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Civil Society in Sub-Saharan African Post-Conflict States: A Western Induced Idea(l)?

Simone Datzberger

1. Introduction

Since the late 1980s there has been a burgeoning interest, among academics and practitioners, in the role and involvement of local civil society in peacebuilding and development processes. (Re-)enforcing, (re-) creating, (re-)building or strengthening civil society, has become the new legitimising toolkit for external interventions and their respective peacebuilding and development agendas. Remarkably, with regards to the sub-Saharan African region, the historical, cultural, socio-ethnographic and local context of civil society, as well as its comprehension often remains unaddressed and has largely become an uncontested idea(l). Above all, civil society, as understood by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century bourgeois Western society, never really matched the realities of social and political life in sub-Saharan Africa. Notwithstanding, civil society is "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: 21)

This article explores alternative ways of approaching the notion of civil society in the scope of peacebuilding and development efforts in the sub-Saharan African region. It will first elaborate on how civil society is currently approached in peacebuilding and development practice and discourse. In order to challenge liberal appropriations of the concept in post-conflict sub-Saharan Africa, it will be necessary to put forward a broad definition of the Western usage of the term. Accordingly, the second section provides a succinct overview of how civil society emerged as a concept in Western philosophical thought. It aims to briefly delin-

eate why commonly agreed definitions of the term remain quite vague in Western social science and philosophy. The third 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, this article explores aspects that shape the civil sphere in post-conflict sub-Saharan African states – albeit in varying degrees.

2. Civil society in current peacebuilding and development practice and discourse

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 practices and discourses. The appeal of both modern democracy and a vibrant civil society became to be seen as a magical formula for peace and development in conflict-affected countries around the world. Indeed, 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/Richmond 2013: 771). Recent initiatives such as the *New Deal* stipulate that "an engaged public and civil society, which constructively monitors decision-making, is important to ensure accountability" (New Deal Building Peaceful States 2013). The *New Deal's* outcome document 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 (ibid.). At the same time, the number, involvement, and activities of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and local CSOs has increased in the developing world. The figures speak for themselves.

There has been a rapid increase of funds from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation (OECD) via Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). While in 1985–1986, funding provided to CSOs amounted to $3.1 billion per year, this increased to $6.7 billion in 1999 and $7.1 billion in 2001 (Debiel/Sticht 2005: 10). In comparison, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (UK-DfID) reports that it spent at least £694 million through CSOs in the period of 2011–12, out of which a total of £154 million went to sub-Saharan Africa alone (ICAI 2013). Additionally, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has established relationships with over 30,000 CSOs worldwide (United Nations n/y). Many of these are located in post-conflict and underdeveloped states and benefit from numerous long-term and short-term funding schemes monitored and administered by several United Nations (UN) agencies. Similarly, CSO involvement in World Bank funded projects has grown over the past decade, from 21 percent of the total number of projects in fiscal year 1990 to an estimated 81 per cent in fiscal year 2009 (World Bank 2010). In addition, the World Bank reports have increasingly involved CSOs in the formulation of Country Assistance Strategies (CAS) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) (ibid.).

Undoubtedly, the growing attention towards civil society in peacebuilding and development assistance has clearly had some positive effects. For instance, externally led programming has become a more inclusive and comprehensive endeavour, while strengthening the capacities of the civil sphere. Nonetheless, the hype on and around the realm of civil society in peacebuilding and development frameworks could not escape from new challenging side effects with regards to the civil sphere. On the one hand, non-Western and often century-long suppressed post-conflict societies are often less accustomed to the political culture of free and equal practice and political emancipation as it was cultivated over centuries in Western politics and thought. In the sub-Saharan African region, most societies are characterised by the legacies o colonial rule, societal, economic, political and/or ethnic disorder, elite capture, and severe poverty. On the other hand, the clearly demarcated liberal boundaries of state/society and politics/economics often do not match with the structure, social stratification and everyday realties of societies outside the Occidental world.

Realising that peacebuilding and development assistance had to go beyond the sheer technicalities of instituting free market economies, multi-party electoral systems or a broader human rights agenda, the international community started to engage in efforts of norm promotion. Externally driven agendas literally started to 'liberalise' 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 2009) provided $140,000 of funding to Sierra Leone for a project entitled *Attitudinal and Behavioural Change (ABC) Secretariat* (PBF/SLE/A-6). The project description reads as follows: "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." Similar rhetoric can be found in the Ugandan case. The country's National Development Plan (2010–2015) repeatedly refers to various trainings and ways of programming that seek to transform the mindset of the population in order to appreciate productivity and development.

Such language clearly reflects Duffield's (2001: 11) general observation, that apart from promoting liberal institutions, peace and development programming and interventions also aim at transforming dysfunctional and war-affected societies into cooperative, representative and especially, stable entities. In short, the institutionalisation of a liberal agenda in non-Western post-conflict states presupposes to import, transplant and root liberal values and norms into 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 (Barkawi/Laffey 2001). It targets people's principal beliefs, attitudes, values and ideals, thereby indirectly suggesting what role 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. Hence, a liberal agenda starts from the premise that reforming state-society relations based on the societal morals of liberalism, creates and fosters responsive and legitimate institutions

that can effectively deal with the peacebuilding and development process of a conflict-ravaged country. Strikingly, such an approach frequently distracts from an often unheeded question at hand: *who* is it that ought to be strengthened, reinforced and consequently liberalised? Accordingly, the ensuing section provides a succinct overview of how civil society emerged as an 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 article to fully engage in the vast number of discourses on civil society, which have been summarised in greater detail by so many others (see Cohen/Arato 1994; Hall 1995; Keane 1998). This section will, nevertheless, attempt to do justice to the main scholarly contributions in order to define the term and find some definitional common ground for ensuing discussions.

3. Civil society in Western political practice and thought

Civil society is probably one of the most theoretically, rhetorically and semantically contested concepts. 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 an existing civil society. Concepts such as democracy, social contract, social capital or even political culture, to name a few, are heavily informed by the various definitions, approaches and interpretations of the role, purpose and functions of a presumably existing civil society.

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 with the state but not yet subsisting as a separate sphere (Seligman 2002: 14-20). The first clear distinction between civil society and the state finds its origins during the time of the Scottish Enlightenment, and 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* (1997 [1776]), but also *Rights of Man* (1999 [1791]), perceive society as the sole source of

legitimate authority, and contrast an individualistic, egalitarian society to government. Probably one of the most articulate accounts of civil society in this era can be found in Alexis De Tocqueville's (1994 [1835, 1840]) *De la démocratie en Amérique*. He referred to civil society as variations of politically active and independent associations – quite simply, life outside the household. For Tocqueville (1994: 191-198, 115-120) 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 keep a close eye on the government.

With thinkers such as G.W. Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx – notwithstanding their sometimes conflicting philosophical viewpoints – the conceptualisation of civil society yet again gained a new dimension. For Marx (1992 [1844]), civil society develops only within the bourgeoisie, which is largely interlinked with the political society (or superstructure) and consequently disregards both, the bourgeoisie and political society. Antonio Gramsci reversed Marxist viewpoints with his ideas on the *Organisation of National Societies*. In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci (2011: 383) 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 organisations like the church, trade unions, or schools". As Bratton (1994: 55) put it, Gramsci's political society is the embodiment of force and civil society is the manufacturer of consent. Still, Gramsci actually acknowledges that in reality the political and civil society often overlap.

That associations, clubs, churches, but also the family can, and in fact do promote antidemocratic and illiberal ideas was the traumatic experience in the events before, during and after World War II. For the first time, the concept of civil society lost its idealistic flavour. The aftershock of World War II led Western civil societies more to an active experience of what it meant to be a member of a society than to a pure ideological envisioning of it. Such civil activism was reflected in anti-nuclear, anti-Vietnam movements, various student protests, civil rights movements and the 1968 revolution. What is more, all these events were supported with advanced technology and the growing dissemination of news and new media.

The second major conceptual, as well as more visionary, transformation of the notion of civil society was largely owed 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 the notion that the communist project was exhausted and would leave no room for human rights. This was famously manifested in initiatives like KOR (Polish Workers Defense Committee) or the Charta 77 (Keane 1998: 19-23). For Kaldor (2003: 76), the end of the cold war embodied "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."

After the fall of communism, the 1990s came to be seen as the golden era for civil society movements, associations and organisations, fuelling fruitful and vast debates on the role of CSOs in local, national and global spheres. The number, involvement and activities of CSOs increased worldwide. Civil society became not only a fashionable, but also overused political, philosophical and phenomenological tool-kit for exponents from the new left to neo-liberal to more conservative strands. In the present day, the idea of civil society is often posited as a panacea, while taking on a large variety of meanings in different countries or regions.

Nowadays, there is a broad consensus that a suitable definition of civil society 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. For example, Spurk (2010: 11) defines civil society as "a large and diverse set of voluntary organisations – competing with each other and oriented to specific interests – that are not purely driven by private or economic interests, are autonomously organised, 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." Lewis (2001: 12) further reminds us: "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." Above all, there is a broad intellectual consensus that a society – and every individual therein – has the ability to liberate itself from imposed political, economic and religious structures. However, it is the emancipatory character ascribed to the concept of civil society that makes it so difficult to set definitional boundaries regarding to what extent civil society seems to be separate from, and to what extent it is in fact intertwined with, the realms of the political,

private, public and economic spheres. In short – as a product of political but also societal and cultural emancipation, civil society remains an on-going process and progress. Yet 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 this thesis, the aim of which it is to examine the consequences of applying a liberal notion of civil society in the sub-Saharan African context. Reflecting on 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.

The above described liberal notion and understanding of civil society has shaped to a great extent the language of international peacebuilding and development actors in their efforts to strengthen and support the civil sphere. The World Bank, for instance, defines civil society thus: "[T]he wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organisations 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. CSOs therefore refer to a wide array of organisations: community groups, NGOs, labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, and foundations" (World Bank 2013). In the main, donors generally prefer to support more organised and formalised versions of civil society (such as CSOs). Loose, non-registered or home-grown clubs are, by and large, the beneficiaries of the work done by officially registered and M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation) checked and audited CSOs.

4. Civil society in the Sub-Saharan African context: A Western artifice?

Civil society, as it evolved as an intellectual construct of the Western world, never really matched the realities of social and political life in sub-Saharan Africa. If compared to other non-Western regions (Asia, Latin

America or the Middle East), the concept gains many additional complex layers regarding historical, political, cultural and economic characteristics and developments. To begin with, a strict prescriptive focus on the potentials or promises of civil society in the peacebuilding and development processes of sub-Saharan Africa risks disregarding a still existing stigmatisation of centuries-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 the everyday lives of millions of citizens, as well as the political landscape, in countries such as Benin, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Burkina Faso. Evoking slavery, they argue, brings shame and in some instances even leads to societal marginalisation. The effective silence surrounding the issue of slavery and the impact it has had on contemporary state and society relations has also consistently been neglected by colonial administrations and by most postcolonial governments. During colonial rule, African societies were once again bereft of their own, self-created or 'African' way of sociocultural evolution. In Howell and Pearce's (2002: 179) words: "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." Ethnic divisions, tribalism, clientelism and patrimonialism were fuelled and impelled by colonialism, a process which consequently led to a severe fragmentation and impoverishment of local societies. In turn, decolonisation resulted in more civil wars than civil societies. According to the UCDP/PRIO armed conflict database, between 1946 and 2010 around 30 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (that is 65% of all states in the region) experienced armed conflict (UCDP 2012). As initially argued by Mamdani (1996), upon independence, sub-Saharan African societies continued to struggle with racial or ethnic privileges and unequal patterns of power and resource allocation, as well as little tolerance for political opposition. According to Mamdani (1996: 13-34), independence deracialised the state and its institutions but not civil society itself, which was retribalised as a consequence of persistent ethnic tensions. Historically accumulated privileges, an urban / rural divide, and direct and indirect (customary) rule and laws not only challenged democratisation processes later on but also fuelled ethnic tensions. Surprisingly, externally

steered efforts to bring about peace, democratisation and development in the region, rarely contemplate the legacy of centuries-long oppression when it comes to the (re)construction and formation of local civil societies. Yet, 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. It thus appears that a large part of peacebuilding and development discourse and practice is detached from a considerable body of literature that generally questions the appropriation of the concept of civil society in non-Western environments (see Chabal/Daloz 1999; Chatterjee 2004; Chazan 1993; Comaroff/Comaroff 1999; Ferguson/Gupta 2002; Ferguson 2006; Harbeson et al. 1994; Kaviraj/Khilnani 2001; Lewis 2001; Lumumba-Kasongo 2005; Mamdani 1996). Picking up on Mamdani's (1996: 19) earlier point, there is still a need in current practice and scholarship for an analysis of (and in fact empirical enquiry into) civil society that allows understanding it in its actual form, rather than as a promised agenda for change.

For some scholars, civil society is non-existent in the sub-Saharan African context. Harbeson et al. (1994: 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: 21) perceive civil society as an 'illusion' in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa and argue that the state is so poorly institutionalised, and 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: 64-71) distinguishes between three different dimensions of civil society, namely the material, the organisational and the ideological. Even though he considers civil society as necessary for political transitions in sub-Saharan Africa, he concludes on a less positive note: "[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 organisations 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" (Bratton 1994: 71).

Harbeson, Chabal and Daloz, as well as Bratton, share one common approach, that is, they indirectly contrast the regulation of societal and political life in post-colonial Africa with state-society and economy-society relations as we encounter them in the West. From this perspective, civil society is once again approached as a normative and prescriptive construct that *ought* to achieve or contribute to peace, development and democratisation. However, this is an ill-fated approach, as "different circumstances produce different meanings" (Jenkins 2001: 251). Consequently, the central questions should rather be, what it actually means and entails to be an African citizen in the 21st century. This also reflects Allen's (1997: 337) observation that civil society in sub-Saharan Africa appears to be merely an ideological construct: "[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."

This invites us to reflect, not only on the extent to which civil society is somewhat artificially constructed by external actors through specific funding schemes, affiliations with INGOs, and capacity building or training programmes targeting local civic associations/organisations, but also to what extent it emerges rather organically in its own pace, manner and formation. For Denskus (2007), the engagement of the international community repeatedly showed that imposing short-sighted liberal governance frameworks helped to stabilise existing elite structures. Lumumba-Kasongo (2005) further contends that it is not that Africans would not appreciate the ideas or principles of liberal democracies, but the processes of creating rules, norms and institutionalisation has been hijacked by the political elite. He further holds that *this* democracy and its processes have not been able to address the core issues of African societies, such as equal distribution of resources, social justice, employment, gender equality and individual and collective rights (Lumumba-Kasongo 2005: 202).

Besides, literature in the form of both scholarly and non-academic discourses on civil society in peacebuilding and development processes only marginally addresses the issue of the political culture in war-torn societies (cf. Almond/Verba 1963). Although democratic institutions were more or less successfully (re-)established on the surface, the civilian (thus legitimising) sphere of many post-conflict societies continues to be embedded in neo-patrimonial and/or religious networks and tribalism. The argument here is not that researchers and practitioners do not recognise these cultural idiosyncrasies. Instead, liberal peace and development discourses remain largely detached from post-colonial discourses which focus on the legacies of colonialism, the bifurcated state and how both have affected and shaped the political culture in contemporary sub-Saharan African societies. The impact of persisting neo-patrimonial networks and tribalism on the political culture of the civilian sphere rewards further examination, but it is also worth asking to what extent the political culture in post-conflict sub-Saharan Africa appears to be once more only a pseudoimitation of a Western idea(l). Mind-sets how to live a responsible communal life, as well as the political nature of communities, stand in stark contradiction to liberal norms and ideas of civil society. The freedom of the individual is not always detached from attitudes towards the community, thereby challenging a liberal understanding of civil society as embedded in a political culture that cherishes the realm of the individual, the very self, constantly striving for personal rights.

5. Conclusion

In the light of the above outlined arguments, it is suggested that civil society in sub-Saharan Africa represents much more than a normative and terminological fad. Civil society has to be approached, understood and contextualised in terms of local realities in order to really hold a key to explaining and addressing more effectively the long-term needs of a conflict-shattered society, as opposed to agendas and priority plans based on a Western notion of the concept. This implies giving firm consideration not only to factors such as the legacy of slave trade and colonialism, urban versus rural areas, local versus elite ownership, neo-patrimonial networks

and chiefdom systems, but also the political culture and cultural identities of a society – to name but a few. This list of aspects is certainly far from being extensive, and many other characteristics have to be explored, such as gender relations and equality as well as society's overall life circumstances (e.g. living conditions, health, nutrition, education).

Moreover, the argument that the nature of civil society in sub-Saharan Africa can be understood only through a local lens is not entirely new (cf. Ferguson 2006; Jenkins 2001; Lewis 2001; Mamdani 1996). By contrast, alternative approaches towards civil society in ongoing peacebuilding and development processes in sub-Saharan African post-conflict states are scarce. There are a few exceptions, such as Verkoren and van Leeuwen (2012), who highlight how and why the idea of a social contract between the state and society needs to be re-negotiated in non-Western post-conflict environments. Both authors caution that neoliberal agendas underlie aspirations for civil society building, sustaining 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 here as non-occidental) manifestations of civil society acquire legitimacy and maintain their own forms of accountability (Verkoren/van Leeuwen 2012: 87). This article further contends that a re-negotiation of the social contract must be put into historical context. State-society relations in sub-Saharan African states surfaced in a completely different manner, pace and time in history than in the (neoliberal) West. As the previous section has shown, there are numerous debates on the effects of colonial rule that offer a great entry point to anchor and interlink current peacebuilding and development research more thoroughly with the past. Similarly, the issue of political culture can tell us a lot about the nature and characteristics of state-society relations emerging from a bifurcated state. As a domain of social life, it seems to be a promising new entry point to revisit the issue of how we approach local societies in non-Western states. At the same time, it opens new avenues towards a more thorough understanding of the opposing tensions between the individual and the community, between particular and universal values – and therefore liberal interests. In short, any theoretical (mis-)usage of 'civil society' has to be carefully questioned and reexamined. Preconceived perceptions and prescriptions hinder and distort rather than (re-)shape and construct cultural and societal identities.

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Abstracts

The promise of a flourishing, vibrant and democracy-committed civil society has emerged as a posited panacea in ongoing peacebuilding, democratisation and development assistance over the past three decades. As for sub-Saharan African post-conflict states, however, the local context and understanding of civil society remains often unaddressed. By and large, civil society has become an uncontested idea(l). This article argues that a classical Western liberal-individualist model of civil society is continuously challenged by the cultural and historical particularisms of states in the sub-Saharan African region. Settled modes of thinking in peacebuilding and development research and practice have to take into account local characteristics that are already part of, and grounded in, existing and historically rooted experiences.

Die Rolle einer starken, politisch aktiven Zivilgesellschaft für die Förderung von Demokratie, Frieden und Entwicklungshilfe wurde in den letzten drei Dekaden zu einer fast unumstrittenen Idealvorstellung in entwicklungspolitischen Konzepten. Hinsichtlich afrikanischer Post-Konflikt-Staaten südlich der Sahara bleiben der kulturelle Kontext und vor allem das lokale Verständnis von Zivilgesellschaft allerdings häufig unberücksichtigt. Es wird argumentiert, dass ein westliches Modell von Zivilgesellschaft, das ideengeschichtlich auf liberalen und individualisti-

schen Konzepten gründet, mit den kulturellen und historischen Besonderheiten dieser Staaten nur schlecht vereinbar ist. In den existierenden Denkmustern und Diskursen der Friedensförderung und Entwicklungspolitik sollten daher die historisch tief verwurzelten lokalen und soziokulturellen Merkmale dieser Länder verstärkt berücksichtigt werden.

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