

The Role of Civil Society in Peace Building in Somalia

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Abstract: The transformation of the international system from a bipolar system to unipolar system during the 1990s substantively ended interstate wars on one hand but also saw the emergence of intrastate conflicts. The internal dynamics of these intrastate conflicts increased the complexities of peacebuilding efforts as issues of international law such as state sovereignty deterred the direct intervention of states in the internal affairs of other states. Consequently, practitioners in peace building have had to rely on alternative mechanisms such as civil societies as viable partners in conflict resolution. Although civil societies have been extensively explored in peace initiatives in other parts of the world, research on civil societies in Somalia remains limited. This thesis therefore adopts an in-depth qualitative analysis of the role of civil societies in Somalia's peace-building initiatives. The thesis lays emphasis on thematic areas including protection of civilians from violence; monitoring of conflict; advocacy for human rights; inter-group social cohesion; socialization to peace values and democracy; facilitation of open dialogue; and as entry points for peace building.

Keywords: Somalia, Civil Society, Peace-building, Conflict

I. INTRODUCTION

The experience of European invasion, occupation and partition of Africa during the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference (Foster et al., 1988; Duthie, 2011; De Leon, 1986) paved way for the full colonization of Africa with the exception of Liberia and Ethiopia. The subsequent decolonization of the continent several decades later during the mid-twentieth century resulted in more civil wars than civil societies. Decades of colonial oppression and suppression did not nurture a socio-political culture that tends to institute change through a legitimising force (people) or by peaceful mechanisms such as debates, contestation or deliberation. Instead, Africa's post-colonial independence was a climate of political violence and chaos that in some instances, albeit unfortunate, resulted in genocides. According to PRIO armed conflict database, approximately 65% of all countries in Sub-Saharan Africa experienced conflict between 1946 and 2010 (Uppsala Conflict Data, 2020). Majority of these conflicts being civil wars (Cheibub & Hays, 2017; Nyadera et al., 2019). The international community through multilateral institutions such as the UN have attempted to deploy peacekeeping missions to rebuild conflict ridden areas, several peace operations have been initiated in the present and past (Adebajo & Landsberg, 2000; Bove & Ruggeri, 2016;

Johnson, 2017). More often, peacekeeping missions are followed by peace-building initiatives aimed at restoring a semblance of normalcy and during the state reconstruction processes. However, the performance of the overall performance of peacekeeping missions in peace-building were not comprehensive enough. The dissatisfaction with the peacekeeping missions as the only mechanism in peace-building therefore gave rise to the emergence of civil societies peace-building processes. Whereas civil societies are often associated as modern phenomenon, the idea traces its root to the classical era of philosophers such as Aristotle, John Locke and Jürgen Habermas. Increasingly, civil societies have evolved as viable frameworks to check the excess use of power by states to oppress civilians by curtailing human rights and freedoms. As entities constituted of different actors operating independently from the state, civil societies tend to have different ideologies and approaches to peace-building from states. Moreover, despite this diversity and divergence in peace-building approaches from states, civil societies tend to often make explicit political demands on the state and also interact and operate within the framework of the laws established by the state.

In the post-World War era, civil societies have increasingly become a fundamental machinery of peace-building and conflict resolution particularly since the establishment of the UN Agenda for peace in 1992 that has seen civil societies play more roles in the negotiation of peace processes (Vogel, 2016; Paffenholz, 2014). In equal measure to the growth of civil societies in peace process, scholarship on the subject has also increased significantly over the last two decades (Kew & John, 2008; Vogel, 2016). This thesis therefore builds on the already existing research to explore the role of civil societies in the context of Somalia.

The increased role of civil societies in the last decade in peace-building and conflict resolution has been advanced by the shortcomings of the traditional mechanism of peace-building and conflict resolution that majorly involved military interventions in the 1990s. Studies such as Edwards (2009) and Paffenholz (2014) argue that the 1990s was the decade for civil societies and the emergence of non-state actors in conflict resolution. The traditional mechanisms of peace-building came under heavy criticism during this period because of the tendencies of some of the peace missions to be

culturally insensitive; disregard local customs, traditions and norms; and largely ignorance of the local contexts of conflict-ridden areas (Donais, 2009; Richmond, 2005; Paris, 2002; Chandler, 1999). Constant criticism from scholars of the traditional peacekeeping mechanisms in peace-building influenced the international community to incorporate and support civil societies as part of their peace-building initiatives. Key among the arguments fronted was/is that local actors in peace-building are equipped with the relevant networks, knowledge, and cultural understanding to approach critical issues from an approach that can ensure success of the peace processes or agreements. The participation of civil societies therefore is often perceived as solution of addressing the shortcomings of traditional peacekeeping initiatives such as military interventions.

This optimistic view of the role of civil societies in peace-building was evidenced by a wide range of scholarly works that established strong correlations between the incorporation of civil societies in peace processes and the durability of peace after conflict resolution (Kew&John, 2008) or the likelihood of reaching a peace agreement (Andersen-Rodgers, 2015). But even more significantly, the involvement of civil societies also aids in countering any accusations that peace-building missions are nothing more than enclaves of neo-colonialism. Several reports released by the UN (2005; 2012) document that civil societies are crucial in peace-building as they legitimize the processes and projects; mediate between state and conflict groups; communicate with the international community; highlight the perspective and priorities of local communities; and implement tangible peace-building programmes. However, advocacy for civil society organizations has not been without opposition. Critics of this perspective to peace building argued that civil society lacked independence and instead, are merely the implementers of Western agendas at the local level (MacGinty & Richmond, 2013; Jenkins, 2001; Hawthorn, 2001).

1.1 Research Problem

For three decades since 1991, Somalia has been embroiled in a prolonged civil conflict that has gradually transformed leading to loss of lives, displacement of communities and destruction of properties. Despite being a nation-state i.e. the composition of the state is dominated by a single ethnic group (Somalis), the conflict is yet to come to an end (Menkhaus, 2007). There has been a proliferation of actors not only in the form of militia and terrorist groups, but also external factors such as regional organizations, and other states pursuing different goals and interests (Abbinik, 2008). As such, there has been the need for civil societies to intervene in the conflict as neutral actors focused only on achieving the ultimate goal of peace-building in Somalia.

The concept of civil society and peace-building is quite diverse. Nonetheless, involving civil societies in peace-building establishes a strong platform for the development of resilient peace. The operations of local governments, police or

military forces, cannot proceed smoothly if local communities are not involved or their concerns adequately addressed (UNDP, 2013).

In the context of Somalia, a report by the United Nations Development Programme (2015) highlights that any progress towards peace in Somalia will require the collaboration, cooperation and trust between local population and the authorities. Additionally, any peace process will require understanding between the different clans in Somalia with a special focus on challenges facing youths and their potential in peace-building in Somalia. However, recent studies (Warsame, 2017; Stearns&Sucuoglu, 2017; Nyadera et al., 2019; Emil & Philip, 2020) tend to focus on the evaluation of peace-building through regional organizations such as the African Union and role of independent external actors such as Turkey. These studies emphasize on peace-building from the basis of intervention without taking into consideration the role played by civil societies and how their contributions have impacted peace efforts at various stages. This thesis will therefore attempt to bridge this gap by focusing on the impact of civil societies at various stages of peace-building such as protection, monitoring, service delivery, socialization, facilitation, social cohesion, and advocacy in Somalia.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study concerns about the role of civil society in peace building, the study will contribute to the body of the knowledge about the role of civil society organizations in maintaining long last peace. The findings may also contribute literature that may be used by the academicians that are interesting to carry out for further study in this field. The study may be a reference for policy makers, researchers, students, NGOs and even other people who have close interest on effect of civil society in peace building, especially the study may be helpful for the Somalia federal Government (SFG), especially Ministry of society affairs and Human Right, Ministry of National Planning and Ministry of justice to take positive actions to civil society in peace building and also Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), both National and International Researchers on the subject matter will also refer this study as a literature review

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the main causes of prolonged civil war in Somalia?
2. What is the contribution of civil societies in conflict resolution in Somalia?
3. How can civil societies contribute to peace building?

1.4 Contextualizing Somalia

Somalia is located at the horn of Africa along the Indian Ocean and has the longest coastline in Africa measuring 3,333 kilometres. It stretches northward to the Gulf of Eden and occupies an important geostrategic route between Sub-Saharan Africa, Arabia and Southwestern Asia. During the colonial era, Somalia has been divided into five regions

namely : French Somaliland (Djibouti) ,British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, Ethiopia (Ogaden), and the Kenyan northern Frontier district . As of 2019, the population of Somalia was estimated to be 15, 552,358.

While the Somalis fall under the same category of a tribe, they are nonetheless very segmented in several groups or clans and are estimated to be 99.9% Muslims. Economically, pastoralism, farming, fishing and remittance from Somalis living overseas are the biggest drivers of the economy.

1.5 Research Methodology

This study adopts qualitative methodology of research in the form of a desk study that appropriates secondary sources of data. Because of the reliance on these sources, the researcher uses data from peer-reviewed academic articles published by high impact journals, and books. The study is a contemporary topic and therefore the researcher lays emphasis on current data. Whereas the internet is also an important source of information, the study only appropriates data from renowned institutions such as the United Nations, European Union, African Union, World Bank, or the International Monetary Fund. However, exception is made regarding data on specific civil society organizations that can only be obtained from respective websites.

II. CONFLICT IN SOMALIA

Conflict in Somalia can be traced back to the collapse of the Somalia government in 1991. Armed rebels overthrew the government of SiadBarre. However, the collapse of the government in 1991 was the culmination of a sequence of political events both at the domestic and regional level that weakened the state of Somalia. Among these political events of experiences is the impact of colonial legacy. First, the partition of Africa into several states led to the division of Somalis into several other states such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia. This led to tense relations between Somalia and regional neighbours particularly Ethiopia largely due to an ambitious ideology of Somali nationalism in the form of a Greater Somalia that included those in other sovereign states such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti. Also linked to colonial legacy is the system of governance that Somalia inherited at independence. The European-styled system of power distribution centralised in political elites was completely different from the Somali traditional power structure that was distributed in a clan structure. As such, political tensions were already rife between the national government and the leadership of the clans.

The clan is the most significant social, political and economic structure in the Somali society. While in other African countries ethnicity forms the basic level of identity, Somalis identify themselves based on their clans. However, the politicization of the clan during and after the colonial era transformed the clan structure to a platform where political and economic power struggles are founded. During the reign of SiadBarre, clannism was extensively exploited to enable some

clans dominate national political and economic discourses while other clans experienced marginalization and suppression (Wam & Sardesai, 2005)

2.1 Clan Affiliation and Multiple Actors

The Somalia conflict is underlined by fighting between different groups over domination of political power and resources at the local, regional and national level. While al-Shaabab is one actors in the conflict, there are other several violent clashes that are inter-clan in nature between large clans or lineages. Regarding multiplicity of actors, terrorist groups such as al-Shaabab, warlords, militia groups, criminal gangs, individuals with business interests, religious courts and clan leader have all emerged as actors in the conflict. Uniquely, many of these actors have been shifting alliance from one group to the other depending on their interests which may be either political or economic in nature. Indeed, the multiplicity of actors in the conflict has hindered any efforts for peace-building and conflict resolution in Somalia due to the overlaying interests amongst the actors making it difficult for any peace agreement to accommodate the interests of all parties involved.

2.2 Lack of clear ideologies driving the conflict

The case of Somalia does not only involve actors who are pursuing different ideologies but also sometimes contradictory. Different actors constantly change their political, cultural, economic, religious and international ideological stance during the different phases of the conflict (Mwangi, 2012). The conflict is therefore simply not a conflict over the differences in political views. There are groups or individuals pursuing political power to maintain status quo and in turn protect their economic or business interests. It is therefore imperative that a distinction is made between groups or individuals articulating and pursuing genuine political goals for the benefit of the Somali people and those who do the same to benefit their economic interests at the expense of the society or those with extremist objectives such as al-Shaabab.

2.3 Militarization

The collapse of the government and pursuit of security in an increasingly chaotic and anarchic environment led to the militarization of civilians in Somalia. The absence of central authority to oversee the maintenance of law and order, clans, individuals, criminal entities, businesspersons and sub-clans embarked on self-arming for purposes of both personal and group protection or to enforce law as they desired to suit their interests. The militarization of civilians and groups eradicated the little legitimacy and expectations placed on public institutions or any institutional culture pertaining to the respect of law and human rights. Without government control, weapons trade increased substantially through or across the border by arms dealers for several years (Bruton, 2010). This accounts for the proliferation of arms in the hands of civilians and militia groups including the al-Shabaab in Somalia.

2.4 Growing War Economies

The absence of functional institutions or a well-established government enjoying legitimacy influenced the emergence of widespread criminality throughout Somalia. The collapse of the government in 1991 established a culture of impunity where public resources are looted, banditry is rife and valuable real estates are occupied by militia groups from various clans. Control of valuable real estate has become an important aspect of the conflict as sources of income for militia groups. Additionally, militia groups have been involved in forceful taxation of small business as well as diverting the distribution of relief food aid. These economic wars have expanded to the coastal regions where piracy has emerged particularly in the Indian Ocean where vessels carrying heavy cargo have been attacked by Somali pirates from time to time (Percy and Shortland, 2013).

2.5 Domestic and Regional Impact of Somalia Conflict

The conflict in Somalia has had extensive impact on the people of Somalia. These impacts can be broadly categorised into economic, humanitarian and political consequences. First, the prolonged conflict in Somalia has had a negative impact on the economic activities in Somalia. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Somalia has one of the highest poverty rates in the region. Violence has destroyed critical infrastructure necessary for economic activities and created an environment of fear among some Somalis largely due to extortion by al-Shaabab and other criminal groups. According to a study by Dagne (2009), the unregulated economic system in Somalia has benefited only a people in the country with political power and enjoying protection from clan militia groups or al-Shaabab. This has rendered thousands of young people jobless and have been forced to rely on remittances from relatives who are overseas in order to survive.

Secondly, there has been a dire humanitarian crisis in Somalia. Somalia has not only been challenged by the over three decades of conflict but also drought and famine. As of 2017, more than 6.7 million people (an estimated 50% of the population) were considered as food insecure. Out of these, 3.2 million people have been categorised as in a crisis stage and over 3.5 million as food stressed. Conflict and famine have destroyed production of food, increased unemployment rates and drastically reduced the purchasing power of household families (UN, 2017). The humanitarian crisis has further been worsened by attacks and subsequent withdrawal or non-deployment of aid workers, high rates of inflation, continued violence and piracy in the Indian ocean (Dagne, 2009). Politically, the conflict has disintegrated Somalia into different regions all claiming autonomy. In 1991, Somaliland declared independence immediately from Somalia after the collapse of the state. It however does not yet enjoy international recognition neither does it have any representation at regional organizations or international institutions such as the UN. Not only the conflict effected domestic but also has regional impact, it has created regional

insecurity particularly through the threat posed by Alshabab. regional neighbours such as Kenya ,has been target of Alshabab.

2.6 Conflict Reconciliation Efforts

The conflict in Somalia has been on the focus of both local, regional and international actors who have repeatedly attempted to establish a peace agreement outside other existing military interventions between different actors involved in the conflict to restore law and order. Since the collapse of the government and outbreak of conflict in Somalia, there has been four major peace efforts initiated through the regional organization IGAD. However, these efforts are yet to exhibit or yield the intended result of ending conflict in Somalia. Reconciliations has been done are, Ethiopia peace conference 1993, Cairo peace conference 1997, Arta conference 2000, Mbagathi peace conference 2004.

III. CIVILL SOCIETY

In an increasingly globalised world, civil societies have become associated with universal values such as good governance, human rights and democracy. Civil society groups have become part and parcel of discussions at national, regional, and international levels. According to Bisley (2007), there has been a dramatic growth and influence of civil societies seeking to drive a global agenda that identify human interests as common and not just nationalistic. World Bank (2010) defines civil societies as:

“The wide array of non-governmental and non-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious, or philanthropic considerations. Civil societies therefore encompass a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations and foundations.”

3.1 Peace-building

The understanding of peace-building continues to shy off from a single universal declaration mainly because peace-building can be conducted at different phases during a conflict. According to Boutros-Ghali (1992), peace-building is a post-conflict activity and as such, denotes those actions or initiatives aiming at identifying and supporting structures that can sustain and strengthen peace within the society and minimise relapse into violence. Another definition is provided by Miller & King (2005) who argues that peace-building is a process of building, strengthen, and reforming socio-political and economic institutions that sustain peace. These processes can be in the form of policies, programmes and any initiatives that support peace. A study by Tschirgi (2003) highlights that the purpose of peace-building is to prevent and resolve conflicts, consolidate peace and promote post-conflict reconstruction activities to prevent another outbreak of conflict. Peace-building efforts are target both immediate and

underlying causes of conflict that may include environmental, cultural, structural, social, economic and political factors. For Lederach (1997), peace-building is a collection of various activities that precede and follow peace agreements.

3.2 Approaches to Peace-building

One of the fundamental questions in peace-building is the approach towards reinstating peace in the society. To achieve this, flexibility and creativity of actors is critical to not only develop mechanisms and institutions to stop and prevent any future outbreak of conflict, but also to ensure that any solutions to conflict are creative, sustainable and viable (Brand-Jacobsen & Jacobsen, 2000). To this end, the nature and quality of connections or relations that people have become the epicentre of nurturing peace (Lederach, 2005) because it is these ties that build social energy to sustain peace. The process of peace-building often occurs in unpredictable conditions and can further be challenged other activities, processes, social connections or people who may not share similar views. As such, actors in peace-building require to develop three fundamental principles that include understanding the social geography of conflict areas; think about intersections; and be flexible.

Understanding social geography involves identification of anchor points that are connected and create a framework of relations. These anchor points can be in the form of geographical localities or processes that are central to social change for groups that may not share similar views. For instance, whereas it is important to examine the role of state and its political system as well as regional and international actors, it is also necessary that analyse and understand the society and how factors such as gender, media, or religion affect people. Understanding these variables will consequently expose the anchor points as contribute towards the establishment of a long-lasting or a peace-building model that is resilient for a particular context.

Secondly, thinking about intersections denotes the identification of building networks or relations that link the various relational aspects of anchor points together. These intersections are key in peace-building approaches because they create, strengthen and bind social spaces where individuals with similar or different views often interact naturally sometimes without noticing. These intersections can be found in schools, public transport areas, marketplaces or sports club. Powers (2010) highlights that this is true for religious institutions because often, they are deeply anchored within communities and represent a complex web of relations cutting across economic, social and political issues.

The third principle on flexibility refers to the ability to be able to adjust, adapt, respond and exploit emerging and context-based challenges (Lederach, 2005). Peacebuilders often pursue solutions hoping that they will permanent for any social or political change instead of establishing self-sustaining platforms that can respond to changing environments through generation of creative processes and

ideas that sustain peace. Indeed, in conflicts, peacebuilders can only rely on the fact that there are always emerging obstacles, issues and challenges and the most preferred means of addressing these difficulties is through permanent adaptation or flexibility.

As such peace-building approaches should also incorporate mechanisms and approaches that can guarantee peace through developing structures that can facilitate psychological healing and structural changes necessary to overcome injustices. Several scholars (Cheldelin & Druckman, 2003; Botes, 2003), argue that peace-building approaches therefore need to emphasize on inclusion the communities and institutional reforms to enhance social change and empowerment. Civil societies therefore become a critical component of this process as they can play critical roles in training, organizing sensitization programmes and acting as local peace commissions.

3.3 Civil Societies in Africa

According to a study by Gyimah-Boadi (1996), civil societies were in the forefront of pushing the democratization agenda in Africa during the 1990s. Despite the great significance of donors who provided substantial funding to these organizations and external influences such as the collapse of communism, it was the dedication and commitment of civil societies in the continent that started and sustained this transition from dictatorships to democracy. They became the drivers for political change in advocating for multiparty politics; respect for human rights and freedoms; preparations for competitive elections; and decriminalization of dissent against governments (Huntington, 1991)

3.4 Civil Societies in Somalia

Civil society organizations are significant in all levels of contemporary peace-building initiatives. This has influenced the devotion of the international community towards the strengthening the operational and functional capabilities and capacities of civil society organizations particularly in conflict-ridden and fragile state or societies. Civil societies are considered as part of viable multi-dimensional framework in peace-building. The conventional understanding of civil society is that they provide a framework for voluntary and collective action around mutual interests, values, and purposes that are distinctive from that of the state, family or market (Paffenholz, 2015). These societies are constituted of several and diverse voluntary organizations and non-state actors that are not driven by economic goals or interests, largely operate independently from the state, reflect civic virtues and interact closely with the public. However, it is important to highlight that not all civil society organizations are necessarily 'good society' because these organizations are a broad reflection of the society. According to Paffenholz (2015), there are other civil societies that operate as polarised, sectarian and occasionally militant civil organizations. Within the context of Somalia, the emergence of civil society organizations is the outcome of the Somalia civil war (Human Development

Report, 2001; Bradbury et al., 2001). Previously, under the regime of SiadBarre, establishment and management of groups such as civil societies or other political organizations was criminal. Since 1960 when Somalia became an independent state, the first NGO's established in Somalia were in the early 1980s after the Ogaden War between Somalia and Ethiopia to respond to the humanitarian and refugee crisis (Human Development Report, 2001). However, whereas during the 1980s approximately 15 local non-governmental organizations were established and operating in Somalia, the figure drastically increased to over 320 NGO's by 1995 (Little, 2003). The proliferation of NGO's during this period can be explained as the outcome of the collapse of government in 1991 and the subsequent famine between 1991-1992 that exacerbated the humanitarian crisis. Additionally, because of the collapse of the state, the previous law that forbade the establishment of political parties or civil organizations became null and void. As the conflict drew international attention, international humanitarian and civil society organizations moved into Somalia to assist. However, due to the complex nature of the Somali society, these international organizations needed local partners. As such, the establishment of civil societies in Somalia was not only a response to the crisis in Somalia but also, it became a financially profitable venture because of donor funding (Tiilikainen & Mohamed, 2013).

Nonetheless, majority of these NGO's or civil society groups did not last for because of the exclusive dependency on donor funding. Additionally, the strong clan inclinations within the Somalis, also influenced the nature of these civil societies in the sense that they were formed and organised along clans. Whereas establishing SCOs along clan affiliations can be effective because it creates a sense of safety, trust, cultural intimacy and establish effective networks, they can also be easily manipulated and misused. One the models fronted oftenly as a solution to the Somalia civil war has been the power sharing formula for the Transitional Federal Government that gives four dominant clans more say in government. Civil society organizations that are strongly to clan patronage structures are therefore very unlikely to challenge decisions or stances taken by the clan leadership (Menkhaus et al., 2010; Quinn & Farah, 2008).

During the thirty years of conflict in Somalia, civil society organizations and NGOs in general, have been criticized for having exploited the conflict for their own interests such as employment opportunities and avenues to acquire illicit funds through corruption. Moreover, even though these organizations operate within Somalia, they have established their operational bases in Nairobi (Kenya) (Tiilikainen and Mohamed, 2013). For several local residents, civil society groups and NGO's play very minimal role outside the seminars organized and convened in high-end hotels, and several foreigners who come, ask questions, and go back without ever returning back with goods or concrete services

that can address the need of the people (Shane & Farah, 2008). According to Tiilikainen and Mohamed (2013: 41):

“NGO business becomes elitism! NGOs and politicians are not connected to the people. NGOs have no governance, boards of directors do not exist, they are only names on the paper. They make reports that donors want to have, they use the same reports they have been doing for 20 years. We do not ask hard questions: What do you really do? There is no real civil society. NGOs go and discuss with the government one by one. NGOs have no power base, they exploit the resources. They should have an important role also in following up and guiding the government, but there is no common voice or a platform for advocacy.”

Generally, the Somalia civil society and non-governmental organizations scene is extensively fragmented. This is largely because of the lack of co-ordination and cooperation between the various organizations because of the need to compete for donor funding. The separation of Somalia into several regions all claiming autonomy such as Somaliland (declared independence in 1991), Puntland, South Somalia, and Central Somalia also undermine cooperation and collaboration between civil society groups. However, Quinn and Farah (2008) argue that women-led civil societies are increasingly taking a key role in bridging this gap because of inter-clan marriages. Menkhaus et al., (2010) highlights that some of the most active civil society organizations in Somalia are managed by women who are now part and parcel of peace-building initiatives as mediators and advocates of human rights and freedoms of women and the marginalised groups in Somalia. Nonetheless, despite the glaring complexities facing civil society and other non-governmental organizations in Somalia, there are several others that are committed to peace-building initiatives, competent and have managed to source for funding internally within Somalia and from the Somali Diaspora groups that seek to contribute to peace-building and nation-building in Somalia.

IV. HOW CIVIL SOCIETIES CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE-BUILDING

Conflict resolution can only be as effective as the preceding peace-building initiatives that have the potential for establishing sustainable peace. Civil societies take different forms of associations and enables them to have the ability to represent various interests and values. These values and interests enable them to articulate, mobilise and pursue the aspirations of the society which they represent. It is a fact that civil societies on their own cannot be able to transform conflict, yet, it is also very difficult if not impossible for governments and international organizations to establish long-lasting peace without the engagement of the larger population (Galtung, 1969). Consequently, civil societies have emerged as viable frameworks of peace-building (Barnes, 2002b) through seven key functions that include protection, monitoring, advocacy, socialization, social cohesion, facilitation, and service delivery.

4.1 *Protection and Monitoring*

Stable societies that have functioning governments and working public institutions, it is the role of the state to protect citizens. However, societies coming out of a long phase of conflict are often fragile and the relations between the state and society can either be completely broken down, or the state itself can be in a situation where it is incapable of ensuring security of the society. It can therefore be very difficult for individuals to engage in peace-building if their security is threatened. Militia groups that participate in conflicts often escalate violence against civilians if they want to deter any peace process. Also, while state security machinery and structures can play an important role in protecting communities, they can also be part of the problem. The deployment of military soldiers can often come too late or deployed with a mandate not adequate to provide security for the community. Civil societies can therefore play a critical role of protecting the society through early warning and response systems. Civil society organizations are strategically placed to identify or detect causes of conflicts, the motivation of those fuelling conflict in the society, and, suggest specific solutions to address the existing challenges before outbreak of conflict. The ability of civil society organizations to have these insights can support the establishment and deployment of necessary resources that can address conflict at early stages. Civil society organizations can also play the role of monitoring conflict initiatives that are aimed at aiding peace-building processes. The local nature of grassroots civil societies provide them with the requisite knowledge to address conflict through the wider societal dynamics that can deter the escalation of conflict. By using trustworthy and credible conflict monitors, civil societies can generate knowledge and analyses that is acceptable to conflict actors and holders. This information can therefore be used to develop strategies and solutions for conflicts in which the same civil society organizations partner with other stakeholders to ensure the implementations of peace-building and conflict resolution mechanisms. The credibility of civil society organizations in conflict resolution mechanisms arise from their perceived non-partisan or multi-partisan nature because they represent both the interests of the civilian communities and those of conflict actors.

4.2 *Transforming Attitudes*

Civil societies can transform conflict attitudes by re-framing and changing the perceptions about conflict in the society. Civil society organizations that operate at the grassroots level as peace builders in areas entrenched in conflict advance conversation formed on the basis of person/people to people dialogue across conflict belligerents. These discussions are often supported by the existence of some common factors such as identity (men, women, youths), occupational roles (farmers, herders, teachers, lawyers, journalists) or perhaps the existence of common experiences (ex-fighters, policymakers). The experience of having discussion with groups or individuals who have been perceived as enemies

and understanding them as human beings and not just enemies can transform perception and shake their stances on hate. This may influence individuals or groups to perhaps reconsider looking for other alternatives apart from conflict, violence or war because there is an understanding that other people or groups from other communities are also seeking a reasonable solution to conflict. Additionally Civil societies can also play an important role in disarmament, demobilization and re-integration of conflict actors.

4.3 *Challenges Facing Civil Societies*

Civil societies face several challenges that undermine their effective performance. First, there is often lack of cooperation and complementary amongst civil society organizations. In Somalia for instance, umbrella civil society organizations engage in similar activities that are done by member organizations operating at the grassroots level. The effect of this is that civil society organizations end up in competition instead of cooperation and therefore posing a challenge to both civil societies and donor organizations. Whereas the presence of civil societies should be a strength in addressing the needs of communities, lack of collaboration deters their effectiveness.

Secondly, civil societies are also faced by the lack of voluntarism and civic engagement.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Civil societies in Somalia are exposed to serious security threats including murder and arrests of journalists by both government security forces and terrorist groups such as al-Shaabab¹. The association of civil society organizations with other western international non-governmental organizations puts them in direct confrontations with groups such as al-Shaabab who despise western ideologies and systems of governance. The Federal Government of Somalia should therefore establish a taskforce of experts drawn from civil society organizations and professional bodies such as lawyers or advocated and review the action of government security forces towards civil society organizations and professional bodies such as journalism media in the wider context. Moreover, stringent penal codes need to be created to punish severely individuals who are caught perpetrating attacks civil society actors. Additionally, the government should find mechanisms that can safeguard the existing and stringent Anti-Terrorism laws from being misused to curtail freedoms of expression of the civil societies through detentions, arbitrary arrests and harassment. The Federal Government of Somalia should also work with peace-building civil society organizations as part of opinion leaders in the society. This partnership should also include actors in the media industry who can provide positive media coverage of the efforts or initiatives by both government and civil societies. Without adequate media coverage, there can be potential low attention

of the community towards initiatives of civil society organizations. Media coverage is very significant for civil society roles regarding advocacy, monitoring, and protection. As such, media should be part and parcel of civil societies as partners in peace-building. International donors providing support to local civil society organizations also need to conduct thorough audit on how aid recipient civil societies are constituted. The nature of a civil society can affect its effectiveness in the sense that those that are dominated by discriminatory and radical ideologies are more likely to be effective in peace-building. Donor organizations should therefore conduct thorough analysis of a given civil society before developing a financial support framework. The civil societies in Somalia can also benefit for increased funding in order to increase and expand peace initiatives and facilitate the professionalization of peace-building initiatives. Inconsistent initiative in peace-building cannot contribute to peace. Additionally, there needs to be a framework through which civil organizations can be accountable to both local communities and the international donors. The overdependence on foreign funding has inculcated a culture in which civil societies lay more preference for accountability to donors than local communities. As such, donors should develop a system of funding that also ties civil societies to be accountable to local communities in which particular peace-building initiatives may be undergoing.

VI. CONCLUSION

Civil societies can be very important partners in peace-building because they offer alternative and innovative solutions to conflict. Even though they are not a force for peace, the debates, programmes, community projects and initiatives created by civil society organizations are fundamental for peace and peace-building. Their contributions to peace-building extend from initiatives of development and promotion of positive values in the community, to addressing policies, socio-political and economic systems that promote exclusion of certain groups in the society that ultimately lead to emergence of conflict. The presence of active, effective and widespread civil society organizations can nurture the emergence and development of institutions that can resolve conflicts and generate self-sustaining systems that can sustain peace through better and responsive governance. This study has argued that whereas there are several reputable international civil society organizations operating in Somalia, the emergence of local civil societies offers mixed results in regard to the operational nature and capacity of these organizations. There is indeed, an important need to conceptualize civil societies within the context of Somalia while at the same time establishing these organizations within an operational structure that enhances and encourages accountability. To this end, new models can be developed to establish to what extent can an organization be considered as civil society organization. Amongst the fundamental criteria, an ideal civil society organization should be established as a separate entity from not only the state and the market, but

also, neither operating as a business private enterprise or offering services which would otherwise be offered by the state or local government. Secondly, unlike the commonality of Somali local civil society organizations to be established based on blood relations, the new model needs to categorise Somali civil society organizations based on the meeting or having defined and specific set of interests that are detached from sectarian identities such as clans or religion. This is important because to have an effectively operating and accountable civil society organizations in Somalia, they need to be autonomous from external influences which may distort their organizational objectives or at worst, even alienate the same population it aims to serve. Instead, the Somali local civil society organizations should have strong internal formal structures that maximises the existing potential of its membership to achieve the organizational goals effectively.

In reassessing the nature of Somali local civil society organizations based on the model identified above, reveals that indeed, most of the organizations do not meet these basic requisite criteria because despite the organizations claiming to be 'civil societies' how they are formed, structured and operate, do not meet the definition of a civil society as exploited in this thesis. While this cannot be said of all the Somali civil society organizations, a vast majority do so and therefore it is imperative that established local and international civil society organizations engage in partnership programmes that can elevate the weaker 'Somali civil society organizations' to develop effective and ethical strategies that can support their organizational and operational structures to operate as ideal civil society organizations in Somalia. But this thesis also recognizes that it is also necessary to differentiate civil society sub-actors relevant to the social, political and economic conditions of Somalia. The hundreds of existing societal actors operate in a grey area ranging between civil society organizations, the state and the market (as private business ventures). For example, traditional elders who are held in very high esteem in the Somali society, play key roles in areas of civil societies, states and NGOs which operate as private businesses and perform public services that are otherwise supposed to be done by the state. Whereas it is without doubt that these Somali local civil society organizations that receive significant support from the international civil societies have a role to play in peace-building initiatives, they are not necessarily non-partisan and accountable actors. This is not to make a bold claim for their exclusion in peace-building processes, but rather, that they should be engaged with as such. While it is not possible to make a unilateral claim on how to deal with every single local Somali civil society organization, developing an identification model can perhaps assist in determining how to best engage with and provide support to a wide range of Somali civil society organizations involved in peace-building initiatives. Nonetheless, the comparative social, economic and political dynamics in Somalia remains very fragile. As such civil societies will continue to remain important partners in peace-building. However, to be able to function effectively, the

Federal Government of Somalia, National Government and the international civil society organizations operating in Somalia should establish mechanisms that can support local Somali civil society activities in the country effectively. Civil societies organizations reflect the society and can therefore be actors of peace-building or polarising agents that preach hate or radicalization. As such, it is not only enough to engage civil societies in peace-building initiatives but, to also ensure that they are dependable to contribute positively to peace-building which is a very delicate process.

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