The ‘Uses and Abuses’ of Civil Society in Africa

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The current discourse on ‘civil society’ in Africa, conducted by Northern governments, international NGOs, activists and academics, often presents civil society as the _locus sine qua non_ for progressive politics, the place where people organise to make their lives better, even a site of resistance. This article seeks to remind us that, as originally theorized by Antonio Gramsci, civil society is a potential battleground. It also constitutes an arena in which states and other powerful actors intervene to influence the political agendas of organised groups with the intention of defusing opposition. This article examines the extent to which this form of civil society is being constituted in Africa, in particular, through Northern government support to African policy-oriented organisations. It does this by looking at three quite distinct national contexts and investigating the relationship between the dominant development project in each, undertaken by the government in ‘strategic collaboration’ with donors and civil society. It focuses on Ghana, South Africa and Uganda during the late 1990s. All three countries have been paradigmatic in terms of donor visions for the continent and have attracted some of the largest aid packages that specifically target ‘civil society’. It is argued that donors have been successful in influencing the current version of civil society in these countries so that a vocal, well-funded section of it, which intervenes on key issues of national development strategy, acts not as a force for challenging the _status quo_, but for building societal consensus for maintaining it.

Which ‘Civil Society’?

_In a ‘bottom-up’ sense, civil society is the realm in which those who are disadvantaged by globalization of the world economy can mount their protests and seek alternatives ... In a ‘top-down’ sense, however, states and corporate interests influence the development of this current version of civil society towards making it an agency for stabilizing the social and political status quo._ (Cox, 1999:10-11)

The term ‘civil society’ has had a long and chequered history. Bratton (1994:52) cites Pelczynski who comments that ‘few social and political concepts have traveled so far in their life and changed their meaning so much.’ Within the African context, many commentators (Oloka-Onyango & Barya, 1997; Allen, 1997; Hearn & Robinson, 2000) have written about the ‘conceptual confusion’ surrounding the term and have critiqued it on counts of theoretical clarity, analytical application and simple ideological role, being the deeply pluralist term that it is. This article takes Cox’s
starting-point that 'there is little point in arguing that one usage of the term "civil society" is correct and the other is wrong' but instead 'let us take current identification of civil society with autonomous social forces as a basis for discussion and examine its implications' (1999:10).

It will be argued that autonomy is an essential, yet frequently side-lined, feature of civil society. The current development paradigm in Africa predominantly concerns bringing civil society into a closer and closer relationship with states and has very little to say about the importance of keeping a critical distance. Writing from a Ugandan perspective, where the process has perhaps the gone the furthest, Muhereza and Kyomugisha (1999:3) describe policy-making and implementation as predicated on the 'compliancy nature of the triad relationship between the state, donors and civil society'. As Abugre (n.d.1) notes, 'partnership' is at the centre of the so-called 'new agenda for development assistance'... Central to this new agenda is a framework where 'civil society organisations' (including but not restricted to NGOs) are expected to work in 'partnership' with 'participatory and accountable' governments as the 'only means of ensuring and sustaining participatory, equitable and sustainable development.'

This article explores how the current development agenda of 'partnership' not only undermines autonomy but can also contribute, as Cox (1999) warns in the opening quotation, to the current version of civil society in Africa becoming a means for stabilizing rather than challenging the social and political status quo. This will involve us in examining three quite distinct national contexts in the late 1990s – Ghana, South Africa and Uganda. Each of these has featured prominently in donor visions of paradigmatic development. Ghana has been the African model for structural adjustment, South Africa has represented the triumph of democratisation and Uganda is currently seen as a leading beacon for poverty alleviation.

In each example, we focus on that section of civil society which has actively engaged with the dominant national development project. It is no coincidence that this section is invariably amongst the most well-funded, is almost completely donor dependent, and tends to identify itself self-consciously via the new language of 'civil society'.2 We begin with Ghana in 1997, where the national context was characterised by an attempt to build societal consensus around 'accelerated adjustment' in the hope that this would propel it toward middle-income status by the year 2020. Discussion then moves to the South African context in 1998, which was characterised by consensus building around the legitimacy of the new South African state, premised on notions of limited liberal democracy and eschewing any remnants of social democracy which many South Africans fought and died for. Finally, it turns to Uganda in 2000 as the model par excellence for the latest 'partnership' project – 'poverty reduction'. In each case the extent to which policy-oriented, donor-funded civil society has an instrumental role in building consensus around the dominant development agenda is highlighted.

Although the section of civil society focused on in each case responds to the specific political and economic context of the country in question, it ends up performing much the same function across all three. In Ghana it promotes yet more poverty-inducing adjustment with no guarantees of gain for the pain. In other words, it 'sells' austerity without development to Ghanaians. In South Africa it is engaged in convincing South Africans not to equate democracy with expectations for a better material life. Again, this amounts to 'selling' austerity. In Uganda, it ensures that poverty reduction is the order of the day, apparently giving up on development in favour of living better
'within your means'. In other words, current 'poverty reduction' looks alarmingly like adjustment to poverty. Therefore, whether it is championing more low/no-intensity democracy or low/no-intensity development, civil society becomes an important agency for stabilizing the status quo in Africa, which is abject poverty with no prospects for social transformation.

Engineering Consensus & the New Politics of Adjustment in Ghana

As the following excerpt from an USAID document confirms, American assistance to Ghana is explicitly oriented toward ensuring increased local legitimacy for current development strategies.

Other ... political risks include growing polarization within the Ghanaian polity and perhaps an associated risk that a legally sanctioned change of government could have totally opposing development views and reverse long-term policies. USAID assistance to civic organisations that develop and debate public policy, and U.S. support for consultation on government policies, have been useful in shaping a vision for Ghana’s future which is developing broad, bipartisan support (USAID, 1997:21).

Ghana’s leading role, initially as an economic reformer and, more recently, as a democratic reformer, made it an important African country for the donor community, particularly in the mid-1990s. As an article in the Financial Times (9 July 1996) noted, ‘if Ghana falters in its trailblazing role ... the credibility of the donors’ development strategy for Africa will also be eroded.’ Ghana is currently undertaking an ambitious economic restructuring programme, known as Ghana-Vision 2020, in an effort to transform itself into a middle-income country by the year 2020. This requires increasing economic growth rates to well above seven per cent per annum (USAID, 1997:21). As the World Bank’s 1996 Ghana Country Assistance Review notes, the economic restructuring of the past decade cannot be sustained unless ‘the implementation of a large unfinished agenda of adjustment is accelerated in the short run’ (Armstrong, 1996:1). Kraus (1991:19) comments, however, that since their inception in the early 1980s, structural adjustment programmes have been ‘the most contentious issue in African political economy.’ Nationwide demonstrations in May 1995 against value added tax (VAT), which left five protesters dead and forced the resignation of the finance minister responsible for the Economic Recovery Programme since the early 1980s, became a flash-point for struggle over structural adjustment.

The VAT demonstrations were a turning-point for the Rawlings government. The lesson which it and the donors learnt was that implementing difficult economic policy within a democratic framework requires broad-based consensus. With a view to building support around the reintroduction of VAT, the government organised a two-day National Economic Forum in September 1997. Under the theme, ‘achieving national consensus on policy measures for accelerated economic growth within the framework of Ghana Vision 2020’, the forum brought together over 150 organisations and institutions. The discussion generated thereby was peppered with references to hard choices, the absence of soft options and the need for sacrifices. The emphasis on national consensus and unity of purpose also signalled the importance of the political context of Ghana’s new multi-party democracy. As one distinguished Ghanaian commentator explained in a televised panel discussion at the time, the fact that so many were expressing their views heightened the need to bring those views together,
else political stability might be jeopardised. In its outlook for 1998, the Economist Intelligence Unit commented that the most formidable challenges facing the government in the coming year would be the introduction of VAT and public sector reforms. It concluded: ‘In the face of domestic opposition to these measures, a popular consensus in their favour will have to be forged in parliament and the country at large’ (1997:3).

An important question to address is why so great an emphasis has been placed on consensus in recent years. Brinkerhoff and Kulibaba provide an explanation applying not just to Ghana, but to broader developments across the continent:

*as the trajectory of economic reform moves from the earlier stages of stabilization, usually managed by a small team of technocrats, to liberalisation and, ultimately, long-haul consolidation, where much larger numbers of actors are involved, African decision-makers and policy managers increasingly face the requirement of building coalitions and managing consensus* (1996:125).

These sentiments have been echoed by the World Bank in Ghana:

*In the 1980s, the Bank dealt with a small group of leaders and technocrats accountable to an unelected head of state. In the 1990s, Ghana has an increasingly active parliament ... and new forms of decentralised organisation and accountability. The political reforms may slow decision-making and policy implementation in the short-term. But insofar as they broaden the 'ownership' ... they will serve to deepen and to speed development over the long-term (http://www.worldbank.org/html/oed/pr099.htm).*

The US aid programme’s analysis is similar:

*The sweep, swiftness and success of the 1983 Economic Recovery Program may be attributed to the mandate given to a small and well qualified group of presidential and ministerial advisors. Although dramatic policy changes have been made, in order for Ghana to realize 7 percent growth, bold new initiatives in policy reform are required ... Further, the maturing of democratic institutions means that a much more intensive process of consultation and consensus-building is required* (USAID, 1997:23).

The US aid programme in Ghana, administered by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has been at the forefront of engineering such a process. Its consensus-building attempts include challenging economic policy formation as the sole preserve of the government and encouraging its being opened up to other actors. As its country report asserts, ‘Parliament, business and labor interests and civil society are now parties to policy formulation’ (Ibid.). Its intervention began with sponsoring the first four independent analyses of the economy by the Centre for Economic Policy Analysis (CEPA). USAID notes that ‘improvements are needed in public and private sector capacity to analyse policy questions and to participate in consensus-building and in mechanisms for public-private consultation’ (Ibid.). USAID has undertaken to ‘support a participatory approach to policy change’ which is ‘process-driven in contrast to the traditional conditionality and output driven formula’, and which places ‘greater emphasis on stimulating Ghanaians – public and private - to drive the policy change process’ (Ibid. p. 29). USAID’s self-styled role was to include ‘support to local research institutions and private and civic organisations, to strengthen their capacity to participate in the policy change process’ (Ibid. p. 30). Its report concludes that ‘this process approach will help institutionalize tools and fora for policy change, that will improve policy management and improve sustainability of policy change’ (Ibid. pp. 29-30).
One of the most important recent developments in USAID’s attempt to bring other actors into the economic policy formation process was the aforementioned two-day National Economic Forum, opened by President Rawlings, which took place in Accra in September 1997. In an interview, the week before the event, an USAID official expressed excitement about the Forum and explained that it was an integral part of their programme to support civil society in Ghana through private sector actors. Indeed, earlier in 1997, USAID had sponsored a meeting in Chapel Hill, North Carolina for 65 public and private actors from Ghana, to which the Economic Forum was a follow-up. However, on the eve of the Forum controversy erupted over who was officially organising it. The director of the National Development Planning Commission gave a press conference in which he stated that the initiative for the Forum had come from the Commission rather than a USAID-funded NGO, the Private Enterprise Foundation (PEF). On the same day, the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry went on prime-time TV to confirm that: ‘It has never been the intention of the USAID to hijack the economic development policy of this country and run it for Ghana.’

We argue here that bringing civil society into the economic policy process in order to broaden consensus around Ghana’s accelerated structural adjustment is an important but little documented objective of Western civil society assistance. An observer can see the relative importance of this objective when examining the kinds of organisations being supported by donors as well as those that receive the most funding. Ghana’s Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), whose brief is to promote economic liberalism, has the largest number of foreign donors. It has ‘cross-donor’ support, receiving funding from at least seven different Western governments. The funding it has received has also been substantial. The US National Endowment for Democracy (NED) provided the IEA with over $500,000 between 1992 and 1997 for work promoting the role of the private sector within parliament and among the public. Between 1995 and 1997 Denmark provided almost the same amount of funding for a programme of roundtables and discussions between government, the political opposition and other organisations to discuss Ghana’s economic policy. This level of funding is in a substantially different league to grants of less than $10,000, for example, which are received by such bodies as the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS).

In 1994 Callaghy observed that in most places in Africa, there are few social constituencies for economic reform. Gyimah-Boadi (1996:121-2) similarly observes that ‘the contribution of civil society to democratic consolidation is even more disappointing in the key areas of economic reform and development’ and notes the ‘absence of decisive coalitions in favor of economic reform’ and the elusiveness of ‘a consensus between governments and civil societies’. Our research suggests that such a consensus may no longer prove so elusive in consequence of donor support to civil society in Ghana. Instead of civil society being a hindrance to economic reform, as Gyimah-Boadi suggests has been the case in the past, donors see its potential for broadening support for the reform process. This development is not unique to Ghana. In Mozambique, Hall and Young (1997:227) observe that ‘aid is being deliberately directed to assist in the construction of new social groups committed to the market economy’. Civil society’s ability to promote consensus around restructuring forms the subject of the new politics of adjustment in the late 1990s in a context where adjustment is increasingly pursued through liberal democracy rather than authoritarianism.
From Social Democracy to Liberal Democracy in South Africa
As Gills et al. (1993:7) noted early in the 1990s:

Perhaps more than at any other time in the recent past, it is now that the struggle to define ‘democracy’ has become a major ideological battle.

For the majority of South Africans the struggle against apartheid was conducted in terms influenced by socialist, redistributionist paradigms aimed at directly redressing the gross material inequality left by apartheid. As Mattes and Thiel explain (1998:102):

While ‘one man, one vote’ was always the goal, the key liberation movements subscribed to and spread to their poverty-stricken followers an economic, as opposed to a procedural view of democracy.

In analysing public opinion polls on democracy, they note that whilst only 27 per cent rated as essential such key procedural elements as regular elections, 48 per cent said that equal access to houses, jobs, and a decent income was ‘essential’ to democracy (Ibid.) However, this is not the kind of democracy that the majority of South Africans have experienced. It is clear that neither the West nor the ANC wanted to see the kind of radical, thoroughgoing reconstruction of society that would be required were the majority of South Africans to be provided with houses, jobs and a decent income. Instead, every effort was made to ensure a political settlement that would allow the passage from racial to non-racial capitalism in South Africa. One aspect of reconciling South Africans to what the New South Africa would actually entail involved convincing them that what they thought democracy meant was incorrect. Democracy as the equivalent to a better life, a release from grinding poverty and economic exclusion was replaced with liberal democracy or polyarchy, which Robinson defines as ‘elite minority rule and socioeconomic inequalities alongside formal political freedom and elections involving universal suffrage’ (1996:356). Mattes and Thiel (1998) conclude that in an attempt to root liberal democracy:

... one might urge South Africa’s educational system, civil society, and political parties to shift their emphasis ... to the ... task of teaching people to value democratic institutions and processes more for their own sake than for what they may deliver in terms of immediate and tangible benefits.

What is interesting in South Africa, compared to other African countries, is the number and calibre of civil society organisations (CSOs) geared towards doing precisely that – encouraging a popular commitment to procedural democracy. What is more, these kinds of CSOs feature predominantly in donor political aid programmes. In the course of our research we asked over a dozen different foreign donors what kind of civil society organisations they funded through their democracy assistance. There were five main categories: democracy organisations, concerned with the overall relationship between states and citizens; human rights and legal aid groups; conflict resolution agencies; organisations servicing or representing the non-governmental sector; and think tanks. More organisations fell within the first of these categories than any of the others. They also received the largest amounts of aid and were supported by the broadest cross-section of donors.

The most prominent is Idasa, an organisation fully committed to procedural democracy with a staff of 140. It probably receives the most donor funds of any CSO in South Africa. Other organisations include the Institute for Multiparty Democracy,
whose name could not be more indicative of its advocacy of procedural democracy, and the Khululekani Institute for Democracy, aimed at bringing parliament closer to the people. A fourth, the Electoral Institute of South Africa, deals with what is perhaps the key aspect of procedural democracy. A fifth, the Helen Suzman Foundation, undertakes similar democracy surveys to Idasa and has a map of Southern Africa on the back of its quarterly emblazoned with the slogan, 'promoting liberal democracy' (Focus, 1998:22-8). A sixth, the South African Institute of Race Relations, has a donor funded Free Society project which aims to monitor South Africa's democratic development and to promote the rule of law, ethics, justice, the concept of limited government and economic freedom. As a 1995 project description, written by one of its foreign funders, the US National Endowment for Democracy explains (NED): the programme will inform key government and non-government officials on activities that hinder the development of a free society. The project seeks to achieve these aims through three principal means: (1) publishing 'Frontiers of Freedom', a quarterly newsletter; (2) sponsoring specific research projects; and (3) hosting and attending special events including briefings and lectures, frequently in conjunction with other non-profit institutions (http://www.ned.org).

It is not altogether surprising to discover that these civil society organisations at the forefront of promoting procedural democracy are very much part of the South African liberal landscape. The South African Institute of Race Relations is one of the oldest liberal institutions in the country. The Helen Suzman Foundation is named after, arguably, the most prominent South African liberal politician. Idasa was started in 1987 by van Zyl Slabbert, former leader of the opposition and Alex Boraine, former Progressive Federal Party MP. What these CSOs have done is to put procedural democracy high up on the agenda for civil society and for the nation and to establish the terms of the debate. That they have proved equal to the task is not surprising, given the resources allocated to them by the international donor community. Idasa has received grants not simply of tens of thousands of dollars, but of a million dollars. In 1996 it received $1.165 million from the Ford Foundation. This is an exceptionally large grant by the Foundation’s standards, which normally provides grants from $200,000 to $50,000 to CSOs in Africa, and is by far the largest grant to any recipient in South Africa. At the same time Idasa received a $1 million grant from USAID for a two year period. The South African Institute of Race Relations and the Institute for Multi-Party Democracy received similar grants from USAID over the same period.

How has civil society interacted with the New South Africa? First, it has changed the debate on democracy. During the past five years, it is possible to see a process in which democracy has been redefined. Although half of South Africans still believe that access to housing, jobs and a decent income are essential components of a democratic society, this residual belief in social democracy is being eroded and replaced by the norms and practice of procedural democracy. It is our argument that the North has played its role in this process, by funding the liberal proponents of procedural democracy in civil society, and that, subsequently, political aid has successfully 'influenced the rules of the game.' The second consequence is that this has facilitated a newly legitimatised South African state to preside over the same intensely exploitative economic system, but this time without heavily mobilised opposition. External and domestic support for procedural democracy has successfully removed all significant challenges to the system. It has ensured that democracy in the new South Africa is not about reconstructing the social order, but about effective system-maintenance.
From Direct to Indirect Service Provider in Uganda

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, civil society played an immensely important role in ‘filling the gaps’ left by government in basic service provision. Dicklich (1998a:148) writes about the ‘politics and economics of survival’ having resulted in citizen withdrawal from the public sphere and a retreat into economic survival activities. Much organised social activity, either initiated by international NGOs or by local networks, was geared towards basic survival needs. This was crucial to both donors, given their obsession with the minimal state, and the government of Uganda, which needed to maintain a modicum of legitimacy. However, by the late 1990s the model was changing. Donors have regained confidence in some African states, to some extent, because they spent the previous decade reforming them, and increasingly believe that they have governments which can now cooperate in ‘strategic collaboration’ with them in meeting what has become the development orthodoxy of the new millennium – international development targets. It is argued here that these poverty-focused targets move the discussion away from the creation of national wealth to the distribution of existing, grossly inadequate, national resources. Donors have found in the government of Uganda, an African ‘partner’ willing to be the ‘star pupil’ for its latest ‘development’ paradigm. Now that the state is once again seen as the main instrument through which basic services should be provided, spearheading the ‘poverty reduction’ agenda, what is the role of civil society?

It could be argued that donors and government see the role of civil society as providing the service of ‘accountability’. Foreign aid is no longer channelled through NGOs but is provided directly to government through sector budgets and CSOs act as external monitors ensuring that current poverty reduction policies are implemented accountably. After all, ‘transparency’ was always cited as an important reason for using NGOs rather than governments. On one level providing ‘monitoring’ and ‘accountability’ is a confrontational role as CSOs must expose irregularities and challenge powerful interests, but on a more fundamental level their participation is welcomed because it contributes to efficient service delivery. They may not be the direct service providers in the new paradigm but they play an important role in ensuring that the services are delivered efficiently and that the paradigm works. This is a legitimating role rather than a critical role and again they are valued by international and national states as implementors, not critics. We can see this role at the level of centrally led ‘pro-poor’ policy development and implementation and at local government level.

The poverty reduction agenda is tailor-made for bringing civil society as a third partner into a close working relationship between donors and African governments. Poverty is the business of NGOs. It is supposedly what they have a comparative advantage in and their insights can help to shape policy and their commitment to enforce it. The beginnings of this new, closer, civil society collaboration over poverty policy began with the Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Project (UPPAP) in 1997 involving nine CSOs. Since then, the Poverty Monitoring and Analysis Unit in the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has strengthened relations with CSOs. The Poverty Action Fund (PAF), use of funds from HIPCs debt relief, ‘output oriented’ budgeting and tax policy are the main areas in which civil society is currently involved. The Uganda Debt Network (1999) is a key actor in this process.

With the ongoing decentralisation process, different sectoral activities, including health, education and water and sanitation, are increasingly implemented by local
government. USAID has recently set up a large-scale programme to train civil society organisations to monitor local resource allocation.\textsuperscript{10} When it shared its plans with government, the immediate, horrified response was that it was training a ‘cadre of complainers’. USAID had to assure government that the CSOs would work in cooperation with local government and their actions could help make local government more effective in executing its responsibilities.\textsuperscript{11} This kind of ‘partnership’, however, blunts independent criticism. Likewise, some NGOs envisaged evolving into subcontractors to government in the new paradigm, where they deliver direct services but are contracted by the government, not donors. At a donor organised workshop to discuss their new role, several NGOs, quite rightly, asked how could they agitate on government policy when their livelihoods depended on government contracts?\textsuperscript{12}

This illustrates a view, which emerged from several interviews carried out in March 2000, that the government is open to CSOs when their activities contribute to the positive impact of current poverty reduction policies and programmes, as implementers and monitors. It was felt that government was willing to allow CSOs to participate in the policy process so long as they confined themselves to the space and issues allowed by government. This meant not getting involved in ‘politics’ or threatening any fundamental positions taken by government on issues such as debt, land and political systems. A somewhat artificial distinction is therefore created between civil and political issues. One interpretation of why the NGO Forum was not allowed to register in December 1999 by the Minister for Internal Affairs is that the government was concerned that one united umbrella group could ‘become a force to be reckoned with’. This unease with organised interest groups outside of the state, which have the potential for popular mobilisation, is reflected in another example. The government felt threatened by the potential mobilisation of rural women, under the auspices of the women’s movement, around the joint-clause regarding land ownership.\textsuperscript{13}

When USAID, which has the most experience of working with civil society in Uganda, was asked if they could recount any examples of CSOs openly challenging powerful international actors, they could not think of one. However, they did point out that parliament had questioned the role of international actors on several occasions. For example, World Bank credit requests have been rejected by parliament, including a $20 million nutrition and early childhood development (NECD) loan. The role of multilateral loans in funding development has been raised in a motion that called for no more multilateral credits until past credits had been accounted for to parliament (Ugandan TV, 23 March 2000). These kinds of issues go to the heart of Uganda’s national economic policy. The US power company, AES’s, plans for a hydroelectric power plant were delayed by more than six months as parliament undertook an investigation. Another case in which the actions and interests of the US came under scrutiny was when the Co-operative Bank, a ‘partner’ of USAID, came under investigation.\textsuperscript{14}

Parliament may therefore offer more leverage for exerting autonomy than civil society, precisely because it is not dependent on foreign donors as are most of Uganda’s CSOs and because its mandate is to be a critical voice vis-à-vis the executive, rather than to function as an implementing partner. Donor funding supports the physical rehabilitation of parliament and its more efficient management but is not involved in the design of programmes, nor does it therefore need to ask MPs to account for their activities. In consequence parliament has relatively greater insulation from donor priorities than do civil society organisations.
Conclusion

What these examples from the Ghanaian, South African and Ugandan contexts illustrate are the limitations for civil society of ‘partnership’ in its various guises from consensual structural adjustment to monitoring the poverty reduction agenda. The continued ideological appeal to partnership, as a model, increases those limitations and erodes the potential for civil society organisations to fundamentally challenge the status quo. The dynamic explored in this paper certainly does not apply to all organised interest groups, but it does illustrate how powerful Northern states are able to create and influence significant social groupings in Africa in order to use ‘civil society’ as a vehicle for stabilising the existing order. If we can draw one conclusion it is that autonomous social forces are more urgently needed than ever before in Africa, yet are as absent as never before. And, perhaps, the identification of ‘autonomous social forces’ with the current version of civil society is a spurious assumption to begin with.

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Endnotes

2. For empirical detail on who funds, who is funded and how much funding is given, see Hearn, J. (1999a/b).
3. See 3 September 1997 Ghanaian Times; Daily Graphic; 8-14 September 1997; Public Agenda.
4. Interview with USAID democracy and governance program officer, September 1997.
6. For a fuller discussion see Hearn, J (2000).
7. See Dicklich, S (1998b) for a fuller discussion.
8. A cautionary note: according to Bazaara, it is ‘not correct to assume that all civil society organisations arose to fill the gap created by state failure. Many organisations were formed to serve different purposes’ (in Muhereza, F & C Kyomugisha 1999:4).
9. Uganda’s continued heavy military involvement in the DRC has been a disappointment to donors. However, speaking to the assembled donors at the country’s Consultative Group meeting in March 2000, President Museveni justified his military adventure not only in terms of defending the country’s borders but on the grounds that it was contributing to reducing poverty.
10. This programme is modeled on a similarly ambitious USAID project carried out in Ghana in the late 1990s. See Hearn, J (2001) for a fuller discussion.
References


Meikins Wood, E (1990), The Uses and Abuses of “Civil Society”, Socialist Register, pp. 60-84.


