

Chapter 7

Civil Society's Roles and their Effects on Democracy in Post-Colonial Anglophone Africa

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Civil society has an important role to play in a democracy. This chapter looks at who or what civil society is, and how the varying roles of civil society develop democracy in these Anglophone African countries. To do this, we look at the various factors that define civil society and the roles that civil society is expected to fulfil. We then look at ten Anglophone countries namely: South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, and Malawi. Given that the focus is post-colonial Anglophone countries, we touch on civil society during colonial times and then look at the civil society that has taken root since independence.

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What is civil society?

To understand the roles and responsibilities that civil society carries, we must first understand what constitutes civil society and how this entity influences a particular democracy. There are many definitions of what civil society is, and this has caused some debate amongst scholars. Von Doepf (1996: 25) defines civil society very broadly as, 'arenas of associational life, which are external to the state'. Schmitter's (1997) definition of civil society can be seen as the most conventional, stating that civil society is a group that is self-organised around a common cause, is independent from government, and does not seek to replace the authority of government. This view forms the core of the western perspective that does not take into consideration the fact that civil society in the west has developed differently to civil society in Africa.

Across the African continent, civil society has had to fight for freedom from and within oppressive regimes. As such, a more inclusive definition is required. Lloyd M. Sachikonye articulates that civil society is a group of institutions and organisations that function outside of the state and pressure

the state to preserve or transform its identity (Makumbe 1998). In other words, civil society operates outside of state structures and is where citizens and communities can gather to participate in activities that relate to the socio-political system within a state (Orvis 2001).

Interestingly, Moyo (1993: 3) argues that civil society and the state should be considered as 'two intertwining parts of the same social reality, within the same public realm', rather than two distinct entities. This does not mean that the state and civil society play equal roles. In some countries, the state plays a much greater role, especially in countries where, for example, state benefits diminish the need for civil society to take care of people's needs or fight for basic human rights. In small or very poor countries, civil society may play a greater role in determining the social reality because people depend on these organisations for their survival. Both civil society and the state play a role in determining the future of individuals and often work together within the public realm. Civil society is generally, however, distinct from government although the lines do become blurred from time to time (World Economic Forum 2013).

Civil society is made up of wide range of public entities working alongside but separate from the state (Diamond 1994). Although most people think of non-government organisations (NGO) when they think of civil society, other groups such as trade unions and churches form an integral part of this collective. Both now and in the past, civil society organisations (CSO) have contributed to the democratisation process and encouraged the transition towards liberal democracies. In Africa, NGOs continue to play an important role in grassroots social development and in supporting communities. Over time, they have grown from providing basic social services to fostering rural development, advancing women and promoting ecological projects (Neubert 2014). Churches and trade unions also play an influential role in political processes as well as a society's overall development.

Churches have also helped civil society fight for independence. In some countries, the differences between churches caused conflict. In others, it advanced the democratisation process. Some academics, such as Zubaida (2001), point out that religious groups, together with tribes and families, should not be considered part of the broader civil society because they are not democratic by nature, nor is their membership voluntary. From an African perspective, however, the church, tribe or family, although patriarchal, can still contribute to the democratic processes of the state as each group can participate and/or motivate participation in political activities. Furthermore, their membership is voluntary as they persuade others to share their thinking, hold a common ideology, and have formed various political associations (Fokwa 2019, Zubaida 2001 and Cheeseman 2015). Diamond establishes the different groups that civil society can consist of namely: economic,

political, cultural, informational and educational, interest-based, developmental, issue-oriented and civic (Diamond 1994). They are all necessary to ensure that society continues to function, and responsibilities are upheld.

Atilbil (2012) argues that state-society relations depend on various factors, including the availability of resources, the historical development of civil-society and the blurred boundaries between the public and the private realms. State-society relations are also influenced by the understanding of the concept – ‘civil society’ (Atibil 2012).

It is important to note that the majority of NGOs, trade unions and other interest groups that constitute civil society generally only operate in urban business areas, which excludes large sections of the population, especially in Africa. The demands put on civil society are usually from the urban population, but this should not mean that the rural population should be excluded from civil society.

Civil society in context

There was very little development of civil society under colonial rule. This was because colonialism was based on the idea of limiting and then eliminating the political participation of Black citizens, effectively starving civil society (Moyo 1993). Only by the end of colonisation did civil society begin to play a proper role in the establishment of independence and the development of democracies. Early civil society organisations faced limitations and contradictions, specifically because, as noted by Obadare, ‘The state’s emergence is often seen as a prerequisite for the development of civil society, such that some experts believe that the persistent weakness of states in Africa contributes to the lack of space for civil society to thrive,’ (Obadare 2014: 8). Given how many states in Africa had to fight for independence and then grapple with a generation of postcolonial dictators and military leaders, it explains why many states across the continent have a limited and underdeveloped civil society (Ibrahim 2015). Despite the gains made during the fight for independence, with civil society organisations such as churches and protest movements gaining ground, many were intimidated or even demobilised by the state (Fokwa 2019). In many instances, colonial leaders who had been overthrown by civil society were merely replaced with incumbent leaders who sought to protect their own power, using legal and financial means to ensure civil society was depoliticised. This is later shown to be true in the cases of Kenya and Uganda, who both suffered under incumbent leaders, post-independence.

By the 1970s, civil society started to regain its position as an active participant in the political

sphere, with many one-party states and authoritarian leaders being overthrown in favour of more democratically run regimes. In several countries armed struggles revolted against state governments with the educated elite leading the rural, the urban poor and the unemployed (Fokwa 2019). In other countries elites in the professional realm aired their grievances without promoting violence, leading to a proliferation of political opposition parties (Fokwa 2019). Bernhard, Reenock and Nordstroom (2004) found that British colonies making the transition to democracy are more likely to endure than their French or Dutch counterparts. In this study, we only look at previously British colonies, who all struggled with developing civil society under colonial rule.

Roles of civil society

Scholars argue that civil society's prime directive is to establish and maintain democracy. In some countries, civil society has played an instrumental role in overthrowing authoritarian government and democratising the state, as in the case of South Africa. As Orvis notes, civil society does not create democracy by itself, nor are the organisations that make up civil society necessarily democratic; rather, civil society allows citizens to air their grievances as a means to protect and grow a democracy (Orvis 2001). Furthermore, civil society can act as an advocate for regime change using its power to disrupt and challenge political norms (Mbuago and Fru 2003). A strong civil society acts as a stabiliser and in some cases, a trigger of democracy through an increased social trust (Grahn and Lührmann 2020).

As an interest group, civil society holds leaders accountable, incorporating minority groups into the political process by seeking to limit the powers of the state and by strengthening the rule of law. For Cooper (2018), civil society is the service provider for the community, advocating for the rights of citizens and supporting active civic participation. Furthermore, civil society is also responsible for participating in global governance processes (Cooper 2018).

Throughout the years, the roles and responsibilities of civil society have changed, become more complex and more involved in politics. One of the main reasons that CSOs form is to promote the interests of a community to achieve a common goal (Gill 2000). It is therefore important that the interests of the community are represented and protected, even if that means going against the government (Gill 2000).

No civil society can be successful if it is not legitimised and supported. Diamond (2000) points out that the roles of civil society can only be achieved if they have the opportunity and support to act both legally and economically to achieve their mandates. But Neubert (2014) warns that should

civil society take on more responsibility, it may delegitimise the government by usurping much of its functions. The importance of civil society is obvious when looking at its roles, but it faces many challenges, especially in Africa.

Civil society and liberal democracy

Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that:

‘The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures (UNESCO 2019).’

Article 19 covers the rights to freely express yourself, which affords citizens the opportunity to express their opinions by casting their vote with the knowledge that each vote counts equally and will be seen as such (UNESCO 2019).

After African countries gained independence, a wave of democracy spread across the continent as people hoped for a better future (Cheeseman 2015). True *liberal* democracy, however, was not achieved. According to the Democracy Index, there is currently no full democracy in Africa (Economist Intelligence Unit 2018). Countries that are considered democratic are flawed, meeting only some criteria of what is required from a full or, in the context of this text, liberal democracy. Those that can be considered democratic are fragile because they are barely legitimate and have weak state structures (Diamond 2000).

To be considered a legitimate democracy, Beetham suggests a state should have four key components which align with most definitions, including those given by Freedom House (Baker 1999: 277).

1. Democratic systems need to have ‘free and fair’ elections where all citizens have an opportunity to vote for their preferred official and there is equality between electors.
2. Government is open and can be held accountable for their actions through the rule of law.
3. Citizens have equal rights and freedoms that are protected by the democratic system, ensuring that all people have a basic livelihood, and can thus not be influenced when voting.
4. The society should have a shared culture of tolerance, trust and participation.

A country that does meet all the components to the fullest degree can still be considered a flawed democracy. In fact, according to the Democracy Index 2018 there are only twenty countries in the world that are considered ‘full democracies’ (Economist Intelligence Unit 2018). Many others

are flawed democracies, including the USA and South Africa. In any type of democracy, civil society has played and continues to play an important role in determining and bringing about political and societal change.

Given that the levels of democratisation that have occurred across countries in Africa vary substantially, it is important to look at countries individually to understand the role civil society has played in Anglophone Africa. Thinking about the roles of civil society that we established earlier, we can assess how successful civil society has been in the democratisation process within Anglophone African countries. We can also then establish what trends have emerged since the end of colonisation, and how that these affect the current levels of democracy across Anglophone Africa.

Anglophone African Countries

According to Kura (2008), most of the 48 countries in Africa had already had democratic elections by the early 1990s. In Zimbabwe, ZANU-PF became the first governing party, following colonisation, under the leadership of Robert Mugabe. ZANU-PF took advantage of an underdeveloped civil society and claimed to be the only representative of the people (Saunders 2011). Under this guise, Robert Mugabe and his elite group of partners became militarised and consolidated their power for more than 30 years, replacing the colonial government with an autocratic one. Since then, civil society in Zimbabwe has been characterised by elite groups and patriarchal associations kept in check by the government's organised violent interventions and leaving little space for political participation and democratic development (Saunders 2011). Indeed, Zimbabwe has notoriously denied privately owned newspapers advertisements, which has had an economic effect (Makumbe 1998). In 2017, Robert Mugabe resigned after 37 years in power, and his successor, also from ZANU-PF, won the 2018 election (*BBC News* 2019). Initially it was hoped that civil society would finally be able to develop under a new president, but very little has changed. The media remains under strict control, millions of people remain in poverty, and civic groups still depend on foreign funding. When citizens do voice their frustrations, the government responds with violence (*Mail & Guardian* 2019). There is, it seems, little hope for civil society to ever be more than service providers to citizens.

In Nigeria, the Nigerian Labour Congress was one of the main players in civil society during the democratisation process. They, together with trade unions such as the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers, took on the government to hold them accountable and achieve economic emancipation (Fokwa 2019). Women empowerment groups and trade unions

were also at the forefront of the struggle for independence. Successive military regimes, however, saw a 'civil society that was bruised by the arrest and detention of its leaders, by the banning and repression of some of its organisations, by scant resources and low capacity, and by the creeping division in vision and strategy,' (M'boge and Doe 2004: 4). Despite having an active civil society, they are still relatively underdeveloped thanks to years of military rule.

Ghana is a country where democracy *is* being ensured by civil society. Here civil society, under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, fostered a strong sense of political participation and freedom (M'boge and Doe 2004). Although they were not always under democratic leadership, civil society remained active and has ensured that democracy has been restored (M'boge and Doe 2004). One of the biggest challenges that Ghana has faced, along with the democratic transition, was economic reform. Many international donors have had a say in this, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Hearn 2001). As a result, many of the CSOs in Ghana rely heavily on external funding which hampers their effectiveness to represent the people rather than their donors. Nevertheless, civil society remains active with elections improving every cycle and the ongoing development of the judiciary (Arthur 2010). The media has also played a major role in the democratisation process, having gained considerable freedom since the 1990s (Arthur 2010). They, together with NGOs such as the Ghana Bar Association, monitor and scrutinise government activities to ensure no constitutional violations are committed (M'boge and Doe 2004).

Both Kenya and Uganda have also civil societies that played an active role during and after the struggle for independence. One of the key CSOs in both countries is the church. In Uganda, tension between the Anglican and Catholic Churches played a major role in the power dynamics within the political arena (Okuku 2002). The Catholic Church, for instance, helped set up and control the Democratic Party Opposition. An increase in ethnic differences played out in the churches and this distraction allowed the government to limit human rights and curb civil liberties unimpeded. Idi Amin, who gained power after independence, limited civil society and curtailed effective political participation by using violence and intimidation. Throughout this period, the church remained silent because they wanted to protect their favourable position with the government. Once news spread about severe human rights atrocities, a massive movement within civil society gave rise to the NGOs that helped guarantee the democratisation of Uganda (Okuku 2002). During the 1980s and 1990s, other CSOs played a key role in providing services to the public. Their financial backing came mainly from international donors (Hearn 2001). As the international arena gained confidence in the new government, financial aid was redirected and it became the responsibility of CSOs to ensure that government was using the money to provide services for their people

(Hearn 2001). The government and the CSOs work together to help with poverty relief through programmes such as Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Project. CSOs are also responsible for holding government accountable and monitoring government policies. Organisations such as the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative and the Inspectorate of Government have since been put in place to oversee democratisation.

Civil society has also been at the centre of democratisation in Kenya. The church, also one of the more important CSOs in Kenya, remained free during the oppressive regime of Daniel arap Moi. It encouraged civil society to stand up against human rights violations (Okuku 2002). The church remained highly critical of Moi's autocratic governance and the Kenyan African National Union's leadership. Despite ethnic and political patronage, the church remained one of the only organisations that could take on the state and fight for human rights. NGOs and other parts of civil society remained unverified until constitutional reform in the 1990s (Okuku 2002). Democracy has since become much stronger but CSOs are finding it harder to operate as government weakens their legislative and political remit (Wood 2016).

In Malawi, civic groups rejected the one-party system and opted for a new multi-party constitution. This saw to a democratic election which ousted the president who had declared himself 'President for Life', Kamuzu Banda (Makumbe 1998). Under his reign, CSOs' activities were limited as Banda used force to control and censor the country (Makuwira 2011). Faith-based civil society groups were among the only organisations that managed to grow during this time, and they used this to voice their opinions and encourage civil action (Makuwira 2011). They staged mass protests to demand political freedoms and contributed to the end of 30-year reign in 1994 (Fokwa 2019). Civil society has also been successful in ensuring autocratic regimes have not changed the constitution to prolong presidential terms (Fokwa 2019). The transition to democracy was further encouraged by international observers and election monitoring (Diamond 2000). In more recent times however, a decline in CSOs' participation has been seen, as was evident in the May 2009 elections where there was a sharp decline in support for opposition parties (Hussein 2009). Hussein believes that fragmented CSOs are too disorganised to challenge the government. They also have a weak financial base and, as in many other African countries, rely heavily on the support of the donor community (Makuwira 2011). While the government views CSOs as partners, many CSOs remain critical of the Wa Mutharika government and continue to ensure democracy is upheld as much as possible.

Under Kenneth Kaunda's one-party rule, Zambia's civil society grew increasingly dissatisfied. By the 1980s, civil society, most prominently the labour force, started to challenge Kaunda's leadership

(Von Doepp 1996). Since then, civil society has also played an active role, ensuring that government moves towards complete liberal democracy. CSOs work alongside the private sector to assess the government's strategies and make recommendations that will strengthen the democratic processes (Kaliba 2014). CSOs are effective because they react quickly to government decisions, forming coalitions where necessary to ensure that they are heard. This is why they play a defining role in the political history of the country (Kaliba 2014). Zambia's media has also had problems with government's often violent interference (Kaliba 2014). Government agencies have blocked negative reviews in several instances and imprisoned journalists for what they have published. *The Rainbow Newspaper's* Editor-in-Chief, Derrick Sinjela, is one of the journalists who was jailed for publishing an opinion piece about corruption in the judiciary (Amnesty International 2019). Apparently, the relationship between the government and a CSO depends on the type of advocacy the organisation pursues and how this action will affect the government.

Botswana is also considered a shining star for liberal democracy given its sustained economic growth and active civil society. However, it is a state that has had the same ruling party, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), since independence in September 1965 (Warren 2019). As such, there has been no peaceful handover of power, much the same as in other African countries such as South Africa and Zimbabwe. According to Carroll and Carroll (2004), Botswana's civil society only started to grow during the 1990s having been almost non-existent before then. Government actively worked to exclude civil society before the 1980s. Under pressure from foreign aid agencies and large international organisations such as the World Bank, the government was forced to start including NGOs into its development projects. One of the main contributors to the growing civil society is the business sector, which has seen many indigenous business groups that have not been subordinated by the state (Carroll and Carroll 2004). They helped ensure that civil society contributed to the policy process. Tribal groups make up a minority of civil society and as such, they need to develop coalitions among CSOs to raise their issues (Carroll and Carroll 2004). Civil society in Botswana currently plays an active role in policy formation and the democratisation process. This has been seen in the increased support for the opposition parties as the BDP support wanes.

Tanzania's civil society started during colonial rule when laws restricted their influence to ensure that there was no uprising. In 1954, Julius Nyerere formed the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) that led the country to independence in 1961 (Haapenen 2007). In 1965, Tanzania had its first multi-party elections, which Nyerere won to remain in power. Despite the multi-party nature of the elections, the laws in the country did not change much and the socialist party that had fought for independence ensured civil society remained inactive, only allowing non-political organisations

such as churches to operate (Haapenen 2007). During the 1990s, after Nyerere retired, civil society finally started to flourish. But with the increase of CSOs, competition for funding also increased (Haapenen 2007). More recently however, increased unhappiness among the Tanzanian people has been viewed as a call for government to address the 'rapidly deteriorating environment for media, human rights defenders and opposition party members' (Gaebee 2018). According to the 65 civil society groups, the government has been limiting the power of the media through the 2015 Cybercrimes Act and The Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations which criminalise some forms of free expression (Gaebee 2018). The government has also been accused of using violence against members of opposition parties such, as CHADEMA (Gaebee 2018). This is worrying as it seems as though democracy is in decline here.

South Africa's independence from colonialism did not mean independence for the majority of the population and the apartheid regime used all available avenues to repress civil society to limit dissent. These laws ensured that civil society could not function properly and led to the mass mobilisation which took place in the 1970s. Churches, trade unions and political parties led the struggle for freedom, mobilising their membership to support the liberation struggle along with illegal opposition organisations such as the ANC and PAC. The ANC, in power since the 1994 democratic elections, has had the country to develop an active civil society but has not successfully translated freedom into tangible economic improvements for much of South African society (M'boge and Doe 2004). The 1994 elections did not result in a total reform of the existing economic structures that had oppressed so many people. Rather, an attempt was made to simply deracialise capitalism (Hearn 2001). This has played a role in the need for CSOs that address gaps left by the lack of reform. South Africa, however, has one of the largest numbers of CSOs focusing on democracy, with organisations such as the Electoral Institute of South Africa and the Helen Suzman Foundation (Hearn 2001) ensuring that democratic values are upheld. The media remains free and human rights are still protected but, due to various factors such as widespread corruption and high levels of unemployment, political alienation remains a threat to democracy (M'boge and Doe 2004). Some such as Hearn argue that the current government has not introduced democratic reform, but rather ensured 'effective system maintenance' (Hearn 2001).

Trends

Although the previous section only touches on civil society and democracy in the sample countries, there are some important trends that are discussed. The trends focus on three areas namely: how active civil society is in the country, the type of democracy, and the link between civil society and the democratisation process.

Almost all Anglophone countries had an active civil society that helped ensure the end of colonisation. In many instances, liberation groups turned into political parties, succeeding the colonial governments through some sort of democratic election. On numerous occasions this was the closest the country would get to democracy. Bratton and Van de Walle (1994) note that of the transitions that occurred between November 1989 and May 1991, more than half were spearheaded by civil society with only five of the 21 being initiated by the leaders within the state. In countries such as Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Zambia, the succeeding governments kept the colonial systems in place so that they could hold onto power using nepotism, patriarchy and militaristic tactics. Basic human rights were denied as money that was supposed to be reinvested into infrastructure to benefit citizens was used to buy support or enrich those at the top.

A study done by Varieties of Democracy Institute shows that the presence of democratic CSOs before independence positively correlates with the level of democracy once independence has been achieved (Grahn and Lührmann 2020). This is then true for the opposite, and this shows the importance of having a strong and active civil society. In many African countries, civil society was underdeveloped and, in some instances, undemocratic, which begs to say that this may have contributed to low levels of democracy after independence.

In some countries, CSOs were fairly undemocratic themselves, holding undemocratic values or using violence as a means of gaining support (Grahn and Lührmann 2020). The problem with these undemocratic organisations is that not only can they not effectively call out the state for being undemocratic, but they risk legitimising the state's actions (Makumbe 1998). Under repressive regimes such as in Zimbabwe, civil society became more concerned with its own parochial goals than with hard issues that would draw attention from the government. It focused on issues such as promoting human rights and peace and holding government accountable to international treaties but did not go so far as to threaten the power of the government (Fokwa 2019). Civil society in authoritarian countries was severely limited by governmental policies that ensured organisations stayed out of politics, 'to prevent them from becoming a political springboard' (Neubert 2014: 8). In other words, the government ensured that NGOs remained outside the political sphere where they

could not interfere with political power or control. This was because NGOs have a unique position in society as they can educate and empower large groups of people, inspiring a fight for freedom (Okuku 2002). Civil society organisations, such as those involved in community development or providing aid, that did not challenge the government's authority, could continue with their work. Those that did question the authority of the government or challenged their power were either controlled by laws or were unsupported.

This has not been the rule for all the Anglophone African countries. The successes of civil society have been seen time and time again. In South Africa, a racist political party was removed from power in 1994 through a liberation struggle that involved countless CSOs. In Botswana, civil society thrived after independence because organisations had space to develop and grow.

Although the transition to democracy is far from complete on the African continent, one can discern a definite shift in political systems. Very few military states remain intact with international pressure ensuring some sort of democratic procedure, such as elections, take place (Bratton and Van der Walle 1994).

Elections can only be successful if a country has an active civil society. Lack of support for the political system and the government has and continues to be one of the central threats to democracy. Participation in elections legitimises the power of the government and provides support for its policy decisions. Only if there is enough participation in an election, and it meets the other conditions too, should it be considered democratic. It is thus important that civil society is not only active and informed, but also well-developed.

Media also has an important role in democracy. Freedom House asserts that, 'The erosion of press freedom is both a symptom of and a contributor to the breakdown of other democratic institutions and principles,' (Repucci 2019). In many of the case study countries where there is an autocratic government, such as in Zimbabwe, there was also a lack of unbiased, free media. The hold over media is an important one because it limits the amount of true information citizens receive. Government has used media to twist or omit information in their own favour – see the recent revelations about manipulation in the Kenyan elections. Cambridge Analytica was accused of mining voters' data to help influence the winning campaigns of President Uhuru Kenyatta (Madowo 2018). This then falsely informs the voter's opinions, resulting in ill-informed actions such as voting for a corrupt government.

Social media has however, become extremely popular in the last decade. It allows for more direct communication, provides a platform for the sharing of ideas, and ensures that news is spread rapidly. Social media platforms also mean that the distance between people is no longer a limitation

in the spreading of ideology or connecting groups of people with similar ideas. It has effectively created a viral civil society. Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are among the many platforms that provide new ways for civil society to voice opinions, spread news, and speak out about concerns with public officials or policymaking. Governments have also made the most of the opportunity to communicate more directly with communities. The downside to social media however is that fake news is being spread faster and more frequently. This hampers the work of civil society and affects democracy.

Conclusion

The concept of civil society is still developing as are the roles it is expected to fulfil. In some countries, civil society only works in the background, advocating for human rights and helping with developmental services while remaining out of government's way to ensure its own survival. In other countries, civil society is active in all spheres of the public realm, advocating and educating the masses, holding government accountable and limiting their powers while still providing aid to communities.

In the sample of Anglophone African countries that we have looked at, all started out under British colonial rule. In every single country, civil society played an active role in the fight for independence. Trade unions and churches were at the forefront of the struggle, providing a platform to voice opinions and air plans of action. NGO's carried forward the fight for fundamental human rights while providing communities with basic needs, such as housing, food and education, which were not adequately being supplied by the government. In some countries, such as South Africa, independence led to the disengagement of some CSOs, while others who had played an active role in the fight for freedom took power.

Regrettably, democracy did not flourish. In many of the countries, including Zimbabwe, the new leaders may have held elections, but that was not democracy. Some governments used their position to loot money national coffers, buy support, or use force to remain in power. In others, where elections were successfully held, a considerable degree of democracy was achieved. Free and fair elections together with the freedoms associated with human rights, such as free speech, has been upheld in countries such as South Africa and Kenya. At the same time, power may be limited, but levels of corruption amongst those in government are indications that leaders are still not being held accountable. As such, the democratisation process is not yet over, and civil society

still has a lot to achieve.

For civil society, the democratisation process will never be over. Civil society plays an essential watchdog role – holding leaders accountable and limiting their power will always be something that they need to do to ensure the government does not resort to being undemocratic.

For civil society to be successful it needs to be allowed to work and strengthen. This can only happen with the support of the government. In a democracy civil society needs to work hand in hand with the government to ensure the needs of the people are met. Only in this way can countries such as those in Anglophone Africa become true liberal democracies.

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