Definition: Articulate citizen interests, especially of marginalized groups, and put them on public agenda; raise public awareness about and debate agenda in institutional arenas.
2. African Context: Limited access to public information; co-optation of civil society leaders.
3. Recommendations:
 - a) “applied” civic education based on issues that impact people’s daily lives – livelihood security.
 - b) civic media, talk shows on community radio; evidence-based name & shame campaigns.
 - c) Parliamentary liaison office.



E. Service Delivery

1. Definition: Direct provision of services to citizens by non-governmental organizations.
2. African Context: Ineffective, inequitable state service delivery; donor-supported burden-shedding due to uneven decentralization.
3. Recommendations:
 - a) service delivery report cards, other social audits.
 - b) public-private partnerships for service delivery.
 - c) implement fiscal decentralization reform to deepen local government revenue-generating authority.



F. Intermediation and Facilitation between Citizens and State

1. Definition: Balancing power of state and negotiating with it to improve relationships between state structures and societal groups.
2. African Context: Weak state administrative institutions, strong coercive ones; rootless CSOs.
3. Recommendations:
 - a) collective action by community-based organizations.
 - b) strengthen political parties' constituency outreach in through CSOs – in single/multiple member districts.
 - c) institutionalize participatory mechanisms in high-level policy fora and accountability mechanisms.



G. Protection

1. Definition: Protecting lives, freedom and property against attacks and despotism by the state or other authorities.
2. Context: Rule **by** law, not rule of law.
3. Recommendations:
 - a) access to justice: paralegal assistance, public legal education, alternative dispute resolution (ADR).
 - b) expand right to have rights – institutionalize access to justice – e.g., ombudsmen, formalize ADR.
 - c) enforcement of international laws, conventions; institutionalization of indigenous ADR mechanisms.



Conclusions

1. Refocus reform efforts on development, not aid effectiveness.
2. Respect and encourage segments of civil society to specialize around core functions.
3. Strengthen civil society functions (aid) to bolster political institutional development:
 - a. consensus,
 - b. inclusion and voice,
 - c. political competition, and
 - d. the rule of law.

