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# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PAPERS

CONFLICT PREVENTION & RECONSTRUCTION

Paper No. 36 / October 2006

## Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding

Thania Paffenholz  
Christoph Spurk

## Summary Findings

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With the proliferation of conflicts in the 1990s and the increasing complexity of the peacebuilding efforts confronting the international community, donors and the peacebuilding discourse increasingly focused on the potential role of civil society. This led to a massive rise in civil society peacebuilding initiatives but it was not matched by a corresponding research agenda and debate on the nexus between civil society and peacebuilding. There has been little systematic analysis of the specific role of civic engagement and civil society in the context of armed conflict and even less regarding its potentials, limitations and critical factors. The aim of this study is to:

- analyze existing research knowledge on the nexus of civil society and peacebuilding,
- examine operational experiences and lessons learned, and
- develop operational principles, guidelines and questions for further research.

The study provides an overview of the concept of civil society, its history and understanding in different contexts. It elaborates an analytical framework of civil society functions derived from democracy theory, development discourse and case study knowledge, which in turn is applied to the context of peacebuilding. Peacebuilding theory and practice is analyzed in terms of its civil society functions and their validity, scope and content. The results show that the mere existence of and support for civil society does not automatically lead to peacebuilding. A good understanding of civil society's roles and potential for peacebuilding is required. It is also important to recognize that certain roles and functions of civil society vary depending on the phases of conflict and may not all be equally relevant and effective in all conflict phases.

Research suggests that merging the civil society discourse in democracy theory, with the development and civil society peacebuilding discourse leads to a much clearer and focused understanding of the role of civil society in peacebuilding. In particular, applying a functionalist analytical framework is a major contribution to the current debate.

The study presents and applies an analytical framework developed from the fields of democracy and development, and based on seven core functions of civil society: (i) protection; (ii) monitoring and accountability; (iii) advocacy and public communication; (iv) socialization and a culture of peace; (v) conflict sensitive social cohesion; (vi) intermediation and facilitation; and (vii) service delivery.

The study also suggests the need to analyze the enabling conditions for civil society to fulfill a constructive role in peacebuilding and approach this from a holistic understanding of what are the needs of civil society. Not only is it necessary to identify the relevant functions of civil society within peacebuilding, but also the composition of civil society. This would avoid the common misconception that conflates support to civil society with support to NGOs. Moreover, there is a need for a better understanding of the conditions and obstacles that affect civil society's ability to play a constructive role in peacebuilding, including the behavior of potential or existing 'uncivil' society actors and the role of fragile or authoritarian states.

The study draws 10 major lessons: (i) civil society has important roles to play in peacebuilding; (ii) beware of simple civil society enthusiasm; (iii) current support is not based on a full understanding of civil society and its composition; (iv) not all civil society functions are equally effective in all conflict phases; (v) civil society can also have a dark side; (vi) the role of the state is equally important; (vii) civil society is more than NGOs; (viii) NGO peacebuilding impact must be critically assessed; (ix) the timing and sequencing of various civil society functions are crucial for achieving impact; and (x) there is a need for a holistic and comprehensive approach to civil society.

The study also suggests four areas for further research: (i) the appropriateness and impact of civil society functions; (ii) the role and selection of actors; (iii) the enabling environment for civil society; and (iv) questioning the role of service delivery as a peacebuilding function.

# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PAPERS

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## Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction

Paper No. 36 / October 2006

### Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding

Thania Paffenholz  
Christoph Spurk

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## Foreword

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This study was commissioned by the Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit in the Social Development Department of the World Bank as part of continuing efforts to better understand the role of civil society in conflict-affected countries. The main purpose of the study is to explore conceptual frameworks on the roles and functions of civil society—in its many manifestations—in countries affected by violent conflict or emerging from conflict and confronting the challenge of making peace sustainable. It is also intended to help conflict practitioners take a hard and more systematic look at the conditions under which civil society organizations, and the NGOs that often claim to represent it, can play constructive roles. This is also meant to present a more nuanced approach in sharp contrast to easy notions that any support to civil society must have positive effects, and especially that it must be good for peace. This study points out that this is often not the case and offers a number of insights and suggestions on how to engage more effectively with civil society organizations.

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# CIVIL SOCIETY, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, AND PEACEBUILDING

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Participation of citizens in political decision making is a core concept of functioning democracies. Civil society has therefore tremendously important roles to play within democracies. This is equally reflected in the international cooperation discourse. Since at least the early 1990s it has become clear that a functioning participatory democracy is a prerequisite for sustainable development. A vibrant civil society is considered as precondition to go beyond ‘formal’ democracies, to achieve long lasting attitude changes and to overcome resistance by former, undemocratic leaders and elites. An active civil society and civic engagement are widely accepted as critical to boost the accountability of governments toward their citizens, to strengthen public policy decisions and to increase the effectiveness of development interventions.

Armed conflict is a fundamental obstacle to development. During and in the aftermath of conflict, high hopes are placed on the de-escalating or conflict-transforming power of civil society and its contribution to sustainable peace. From this perspective, citizens, communities and civil society organizations are perceived as key actors in overcoming existing conflict lines, factionalism and organized violence.

With the proliferation of conflicts in the 1990s and the increasing complexity of the peacebuilding efforts confronting the international community—including notable failures such as Somalia and Rwanda—the peacebuilding discourse increasingly focused on the potential role of civil society. This led to a massive rise in civil society peacebuilding initiatives but, interestingly, it was not matched by a corresponding research agenda and debate on the nexus between civil society and peacebuilding. To date there has been little systematic analysis of the specific role of civic engagement and civil society in the context of armed conflict and even less regarding its potentials, limitations and critical factors. Therefore, the aim of this study is to:

- analyze existing research knowledge on the nexus of civil society and peacebuilding,
- examine operational experiences and lessons learned, and
- develop operational principles, guidelines and questions for further research.

This study is the first product of this research. The study starts by providing an overview of the concept of civil society, its history and understanding in different contexts. It elaborates an analytical framework of civil society functions derived from democracy theory, development discourse and case study knowledge, which in turn is applied to the context of peacebuilding. Peacebuilding theory and practice is analyzed in terms of its civil society functions and their validity, scope and content.

The results demonstrate that the mere existence of and support for civil society does not automatically lead to peacebuilding. A good understanding of civil society’s roles and potential for peacebuilding is required. It is also important to recognize that certain roles and functions of civil society vary depending on the phases of conflict and may not all be equally relevant and effective in all conflict phases.

Research suggests that merging the civil society discourse in democracy theory, with the development and civil society peacebuilding discourse leads to a much clearer and focused understanding of the role of civil society in peacebuilding. In particular, applying a functionalist analytical framework is a major contribution to the current state of debate.

The study also demonstrates that it is necessary to analyze the enabling conditions for civil society to fulfill a constructive role in peacebuilding and approach this from a holistic understanding of what are the needs of civil society. Not only is it necessary to identify the relevant functions of civil society within peacebuilding, but also the composition of civil society. For example traditional groups, social movements and mass organizations are very important civil society actors in peacebuilding that need to be considered more systematically. This would avoid the common misconception that conflates support to civil society with support to NGOs. Moreover, there is a need for a better understanding of the conditions and obstacles that affect civil society's ability to play a constructive role in peacebuilding, including the behavior of potential or existing 'uncivil' society actors and the role of a fragile or authoritarian states.

The study is structured in four parts. Following this introduction, the second section discusses two basic concepts—civil society and peacebuilding. It defines the concepts, describes their history and current debates, distils the main approaches inherent in these concepts, and outlines current practice in international cooperation. The third section analyzes civil society functions in peacebuilding. The last section draws lessons and analyzes obstacles for civil society's constructive role in peacebuilding, and elaborates further research questions.

## II. BASIC CONCEPTS

### 1. The Concept and Practice of Civil Society

#### 1.1 Definitions

'Civil society' is a complex concept. Although the term is widely used, seeming at times to be "the big idea on everyone's lips" (Edwards 2004, p. 2), there is no commonly-agreed definition. The notion that civil society is the arena of voluntary, uncoerced collective actions around shared interests, purposes and values (Merkel and Lauth 1998, p. 7) is non-controversial. To define civil society further many authors describe its position in relation to other sectors of society and then group actors within these sectors. Thus, the Centre for Civil Society, London, considers civil society as a sector on its own vis-à-vis the three other main sectors—state, business and family (see figure 1). Although there is some degree of consensus in the literature on this basic approach, the attribution of actors is contested. For example, some authors argue that family is not a separate sector but belongs to civil society, while others consider business as part of civil society rather than being a sector on its own (Glasius 2004, p. 1). Some researchers use a different and more sophisticated segmentation, distinguishing for example between the political (state apparatus, political parties and parliamentarians), economic (companies and markets) and private spheres, and define a space where these spheres overlap. Thus, some actors do not belong just to one sector but to operate in various spheres (Croissant 2003, p. 240).

A slightly different approach stresses that civil society is not a sector on its own but the space between societal sectors (Merkel and Lauth 1998, p. 7). Thus, actors are attributed to specific sectors but can also act in civil society. For example, entrepreneurs, usually part of the business sector, are acting in civil society when demanding tax exemptions. This understanding also helps to uncover other actors who have a role in civil society, such as traditional groups in Africa (Croissant et al 2000, p. 18).

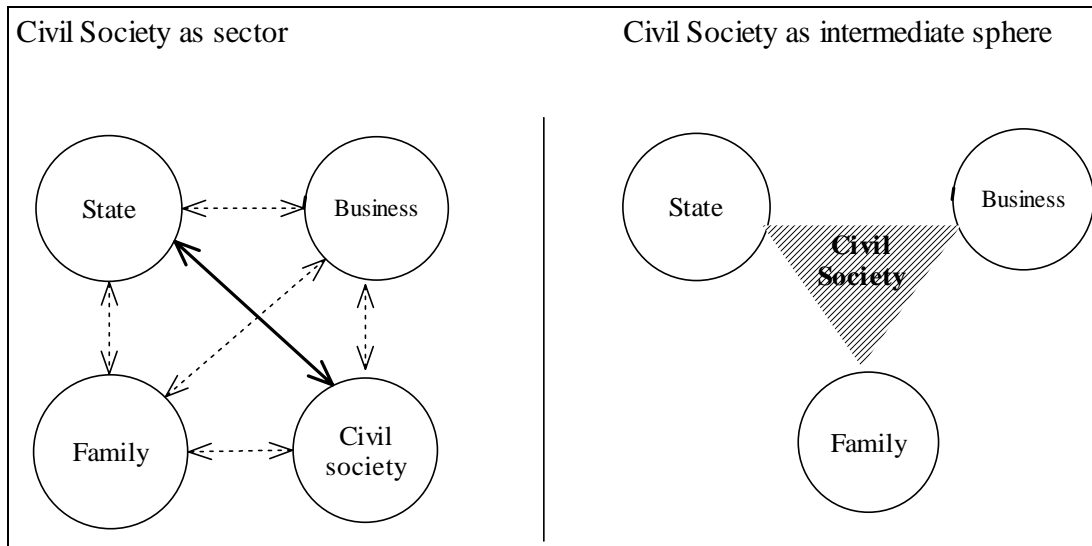
Both approaches can be summarized in the following definition or understanding of civil society:

- Civil society is the sector of voluntary action within institutional forms that are distinct from those of the state, family and market, 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, often competing with each other and oriented to specific interests. It comprises non-state actors and associations that are not purely driven by private or economic interests, are autonomously organized, and interact in the public sphere; and
- Civil society is independent from the state, but it is oriented toward and interacts closely with the state and the political sphere.

Figure 1: Civil Society as Sector and as Intermediate Sphere



This definition already implies a particular understanding of the interaction between civil society and the state, government and business. Although civil society interacts with these other sectors, especially with the state, it does not replace these sectors and its political actors, but rather aims to improve their effectiveness and responsiveness (Croissant et al. 2000, p. 17; Merkel and Lauth 1998, p. 7).

This definition of civil society, however, is not sufficient to fully clarify its roles, especially in terms of democratization or peacebuilding objectives. Reviewing the literature makes it clear that the roles of civil society are highly diverse, complex and, above all, contentious—“politicians and thinkers from left, right and all perspectives in between” (Edwards 2004, p. 2) see civil society as a solution to social, economic and political problems. Some even ask whether it is this very fuzziness that explains the present popularity of civil society—“it can be all things to all people” (Glasius 2004, p. 3).

For the purpose of this paper it seems therefore necessary to first clarify the role of civil society as a concept before analyzing its nexus with and potential for peacebuilding. The paper therefore first considers the fundamental theoretical concepts and the different forms civil society has taken over time. It then explores in detail the main roles and functions currently ascribed to civil society, taken from current research on civil society and development cooperation practice. This functional scheme is then used to analyze the nexus between civil society and peacebuilding.

The term civic engagement is widely used by social capital theorists like Robert Putnam and refers mainly to the participation of individuals in civil life and groupings (Putnam 2000, pp. 31-180). In its civil society discourse the World Bank uses the term civic engagement, which is broader than the activities and roles of organized civil society and also includes actions of individuals and loose groupings or associations. The paper uses the term civil society when referring to the general concept or to activities of

groups, organizations, associations and movements, and civic engagement when referring to the activities of individuals or non-organized groupings.

## 1.2 History of Civil Society and its Debates

Civil society concepts stem from different roots. In modern times, a number of political philosophers have contributed to the discourse and definitions of civil society. Key thinkers are briefly presented below.

### Fundamental Theoretical Concepts and Philosophical Roots

**John Locke** (1632-1704) was the first in modern times to stress that civil society is a body in its own right, separate from the state. People form a community, in which their social life develops and in which the state has no say. This sphere is pre- or un-political. The first task of this civil society is to protect the individual—his/her rights and property—against the state and its arbitrary interventions (Merkel and Lauth 1998, p. 4; Schade 2002, p. 10).

**Charles Montesquieu** (1689-1755) elaborated his model of separation of powers (*De l'esprit des lois* 1748) where he distinguished, as Locke did, between political society (regulating the relations between citizens and government) and civil society (regulating the relations between citizens), but presents a far less sharp contrast between the two spheres. Instead, he stresses a balance between central authority and societal networks (*corps intermediaires*), where the central authority (monarchy) must be controlled by the rule of law and limited by the countervailing power of independent organizations (networks) that operate inside and outside the political structure (Merkel and Lauth 1998, p. 5).

**Alexander de Tocqueville** (1805-1859) stressed even more the role of these independent associations as civil society (*De la Democratie en Amérique*). He saw these associations as schools of democracy in which democratic thinking, attitudes and behavior are learned, also with the aim to protect and defend individual rights against potentially authoritarian regimes and tyrannical majorities in society. According to de Tocqueville these associations should be built voluntarily and at all levels (local, regional, national). Thus, civic virtues like tolerance, acceptance, honesty and trust are really integrated into the character of civic individuals. They contribute to trust and confidence, or as Putnam later described it, social capital (Putnam 2000, pp. 19-26).

**Antonio Gramsci** (1891-1937) focused on civil society from a Marxist theoretical angle. He stressed the potentially oppositional role of civil society as a 'public room,' separate from state and market, in which ideological hegemony is contested. According to him civil society contains a wide range of organizations and ideologies which both challenge and uphold the existing order. The political and cultural hegemony of the ruling classes and societal consensus is formed within civil society. Gramsci's ideas influenced the resistance to totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe and Latin America (Lewis 2002).

**Jürgen Habermas** (\*1929) focused his concept of civil society on its role within the public sphere. The political system needs the articulation of interests in the public space to put different concerns on the political agenda, but this function cannot be left entirely to established institutions such as political parties. Marginalized groups in particular need to organize and find a way to articulate their interests. This is necessary because political parties and parliaments need to "...get informed public opinion beyond the established power structures' (Habermas 1992, p. 374).

Two broad conclusions can be drawn from this short overview of the fundamental principles of the notion of civil society. First, different meanings and interpretations of civil society have influenced theoretical debate and empirical research. Second, civil society has been an almost purely Western concept, historically tied to the political emancipation of citizens from former feudalistic ties, monarchy and the

state during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Other notions of civil society that might have existed in other regions or at different times are hardly reflected in the international debate about civil society (Appiagyei-Atua 2005, pp. 2-3; Pouligny 2005, p. 498). As a result, there is still debate on whether these concepts of civil society are transferable to non-Western countries or other historical contexts with different levels of democracy and economic structures (Lewis 2002; Harneit-Sievers 2005).

### **Civil Society in Practice: Discourses in Different Contexts**

**Western Europe: From Exclusiveness to Inclusion.** In its early phase civil society in Western Europe (early 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century) was driven by economic and academic elites that demanded civil and human rights, and political participation. In its second phase (19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century) civil society widened its areas of activity and potential. New actors entered civil society, as for example the social movements of the working class, farmers or churches, who not only engaged in social welfare but also articulated political and societal claims. In their programs these new actors were less universal than the elites of the first phase, focusing instead on specific interests, sometimes stressing societal conflicts and deprivations. A third phase of civil society began with the emergence of new social movements in the 1960s, such as women's liberation, and the student, peace and the ecology movements. These new movements and agendas considerably expanded the range and scope of civil society activities, and the reasons for being part of civil society in its many manifestations (Lauth 2003, p. 229).

**US and Western Europe: Social Capital Debate.** Starting in the United States, a rich debate emerged in the 1990s on the performance of major social institutions, including representative government, and its relation to political culture and civil society. Putnam sees social capital—social networks, a rich associational life and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness associated with it—as the core element of civil society, affirming that the characteristics of civil society and civic life affect the health of democracy and the performance of social institutions (Putnam 1993; Putnam 2002, p. 14). His research shows a tremendous decline of social capital in the United States and his work has spurred considerable research on various forms of social capital (Putnam 2000, Putnam 2002, pp. 14-25) and its conduciveness for democracy.

**Latin America: Different Concepts.** In Latin America the concept of civil society initially gained importance mainly in the fight against military dictatorship at the end of the 1960s. Since then the concept has widened to encompass a range of activities as manifested in Europe—from an anti-authoritarian model based on a 'Gramscian' understanding to a neo-liberal concept mainly stressing individual economic freedom and favoring de-regulation (Birle 2000, pp. 232-4).

**Eastern Europe: Challenges of a Three-Fold Transition.** Most countries in Eastern Europe faced a three-fold transition: the political transformation from dictatorship to democracy, the economic transformation from state to market economy, and sometimes the state transformation due to the disintegration of the USSR (Merkel 1999, p. 377). This transition drew much interest, mainly from European researchers and practitioners. Numerous case studies showed that in most countries civil society played a major role, although not the only one, in overcoming authoritarian regimes and establishing democratic structures (Merkel 1999, pp. 397-441).

Research demonstrates that civil society plays different roles in various transition phases. Its success is contingent on a variety of factors, among them its strength and capacity to fulfill the right functions at the right time, the incorporation of democratic procedures in its own structure and organization, especially after immediate system change, the extent of bridging societal divides by inclusive membership as well as the 'civility' of its actions. This must be seen within the context of other factors and power structures civil society has to interact. (Merkel 2000; Lauth 2003).

**African Context: Still Looking for a Major Role?** The main question in Africa is whether the concept of civil society is applicable to this context, considering that the most apparent conditions for a Western-type civil society (e.g., a self-confident urban citizenship that has already gained some autonomy from state structures) are mostly missing in Africa. There are three different positions in the literature.

One position states that due to colonial rule—fostering a small urban elite in African cities and oppressing the big majority of the people by leaving them as subjects of traditional despotic rulers in rural areas—Africa knows only traditional associations but has no space for a civil society that aims at participatory governance. As this pattern largely continued in the post-colonial phase, there is no civil society in Africa. The second viewpoint sees hardly any difficulty in applying the concept to Africa and considers almost all existent non-state actors as civil society (Harneit-Sievers 2005, p. 2). A third viewpoint takes a middle position stressing the need to adapt the concept of civil society to Africa (Lewis 2002, pp. 574-84). Africa's civil society is seen as different from Western concepts, but having executed similar functions, although in a rudimentary way. Traditional associations, like male youth groups, were not acknowledged as civil society but have worked already in traditional society as controllers of traditional government, i.e., elders and chiefs (Appiagyei-Atua 2005, p. 6). Other traditional institutions can equally be seen as cells of civil society (Harneit-Sievers 2005, pp. 5-9).

However, most authors assess the impact of Africa's civil society on democratization as very limited, because it has been itself fragmented and the links between different civil society organizations (social self-help groups, urban intellectuals) to the formal political system are rather weak (Pinkney 2003, pp. 104-5; Schmidt 2000, pp. 321-3).

**A Global Civil Society.** The 1990s also saw a large increase in worldwide NGO activities. Especially trans-national NGOs and networks have placed globally important issues on the international agenda, have launched international campaigns (e.g., on landmines, 'blood diamonds,' 'publish what you pay'), have participated in key international conferences (UN 2003) and thus advocated and spoken globally on behalf of people who were formerly neglected. International NGOs have conducted large and well-organized campaigns on development issues and presented alternative viewpoints to those of official governments and development agencies. Their involvement in the UN system has been acknowledged and recommendations made for their future relations and interactions with the UN (UN 2003, pp. 19-21).

The concept of a global civil society (Kaldor 2003) is debated intensively in the literature. Some see it as an appropriate reflection of globalization (Cardoso 2003), having a positive potential to influence the framework of global governance by promoting debate and thus bridging existing societal divides (Clark 2003). Critics of a global civil society and their actors have tended to focus on their lack of legitimacy, and while valuing the expertise and competence of international NGOs, their claim of being 'representatives of the world's peoples' is questioned (Anderson and Rieff 2004, p. 35).

**Debate on the Third Sector.** Civil society comprises the same broad range of institutions and organizations known variously as the non-profit, the voluntary, the independent, or the third sector. This third sector gained considerable attention in the 1990s as it started to operate outside the confines of the state and the market, and thus mostly outside government control or beyond profit orientation. Despite its heterogeneity the entities of the third sector show a number of common features:

- They are set up as an organizations, i.e., they have an institutional presence;
- They do not distribute profits or dividends to managers or owners;
- They are self governing;
- They are voluntary in the sense that membership is not legally required, and attract some level of voluntary contribution of time or money. (Salamon and Anheier 1999, p. 4); and
- They provide services to their members or to clients (Badelt 1997, p. 5).

As the third sector can be a significant economic force—especially regarding employment and service delivery—than commonly understood, the debate on the third sector focuses on the conditions under which it can be developed (Salomon and Anheier 1997, pp. 12-9, 20-5). It centers on service delivery, asking for example what kind of services can be provided by what kind of organization (state, business or non-profit sector). Although involving the same organizations, the civil society debate instead has a different focus and objectives. It centers mainly on the political, social or cultural implications and effects of civil society organizations on democratization.

### 1.3 Analyzing Civil Society: Approaches and Models

The literature offers two approaches to analyze this diversity of different forms of civil society. One focuses on actors and their identity, while the other focuses on the functions of civil society.

#### Actor-Oriented Models

Actor-oriented models focus the debate on the actors that belong to civil society and their characteristics. Are members of parliament and officials of political parties a part of civil society or do they belong to the political sphere that is considered as counterpart to civil society? Do the media belong to civil society or to the business sector? Do all actors in state or government structures belong to the state or at least partly to civil society? (Lauth 2003, p. 224; Bliss 2003; Croissant 2003). Some development practitioners such as the Development Assistance Committee (DAC 2005) are inclined to equate civil society only with NGOs. In this NGO category a wide array of diverse actors is considered as being part of civil society, such as women, media, youth, faith-based organizations, education institutions, arts groups, local business, diasporas, and even soldiers (van Tongeren et al. 2005, pp. v-ix). This includes almost everybody under civil society and thus blurs the sectoral boundaries (state, market, family), but also fails to identify purposes and objectives of different actors.

Other authors require civil society actors to be ‘civil,’ i.e., to respect the values of non-violence and mutual tolerance (Merkel and Lauth 1998, p. 7) while others prefer to include all non-state actors, even those that show ‘uncivil’ behavior or use violence in their interactions with other groups, for example warlords, militia and armed liberation movements (Merkel and Lauth 1998, note 32). In Africa some authors also favor including groups with involuntary membership and kinship relations, although this would not be the case in Western conceptions of civil society (Lewis 2002, pp. 578-9).

This short overview already demonstrates the limitations of actor-oriented models in clarifying the objectives of civil society. The purposes of these different actors remain largely unexamined other than general references to philosophical roots (the ‘Gramscian model’) or to other theoretical frameworks such as the ‘neo-liberal model’ or the ‘civil society of social movements’ approach (Birle 2000, p. 232-4). An alternative approach is to focus directly on the functions of civil society.

#### Functions and Role Models

**Merkel and Lauth’s Function Model.** One school of thought comes from German political scientists who have presented a model of five functions of civil society extracted mainly from research on system transformation in Eastern Europe and enriched by a large number of practical case studies of the role of civil society in different contexts (Merkel and Lauth 1998; Merkel 2000; Croissant et al. 2000; Lauth 2003). Their model sees civil society not as a specific historic form, but as an analytical category. This decoupling from history helps to distil the functions of civil society as they relate to democracy and to analyze different regional or cultural contexts and societal conditions. The basic model discerns five essential functions of civil society.

*Protection.* Civil society is the social sphere beyond the state in which citizens, endowed with their rights, are free to organize their lives without state interference. The state has to ensure protection of the private sphere. The task of civil society is to remind the state of this warrant and if needed compel it to do so.

*Intermediation between state and citizens.* Civil society has to ensure a balance between central authority and social networks. This balance is a pre-condition for safeguarding the rule of law. This function focuses on the permanent exchange of self-organized associations with the state in order to control, limit and influence the activities of the state.

*Participatory socialization.* This function stresses that civil society and associations are schools of democracy. People learn how to execute their democratic rights, even on a basic level. People will acquire the capacities of being citizens, participating in public life, developing trust, confidence, tolerance and acceptance. This also supports the decentralization of power, and the creation of solidarity among citizens, which act as defense mechanisms against possible attacks on their freedom.

*Community building—integration.* Civil society is seen as a catalyst of civil virtues or as an antidote to individualism and a retreat to family and statism. Thus participation in social organizations helps to bridge societal cleavages, create civil virtues, and foster social cohesion also satisfying the needs of individuals to develop bonds and attachments. A pre-condition is that the self-organization of civil society does not take place purely under ethnic, religious or racist premises.

*Communication.* Public communication is the core function of civil society in deliberative democracy models. It stresses the importance of a free public sphere, separated from state and economy, where people have room for debate, participation and democratic decision-building. Civil society and its associations have a major role—besides political parties and parliaments—to establish this ‘democratic public’ and to act as a watchdog. Actors of spontaneous groups, organizations, and social movements are able to articulate concerns and problems and transfer them from the private sphere to the political agenda.

Comparative research based on these functions shows that:

- The functions are not mutually exclusive but rather complement one another in their conduciveness for democracy;
- Contingent upon the country context, some functions seem to be more basic (e.g., protection), being essential in the immediate phase of democratic system change, while others (e.g., integration) gain more importance only in later stages of consolidation of democracy (Croissant et al. 2000, pp 37-41); and
- The internal democratic organization of civil society groups will determine whether they are able to perform all their functions, not only in immediate system change but also in a consolidated democratic society. In this phase integration and community building play a decisive role, as well as public communication on common issues (Lauth 2003).

The model also notes that civil society needs to be civil and thus excludes groups that show uncivil behavior. This emphasis on norms of civility is akin to Putnam’s distinction between good or positive and bad or negative social capital. Good social capital is built when associations develop strong bridging ties, i.e., including members from other ethnic or social groupings, whereas bad social capital is characterized only by bonding ties or strong inward social capital, including only members from the same ethnic or social grouping. The latter are more inclined to act violently against others compared to associations that have stronger bridging ties (Putnam 2000, pp. 22-3).

**Edwards' Roles Model.** Edwards made a similar attempt to structure the meanings of civil society. Out of the diversity of concepts offered by multiple actors regarding civil society and “recognizing that civil society does indeed mean different things to different people” (2005, p. 3) he elaborated three roles.

*Civil society as associational life.* Civil society is the world of voluntary associations that act as ‘gene carriers’ for developing values such as tolerance and cooperation. This is the central role the ‘neo-Tocquevillian school’ ascribes to a rich associational life (Edwards 2004, pp. 18-36).

*Civil society as the good society.* The second role sets this rich associational life in a proper context, fostering specific positive norms and values, emphasizing that activities must be geared toward specific social and political goals (Edwards 2004; pp. 37-53).

*Civil society as the public sphere.* The third role of civil society is to provide a public sphere where citizens argue with one-another about the great questions of the day and negotiate a constantly evolving sense of the common and public interest. This role is central when it comes to finding proper solutions and decision-making in society. It is central for civil society and crucial for democracy to interact fairly in the public sphere. This comprises a willingness to cede some territory to others, to develop shared interests and to deliberate democratically (Edwards 2004, pp. 54-71).

Edwards’ main hypothesis is that each of these roles alone cannot achieve effective social change and other positive outcomes normally attributed to civil society. Thus he calls for integration or synthesis of the different roles and to consider them comprehensively when supporting civil society initiatives (Edwards 2004, p. 10). This will balance the weaknesses of each role by the strengths of the others.

Edwards’ role model concurs almost completely with the functions suggested in Merkel and Lauth’s model—the rich associational life refers to the function of socialization (school of democracy) and the role as public sphere with the communication function. Additionally, the role of civil society as good society is almost equal to the norm of civility and tolerance. Edwards also shares a similar understanding of the interaction of different sectors, emphasizing that a thriving civil society fosters national development and sustained poverty-reducing growth, because “networks of intermediary associations act as a counterweight to vested interests and promote institutional accountability” (Edwards 2004, p. 13).

Comparing the two approaches it can be stated that the function/role model offers a framework of analysis that appears more conducive than the actor-oriented models for analyzing civil society. Differentiating functions of civil society and analyzing existing societies or programs according to this model seems to have more potential for better analysis, planning and assessment of civil society initiatives. Thus, it is interesting to see to what extent development cooperation considers these functions.

#### **1.4 Civil Society in Development Cooperation**

Civil society and its actors have gained widely in importance in development cooperation, at least from the mid-1980s. This shift started with the increased involvement of voluntary agencies or NGOs in development cooperation. This can be attributed mainly to the neo-liberal development model (Debiel and Sticht 2005, p. 9) of the 1980s that has encouraged a highly skeptical attitude toward the state and favored the privatization of state welfare and infrastructure services. Thus, NGOs have been assigned new service functions, especially in the social sectors, for which the state had until then been responsible. They have increasingly taken over operational tasks, in line with efforts to reduce the role of the state or where state weakness is pervasive (Abiew and Keating 2004, pp. 100-1).

This trend was reinforced by the series of UN world conferences in the 1990s that gave substantial incentives to found new NGOs or to enlarge the scope of existing ones. NGOs were especially presented

as alternative implementers of development assistance when states or governments of partner countries were weak or performing poorly. The preference for NGOs was due to their perceived political independence, flexibility and effectiveness in reaching beneficiaries, in contrast with bureaucratic state apparatuses. Funding of official development assistance channeled through NGOs has increased substantially, from an average of \$3.1 billion from OECD countries in 1985/86 to \$7.2 billion in 2001 (Debiel and Sticht 2005, p. 10). Other sources mention even higher figures (Schmidt 2000, p. 302).

This shift in funding through NGOs can be identified as mainly strengthening the third sector as a more efficient alternative in service delivery. Although NGOs are also civil society actors, this shift in aid delivery mechanisms did not primarily aim to support the establishment of a vibrant civil society. Notwithstanding the different objectives, support to the third sector was automatically identified and labeled as civil society support.

Civil society as a concept gained more momentum at the beginning of the 1990s as a means to improve governance and democratization. As the Cold War came to an end, there was an opportunity to set good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law as priority objectives in development cooperation. Thus, a vibrant civil society was considered as an important pillar for establishing democracy and its support an obvious aim of democratization efforts (Schmidt 2000, p. 312). Almost all international donors mention civil society as an important factor to “influence decisions of the state” (BMZ 2005, p. 3), highlight civil society’s responsibility for a democratic state and its “dynamic role...in pushing for social, economic and political change” (DFID 2005a, 2001b) or stressing its role in encouraging open debates on public policy (USAID 2005).

In practice, donors mix third sector and civil society approaches by supporting a combination of service delivery as well as advocacy work. Beyond noting very general and positive connotations of civil society, only a few donors highlight specific functions or tasks of civil society. The World Bank highlights advocacy, monitoring and direct service delivery as three main functions of civil society (World Bank 2003, p. 3). Other donors justify combining the two functions as they are interconnected and the potential of community based organizations to advocate for the poor is enhanced by the legitimacy provided by their effective delivery of services (DFID 2001a, p. 5).

The involvement of NGOs in development cooperation and especially in civil society has been widely acknowledged but also criticized (Debiel and Sticht 2005, p. 11). Critics have pointed out that funding for civil society has concentrated on NGOs, that NGOs are less independent from governments, and that their accountability to the local people and their communities is weak. A main critique is that support to civil society has been highly concentrated on international or national NGOs (Stewart 1997, p. 26), at the expense of other civil society actors that have broader membership. For example, trade unions and other mass organizations could guarantee more participation than recently-created NGOs with a very limited membership base (Bliss 2003, p. 198). Questions are also raised regarding NGO performance in democratization, because some NGOs are personally or institutionally tied to the government, thus finding it difficult to play the role of a counterweight to government.

Political scientists also argue that international NGOs are not as independent from donor governments as they often claim. As donors have—at least partly—outsourced the implementation of their development cooperation, official and non-government aid have become closely intertwined (Debiel and Sticht 2005, p. 12), raising serious doubts on the effective independence of NGOs.

The legitimacy of NGOs is also questioned, largely due to the prevailing division of tasks. Funds are channeled from donor governments to Northern NGOs that subcontract implementation to Southern NGOs (Neubert 2001, p. 61). In this case it has been observed that the Southern NGO is accountable only to its Northern counterparts instead of local constituencies. Thus, many NGOs are regarded as consultants



or small businesses with purely economic interests (Bliss 2003, p. 198; Langnau 2003, p. 234, Schmidt 2000, p. 306). The Southern NGO represents a new type of organization, being non-profit, but acting like a commercial consulting firm (Neubert 2001, p. 63), financed by external mandates. Some critics fear that this commercialization of civil society and especially advocacy or public policy work discourages other 'true' or more legitimate local actors that are not receiving funds (Pouligny 2005, p. 499) from participating or becoming active. Civic engagement is at risk of being dominated by the 'commercial' NGOs, which will weaken the development of a vibrant civil society in the long run.

Development cooperation places more emphasis on service delivery than Merkel and Lauth's model and emphasizes monitoring and advocacy. Civil society is considered mainly as a positive force, while the dark or uncivil side of civil society does not seem to be considered in analysis nor in project design.

### **1.5 Civil Society Confronted with Armed Conflict**

Civil society also receives support during or in the immediate aftermath of armed conflict. This has to take into consideration that armed conflict dramatically changes the life of all people at all levels, from individual changes in attitudes and behavior (trust and confidence) over economic and social change, to ultimate shifts of power relations in communities, regions and the society as a whole. This also changes the enabling environment for civil society (security, legal situation and law enforcement), basic issues and actors. It is almost self-evident that "civil society...tends to shrink in a war situation, as the space for popular, voluntary and independent organizing diminishes" (Orjuela 2004; p. 59).

Many case studies are available on changes in community structures, groups and single actors due to war and conflict (Pouligny 2005; p. 498), although there is still a lack of empirically-based research (Goodhand et al. 2004). Although case studies are generally not directly linked to the debate on civil society, a few common patterns of change due to conflict are valid in all contexts. All conditions necessary for civil society to develop worsen due to armed conflict:

- Physical infrastructure is destroyed which limits communications and exchange;
- State structures and institutions to which civil society addresses its activities are weakened or non-responsive;
- Security is low and the overall situation is characterized by complete or partial lawlessness;
- Basic human rights are suppressed thus limiting even very basic civil society activities;
- Trust disappears and social capital beyond family, clan or ethnic affiliation is destroyed (Stiefel 2001, p. 265); and
- Free and independent media is not present or severely restricted, depriving civil society groups of one of their main communication channels to other civil society groups, the general public as well as government and state structures.

The deterioration of the enabling environment will generally cause a decline of civil society activity and make revival after war difficult. Insecurity and fear, induced by years of civil war, hinder people from participating, even in local community development as they are carefully observing the new power relations after the conflict (Pearce 2005). This decline is also due to the fact that many civil society actors go to exile thereby weakening the capacity of organizations that remain, although in some cases Diaspora communities remain active from afar.

All actors adapt to the difficult environment and new power relations. Especially when the state is weak, the influence of uncivil, xenophobic or mafia-like groupings tends to become stronger (Belloni 2006, pp. 8-9), thus limiting considerably the potential influence of civil society groups working for cross-ethnic understanding. This enhances the danger that civil society groups develop into uncivil actors, due to conflict and aggravated by economic decline, social stress, ubiquitous existence of violence and the

separation of civil society along ethnic lines (Schmidt 2003, pp. 323-4). This is likely enhanced by a natural reaction of people in conflict to strengthen bonds to their ethnic and language group as a protective mechanism when the state is unable to guarantee security (Bogner 2004). Strand et al. (2003, p. 2) confirm that civil society groups at the local level revert to 'primary groupings.' Kinship, tribal, religious and traditional political structures as well as communities (Poulligny 2005, p. 498) serve as coping strategies for people in response to the state's collapse.

Civil society groups might be instrumentalized by political elites on the basis of ethnicism, which in some cases can lead to the 'de-civilization of society,' as in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Rüb 2003, pp. 173-201). The decay of state and other institutional structures drove people into ethnic networks that perpetrated violence against other ethnic groups. During conflict and immediately after, civil society tends to be organized along conflict lines, thus fostering clientelism, reinforcing societal cleavages and hindering democratization.

Large aid inflows also affect the social fabric and power relations in and after conflict. Mary Anderson (1999, pp. 37-53) analyzed how aid can do harm, inciting conflict by a variety of unintended consequences, including:

- favoring recipients from one side of the conflict,
- fostering inter-group conflict through different benefits,
- funding war parties by not preventing theft of aid goods,
- releasing funds for war through aid delivery,
- destroying local markets through aid delivery, and
- legitimizing war factions through aid delivery.

There are already concerns that the dominant position of NGOs in humanitarian crises and post-conflict settings (Abiew and Keating 2004, p. 101) will further destabilize and disempower already weak state structures. It might also inadvertently enhance authoritarian regimes as 'soft' NGOs normally lack the power to exert pressure on these regimes. Supporting civil society and rebuilding social capital is difficult under such circumstances (Coletta et al. 2000). Power struggles with conflict entrepreneurs may continue in the aftermath of war, local authorities may contest the space of civil society (Strand et al. 2003, p. 20), and illegal practices may be widespread. A recent report (World Bank 2005a) analyzing Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in three conflict-affected states in Africa, lists the following shortcomings:

- CSOs were often driven into social service delivery and away from advocacy and governance, which was also attributed to government attitudes that regard advocacy less positively than service provision (World Bank 2005d, p. 10).
- CSOs were sometimes exclusionary and at worst reinforced divisions between groups; sometimes vulnerable groups were not represented and beneficiary participation was less widespread than commonly assumed (World Bank 2005d, p. 13-6).
- Accountability of CSOs vis-à-vis the local communities was generally low, as well as their transparency. As legal frameworks did not provide accountability mechanisms, some fraudulent CSOs took advantage of this vacuum to defraud communities (World Bank 2005d, p. 16).
- CSOs have developed higher responsiveness upward to donors than downward to beneficiaries (World Bank 2005d, p. 16).

## **1.6 Conclusions: Civil Society Functions**

Comparing function/role models derived from democracy theory and development reveals differences and commonalities. Donors assign service delivery a higher priority under the guise of improving living conditions (SIDA 2005). This largely reflects the fact that the third sector approach is equated with the civil society democracy discourse. While Edwards highlights the service provision role of NGOs in

“deliberate substitution for the state” (2004, p. 14), democracy theory attributes no role to service delivery as this is not seen as directly related to democratization (Merkel and Lauth 1998, p. 10). In addition, monitoring government, holding institutions to account and fostering transparency and accountability (World Bank 2003, p. 3) can be considered separate functions of civil society not mentioned in Merkel and Lauth’s model, but closely related to their communication and protection functions.

The other functions mentioned in the context of development cooperation can be attributed to the civil society functions from the Merkel and Lauth model. Stimulating dialogue between civil society and government (DFID 2001a, pp. 4-5) can be equated with the intermediation function, whereas advocating on behalf of the poor (Ibid.) and channeling the views of the people to the political system (DFID 2001b, p. 11) belongs clearly to Merkel and Lauth’s public communication function.

### **Seven Basic Civil Society Functions**

Thus, the proposed model combines Merkel and Lauth’s five functions, which already encompass those of Edwards’ role model, with two new functions contributed by development cooperation practice.

- *Protection of citizens:* This basic function of civil society consists of protecting lives, freedom and property against attacks and despotism by the state or other authorities. It goes back to Locke.
- *Monitoring for accountability:* This function consists mainly in monitoring the activities of the central powers, state apparatus and government. This is also a way of controlling central authorities and holding them to account. Monitoring can refer to various issues, such as human rights, public spending, corruption, and primary school enrolments. The function is based on Montesquieu’s separation of powers, but is enhanced by development cooperation perspectives.
- *Advocacy and public communication:* Civil society has an important task to articulate interests—especially of marginalized groups—and to create channels of communication to bring them to the public agenda, thus raising public awareness and debating them. In development cooperation this Habermasian function is mainly described as advocacy.
- *Socialization:* With its rich associational life civil society contributes to the formation and practice of democratic attitudes among citizens. Thus people learn to develop tolerance, mutual trust and the ability to find compromise by democratic procedures. Thus, democracy is ensured not only by legal institutions but by citizens’ habits.
- *Building community:* Engagement and participation in voluntary associations also has the potential to strengthen bonds among citizens, i.e., building social capital. In cases where the associations include members from other ethnic or social groups it also bridges societal cleavages and adds to social cohesion.
- *Intermediation and facilitation between citizens and state:* Civil society and its organizations fulfill the role of balancing the power of and negotiating with the state by establishing diverse relations (communication, negotiation, control) of various interest groups or independent institutions to the state. This role goes mainly back to Montesquieu.
- *Service delivery:* The direct provision of services to the citizens forms an important part of the activities of civil society associations, e.g. self-help groups. Especially, in cases where the state is weak it becomes a basic activity to provide shelter, health or education.

### **Clarifications and Limitations**

*Uncivil or bad civil society actors.* Although these civil society functions are positive and constructive, clearly many civil society actors might not fulfill one or more of these functions but develop uncivil behaviors, preach hatred against others, act violently and destroy life or property. Associations and organizations can not only be destructive in their behavior but can also have both integrative and

disintegrative potentials. On the ground knowledge and sound analysis is required to determine the nature of actors and the functions they perform. Belloni (2006, pp. 8-10) provides a range of examples from Africa, Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland where civil society actors focused only on strengthening their bonding ties, based on a sense of belonging and kinship, that were later channeled destructively. He presumes that the less bridging ties are built the more likely is influence to be detrimental. Although additional research is needed on the conditions under which civil society organizations act positively or negatively, it is important to keep in mind the potential for detrimental effects by civil society actors.

*The scope of civil society functions.* Constructive civil society functions are not exclusively provided by civil society actors. They can and are also provided by others. Protection for example should be mainly provided by the state, the judiciary and law enforcement authorities. Equally, democratic attitudes are not only learned in voluntary associations, but also in the classroom, family or community.

*The role of the state and other enabling factors.* The constructive civil society functions do not describe the enabling environment in which they operate. As noted before, civil society should not replace the state but rather improve the interplay of citizens with the state. Thus, it needs to be kept in mind, that especially where the state is fragile or authoritarian, external support may need to focus, at least initially, on improving the enabling environment for civil society. This might encompass capacity building for state structures or enforcement of the rule of law.

*Limited role of service delivery.* The above mentioned functions aim to improve the political interplay between the political and economic systems, and the people, thus ensuring democratic, participatory decision-making in society. Although organizations executing civil society functions generally also provide services to their members or to clients, the proposed model centers on the political functions or objectives—in contrast to the third sector debate that focuses on services and their economic objectives. Thus, service delivery as a function is questioned and mainly considered as an entry point for political civil society functions, but the latter should be based on a careful assessment of whether the specific service is indeed a good entry point for the wider functions and objectives of civil society.

In the third section, the report makes use of these seven functions as a framework to analyze the role of civil society in the context of peacebuilding. While the service delivery function is questionable, it is included in the framework to see whether it might be important for civil society in peacebuilding. Prior to a more detailed analysis of the role of civil society in peacebuilding, it is necessary to first understand the concept of peacebuilding, its history, theory and practice.

## **2. The Concept and Practice of Peacebuilding**

### **2.1 Definitions**

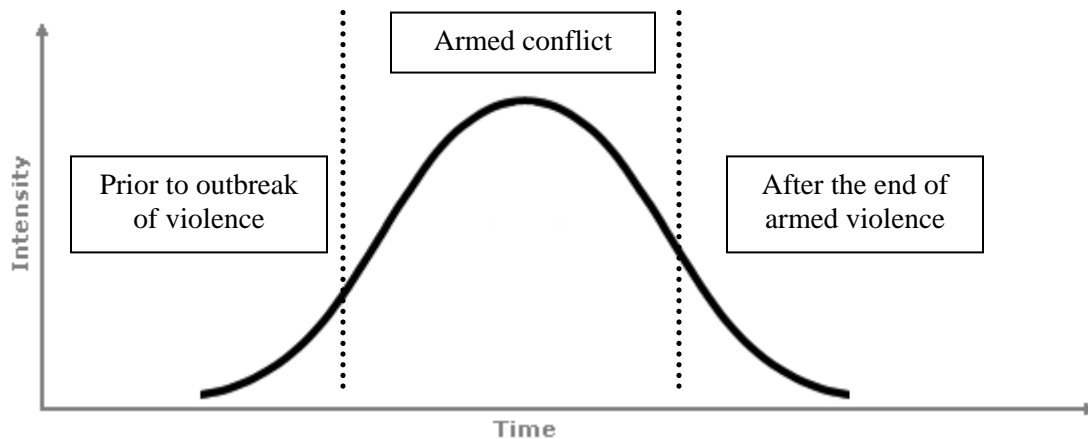
Conflict is a divergence of interests, views or behavior between persons or groups, and is normal in any society. When dealt with in a constructive way, conflict can lead to positive outcomes for individuals and society. However, conflict can also lead to violence when channeled destructively. Since the end of World War II there had been 228 armed conflicts in 148 locations around the globe. In 2004 the number of wars and armed conflicts was estimated to range from 30 (Harbom and Wallensteen 2004) to 42 (Schreiber 2004) depending on the definition of armed conflict. This paper focuses on destructive, armed forms of group conflict only, thereby excluding domestic violence.

There are different definitions of armed conflict in the literature. Their common determinants are that armed conflicts involve organized, armed groups, in most cases with the government as a party to the conflict. The Uppsala conflict data program ([www.pcr.uu.se/research/UCDP](http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/UCDP)) defines an armed conflict with at least 25 battle-related deaths per calendar year. Research also distinguishes between armed

conflict and war, with the latter defined as major armed conflict with at least 1,000 battle-related deaths per year. In practice the term war is rarely used as it is often perceived as political statement. This study uses the term armed conflict or war, the latter in line with the Uppsala definition of major armed conflict.

Theory distinguishes three phases of armed conflict: prior to the outbreak of violence, armed conflict, and the post-conflict phase after the end of large scale violence (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Three Phases of Conflict



However, armed conflicts and wars do not follow this neat path, but rather evolve in recurring cycles of peace and violence. For example, the armed conflict in Nepal has seen a number of ceasefire agreements and two negotiation phases that considerably reduced the intensity of violence, but there was always a reversion to violence when negotiations broke down. In practice, different phases can be present at the same time in a country. For example, in Somalia while Somaliland is in a post-conflict phase, the South of the country around Mogadishu is still in the escalation phase with frequent armed clashes between different factions. The same diversity of conflict phases is true for different regions in Afghanistan.

Peacebuilding is understood as an overarching term to describe a long-term process covering all activities with the overall objective to prevent violent outbreaks of conflict or to sustainably transform armed conflicts into constructive peaceful ways of managing conflict. This definition, however, is only partial because it is not entirely clear on the scope and time frame of peacebuilding. In the peacebuilding discourse, Galtung (1969) distinguishes two forms of peace—negative peace (end of violence) and positive peace (peaceful society at all levels).

A narrow definition of peacebuilding based on the concept of negative peace is evident in the 1992 UN *Agenda for Peace* where the aim of peacebuilding is defined as preventing large scale violence or the recurrence of violence immediately after wars or armed conflicts (1-3 years, maximum 5 years). In this definition all activities belong to peacebuilding that aim at achieving this goal directly. The prevailing understanding of the end of peacebuilding in international practice slightly enlarges the above definition. Here, peacebuilding ends when a post-conflict country is perceived by the international community to be able to guarantee a minimum security to its people (thus allowing outside peacekeeping forces to exit) as well as establishing working democratic structures, usually understood as a national government legitimized through internationally observed and recognized elections.

A wider definition sees the end of peacebuilding when a positive peace has been achieved. This notion, however, is too wide to allow a clear definition of the end of peacebuilding, as it includes a range of activities and outcomes (e.g., negotiations, peacekeeping, trauma healing, poverty reduction,

democratization). This study therefore uses a compromise definition between the two extremes: Peacebuilding aims at preventing and managing armed conflict and sustaining peace after large-scale organized violence has ended. Peacebuilding scope covers all activities that are linked directly to this objective over 5-10 years. Peacebuilding should create conducive conditions for economic reconstruction, development and democratization, but should not be equated and thus confused with these concepts.

Corresponding to the three phases of conflict, there are three phases of peacebuilding: (i) the prevention phase aiming at preventing armed conflict; (ii) the conflict management or peace-making phase aiming to end armed conflict and reach a peace agreement; and (iii) the post-conflict peacebuilding phase, or post-settlement phase. The term post-settlement would be more appropriate as the term post-conflict is somewhat at odds with the notion that conflict is inevitable in any society and can be constructive. However, the problem with the term post-settlement is that in some cases there is no peace agreement in place, but yet large scale organized violence has ended. This study uses the term post-conflict which, while recognizing its limitations, is widely used in mainstream research and practice.

The post-conflict phase can be divided into two sub-phases, the immediate aftermath of armed conflict (1-5 years) and the period after (5-10 years). This newer distinction of the post-conflict phase is a result of post-conflict research that finds evidence that there is a high risk (44%) of reverting to large scale violence within the first five years after the end of hostilities. This risk falls considerably after the first post-conflict decade (Collier et al. 2003).

## 2.2 History of the Peacebuilding Debate

*The birth of modern peacebuilding.* Although different actors have contributed to peacebuilding, only since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century have international institutions and international law increasingly developed mechanisms and instruments to make war between states less likely. This process started with the Hague peace conference in 1898, followed by the foundation of the League of Nations and resulting in the creation of the United Nations at the end of World War II with the main objective to monitor and support world peace through mediation, facilitation, good offices and arbitration between states. The main protagonists involved were nation states and the UN (Paffenholz 1998 and 2001a). But the involvement of civil society, especially in international conflicts, was considered to complicate the peacebuilding efforts of professional diplomats (Berman and Johnson 1977). There were some exceptions, however, such as the Quakers (Curle 1971).

*The establishment of peace research as a discipline in the 1960s.* Although scholars had long carried out peace research within a variety of academic disciplines, it was not until the 1960s that peace research was established as a normative, interdisciplinary academic field. Early peace theories focused on the analysis and practice of conflict management as well as on theories of non-violent social and international change. However, peace research in Europe as well as the United States, has always analyzed a wide array of conflict causes, ranging from global, political, and economic issues to those dealing with religious, cultural, and social aspects. During the Cold War, the prevention of a nuclear or conventional war between the two superpowers became a main focus of peace research and was closely linked to the US and European peace movements.

*The end of the Cold War and the 1992 UN Agenda for Peace.* The practice of peacebuilding only gained significant international momentum in the early 1990s with the end of the Cold War, and the focus shifted away from intra-state conflicts to the management and resolution of armed conflicts within states (Miall et al. 1999; Eriksson et al. 2003). This was in line with the significant increase in inter-state conflicts, which account for 80-90% of all armed conflicts since 1989 (Eriksson et al. 2003, p. 594). Interest initially grew slowly, but in the mid-1990s there was a rapid increase in peacebuilding activities, which went hand in hand with an international debate on the need to adapt international instruments to the new

challenges of managing inter-state armed conflict. The UN Secretary General's 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*, was the beginning of a still ongoing process (Boutros-Ghali 1992). It proposed a new framework to manage international armed conflicts and introduced the term peacebuilding. The issue of post-conflict peacebuilding also started to figure in the discourse as the international community tried to cope with the challenge of rebuilding societies after wars.

*Dashed hopes for the end of major wars.* In the early 1990s, as a number of long-term armed conflicts were resolved (e.g., Namibia, Mozambique, Cambodia and El Salvador), there was a hope that the world would become a more peaceful place because most of these inter-state conflicts had been seen as proxy conflicts of the Cold War. The wars in Somalia and Yugoslavia and the genocide in Rwanda brought this short international euphoria to a harsh end.

### **New Debates after the Rwanda Crisis in 1994**

*Preventing armed conflicts—the early warning debate.* The discussion of peacebuilding has since intensified, initially focusing on how to prevent another Rwanda. This was the beginning of the political early warning discourse (Carnegie Commission 1997), which initially assumed that within a couple of years there would be quantitative methods that could predict political violence and thereby create the preconditions for political early action. However, these hopes were not fulfilled because it became clear that quantitative early warning systems in isolation cannot predict political violence, and the lack of information was not the main problem but rather the lack of political will to engage in early action.

Although the early warning debate lost its momentum and was absorbed into the general debate about prevention, culminating in the UN Secretary General's report, *Preventing Armed Conflict* (UN 2001), a number of early warning systems are in place today. For example, the International Crisis Group (ICG: <http://www.icg.org>) produces regular qualitative analyses throughout the world, and the regional organization IGAD runs a quantitative early warning system called CEWARN where civil society organizations have also been engaged in planning and implementation (<http://www.cewarn.org>).

*Development Challenged by Armed Conflict.* Development cooperation became involved in peacebuilding in the early 1990s as development actors took on new tasks in response to the challenges of post-conflict peacebuilding. This issue gained momentum in the aftermath of the tragic events in Rwanda, when research showed that aid *can* do harm in conflict situations and may inadvertently have negative effects on conflict dynamics (Uvin 1998; Anderson 1999). Over the past years the development community has been engaged in a series of debates on the linkages between armed conflict, peace and development, including the emergence of several frameworks that explore this relationship. Mary Anderson and her team developed the 'Local Capacities for Peace Approach' better known as 'Do no harm' with a planning matrix and check lists for determining the potential effects of aid projects on conflict and peace. In 1998, Kenneth Bush (1998) developed a 'Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment' (PCIA) methodology comparable to environmental or gender impact assessment also designed for project level interventions. Luc Reyhler (1996) developed a similar assessment tool focusing on country level interventions. Most of these approaches have been tested and further developed (for an overview see Paffenholz 2005b).

The development community's involvement in the peacebuilding discourse has had several implications. First, many peacebuilding approaches and tools, such as conflict analysis frameworks, were imported into the development field. Second, development actors started to fund or implement interventions that directly aim at peacebuilding. This contributed to increased peacebuilding activities and the involvement of new actors, mainly NGOs, which also gave raise to the professionalization and commercialization of peace work (Orjuela 2004; Pouligny 2005). Third, the definition and understanding of peacebuilding has been stretched in terms of scope and duration. In the early 1990s, for instance, development actors first claimed that poverty reduction, and thus almost all development activities, contribute to long-term

peacebuilding. By the end of the 1990s it became evident that poverty reduction alone does not automatically lead to more peaceful societies, although most concurred that development *can* contribute to peacebuilding, albeit in different, more specific ways:

- At the macro political level through targeted policy interventions such as conditionality of aid resources, negotiated benchmarks or international measures against war economies (Paffenholz 2005a). This overlaps with traditional diplomacy, requiring close cooperation between development and foreign policy actors;
- At the sector level by incorporating conflict and peace issues in sector strategies; and
- At the operational level through:
  - Greater understanding of how development programs and projects are working in conflict settings, now referred to as peace and conflict sensitive development (Paffenholz 2005b), Do no harm (Anderson 1999), or mainstreaming peace and conflict as a cross-cutting issue in the project cycle. In practice, development interventions try to (i) avoid inadvertently escalating the conflict situation, and (ii) ideally also contribute to peacebuilding, e.g., by providing space for dialogue between rival groups at the district or local level, or by using mixed community committees and participatory approaches that includes conflicting parties.
  - The support for new types of projects that are directly related to the objective of peacebuilding, as for example support to local peace networks, peace journalism training, demining or demobilization activities.

### **The Mushrooming of Peacebuilding Initiatives from the Mid-1990s**

In the 1990s, the main focus of research was on which external actors would achieve the best results and with what kinds of approaches to end armed conflicts and wars. The practice of peacebuilding during this time was characterized by testing many different approaches. Research has provided many answers to a number of issues over the past 10 years moving toward an overall conclusion that only the involvement of a variety of different actors and approaches can succeed in sustainable peacebuilding, including grassroots organizations or other civil society actors (for the state of debate see Reychler and Paffenholz 2001a; Crocker et al. 2001; Austin et al. 2004).

Contrary to the development discourses, the main focus of the peacebuilding research debate until the mid 1990s was still focused on the role of *external actors*. The work of Lederach shifted the focus of attention from external actors to the important *role of actors from within the conflict country* (Lederach 1997), which led to a paradigm shift. From the mid-1990s, the question for external actors was mainly how to support internal, national actors in conflict countries to enhance their peacebuilding capacities. The interpretation of this conceptual framework gave rise to and justification for the mushrooming of international, national and local peacebuilding initiatives.

Today, an array of non-state actors such as NGOs, associations, religious entities, business and grassroots organizations, communities or individuals are increasingly involved in different peacebuilding activities (European Centre for Conflict Prevention 1999; van Tongeren et al. 2005; Richmond and Carey 2005). Many approaches and initiatives such as peace funds, dialogue projects, peacebuilding training and capacity building programs for local actors have been tested during the last decade.

*Stocktaking experiences and lessons on successful peace agreements.* Since the start of the new millennium, practitioners and researchers have begun to take stock of a decade of practical experiences from countless peacebuilding interventions led by various actors in conflict zones around the world. They mainly analyze conditions for successful and sustainable peace agreements. Most of the research findings focus on successes and failures of peace agreements, e.g., identifying conditions for reaching peace



agreements, such as the willingness of rival leaders to compromise (Walter 1997), the ripeness of the conflict for resolution (Zartman 1989), the importance of dealing with spoilers and hardliners that could challenge the entire process (Stedman 1997), the need to establish conflict resolution and power sharing institutions (Linder 1994), the need for economic conditions to stabilize peace settlement (De Soto and Del Castillo 1994), the importance of regional power balances, the existence of different mediation channels (Paffenholz 2001a; Fitzduff 2002), and the quality of peace agreements (Hampson 1996).

*Post-Conflict peacebuilding.* The main focus of post-conflict research is the durability of peace agreements, e.g., how can peace agreements be successfully implemented in the immediate aftermath of wars and sustained. Two main discourses can be identified. Research within the first discourse found a number of conditions that need to be in place for peace agreements to last, such as power sharing agreements between the former conflicting parties, international commitment to the process, security guarantees, or design of a good process for implementation of the peace agreement with mechanisms to mediate unresolved issues (Stedman et al. 2002). The second discourse, criticizes the current international peacebuilding paradigm of ‘liberal internationalism’ which assumes that the best way to consolidate peace is to transform states into stable market democracies as quickly as possible. Critics argue, however, that the limited success of many post-conflict peacebuilding processes is due to the destabilizing effects generated by overly fast political and economic liberalization processes in post-conflict societies that do not meet the necessary preconditions (Paris 2004).

These debates on lessons learned, especially with regard to post-conflict peacebuilding, are still ongoing. In addition there is a new discourse on aid effectiveness in fragile states that is increasingly linked to the discourse on the nexus between conflict, peace and development and the debates about professionalization and evaluation in peacebuilding.

*Aid effectiveness and fragile states/conflict countries.* The development community is engaged in a debate about aid effectiveness, coming to the conclusion that aid is only effective when recipient countries adopt sound policies and nurture effective institutions (Paris High-Level Forum 2005). The problem with this finding is how to deal with poor performers, which are often fragile states in conflict or emerging from it. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness argues that these countries need special attention since almost 50% of aid recipients are fragile states and people should not be penalized for the poor performance of their leaders. The proposed approach is to ‘stay engaged-but differently’ and to find the best way to deliver support by taking into account the specific development environment (Paris High-Level Forum 2005, p. 7; Centre for the Future State 2005; Debiel and Terlinden 2005; Leader 2005; OECD 2005).

*Evaluating effectiveness and impact of peacebuilding interventions.* The late 1990s debate on lessons learned in peacebuilding has shifted toward the need to further professionalize the planning and evaluation of interventions. This discussion has gained importance with the growing reluctance of donors to fund peace interventions that cannot prove a positive impact on the peace process. Many interventions claim long-term impact on peace processes without being able to demonstrate impact. The Hewlett Packard Foundation, for example, one of the largest sources of funds of research and NGO peace initiatives in the US, recently stopped this funding stream. Donor concerns have been expressed in numerous conferences and reports, and as a result many donors are currently drafting evaluation guidelines for peacebuilding interventions (Paffenholz 2005b).

Unlike the development field, the issue of evaluation has only recently entered the field of peacebuilding (Church and Shouldice 2002 and 2003; Journal of Peacebuilding and Development 2005). A number of projects have assessed peacebuilding experiences, such as the *Joint Utstein Study* (Smith 2003) which analyzed the peacebuilding efforts of different governments, and the *Reflecting on Peace Project* which evaluated the lessons from NGO peacebuilding efforts (Anderson and Olson 2003). There are also a number of proposals and frameworks on how to evaluate peacebuilding in general (Fast and Neufeld

2005; Paffenholz 2005b; Paffenholz and Reychler 2006; Church and Rogers 2006), and for particular peacebuilding initiatives (D' Estree et al. 2001; Cuhadar 2004). The debate about professionalization of peacebuilders is along the same lines (Ingelstam 2001, pp. 21-7).

### 2.3 Theoretical Approaches to Peacebuilding: Different Schools of Thought

Four schools of thought can be distinguished within peace research. These schools use different terminologies, and have different conceptual understandings, approaches and actors. The history of these schools of thought is closely linked to the history and evolution of the field of peacebuilding. The different schools have had different influences on peacebuilding and practice has adopted elements from different schools. The conceptual frameworks and terminologies often create confusion, while the origins are at times unclear. The four main schools—conflict management, conflict resolution, complementary school, and conflict transformation—are briefly described below.

All schools present different approaches to mediation between conflicting parties, whether between or within states. For many decades mediation has been the main and dominant approach to peacebuilding, but from the mid-1990s it became clear that peacebuilding required additional approaches. It is also important to note that these theoretical schools are not linked to the conceptual debate on the nexus between peace/conflict and development.

**The Conflict Management School.** The approach of the Conflict Management school is to end wars through different diplomatic initiatives. This is the oldest school of thought, closely linked to the institutionalization of peacebuilding in international law. The peacebuilders within the logic of this school are external diplomats from bilateral or multilateral organizations (Paffenholz 1998, 2001). Its theoretical approach is referred to as *outcome-oriented approach*, which aims to identify and bring to the negotiating table leaders of the conflict parties. Its main focus is on the short-term management of the armed conflict. Recent examples include the Camp David agreement and the Sudan peace accord.

Power mediation is a special form of conflict management, with the same criteria as the outcome-oriented approach but including the possibility of applying external power, including financial carrots and/or military sticks, on the parties. Examples include the 1995 US mediated peace treaty for Bosnia, when the US linked reconstruction support to a peace agreement, and threatened the bombing of Bosnia-Serb artillery in case no agreement was reached. Another example is Haiti, when former US President Jimmy Carter mediated an agreement while American troops were ready to intervene.

The Conflict Management school has been criticized because mediators tend to concentrate solely on the top leadership of the conflicting parties (Lederach 1997), are not always neutral in internal conflicts (Ropers and Debiel 1995), and the approach overlooks deep causes of conflicts and thus cannot guarantee long-term stability of the peace agreement (Hoffman 1995). Conflict Management approaches have recently moved beyond an exclusive concern with securing a peace agreement and now also focus on the conditions for successful implementation of post-conflict peacebuilding. Thus it is now possible to distinguish between traditional and modern approaches to conflict management.

**The Conflict Resolution School.** The approach of the Conflict Resolution school is to solve the underlying causes of conflict and rebuild destroyed relationships between the parties. Under this logic, relations need to be rebuilt not only between the top representatives of the conflict parties, but also within society at large. This school was established in academic research in the 1970s, adopting strategies from socio-psychological conflict resolution at the inter-personal level. In the early Conflict Resolution school, peacebuilders were mainly Western academic institutions carrying out conflict resolution workshops (Fisher 1997). The principle of these workshops is to bring individuals from the conflict parties together

that are close to or can influence their leaders. Workshops are designed to rebuild relationships between the representatives of the conflict parties and work with them to solve the causes of the conflict.

As the approach evolved, additional participants entered the field, such as international or local NGOs, as well as individuals and communities. The common features are that all actors work to address the root causes of conflict with relationship-building and long-term resolution-oriented approaches, and they do not represent a government or an international organization (Bailey 1985; Stedman 1993). Approaches and tools used include: dialogue projects between groups or communities, and conflict resolution training to enhance peacebuilding capacity of actors perceived as agents of change (Mitchell 2005).

The Conflict Resolution school has been criticized, especially by supporters of the Conflict Management school, because the process is too lengthy to be able to stop wars and because improving communications and building relationships between conflict parties do not necessarily result in an agreement to end the war (Bercovitch 1984). Research has also found that while relationships between groups can be rebuilt, this need not necessarily spill over to other groups or the leadership of the conflict parties. An interesting example comes from the assessment of the Norwegian-funded People to People Peace Program following the Oslo peace agreement between Israel and Palestine in 1994. The Program funded many dialogue projects between various Israeli and Palestinian groups, which while they improved relations between participants, had no impact on the peace process at large (Atieh et al. 2004).

**The Complementary School.** This school focuses on the complementarity of the conflict management and resolution schools, with three different approaches. The first is Fisher and Keashly's (1991) 'Contingency model for third party intervention in armed conflicts', which aims to identify the appropriate third party method and the timing of interventions. Based on Glasl's (1990) conflict escalation model, the approach is to de-escalate the conflict from phase to phase. The escalation phase is the appropriate time for resolution-oriented approaches, while power mediation should be used when the conflict escalates. After a peace accord has been reached, it is time to revert to resolution-oriented approaches. Critics of this approach point out that in practice different types of interventions can take place at the same time (Bloomfield 1995; Paffenholz 1998).

Based on quantitative empirical research Bercovitch and Rubin (1992) developed an approach similar to the contingency model, but shifting the perspective from approaches to actors. In this approach it is not important which mediators are the most effective, but who is more effective at different stages of the conflict. The results are similar to those of Fisher and Keashly—the more the conflict escalates, the more powerful the third party should be. A weakness of this approach is that it does not fully address the issue of coordination or the possibility of simultaneous application of all approaches (Paffenholz 1998).

The third strand of this school is the Multi-Track Diplomacy approach by Diamond and McDonald (1996), which while recognizing that different approaches and actors are needed to reach peace, it seeks to make a clearer distinction between the different approaches and actors by adopting a 'track' concept (figure 3). Track 1 involves diplomatic peacebuilding initiatives by governments and is in line with the Conflict Management school. Track 2 represents the original conflict resolution school, while the other tracks try to cluster other relevant actors.

The Complementary School has not been subject to a broad critique nor has it resulted in major debates within mainstream research. This is likely due to the evolution of the Conflict Transformation school that absorbed the results of the Complementary school and was taken over by mainstream research and most of all by practitioners.

Figure 3: Multi-track Diplomacy



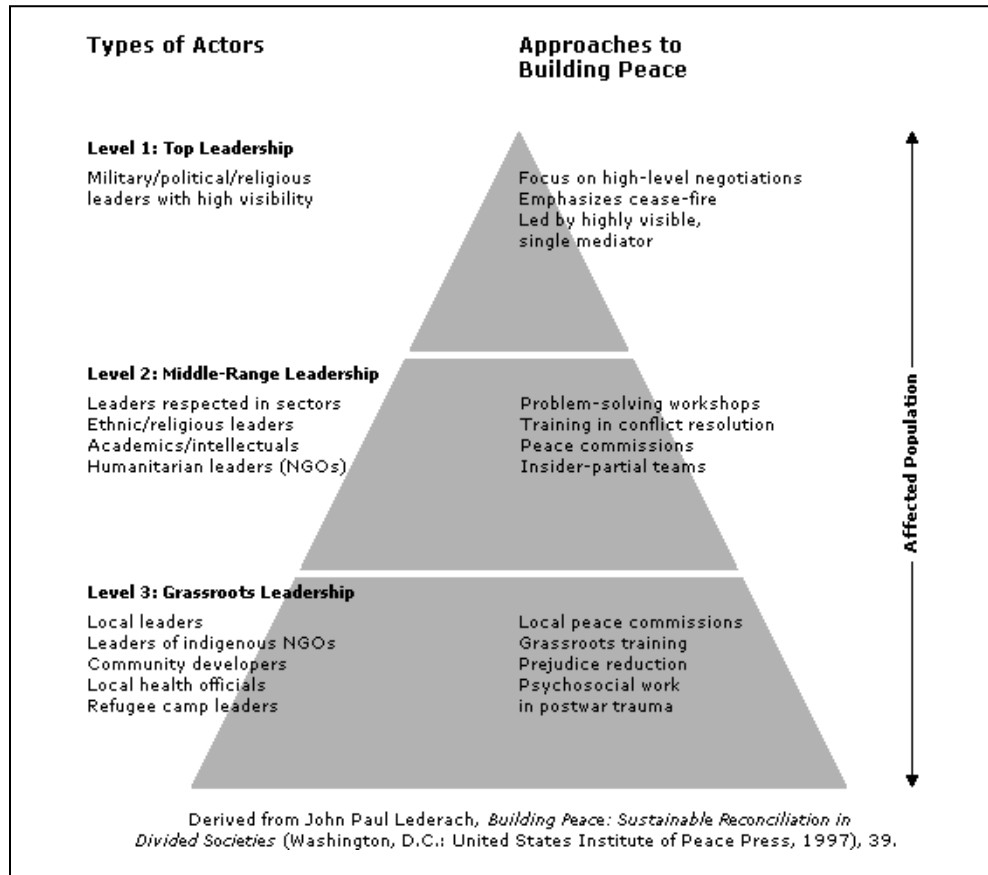
***The Conflict Transformation School.*** This approach focuses on the transformation of deep-rooted armed conflicts into peaceful ones, based on a different understanding of peacebuilding. It recognizes the existence of irresolvable conflicts, and therefore suggests replacing the term conflict resolution with the term conflict transformation (Rupesinghe 1995). John Paul Lederach (1997) developed the first comprehensive transformation-oriented approach. Building on the Complementary school, Lederach also sees the need to solve the dilemma between short-term conflict management, and long-term relationship building and resolution of underlying causes of conflict. His proposal is to build ‘long-term infrastructure’ for peacebuilding by supporting the reconciliation potential of society. In line with the Conflict Resolution school, he sees the need to rebuild destroyed relationships, focusing on reconciliation within society and the strengthening of society’s peacebuilding potential. Third party intervention should concentrate on supporting internal actors and coordinating external peace efforts. Sensitivity to the local culture and a long-term time frame are necessary.

A key element of this approach is to focus on peace constituencies by identifying mid-level individuals or groups and empowering them to build peace and support reconciliation. Empowerment of the middle level is assumed to influence peacebuilding at the macro and grassroots levels. Lederach divides society into three levels, which can be approached with different peacebuilding strategies (figure 4).

Top leadership can be accessed by mediation at the level of states (track 1) and the outcome-oriented approach. Mid-level leadership (track 2) can be reached through more resolution-oriented approaches, such as problem-solving workshops or peace-commissions with the help of partial insiders (i.e., prominent individuals in society). The grassroots level (track 3), however, represents the majority of the population and can be reached by a wide range of peacebuilding approaches, such as local peace commissions, community dialogue projects or trauma healing.

Building on a decade of work in the Horn of Africa, the conflict transformation approach of the Swedish Life and Peace Institute adopts a community-based bottom-up peacebuilding approach (Paffenholz 2003), expanding Lederach’s mid-level approach to the grassroots track 3 level. This approach also combines in-country peacebuilding with peacebuilding advocacy at the international level and thereby conceptually links to the debate on global civil society (Kaldor 2003).

Figure 4: Lederach's Levels of Peacebuilding



The Conflict Transformation school has not been subject to fundamental critique. On the contrary, it has become the leading school of thought in the field.

#### 2.4 The Role of Civil Society within Peacebuilding Theory

Non-governmental actors, including civil society, play a limited role in the Conflict Management school. There are exceptions where civil society acts as mediators, such as the Comunita di Sant'Egidio in the Mozambique peace negotiations or the Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in the first Aceh peace negotiations ([www.hdcentre.org](http://www.hdcentre.org)). When civil society actors are official mediators, their actions and behavior are not different from official governmental mediators (Paffenholz 1998). Civil society rarely has a seat at the negotiation table based on the assumption that the lower the number of actors involved in negotiations the easier it is to reach agreement. Negotiation theories, especially those based on game theory and the theory of effective communication confirm this assumption (Wanis-St.John and Kew 2006). However, recent quantitative research analyzing 22 peace negotiations over 15 years shows a positive correlation between the degree of civil society involvement in peace negotiations and the sustainability of peace agreements (Wanis-St.John and Kew 2006), which is also confirmed by regional case studies (see for example Belloni 2001 and 2006 on Bosnia).

The challenge of ensuring a broad based peace process without having too many actors involved in negotiations, in some cases has been addressed by establishing official parallel civil society forums, as in Guatemala during 1994-96 (Armon et al. 1997; Molkentin 2002; Greiter 2003; Stanley and Holiday 2002) and the Afghanistan negotiations in 2001 in Germany (Paffenholz 2006). In both cases, parallel civil

society forums had an official mandate to discuss issues and give recommendations to the track 1 negotiations, and their positions influenced considerably the peace agreements. The selection of civil society representatives, the time allowed, and coordination between the negotiations and the civil society forum are key to the legitimacy, acceptance and influence of this type of forums. While in Guatemala a locally-driven process influenced the peace agreement, the case of Afghanistan shows that an externally-driven civil society involvement can also be effective, including playing an important role in the post-settlement phase (Paffenholz 2006).

Other approaches try to link the population to the official mediation process through broad information campaigns or public opinion polls (Accord 2002), which at times allows civil society to play a key role in the communication process (along the lines of Habermas' communications function). While it is relatively easy to organize communications from the conflict parties to the population, a more serious challenge is the communication flow from the population to the negotiations.

Global civil society can also play an important role by exerting pressure on donors in their home countries to address specific issues for international peacebuilding, protect national civil society through international awareness or support their functioning through knowledge transfer and funding.

Civil society actors are the key protagonists in the Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation schools. The focus is on the roots of conflict and relationships among conflict parties and society, and both schools understand that these issues can best be addressed by non-state actors. The main difference is that the Resolution school tends to focus on external actors and the Transformation school on internal actors. In some cases, additional actors become relevant, such as the media, businesses, or political leaders.

## **2.5 The Role of Civil Society in Peacebuilding Practice**

### **The Application of Peacebuilding Theories in Practice**

*One term but different meanings of peacebuilding.* The term peacebuilding is currently used as: (i) synonymous with the Conflict Transformation school; and (ii) an overarching term to describe the entire field of conflict prevention and management, and the sustainability of peace processes. The other schools of thought are rarely referred to on the grounds that the evolution of the Conflict Transformation school now encompasses all other schools. Although the track concept was introduced earlier, Lederach's pyramid has become the leading reference for most practitioner discussions of peacebuilding.

Track 1 is linked to the Conflict Management school and tracks 2 and 3 are seen as equivalent to the Conflict Resolution school. The Complementary school has been absorbed totally into the conflict Transformation (peacebuilding) school. At first glance this bears certain logic, but it is also a source of conceptual confusion:

- Lederach has offered a complex, comprehensive approach to peacebuilding (Lederach 1997), whereas the logic of the tracks is only one element of this approach. Mainly referring to his peacebuilding approach in reference to the tracks is misleading.
- The logic of the tracks is related to some elements of the different schools of thought, but they are not identical with the schools.
- Thinking along the tracks is an actor-oriented model of peacebuilding, while the schools of thought offer an approach, functions and goal-oriented model to peacebuilding.
- Within the original understanding of the conflict resolution school there are a variety of different external actors that could contribute to mediation/peacebuilding, mostly academic and training institutions. The original understanding of actors within the conflict transformation/peacebuilding

school—peace constituencies—focused on leaders at various society levels. The current understanding of actors on the level of track 2 and 3 has been enlarged to almost every actor in a conflict country that is not a government and not an armed party, which as a result watered down the original understanding of both the conflict resolution and transformation schools.

### **The Practice of Civil Society Peacebuilding**

The element of Lederach's peacebuilding approach that focuses on the empowerment of the mid-level leadership under track 2, has had a considerable influence on the practice of peacebuilding. This was possible as the concept was introduced when the international community was receptive to civil society peacebuilding initiatives. As a result, civil society and other non-governmental peacebuilding initiatives increased markedly, leading to a number of achievements, but also a number of severe problems.

In terms of achievements, there is general acceptance that national actors should play the leading role in peacebuilding and the role of outsiders limited to their support (Lederach 1997). There is also agreement that non-governmental peace initiatives are as needed as official or unofficial diplomatic efforts. At the international level there have been successful lobbying and advocacy efforts on specific peace related themes (e.g., small arms and war economy) but also for specific peacebuilding processes in conflict countries. For example, different faith-based development and peace organizations joined hands to raise awareness on the conflict in Sudan. They opened an advocacy liaison office in Europe (Sudan Focal Point Europe) to lobby for the case of Sudan in European Parliaments and other decision-making forums long before Sudan was back on the international agenda.

Cooperation between governmental actors and mainly International NGOs (INGOs) for peacebuilding has become more and more routine in many countries, accepting each other's comparative advantages. In Germany for example, the main governmental and non-governmental development and peace organizations and networks have established a joint working group to foster conflict sensitive mainstreaming (FriEnt: <http://www.frient.de>). A similar initiative exists in Switzerland since 2001 (KOFF: <http://www.swisspeace.org>).

On the negative side, the mushrooming of peace initiatives prompted increased involvement of NGOs in conflict countries but also to the commercialization of peace work. This 'NGOization' of social protest (Orjuela 2004; p. 255) led to a perceived 'taming of social movements' (Kaldor 2003) and thus shifted the focus away from peace movements and grassroots civic engagement.

Most donor support is channeled through INGOs or through them to national, mainly urban, elite based NGOs. Evidence from El Salvador (Foley 1996), Timor-Leste (Patrick, 2001), Bosnia (Belloni 2001) and Sri Lanka (Orjuela 2004) shows that donors tend to support mainly moderate, middle class groups that often act as gatekeepers (Paffenholz 2001b, pp. 8-9) vis-à-vis other strata of society (Belloni 2006; p. 21). This has resulted in a 'colonization of space' by international and national NGOs (Jeong 2005, pp. 215-9; Pouligny 2005, p. 499; Paffenholz 2001b, pp. 8-9). INGOs have been criticized for parachuting into conflicts and introducing culturally insensitive Western conflict resolution techniques (Sorbo et al. 1997) that are in consequence socialized to the language and expectation of international donors (Belloni 2006, p. 23). This argument is countered by others that point to the fact that many INGOs work with national NGOs that are linked to the local context (Aall 2001, p. 373).

Another strand of criticism points out that many of these new national urban NGOs have a weak membership base, lack country-wide and balanced political or ethnic representation, and are often linked to the political establishment through kin relationships. The reasons are to be found mainly in the monetization of peace work (Orjuela 2004, p. 256) which some authors refer to as the peace industry (Moltmann 2004). NGOs are confronted with legitimacy problems of different kinds. They often lack

transparency vis-à-vis their donors (Debiel and Sticht 2005, pp. 16-7), and the fact that they are only accountable to their international fund providers and not their local constituencies (Orjuela 2004, p. 256; Neubert 2001, p. 63) has resulted in the disempowerment of local communities and civic engagement from peace efforts (Orjuela 2004, p. 256; Bush 2005; Pouligny 2005, p. 499; Belloni 2006, p. 22). The logic of fund raising makes it necessary to downplay local knowledge and resources, emphasizing instead local weaknesses and needs. Donor-driven NGO civil society initiatives have limited the capacity to create domestic social capital and ownership for the peace process. Thus empowerment is undermined leaving domestic groups in a weak and subordinate position (Belloni 2006, pp. 21-2). As Michael Edwards states: “The number of NGOs is the easiest thing to influence, but also the least important” (2004, p. 95).

Moreover, resources and opportunities gained in the third sector divert talented and motivated citizens from joining political parties, government institutions and contributing to political peace processes (Belloni 2006; p. 23). The same negative effects of donor-driven support occur in peacebuilding as was analyzed decades earlier in development research (see for example Hanlon 1991 on Mozambique).

Analyzing the role of Sri Lankan civil society in peacebuilding, Orjuela (2004) came to the conclusion that there had been many forms of social and political engagement of genuine local and national groups. When the peace work was more professionalized and commercialized, however, it was monopolized by a few, mainly urban based elite NGOs from Colombo. As a result, the genuine social and peace engagement of the population decreased, local peace work was consequently disempowered as the national NGOs were mostly disconnected from the people and their communities on both sides of the conflict. In the midst of a polarized ethnic conflict, it was critical to rely on the mobilization of people for peace, but this mobilization could not be achieved by national NGOs. The impact of civil society work on peacebuilding in Sri Lanka was thus very limited.

Studies on the effectiveness of peace work confirm these findings. It has been mainly assumed that initiatives by national NGOs will automatically influence peacebuilding at the macro level. Recent studies, however, show that this is not automatic without certain prior conditions. For example the Reflecting on Peace Project found that either key people must be supported or a large enough number of people to create a critical mass for peacebuilding (Anderson and Olson 2003). Nevertheless, single urban based or INGOs receive the majority of funds because it is easier to work with urban based elite NGOs as they speak the same language and donors understand the culture of project proposals. It is much harder to engage with actors in communities who have limited capacity to cope with Western agency demands.

The research relationship between donor agencies and INGOs has also intensified. The research community is less and less consulted by international donor agencies. Instead the discourse has tended to be monopolized by a small number of prominent and large INGOs, mainly from the Anglophone world with their partner NGOs in the field. As a consequence it is necessary to distinguish between the research discourse on peacebuilding and the INGO discourse. Donors and INGOs have built a strong relationship, with INGOs meeting the donor demand for service delivery and donors providing the funding. As a result, there is increasing emphasis on quick results, at the expense of greater conceptual understanding of issues, sound research and critical academic reflection.



### III. CIVIL SOCIETY FUNCTIONS IN PEACEBUILDING: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Peacebuilding practice but also research works on the basis of two assumptions: (i) civil society has a role to play in peacebuilding; and (ii) there is a need for coherent and coordinated approaches to peacebuilding between track 1 and 2 actors.

Interestingly, the increase in peacebuilding initiatives involving civil society in the last decade is not matched by deep research and debate on the nexus between civil society and peacebuilding. Only a few publications explicitly deal with the subject, either taking an actor-oriented approach (van Tongeren et al. 2005) that aims to understand who is doing what, or else they analyze roles and functions of civil society actors (mostly NGOs) in peacebuilding in general (see for example Aall 2001; Barnes 2005; Pouligny 2005; Debiel and Sticht 2005), or focus on case studies (Foley 1996 on El Salvador; Paffenholz 2003 on Somalia; Belloni 2001 on Bosnia; Patrick 2001 on Timor-Leste; Orjuela 2004 on Sri Lanka; Challand 2005 on Palestine). Another debate looks into the effectiveness of NGO peace work in general (Anderson and Olson 2003) or evaluates the impact of specific civil society initiatives on a particular macro peace process (D' Estrée et al. 2001; Cuhadar 2004; Ohanyan with Lewis 2005; Athieh et al. 2005).

The majority of this research is critical of NGO peacebuilding initiatives, especially due to crowding out local efforts and actors, and their lack of impact. Existing studies, however, address different research questions making it difficult to compare their results and draw detailed conclusions on the role of civil society in peacebuilding, or to determine what kind of peacebuilding civil society can contribute to.

The analysis below applies the proposed analytical framework (page 13) to assess the different functions of civil society in peacebuilding. The aim is to determine whether these functions can also be useful to analyze civil society contributions to peacebuilding more systematically and thus enhance the effectiveness and impact of civil society peacebuilding. The analysis will also suggest hypotheses for further research on the timing, sequencing and impact of each function of peacebuilding.

#### **Protection**

In the civil society discourse protection of citizens and communities against the despotism of the state is a core function. But civil society also needs a minimum of security and protection from state and non-state armed actors to carry out its peacebuilding functions (Aall 2001; Orjuela 2004; Barnes 2005; Jeong 2005). This can be a major constraint when a state weakened by armed conflict cannot guarantee security.

The main activities within this function are:

- International accompaniment;
- Watchdog activities (only in interaction with monitoring and advocacy function);
- Creation of zones of peace; and
- Human security initiatives (locally or internationally).

The protection function is often attributed to outside NGOs that support national or local civil society actors indirectly, through their presence on the ground as a watchdog (Orjuela 2003; p. 47) or directly, through international accompaniment. A good example is the work of the INGO Peace Brigades International that sends outsiders into conflict zones to protect national peace or human rights activists. Local civil societies can also take up protection functions for their communities. For example communities in the Philippines and in Colombia have negotiated zones of peace where no arms are allowed (Barnes 2005; Orjuela 2004; Eviota 2005).

Another aspect of protection is linked to security related interventions such as demining, demobilization, disarmament or reintegration of ex-combatants. In general, this is not a civil society function as it tends to be carried out by the state, UN or business companies (mainly in demining). Nevertheless, there are some instances where civil society might become active, as for example in Mozambique when churches launched a demobilization campaign after the official UN demobilization process ended as they felt there were still too many weapons in the area.

*Hypotheses and questions for further research:*

- The security role of the state should not be underestimated, e.g. when and under what conditions should civil society take up protection functions and when should the state structure be strengthened instead?
- Civil society can nevertheless contribute to protection especially at the local level as well as in cooperation with international NGOs or the UN.
- The protection function is most relevant during armed conflict and in the immediate aftermath.

### **Monitoring and Accountability**

Monitoring is both a precondition for the protection function and the advocacy and public communication function, as well as critical in democratization as a means to hold governments accountable. Monitoring in peacebuilding remains closely related to protection and advocacy, but also to early warning. International and local groups monitor the conflict situation and give recommendations to decision makers or information to human rights and advocacy groups. The main activities within this function are creation of early warning systems, and human rights monitoring.

In the field of early warning there is increasing cooperation between local, national and international NGOs but also with regional organizations. In Nepal national human rights organizations cooperate with local groups while maintaining close links to Amnesty International. The ties between these groups also create space for local groups to fulfill their monitoring tasks. Examples in Africa include regional organizations (CEWARN in the Horn of Africa) that cooperate with local civil society groups for the actual monitoring, and in West Africa UN OCHA, ECOWAS and a regional NGO peace network have signed a memorandum of understanding for joint early warning.

*Hypotheses and questions for further research:*

- The monitoring function is relevant in all conflict phases;
- Monitoring has greater impact on security and peacebuilding when closely coordinated between local, national and international actors, although the importance of the monitoring function during armed conflict needs to be further researched; and thus
- Is monitoring a function on its own right or is it directly linked to protection and public communication/advocacy and thus not a stand-alone function?

### **Advocacy and Public Communication**

Advocacy is a core function within the civil society democracy discourse, often referred to as communication, as civil society brings relevant issues into the political agenda. In the same vein, it is also a core function in peacebuilding (Aall 2001; Paffenholz 2003). Main activities within this function are:

- International advocacy for specific conflict issues (land mines, war diamonds, child soldiers);
- International advocacy for specific countries in conflict;
- Agenda setting:
  - Bringing themes to the national agenda in conflict countries (road map projects, awareness workshops, public campaigns);

- Lobbying for civil society involvement in peace negotiations; and
- Participation of civil society in peace negotiations
- Public pressure, for example through mass mobilization for peace negotiations or against war.

The advocacy function can be taken up by both, national and international civil society. First of all, it is a main function for national civil societies. An interesting example is the mass mobilization against the King of Nepal in the spring of 2006 that started as a political movement of the parties and Maoists and developed into a country-wide peace and democracy mass movement.

International civil society can also take up important advocacy functions. For example, the Swedish Life and Peace Institute has advocated for a people-based peace process in Somalia, the special role of women in peacebuilding and the need to fund people's involvement. Its approach is to provide information and constantly advocate a bottom-up solution of the Somali crisis in various international forums, such as UN bodies (UNOSOM in the beginning), the Somali Aid Coordination Body and international conferences (Paffenholz 2003; pp. 56-7).

Advocacy is also relevant in all phases of armed conflict, but the degree of relevance may differ depending on the different phases: During armed conflict civil society can advocate on behalf of a peace agreement, against violence and human rights violations, for broad-based participation in the peace process as well as for specific issues. The population can be linked to the official negotiation process through broad based information campaigns, public opinion polls (Accord 2002) or more direct involvement. For example, during the peace process in Northern Ireland civil society organized 'Yes' campaigns to gain public support for the peace agreement. In the post-conflict phase civil society can advocate against the recurrence of violence, for the implementation of peace agreements, or for important themes on the post-conflict agenda and a culture of peace within society (Orjuela 2004, pp. 51-3; Jeong 2005, pp. 120-1).

*Hypotheses and questions for further research:*

- Advocacy is one of the most important civil society functions in peacebuilding during all phases of conflict; and
- Mass mobilization for peace negotiations and against the recurrence of war, coupled with targeted agenda setting (especially though the involvement of civil society in peace negotiations) are the most effective roles civil society can play during and in the immediate aftermath of conflict.

### **Socialization and Culture of Peace**

Socialization is a key civil society function that supports the practice of democratic attitudes and values within society, realized through the active participation in associations, networks or democratic movements. Naturally this is also a crucial civil society function in peacebuilding which aims at inculcating a culture of peace in societies affected by conflict. The objective is to promote attitude change within society toward peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation.

The main activities within this function are:

- Dialogue projects;
- Reconciliation initiatives;
- Peace education through different channels (radio or TV soap operas, street theatre, peace campaigns, school books, poetry festivals, etc.);
- Exchange programs and peace camps;
- Conflict resolution or negotiation training or capacity building; and
- Joint vision building workshops for a future peaceful society.

Many civil society initiatives to support attitude change of adversary groups have been implemented as part of fostering a culture of peace in conflict countries. Empirical evidence shows that this function is effective only when it reaches a large number of people (Anderson and Olson 2003; Paffenholz 2003). Research evaluations of a series of dialogue projects in the context of the Israel/Palestine conflict confirm these findings as the link between these small-scale initiatives and the macro peace processes is difficult to achieve. The Geneva based international War-torn Societies Project supports groups on the different sides of the Israel/Palestine conflict separately and believes that first each group needs to be strengthened in their peace efforts and understanding, prior to joint activities ([www.wsp-international.org](http://www.wsp-international.org)).

The practical problem is that most of the many culture of peace activities are often too sporadic (Aall 2001, p. 373), lack coordination and fail to create a critical mass movement that is needed for change. The evaluation of a multi-donors UNDP Peace Fund in Nepal confirms and adds to these findings. First, many good small local initiatives were supported with positive effects at the local level that failed to have an impact on the macro peace process as initiatives were scattered, not coordinated and failed to create a peace movement that could pressure for peace. Second, the local impact was also limited as it proved extremely hard to mobilize people for a long term process when they lacked basic human needs. Although the Fund added an aid component it did not increase participation. On the other hand, monitoring or advocacy projects aiming at protecting and/or mobilizing people to meet their own needs and interests, could achieve good results even without adding an aid component (Paffenholz et al. 2004).

The work of the Swedish Life and Peace Institute (LPI) in Somalia suggests that a continuous and sustained engagement in promoting a culture of peace and reconciliation can have an impact on peacebuilding. In the absence of genuine civil society groups in Somalia, LPI chose to work directly with local communities and empower community leaders to enable them to practice civic engagement, rebuild communities and promote peacebuilding. While starting as an outsider, the LPI program quickly gained Somali ownership, organizing peacebuilding, leadership, and transformation training courses for more than 10 years. When interviewing the participants of the Somali peace negotiations in Djibouti in 2001, researchers found that more than 60% of participants had been LPI trainees, suggesting a link between micro-level training and the macro peace process (Paffenholz 2003, pp. 75-6).

*Hypotheses and questions for further research:*

- The culture of peace function seems to be more effective in the post-conflict phase as it has a long-term objective, but cannot have an impact on short-term peace making;
- Most donor funding goes into these types of activities and assumes that it can have a short and medium term impact on peace processes; and
- The culture of peace function goes hand in hand with the traditional socialization function of civil society in democratization efforts.

**Conflict Sensitive Social Cohesion**

In the democracy civil society discourse social cohesion is seen as an important civil society function. It is also an essential function in peacebuilding as positive social capital is destroyed during war and needs to be rebuilt (Paffenholz 2003; Orjuela: 2004, pp. 46-7; Jeong 2005, p. 120). This function mainly focuses on joint activities between former or present adversary groups, such as: joint service delivery (mixed aid user committees, joint development committees); associations that bring adversaries together (parents, journalists, teachers, multi-ethnic chambers of commerce); and joint cultural or work initiatives.

A qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the impact of peace education on attitude change through peace camps with different groups from both sides of the Georgia/Abkhazia conflict shows little attitude change as a result of peace education initiatives over a period of four years. However, joint work initiatives were perceived as fruitful by the adversary groups even without any attitude change (Ohanyan

with Lewis 2005). This case suggests that initiatives focusing on conflict-sensitive social cohesion may be more effective than culture of peace initiatives. Another interesting research from India shows that ethnically integrated organizations, including business, trade or other associations were effective in building bridging ties across ethnic groups which led to an ‘institutionalized peace system’ which facilitated the control of violence (Varshney 2002, p. 46).

*Hypotheses and questions for further research:*

- Creating bridging ties between adversary groups as a means of conflict sensitive social cohesion through joint initiatives with overall objectives that are not directly linked to peace or reconciliation are more effective and easier to implement than initiatives aiming at direct peacebuilding through promoting a culture of peace; and
- Conditions for successful joint activities that build bridging ties need to be further researched.

### **Intermediation and Facilitation**

The intermediation function of civil society within the democracy discourse highlights its role as facilitator between citizens and the state. In a peacebuilding context intermediation and facilitation can also take place between different groups (not only state-citizen) and on different levels of society.

The main activities within this function are facilitation initiatives (formal or informal) between armed groups, between armed groups and communities or development agencies:

- The contribution of civil society to intermediation and facilitation is limited (Aall 2001) since this tends to be more of a function for states or the UN; in the rare cases where it is taken up by civil society actors, they tend to be international NGOs or networks (Comunita de San’Egidio, Center for Humanitarian Dialogue).
- Local civil society can often facilitate/mediate:
  - between civil society and the warring parties at the village or district level. In conflict zones in Nepal civil society representatives have successfully negotiated the release of citizens by the armed groups (Paffenholz et al. 2004); and
  - between the warring parties in order to negotiate peace zones or violence free-days as churches negotiated during the war in El Salvador for a child vaccination campaign (Kurtenbach and Paffenholz 1994).
  - between international or national aid agencies and the warring parties to ensure delivery of aid to their communities (Orjuela 2004: 48), especially when aid agencies cannot operate due to the armed conflict (Jeong 2005, p. 218).

*Hypotheses and questions for further research:*

- The facilitation role of local civil society is highly relevant during armed conflict but also its immediate aftermath;
- This function is often taken up by community leaders; and
- Facilitation is not a key civil society function in track 1 peace negotiations.

### **Service Delivery: No Function in Peacebuilding?**

Service delivery is not a civil society function within the democracy civil society discourse. Service delivery as such is seen as an economic task of the state, the market or the third sector. However, service delivery is connected to civil society, as many of its actors have taken up service delivery parallel or alternatively to the state or the market. Service delivery, however, may be seen as a civil society function when it is directly linked to other civil society functions or objectives. Without this connection to other civil society functions service delivery has mainly economic or social objectives.

During armed conflict the provision of aid through civil society actors (mainly NGOs but sometimes also associations) increases tremendously as state structures are either destroyed or weakened. There is no doubt that this kind of service is extremely important to support war-affected populations. Often the same actors provide services and peacebuilding functions at the same time. Nevertheless, the question remains whether and under what circumstances it is also a civil society function in peacebuilding.

Some authors see service delivery as a separate function of civil society because it saves lives and thus creates the preconditions for civil society to exist (Barnes 2005). Others, however, follow the same argumentation as in the democracy discourse and point out that since service delivery has an economic, social or humanitarian objective, it should not be labeled as civil society support.

Service delivery can only be important for civil society peacebuilding where donors explicitly aim to contribute to local peace capacities and try to find entry points for peacebuilding through service provision (Anderson 1999). However this is not seen as a function on its own, but only as an entry point for other functions. For example, a development project can analyze the conflicting local stakeholders and try to involve them through project user committees as a means to facilitate dialogue between adversary groups. This can be done both at the local as well as on the sector level. In Sri Lanka, an emergency education project that had started in the immediate aftermath of the ceasefire agreement in the most conflict-affected areas in the North of the island formed a district project management committee comprising the two conflict parties that had not been in dialogue with each other (Paffenholz 2003b). Here service delivery is an entry point for the conflict sensitive social cohesion function of civil society peacebuilding. The question is whether this type of strategy needs to be reflected in project design as a cross-cutting theme (like gender) or as a separate peacebuilding objective, next to the development objective?

Table 1: Comparing Civil Society Functions in Democratization and Peacebuilding

<b>Civil Society Functions Democratization</b>	<b>Understanding in Democratization</b>	<b>Civil Society Functions Peacebuilding</b>	<b>Understanding in Peacebuilding</b>	<b>Research Hypothesis on Relevance + Effectiveness in Phases of Conflict</b>
Protection	Against attacks from state against freedom, life and property	Protection	Protection against attacks from all armed actors	High relevance during armed conflict
Monitoring	Monitoring and controlling state activities and citizen's rights	Monitoring & Early Warning	Same as in democratization, plus monitoring relevant issues for early warning	High relevance during armed conflict, however only effective together with protection and communication function
Advocacy/ public communication	Articulating interests and bringing relevant issues to the public agenda	Advocacy & public communication	Same as in democratization, plus participation in the peace process	High relevance in all phases of armed conflict
Socialization	Forming democratic attitudes and habits, tolerance and trust	Culture of Peace & Socialization	Attitude change for inculcating 'culture of peace' and reconciliation	Long-term effects, only important in post-conflict phase
Social Cohesion	Building social capital, bridging societal cleavages, adding to social cohesion	Conflict sensitive social cohesion	Building bridging ties across adversary groups	Relevance during armed conflict but most of all post-conflict; more effective then 'Culture of peace'
Intermediation	Balancing interests with the state	Intermediation/ Facilitation	Facilitating between all kinds of different actors, not only citizen-state	Int. involvement of CS less important; local CS involvement relevant during and after armed conflict
Service delivery	Providing basic needs oriented services to citizens (questioned).	Service delivery	Can serve as important entry point to other functions for peacebuilding in case actors are aware of potential	Not a civil society function in peacebuilding

An additional question is whether the monitoring function should also be carried out by development NGOs that are already delivering service. It is argued that these groups are on the ground and could easily add this function, but it does not seem that easy in practice. In Nepal a UNDP multi-donor Trust Fund for Peacebuilding and Development funded peace, human rights and service delivery local groups to contribute to peacebuilding. It was assumed that service delivery could create entry points for working with the communities on other—more delicate—peace and human rights issues. An evaluation (Paffenholz et al. 2004) found that the mixing of roles was problematic. For example, human rights groups specialized in monitoring were very effective provided they were linked to national and international networks, but service delivery NGOs that took up new functions were far less accepted by communities and they lacked expertise in these new fields. Human rights monitors also felt no need to have other entry points as monitoring violations was high on the agenda of affected communities.

Another question is whether a specific peace service delivery function exists and whether it can be attributed to civil society. For example, international research institutions and NGOs provide negotiation training for official delegations or mediation teams, as well as transportation or office space for negotiations. In the peacebuilding discourse these activities are traditionally found under the label of Good Offices or track 1.5 initiatives, but civil society actors are rarely involved in these activities.

*Hypotheses and questions for further research:*

- Service delivery is not a civil society peacebuilding function;
- Service delivery can only provide entry points for other civil society functions, mainly intermediation/facilitation and conflict sensitive social cohesion;
- Service delivery can provide these entry points only in case the involved actors are aware of this potential; and
- Civil society is rarely involved in peace service delivery functions and the exceptional cases can be grouped under the facilitation/intermediation function.

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

A good understanding of civil society's roles is required when civil society aims to have an impact on peacebuilding. This is equally important for national or local civil societies and their strategies as well as for outside supporters.

This research suggests that merging the civil society discourse in democracy theory and development, with the peacebuilding discourse leads to a clearer and more focused understanding of the role of civil society in peacebuilding. In particular, applying a functionalist analytical framework is a major contribution to the current state of debate. Application of the analytical framework, based on a general literature review and information from case study research and evaluations yielded a number of results.

Six of the seven civil society functions are applied in current peacebuilding practice. However, in peacebuilding some functions are understood differently than in democratization or need adaptation for peacebuilding purposes. The service delivery function (already questioned in democracy research) has proved to be not a separate civil society function for the objective of peacebuilding. However, service delivery can create important entry points for civil society peacebuilding, mainly for the functions of conflict sensitive social cohesion and facilitation.

The analytical framework itself is geared toward a better understanding and analysis of the constructive roles of civil society. It does not deal with existing or potentially negative roles civil society actors might

develop nor does it describe the obstacles for an enabling environment for civil society in peacebuilding. So far it does not address the timing and sequencing of civil society support, the role of different actors, and the impact of various functions on peacebuilding nor the role of external support. Detailed answers to these questions need to come from in-depth case study research. Nevertheless, this study has generated a number of insights and can also identify some obstacles for a constructive role of civil society in peacebuilding and its enabling environment.

This concluding chapter presents general conclusions from the research so far, discusses further research questions that need to be addressed in in-depth comparative country case studies.

## 1. Lessons Learned and Obstacles for Civil Society Peacebuilding

*Civil society has important roles to play in peacebuilding.* Based on an analysis of civil society functions, this study concludes that civil society can make important contributions to peacebuilding in the short, medium and long-run. Democracy research shows that civil society has played a crucial role in democratic transitions in Eastern Europe. The most striking result in civil society peacebuilding research shows a direct correlation between civil society involvement in peace negotiations and the sustainability of the agreement—the greater the involvement of civil society the more likely the peace agreement will be sustained. The most important civil society function in peacebuilding seems to be advocacy, particularly in terms of making the voices of civil society heard and bringing important issues to the peacebuilding agenda. Other civil society roles are also important for peacebuilding, especially human rights monitoring which contributes to the protection of civil society, and through joint activities that can build bridging ties across divided societies.

*Beware of simple civil society enthusiasm.* The mere existence of civil society and general efforts to support it does not automatically contribute to peacebuilding. Civil society (as well as external supporters) needs to clearly identify its objectives and demonstrate the relevance of particular roles/functions in different phases of conflict/peacebuilding. Civil society support needs to be based on expected results rather than purely by good intentions. Civil society has much to contribute to peacebuilding during all phases of conflict, but where external support is provided it needs to be based on careful analysis and clear objectives.

*Current civil society support neglects understanding of civil society roles and composition.* The current practice of civil society support has an actor-oriented approach, focusing on identifying civil society groups that can support peacebuilding. The approach is mostly based on the simple hypothesis that civil society needs to be supported and will somehow contribute to peacebuilding. Instead, support needs to be based on a solid analysis of the composition and characteristics of civil society in a specific country context and the specific functions of civil society in support of peacebuilding in a given phase of conflict/peacebuilding.

*Not all civil society functions are equally effective in all phases of conflict.* It is also important to recognize that depending on the functions of civil society, these will have different priorities depending on the phases of conflict. During armed conflict or in the immediate aftermath the functions of protection, monitoring and advocacy/public communication seem to have clearly priority. Other functions, such as culture of peace, seem more long run and thus should have less priority during the early phases of peacebuilding. Nevertheless, more empirical evidence is needed to verify these preliminary findings.

*Civil society is not always good—beware of ‘uncivil’ society.* Civil society also has a dark side. Many civil society actors show uncivil behavior, preach hatred against other groups, and can incite violence. This seems to be especially likely during and in the immediate aftermath of armed conflict, when the weakness of the state offers greater opportunities for uncivil groups to thrive. This reinforces the previous



lesson on the need for sound analysis that can assess the constructive as well as the negative potential of civil society and the contexts in which they emerge.

*The role of the state is equally important.* Civil society needs a functioning state to operate effectively. During and after conflict civil society confronts a difficult enabling environment due to weakness of the state and unclear power relations and networks, or may be affected by a strong authoritarian state that suppresses civil society. In the case of a weak state, civil society support may need to focus on the enabling environment, including support to state structures and law enforcement as well as specific support to civil society functions. Support to civil society should avoid weakening the role of the state, and attempt to develop both in a way they can be mutually reinforcing. Further insights are needed on the specific features of the enabling environment that should be targeted.

*Civil society is more than NGOs.* Although NGOs have a role to play in peacebuilding and have received the most attention and support, they are not the only relevant civil society actors. The democracy discourse shows that there are many more actors that fulfill—even if only temporarily—a civil society function. Evidence from a range of countries shows that donors tend to support mainly moderate, middle class groups that often act as gate-keepers vis-à-vis other groups in society. Critical parts of civil society, such as mass movements, who may have greater representation and legitimacy, tend to be pushed aside. Donors seem to devote little effort to identifying appropriate actors, preferring instead to maintain a relationship with those they already know. In contrast, many of these new national urban NGOs often have a weak membership base, lack country-wide and balanced political or ethnic representation, and are often linked to the political establishment. Donor-driven NGO-civil society initiatives have limited the capacity to create domestic social capital, and ownership of the peace process, undermining empowerment and leaving domestic groups in a weak and subordinate position. As Edwards states: “The number of NGOs is the easiest thing to influence, but also the least important” (2004, p. 95).

*Critical assessments of NGO peacebuilding effects.* Two key lessons emerge on NGO peacebuilding effects. First, donor support to NGOs tends to favor urban-based, and weakly representative local NGOs, crowding out space for other, often more representative, manifestations of civil society. The donor emphasis on unrepresentative NGOs and service delivery leads to a monetization of peace work, and makes NGOs accountable to their external fund providers rather than domestic constituencies. Second, NGO peace initiatives have very limited effects on macro peace processes. It was assumed that initiatives by national NGOs would automatically influence peacebuilding at the macro level, but recent studies show that only under certain conditions can peace work influence the macro peace process.

*Effectiveness and timing of various civil society functions.* The few studies on the effectiveness of peace work confirm that its success is contingent on very specific conditions. More studies are needed to gain additional insights and develop typologies. The recent focus on impact evaluation in peacebuilding, however, mainly looks at the project level of interventions without asking what kinds of civil society functions/roles can have an impact on peacebuilding in the various phases of a peace process and under different conditions

*Need for holistic view/approach.* Whether civil society can play a constructive role in peacebuilding must be based on a holistic understanding of civil society itself and the support it needs. It is not only necessary to identify the relevant civil society functions, but also to assess the composition of the civil society in question, and the conditions and obstacles that affect its enabling environment, including the behavior of potential or existing uncivil society and the role of the state.

## 2. Research Hypotheses for Further In-depth Country Case Studies

Further research is mainly needed to generate sound knowledge on: the relevance and appropriateness of civil society functions in different phases of peacebuilding; the influence of different economic and political conditions on the effectiveness of the functions; and the specific contributions of each function and intervention-type to the objectives set. Additional insights will help to derive recommendations for setting priorities in terms of relevant functions and thus support future planning and implementation. Main research questions are listed below

### *Appropriateness and impact of functions:*

- What are the main contributions of short-term and long-term civil society functions toward various peacebuilding objectives? What is their impact?
- How do various functions interact in different phases? Which functions are mutually reinforcing and complementary? Which are mutually exclusive or competing, or even counterproductive? Which can thus be combined?
- Can it be demonstrated that advocacy is one of the most important civil society functions in peacebuilding during all phases of conflict? Can it be verified that mass mobilization for peace negotiations and against the recurrence of war in combination with targeted agenda setting (especially though the involvement of civil society in peace negotiations) are the most effective roles civil society can play during and in the immediate aftermath of armed conflict?
- Is creating a mass movement for peace (by linking scattered grassroots social initiatives with national groups) that presses for change an effective way to support civil society to achieve peace?
- Is the culture of peace function, which receives most of the donor funding, only effective for long-term post-conflict peacebuilding and cannot have an impact on short-term peace making?
- Can it be demonstrated that creating bridging ties between adversary groups as a means of conflict sensitive social cohesion through joint initiatives is more effective and easier to implement than initiatives aiming directly at peacebuilding through promoting a culture of peace?

*Role and selection of actors.* There is a need to know more about the appropriateness of different actors, especially to determine what kinds of organizations have succeeded or failed in encouraging genuine, representative and sustainable civil society. It is also equally important to assess what kind of mass organizations are able to fulfill specific civil society functions and how they might change due to external support—how to support genuine groups, movements and networks without blunting their power and commercializing them? It is also important to assess the role of INGOs—are they really functioning as gatekeepers that draw away resources and knowledge from national groups? Under which conditions can they be supportive? What is the role of donors? Do they need to substantially change the way in which they support civil society?

*Enabling environment.* What are the specific elements of an enabling environment for a constructive role of civil society in peacebuilding? What are the specific obstacles that prevent civil society from taking up a positive and constructive role in peacebuilding?’

*Service delivery.* Service delivery needs major rethinking: Under what conditions is service delivery an entry point for other civil society functions? There is some evidence that effective service delivery adds to the legitimacy of civil society actors, but there is also evidence that service delivery does not necessarily enhance civic engagement. In addition, some cases show that fostering representative civil society need not be accompanied by service delivery. There are also concerns that advocacy work is deemphasized when civil society organizations are driven into service delivery and thus drawn away from other

important functions, or that service delivery is weakened or at least discredited when it is not linked to advocacy.

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