

Interrogating Civil Society: A View from Mozambique

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Policy Brief

Since the early 1990s civil society has been promoted as a concept as well as a strategy that contributes towards democratic governance. Most government and non-government cooperation agencies have been strongly in favour of this strategy, including from a normative perspective. However, over the last 10 years the concrete implementation of civil society strengthening approaches has also been the subject of fundamental critique and questioning, in particular insofar as the role and relevance of NGOs has been concerned. Indeed, since the Busan High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, private sector actors have been promoted to a role just next to civil society actors – being equally seen as a vehicle for development. It is thus opportune to critically interrogate the concept of civil society in theory and in practice.

Key issues:

- Understand the tension between normative debates on the one hand and the practice of civil society strengthening programmes and their (contested) impact on the other hand.
- Need to promote civil society as a space independent from the state and the market (as well as family)

Recommendations: we propose a civil society Participatory Action Mapping (PAM) approach based on the following principles:

1. Civil society needs to be understood in all its complexity and contradictions:

Too much simplification of the concept of civil society does not help to develop effective civil society strengthening programmes and broad participation in policy making.

2. Civil society is key to democratic governance:

Just as informal economic and political spaces are being investigated for policy-making, civil society and the raising of voices within informal economy and political spaces, needs to be taken into consideration as well.

3. The function of civil society/NGOs and private sector actors are not equivalent:

Since the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness both NGO and private sector actors are seen as equal partners for development cooperation. As a consequence, NGOs, important formal civil society actors, are locked into liberal market ideologies where cost-benefit analysis is increasingly dominant and the concept of solidarity is being reduced to social investment and return. In this context, civil society as a broader arena where social and political interests of citizens are being articulated and are supposed to

further 'democratize' political processes, cannot fulfil its allotted role. NGOs in particular are increasingly reduced to service providers.

- 4. Civil society actor mapping is complex and cannot be reduced to those acting as intermediaries in formal economic and political processes:** Understanding the historical and political role of civil society, as well as its current diverse actors, is crucial to an effective development cooperation that wishes to contribute towards democratic governance. Hence a broader political economy approach when looking at civil society is fundamental. This can help to understand how collective action develops and how it can be supported to bring about positive sustainable social change and transformation.

Abstract

This paper seeks to problematize the dominant discourse and practice around civil society from a Southern perspective. We first critically examine the way in which the concept of civil society has been deployed in development discourse. This highlights its highly normative and North-centric epistemology and perspectives. We also find it to be highly restrictive in a Southern context insofar as it reads out much of the grassroots social interaction deemed ‘uncivil’ and thus not part of civil society.

Subsequent sections introduce a historical analysis of civil society development and a preliminary mapping of current civil society in Mozambique which begins to set out a more complex understanding of civil society, a concept sometimes reduced to the world of the NGO’s. This is followed by a report on a recent roundtable discussion with civil society actors in Mozambique that sparked our interest in this theme. This discussion also articulates a more complex and conflictual understanding of civil society than that held by many international NGO’s for example. Finally, we discuss some of the matters arising from our movement from the abstract (the deconstruction of the concept of civil society) to the concrete (our conversations with a range of civil society actors). This work is the start of a broad longer term project with partners in Mozambique seeking to map and thus better understand the complexity of civil society in a country widely seen as test case for development strategies.

Civil Society: a view from below?

There is little doubt that the term ‘civil society’ (CS) is seen to have joined the pantheon of public goods alongside development, “good governance” and many other socially or politically constructed terms. Yet, in reality, the term civil society is hotly contested and has many different political interpretations. The dominant interpretation internationally, which underpins, the usage by most international agencies derives from the work of 19th century French theorist De Tocqueville. For him, civil society was characterised by voluntary, non-political social associations that strengthened democracy. Civil society according to this liberal political philosophy fosters the social norms and trust which are necessary for individuals to work together in democracies. The World Bank effectively continues this political tradition when it defines civil society in a development context as “the under array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethnical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations” (www.worldbank.org).

The dominant conception of CS is, we would argue, Eurocentric, part of the neoliberal worldview, and seriously downplays the context of colonialism (see Munck 2004). It is based on what are presented as universal moral norms and values which are in reality based firmly on the European enlightenment. Sometimes it seems to be an idealized virtual space of communicative rationality (see Habermas 1984) that is quite distant from the political reality of most ‘developing’ countries and ‘actually existing civil

society’ to put it that way. Its current use emerged quite specifically from the anti-totalitarian Eastern European oppositional discourse in the mid 1980’s and posits the rejection of all state-oriented or party – based mass politics in favour of an ethical, moral and individualist conception of good politics. In an African context this has been translated into a notion that civil society (in this version of the term) is a good thing in and of itself that needs to be built, nurtured and strengthened (see Levis 2002). Political forms of association in Africa that do not fit this model are deemed dysfunctional. As with the wider but related concept of ‘good governance’ we can see how ‘civil society’ has been to some extent a Western or Northern imposition on a recalcitrant local reality.

The World Bank definition of civil society is part and parcel of the Washington Consensus and is imbued with the notion that the role of the state needs to be ‘rolled back’ and that civil society needs to act as a ‘watchdog’ over that state (see Weiss 2000). The earlier concept of a developmental state and a national development strategy were rejected in favour of a view of the market as always benign and self-sufficient to promote development in some versions, the concept of civil society was reduced to that of the international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) ignoring the fact that these were most often state funded and were certainly not ‘below’ the African state they related to. Civil society is thus truncated conceptually and subordinated quite openly to the policies of the foreign governments and international agencies seeking to impose their policies in Africa from the 1990s onwards (see Lewis 2009). It thus loses its meaning as a realm of socio-political activity and

becomes subordinated to an external political agenda (with its local supporters of course) and a liberal mode of politics where consensus is assumed and conflict is deemed to be outside the realm of civilized civil society (see Munck 2004).

The NGO's, according to some critical analysts, can be seen as modern continuations of the civilising mission of the colonial missionaries (see Chandhoke 2005, Adam 1997). They both knew the truth and they brought enlightenment. Whatever our positions we must recognise that in Africa the colonial past is very much the present whether in terms of land tenure patterns, political formations or social relations. Thus we might follow the logic of Mammo Muchie who argues for an African re-appropriation and re-definition of the state, civil society and market nexus for the continent. Neither the terms nor their relationship can be imposed from without and must necessarily be created in terms of African history, culture and traditions. In short, according to Muchie "civil society as a concept needs to be emancipated before it can be of use building African regional co-operation, stability security and peace" (Muchie 2002, p.56). While we reject a notion of CS imposed in a universally prescriptive way we do, of course, see the value of genuine civil society dialogue in individual countries as well as in a regional and transnational context.

Our 'view from below' is not only one from the global South faced with a dominant Northern knowledge paradigm as power. It also refers to the real deficiencies of the dominant CS model in

terms of taking into account those 'uncivil' elements in society at the grassroots which also have strong associational life (Ferguson 2006). To make the epistemological break from the dominant conception of CS to one more attuned to the reality of the subaltern classes in the South an obligatory point of departure is the work of Antonio Gramsci: while most often referred to as a model for advanced Western societies he was in fact always writing from a 'Southern' perspective, i.e. the Italian Mezzogiorno. While Gramsci's concepts are often buried in the concrete analysis of the *Prison Notebooks* (see Buttigieg 1995) some general points can be made. Gramsci distinguished two superstructural levels, the state or political society and 'civil society' which he saw as the ensemble of 'private' institutions such as the trade unions, churches and the education system which ensured popular consent to the state. Yet it is also, for Gramsci, the arena in which subaltern classes forge social alliances and begin to articulate alternative hegemonic projects.

If we are to engage in a robust 'mapping' of civil society we need go beyond current conceptions which conflate NGO and GONGO (government organised NGO) and often does not see the international hand behind the supposedly 'local' manifestation of civil society. As José Negrão reports, the 1990's saw the arrival of NGOs in Mozambique and "in essence these NGOs directed the implementation of projects through their local 'partners', having neither any members nor any "representation mandate" (Negrão 2003:3).

This was a 'supply driven' rather than 'demand driven' generation of civil society organisations very much externally driven and not at all 'bottom up'. Yussuf Adam has referred to "modern Messiahs in search of new Lazaruses" to describe the 'misfortune hunting' or 'ambulance chasing' of some international NGO's (Adam 1997). Powerful transnational forces lay behind this creation of 'civil society' de novo in Mozambique while wiping the state clean in terms of the pre-existing mass democratic organisation of their 'socialist period' through which dominant parts established a transmission belt, into the world of workers, peasants and women through organisations which were, undoubtedly part of civil society as well as, of course political society.

The dominant conception of civil society in Mozambique, for example, tends to only perceive the 'official' dimension (see Francisco 2010, Bellucii 2002). These are the national and international NGOs and the myriad of organisations often set up by them as 'civil society' interlocutors. We could, perhaps unkindly, see this as a 'domesticated' civil society, tolerated precisely because it operates within certain agreed political parameters. Analysts complain about the 'weakness' of civil society and extol the virtues of a 'vibrant' civil society but sometimes their vision is somewhat restricted. From a Gramscian perspective civil society can be taken simply as all those associations and networks which exist

'between' the economy and the state. These might take distinctly 'uncivil' forms but analytically they must be included. Above all, if we focus on meetings in the capital between elements of "recognised" civil society we miss out on traditional forms of neighbourhood associations, spontaneous campaigns, self-help networks, and all the other original ways - some traditional, some modern- through which people organise when they do not feel represented by the political system.

The alternative to the dominant 'from above' perspective on CS is perhaps best captured by Mzwanele Mayekiso an 'organic intellectual' of the South African civics movement. For Mayekiso, based on the struggle against apartheid in the townships during the 1980's, it makes no sense to value civil society in its own right. We need to distinguish, he argues, between "working class civil society" and those sections which are "following the agenda of imperialist development agencies and foreign ministries" namely to shrink the capacity of the state and force community based organisations to take up the responsibilities of the state (Mayekiso 1996:12). What Mayekiso does is to draw a clear political line between different strands claiming the CS mantle. We do not need to agree with his precise analysis to recognise that beneath the studiously apolitical portrayal of 'civil society' in its official version there stands a multiplicity of sometimes contradictory political positions. Nor does it mean we should counterpoise the local to the global because as Mayekiso shows in relation to South Africa, and as we also found in Mozambique,

sometimes the most ‘local’ of community based organisations are characterised by intense transnational connections and activities.

Sometimes a story can tell us more than a ‘scientific’ analysis what is going on in a given situation. In 2011 a representative sample of NGO and civil society met in a high category Maputo hotel for one of their regular workshops on ‘the vision of civil society for a strengthened citizenship’. Around midday the delegates could see from the windows of their air-conditioned conference hall that a somewhat bedraggled crowd was gathering in the street below with crude home-made placards. These were ex-combatants with their families protesting at the non-payment of the pensions that had been promised them. The police soon dispersed the protestors and things returned to normal. While the ‘official’ civil society representatives went to lunch at the hotel, the ‘real’ civil society in the streets wandered home hungry and thirsty. The point is not to pose a moral critique here but simply to show the total divorce- and mutual disinterest-between the two wings of civil society. No one thought to go down to the street to find out what was going on, let alone to offer solidarity.

Civil Society in Mozambique: From colonial rule to participation?

It is important to analyse contemporary civil society in the light of a historical understanding of past developments in Mozambique. Colonial rule

had hindered the constitution and development of a vibrant civil society. Associational life arose in a context of opposition to the colonial regime; it was influenced by the international context of Pan-Africanist ideals, negritude and socialism. Some groups have clamoured for reforms within the colonial system, for example they claimed access to education, jobs, etc. Around 1880 some civic representations were made in the context of the creation of the first newspapers¹ as a voice for specific civic groups². From the 1930s in the context of the implementation of the *Estado Novo* (New State) philosophy by the Portuguese dictator Antonio Salazar, the colonial regime used an authoritarian model that imposed non-governmental entities for conducting state propaganda, gaining adherence from people to state policies. In the 1950s some civic groups emerged,³ which constituted a space for mobilization for resistance against the colonial regime. Within these organizations reformist, as well as radical ideas in the struggle for independence, have been generated (see Negrão 2003, Francisco 2010).

With national independence in 1975, the government led by the liberation movement, *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO), with massive and enthusiastic support from the people and international solidarity, took the leadership of the state and adopted an absolute control of power,

¹ *Clamor Africano* (in 1886), *O Africano* (in 1806), *O Brando Africano* (in 1808).

² Such as *O Grémio Africano*, *União Africana*, *Associação Africana da Colónia de Moçambique* and *Instituto Negrofílo* (Newitt 1995).

³ Such as *Associação dos Naturais de Moçambique*, *Conselho Cristão de Moçambique*, cooperatives of African farmers and others.

including the control of the civil and the social arena; in this context the party and state established and consolidated the so called *organizações democráticas de massa* (mass democratic organizations)⁴ and strictly controlled socio-professional organizations⁵. Only a few organizations⁶ could develop outside of the state control.

The brutal civil war and the development strategy of the one-party regime led to a deterioration of the living conditions of the people both in rural and urban areas, so that humanitarian assistance was needed. Integration in to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (in 1983) and the introduction of the structural adjustment programme led not only to the expansion of the informal economy, but also to the formation of organizations in the area of delivery of humanitarian assistance, occupying space where the state could not provide services. This was triggered by neo-liberal arguments that postulate that the state should withdraw from certain areas of goods and services provision. Thus, government, cooperation partners, as well as international and national Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) themselves saw the role of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) merely as providers of services, implementing projects and

activities initiated, designed and financed by government or cooperation partners.

In the 1990s a new phase of the country's history emerged, characterized by the end of the civil war and the broadening of the democratisation process. With the new Constitution, approved in 1990, the FRELIMO-led government introduced a multi-party system as well as freedom of association, creating the legal and institutional framework for the development of democratic culture and more positive attitudes towards good governance.

International donors initiated various programmes and projects to further improve good governance, and channelled their technical assistance and funds also through international NGOs. Donors have looked for intermediary organizations to channel assistance directly to citizens circumventing the government and the state. At that time, government financial, human, technical and organizational capacity to deliver services to the population was extremely limited. The country witnessed the accelerated creation and expansion of national NGOs and networks.⁷

In fact, the country has formally created fundamental democratic instruments for civil society participation in public life (including some platforms for dialogue between government and

⁴ Such as *Organização da Mulher Moçambicana* (OMM, Mozambican Women Organization), *Organização da Juventude Moçambicana* (OJM, Mozambican Youth Organization), *Organização dos Trabalhadores Moçambicanos* (OTM, Mozambican Workers' Organization).

⁵ Such as *Organização Nacional dos Professores* (ONP, National Teachers' Organization) and *Organização Nacional dos Jornalistas* (ONJ, National Journalists' Organization).

⁶ Such as *Concelho Cristão de Moçambique* (CCM, Christian Council of Mozambique) and *Caritas* (from the Catholic Church).

⁷ For example, *Organização Rural de Apoio Mútuo* (Rural Organisation for Mutual Support, ORAM), *Fundação para o Desenvolvimento Comunitário* (Foundation for Community Development, FDC), Grupo Moçambicano da Dívida (Mozambican Debt Group, GMD), G20 - the Mozambican platform of CSOs participating in formulation, monitoring and evaluation of macro-economic policies such as the poverty reduction strategy in the context of the Development Observatories.

civil society).⁸ However, these participation mechanisms need to be empowered so that real participation of the citizen and their organizations can be achieved. Beside the real difficulties of the process and the lack of strong political commitment of some stakeholders, many civil society experts argue that the capacity of civil society is still weak, as well as the coordination and cooperation among CSOs (see FDC 2007, Forquilha 2010, Hodges and Tibana 2005, Kepa 2011).

The political environment deteriorated following the third general elections (2004). The political scene continues to be dominated by the two largest parties. Consequently, during recent years, civil society's space for action has been reduced (see KEPA 2011, Macuane et al 2010). Furthermore, the instrumentalization and co-optation by the government and political parties⁹ has contributed to a reduction of the potential role of the CSOs as partners and brokers in the context of social conflicts such as the food riots in September 2010 and February 2013.

Despite these problems there are consultation forums initiated by the government and donors, some of them working quite well. Donors have been especially active in implementing NGOs'

capacity-building and funding programmes¹⁰. However, it seems that areas of activities and strategies of NGOs supported by donors are to a great extent determined by donor priorities and trends. In conclusion, there is in Mozambique a legal-constitutional framework for freedom of expression and association, as well as official commitment of the government for democracy and good governance. However, this is not sufficient for ensuring a proper citizen voice, as there are in practice further aspects which are hindering the development of citizenship and the expression of citizen voice.

Mapping civil society in Mozambique

As has been outlined in the previous section, after colonial rules hindered the formal development of a vibrant civil society, the struggle for political independence and decolonization developed new forms and understandings of formal and informal civil society. Various ways and attempts of civil society participation in developmental processes were initiated in Mozambique and the wider region. After learning about these civil society developments, we decided to talk to various development actors in Mozambique and to get a perspective on civil society influenced from the South. We now believe there is an unpublished field of research that combines civil society actor research with a broadened analytical framework of

⁸ For example *Observatórios de Desenvolvimento* (ODs, Development Observatories) and *Instituições de Participação e Consulta Comunitária* (IPCCs, Institutions for Community Participation and Consultation) to which the *Conselhos Locais* (Local Councils) at the *distrito, posto administrativo, localidade* and *povoação* levels belong.

⁹ It should be clear that we are not saying, conversely, that the civil society has to be or act necessarily in confrontation to or against the state, the government or political parties (see Ilal 2008).

¹⁰ Bilateral and multilateral governmental agencies DANIDA, DFID, European Commission, Irish Aid, SIDA, UNDP, USAID, etc. as well as international NGOs such as CAFOD, Centro Cooperativo Sueco, Concern, Helvetas Intercooperation, Hivos NOVIB, Ibis, Oxfam and Diakonia.

the conceptual meaning of civil society in a southern context like Mozambique.

A preliminary roundtable discussion about civil society in Lichinga-Niassa Province

We see the need to deconstruct the term civil society and began by identifying the following four broad questions. Those were used during individual interviews and a round table discussion in Lichinga (capital city of Niassa Province).

Who belongs to civil society?

Whilst all round table participants would agree on the broadest definition that civil society involves different types of social organizations, including the church and grassroots organizations, there was considerable disagreement whether political parties and mass democratic organizations would form part or not. A round table discussion participant from the Provincial Small-Scale Farmers Union UNAC noted that in theory he believed that political parties could form part of civil society but that in practice, in Mozambique, this was certainly not the case. However, for many people interviewed, there was recognition that political parties include the mass democratic organizations, which in turn, participate at civil society meetings. There was broad agreement that they do so not as political parties, but as mass based organizations that participate in the name of the political parties.

The question arose as to whether civil society actors can be part of several realms e.g. political and civil society at the same time. The official aid

discourse on civil society in Mozambique would certainly suggest a clear separation line between the political and the civil society realm and actors – with its functions as social service provider and watch-dog vis-a-vis the government. However, during our visit, it also became clear, that for the majority of interviewed Mozambican NGO workers, the official mass based organizations were not part of civil society. Nevertheless, for the majority of Farmer Union Members consulted, they could form part if it, based on the argument, that they do actively participate at civil society meetings including manifestations and street demonstrations. Indeed, there was no agreement on the topic. This question caused significant disagreement during individual and group discussions.

Some arguments were based on the fact that women, workers or youth participate in their capacity and with their social identity and not solely as members of political parties. There was also disagreement as to whether mass based organizations depend financially on political parties or not and if this should be a determining factor within the debate. Whilst this issue was certainly the hottest debate within and in-between debates from NGO representatives in Lichinga, donor and private sector representatives did not really engage deeply with that topic. They preferred to define civil society actors as ‘intermediaries’ located between service providers (mainly government and private sector) and citizens, distinguishing mainly between national and international NGOs and their capacities to

implement and report on development projects. Both private sector representatives consulted stressed that civil society actors can also disturb social and economic development as they bring contradictory messages to local communities.

Based on a normative-democratic and non-violent model of civil society, they consequently considered ‘disturbing actors’ as located outside the realm of civil society. One representative went as far as saying civil society was ‘utopia’. This reflection was then also included in the final round table discussion. Confronted with many uncertainties about which actors belong to civil society, some people preferred to consult the national constitution which contains articles referring to civil society organizations. It became clear that apart from the Farmer’s Union representatives most participants were looking to the legal categories of civil society actors rather than the political processes they participated in.

What is the objective of civil society?

Our next question was linked to the local understanding about the objectives of civil society. Only the Farmers’ Union representatives were well engaged with this question. They highlighted that civil society’s objectives ranged from monitoring to criticising government policies to presenting new ideologies to government. One representative underlined that in his opinion, civil society needed to lead on all development issues, in particular bringing new ideas and concrete proposals to solve

development problems to the table. Other participations didn’t have much to contribute.

What is the role of civil society in development?

A Mozambican NGO worker explained that he saw a dual purpose of civil society – monitoring of government policies and funding/implementing development projects. For the latter the capacity for financial management and administration was fundamental and hence the fact that most aid funds for civil society was channelled through INGOs. The question as to whether civil society actors can legitimately speak on people’s behalf and articulate their needs was raised in the discussion. In the end there was no clear common understanding about the legitimacy of civil society but it was agreed that, racist actors as well as violent actors were excluded from civil society.

Within all interviews and group discussion there was clarity that civil society can and does influence and mobilize citizens and that this was something that the government was not able to do as well as civil society. An INGO representative then asked whether mobilizing for development and delivering social services was actually the task of civil society. Is civil society’s role not much more about monitoring government and carrying out advocacy? Many participants agreed on this point. One Mozambican NGO worker underlined that it is very important to be clear who does what and to have clear lines between the state, the market and civil society. Nevertheless he also expressed the view that sometimes Civil

Society Organisations – in particular church based organizations – can complement the work of government, where it is weak and cannot fulfil its role.

There was very broad agreement that individuals that come together on a common cause are part of civil society. The common cause was many times seen as being felt the strongest at the local level, with inter-connectedness between various levels being equally important. A representative of a civil society platform referred to the need of strategic forums and networks. At the end of this debate, there stood the questions whether an individual could form part of civil society or if an actor needed a certain level of (self-) organization to be included within the concept.

Civil society: a myth or utopia within the aid debate?

The last question was only debated at the round table discussion and not as part of individual interviews in Lichinga. It was about the concept of civil society in the aid debate. Is the concept of civil society as it is being used in the aid debate a myth or does it actually exist in Mozambique? A researcher participating in the debate asked a supplementary question: is the concept of civil society in the aid debate explaining or complicating? The NGO platform representative explained that local people needed a lot of preparation to understand what civil society is all about and that local people might even reject participation in civil society events as they do not

understand their meaning. A Mozambican NGO worker then referred to civil society indicators and argued that these helped to show that the concept of civil society is real and not a utopian concept.

The same person furthermore insisted that civil society was not doing what it is expected to do; it is rather fragmented and weak, affected by political party infiltrations. That person also referred a couple of times to the terms ‘sociedade civil do dia’ (civil society of the day) and ‘sociedade civil da noite’ (civil society of the night) – meaning that real development or government critique only happens outside the formal civil society organizations operating during the day. He further explained that those civil society organizations that criticise during the day will not be funded or have their funding cut off.

The NGO network representative at this stage referred to a local demonstration involving many local NGOs and associations, including church groups, demanding the building of a road between Lichinga and Cuamba (the two major towns in Niassa province). He felt that this demonstration brought real attention to the influence, civil society can have. It also showed that civil society from various levels and origins can come together on a common cause. Finally, government representatives participated in the round table discussion joined the debate at the very end, noting that any civil society needed to be organized and ready to dialogue as an

intermediary. Dealing with informal civil society was seen as problematic.

No one disagreed.

Additional thoughts about the concept of civil society and its role in Mozambique

The diversity of views around the concept of civil society, in particular its main actors in Mozambique, came out clearly during the round table discussion and altogether, during the various conversations we held in Mozambique. What was not discussed at the round table but was mentioned during two individual interviews in Lichinga, was the role of the private sector in bringing philanthropic development and a level of political freedom to people's realities. The level of co-optation of NGO representatives from government was seen from those two people as a major obstacle towards a vibrant and independent civil society. One provincial NGO representative even stated that 'liberation from the liberators' was now urgently needed. Pointing to the high level of oppression citizens experienced, he was critical about the "political game".

Suggested next steps for developing PAM (participatory action mapping) in Mozambique

Preliminary research carried out so far suggests that current civil society actor mapping approaches such as the CIVICUS Civil Society Index also carried out in Mozambique can and

should be extended analytically, including additional actors and dynamics. Just like the economic sector has been extended to informal economy it is time to try and identify those civil society actors that get together and develop below the 'radar' of current formal aid systems. Accordingly we would like to use our preliminary research and this first discussion paper as initial evidence for developing and piloting a comprehensive participatory civil society actor mapping methodology.

Our project is based on a mapping methodology understood as a tool that can be used to identify key actors in a process or given context (country, province, district, sector, etc.) in order to understand their structure and relations concerning the development process. It helps to identify the role and position of actors in the broader social, institutional and political framework of a given society, as well its strengths and weaknesses, which allows for the analysis of their influences in this same arena.

The main purpose of the mapping exercise is to generate robust and original knowledge about relevant civil society actors, understanding their role, structure, capacities and relationships with other actors in the society and within themselves. This includes active recognition of the context in which actors operate, as well as their democratic disposition towards effectively engaging within positive social, economic and political change.

The main objectives of the mapping are the following, to:

- provide a comprehensive vision of the actors in the civil society arena, and their relations to other actors in the state, economic and family spheres
- identify relevant civil society groups, organizations and platforms for strengthening substantial dialogue between civil society, state, private sector and donors;
- identify the key civil society actors and to understand how they are involved in development and governance processes and what their relevant dynamics are
- assess the role and position of the civil society actors, as well as their links to and relationships with other actors and their needs and interests
- assess the capacity of civil society actors, their strengths and weaknesses
- identify the most relevant actors at all levels, going beyond the known beneficiaries, especially those relevant to promote the democratic governance agenda

The setting of the scope of our civil society mapping in Mozambique will be carried out with active participation by key stakeholders in the country. However, with some level of anticipation we make some preliminary suggestions concerning the scope of the mapping.

The mapping should look at the following aspects:

- (i) balance between inclusiveness and selectiveness of actors, i.e. definition of the extent up to which we will include the different types of actors;
- (ii) selection of the layers of the environment for civil society to be assessed; definition of relevant aspects to be assessed concerning the structure, capacity and internal governance of civil society actors;
- (iii) selection of the most relevant platforms for dialogue, collaboration and coordination within the civil society and among civil society, state, private sector and cooperation partners. This can include for instance examining relevant factors for failure in the coordination for collective action of civil society actors; and
- (iv) defining how the assessment of the impact of civil society engagement in the development process, especially in decision-making processes on governance and democracy issues, will be included. This will enable the key actors to ‘buy-in’ and consolidate their ownership of the mapping exercise and to integrate their experiences.

It is important to stress that we will take a broad political economy approach when looking at civil society to understand how collective action can be supported and how change can occur (see Corduneanu-Huci, Hamilton and Ferrer 2013). Thus, we will also focus on the environment for civil society actions as well as the relationships with

other stakeholders, such as governments at their various levels, parliaments and other state institutions, political parties, the private sector, cooperation partners, media and academic and research institutions. We hope to contribute to the progressive recognition that civil society actors are crucial development actors and drivers for change in their own right, and we underline – while refusing the neo-liberal discourse - that their role goes far beyond the role of service providers.

The mapping of the civil society we will carry out could have various uses, such as:

- Supporting the identification and formulation of interventions to support civil society
- Identification of actors with expertise and capacity to be involved in policy dialogue;
- Identification of adequate strategies to boost citizens and civil society engagement in policy dialogue and advocacy about public policies, programmes and projects
- Provision of an updated picture of the volume, distribution, coverage, and contributions of civil society actors in order to inform and assist the planning and implementation of public policies, plans and programmes
- Highlighting the challenges and opportunities that civil society faces in terms of contributing to the national development process, especially concerning governance and democracy, and proposing solutions

- Assessing the capacity of civil society actors and determine the capacity development requirements for supporting more civic engagement and participation
- To improving CSO internal governance, legitimacy and accountability.

Our mapping philosophy or theory makes explicit the values, principles and assumptions that underlie the foundation of the mapping process, in the following manner, to:

- Seek a bottom-up participatory engagement of the stakeholders
- Strengthen stakeholder commitment to strengthening and expanding civil society
- Ensure responsiveness and flexibility in the planning and implementation of the mapping
- Provide opportunities to reflect and evaluate in an ongoing way
- Reflect on internal governance to achieve learning
- Promote the move from knowledge to action
- Present the mapping approach in a proactive way to ensure political space for implementing it.

This will help us to define in close partnership with key actors the principles underlining the mapping exercise. Thus, it is of paramount importance to ensure plurality, in terms of multiplicity and heterogeneity. In the mapping exercise we will include all relevant organisational forms belonging to civil society — at all levels¹¹.

¹¹ Namely non-governmental organizations, membership-based organizations, mass democratic organisations, trade and labour unions,

Our preliminary local consultation leads us to believe that civil society at the village level in Mozambique is conscious of its potential political role, as are some civil society actors at the provincial level. It appears that formal civil society at both provincial and national level is well structured, with alliances, networks and platforms. Most formal and bureaucratic civil society actors (mainly national and international NGOs) in Maputo are commonly not linked nor particularly interested in what might be called the ‘uncivil’ part of civil society. However, at the provincial level we increasingly see exchanges between formal and informal civil society with actors sometimes consciously moving from one space to the other (civil society of the day and civil society of the night). From tradition to associational life and clearly as well from civil to political society. The complexity of politics within civil society is now being discussed openly to include the formal and informal sectors.

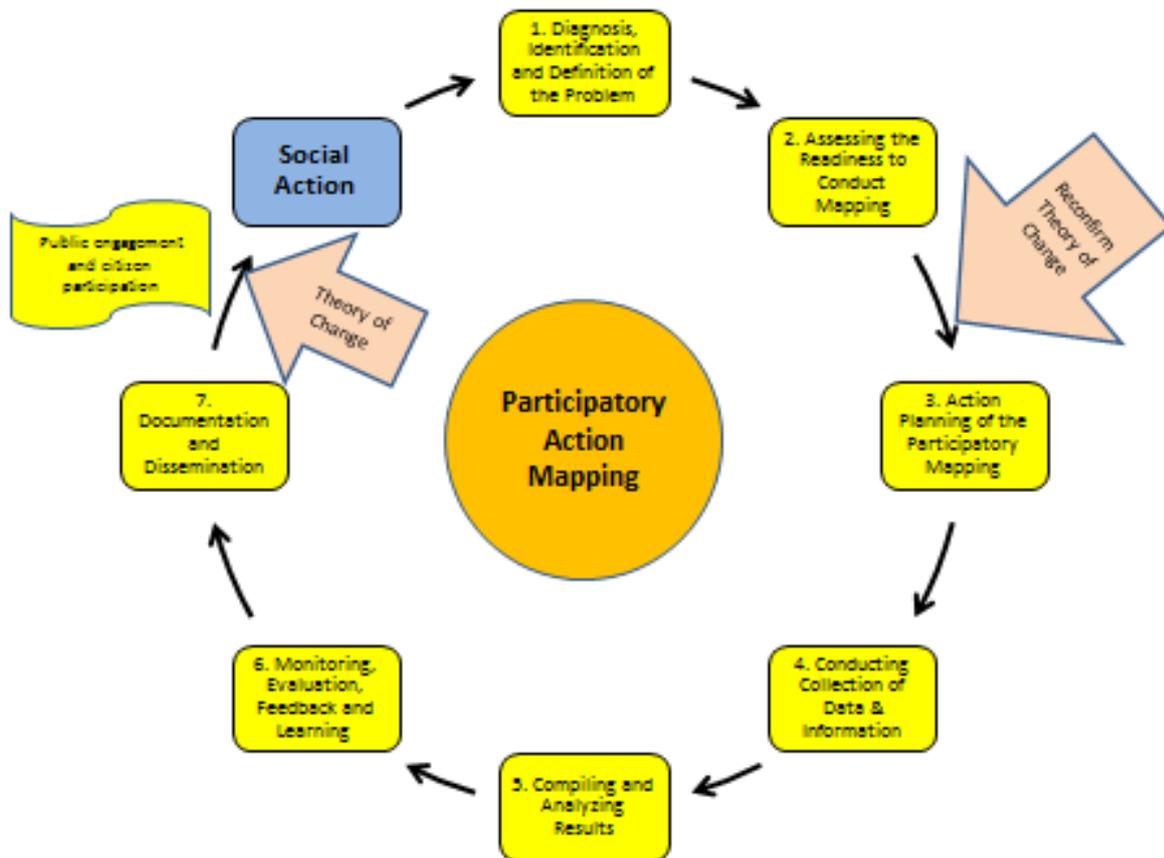
Our mapping methodology will consist of identifying, interviewing, surveying, analysing and discussing with civil society actors and other stakeholders to assess the goals and mission, the interests and roles, the organisational structures, the capacity of the civil society actors and the relations among themselves and with state/government, private sector and cooperation partners.

The main phases of Participatory Action Mapping will be the following:

1. Diagnosis, identification and definition of the problem
2. Assessment of the readiness to conduct participatory action mapping. This includes identifying the timescale needed, mobilisation of human, financial, material, technical and organisational resources, building opportunities for collaboration and cooperation for the mapping (including technical assistance, capacity building and funding); this will help to determine the feasibility of the mapping in the country context
3. Action planning:
 - a) Collection of data and information;
 - b) Compiling and analysing results;
 - c) Monitoring, evaluating, feedback, learning and documentation;
4. Dissemination of results, lessons learned, good practices and policies.

professional groupings and organisations, faith-based organisations, community-based organisations, informal groups, self-help groups, traditional and cultural organizations, foundations, media and policy research institutions, social movements and other platforms and networks with a development agenda.

Figure 1: Phases of Participatory Action Mapping



What we are thus proposing, based on a very initial critical political economy deconstruction of ‘civil society’ and a preliminary localised conversation in Northern Mozambique, is a new methodology of Participatory Action Mapping to capture the complexity and contradictions of civil society from a Southern perspective. We would welcome comments on this proposal.

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