Danish Support to Civil Society

- understanding the implications of multi-donor funds supporting civil society

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Abstract

This thesis critically examines the Danish support to civil society and relates it to the Aid Effectiveness Agenda. Increasingly multi-donor funds are used to support civil society in partner countries directly. Through a case study of a multi-donor fund in Ghana, this thesis tries to understand the underlying motivation behind pooled funding mechanisms and the implications this have for civil society in partner countries. After discussing what civil society means and where it comes from, the role of civil society and development is reviewed. Often civil society is ascribed normative meaning in terms of democratization. However, only by applying an analytical approach is the concept relevant in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. After generating five hypotheses -following an in-depth desk-research- about STAR-Ghana (the case study) and aid effectiveness, six semi-structure interviews document STAR-Ghana's implications for civil society in Ghana. Amongst the main findings, it is shown that the institutional donors are more concerned with their own agendas than national strategies. Further, the donor harmonization lead to an increased professionalization of civil society in Ghana, as the requirements for obtaining support is raised. Finally, concerns for public support to development cooperation have led to an unprecedented emphasis on accountability and results-based management, as short-term results are easier to communicate than long-term development.

The overall conclusion seems to be, that STAR-Ghana is multi-donor fund that in fact promote aid *efficiency* rather than aid *effectiveness*.

Keywords:
#Civil Society #Multi-Donor Funds #Development Aid #STAR-Ghana #Danida #Aid Effectiveness #New Public Management

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Preface

In the autumn of 2013 I wrote a paper on a reform of how Danida supports Danish civil society organizations with aid programs. The 'Evaluation of Danish Support to Civil Society' motivated the reform, and I was inspired to continue the research on this topic. This thesis studies Danish direct support to civil society rooted in the 'Policy for Danish Support to Civil Society', which is the implementation of the evaluation's findings.

Former Director of UNDP's Nordic Office Jakob Simonsen had supervised the former paper, and he was later a great help to me when I arrived at the present topic. I am grateful for his time and interest in my work.

In the spring of 2014 Professor Anker Brink Lund agreed to supervise this present thesis. The interest he has taken in my study has been extraordinary, and I am grateful for the supervision he has given me, as well the way he integrated me into his Center for Civil Society Studies. I have benefit much from this.

Indeed, I am indebted to the practitioners -none mentioned, none forgotten- who took time to discuss my thesis's problem. Without their contribution, it would have been impossible to go into depth with my study. Thank you.

On a more personal note, I would like to credit Professor Kristian Kreiner who kindly has shared his office with me, where the most of this present paper has been typed, and printed. I am also thankful to Iben Sandal Stjerne. She has patiently engaged in methodological and theoretical discussions and made me be critically aware of my choices. Thank you!

Finally, in the preparation of this document I have received valuable comments from my friends Bjarke Søndergaard, Iben Villumsen, Tobias Krogh and Troels Veien who have worked (hard) to transform my Danish English into readable English. Next beers on me!

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

Civil society has moved center stage in the current discussion of transnational politics. With increasing concerns over global issues and global actors, global governance - which deals with the capacity to enforce decisions on a global scale without a centralized authority (Rosenau & Czempiel 1992) - is consequently becoming increasingly important. However, global governance is under transformation. Traditionally, nation-states have been at the heart of global governance. Yet, the challenges confronting decision-makers today call for new and more inclusive approaches to global governance (Strange 1996). This is especially true for development policy. With point of departure in Margaret Levi's much cited, Weberian, 2002[1] definition of the nation-state, globalization have challenged its reach and non-state actors have tapped into this vacuum: The proliferation of civil society and other non-state actors in global governance, which has followed from globalization, is a response to that call (Avant et al. 2010).

Describing the ability of civil society, the World Economic Forum does not mince their words when stating that: "civil society actors are demonstrating their value as facilitators, conveners and innovators as well as service providers and advocates" (WEF 2013 p. 5).

The rise of the global South has been critical to the transformation of global governance. However, whilst emerging markets are winning more geopolitical significance, they still face significant developmental challenges. Whereas the

[1] A state is a complex apparatus of centralized and institutionalized power that concentrates violence, establishes property rights, and regulates society within a given territory while being formally recognized as a state by international forums.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)[2] broadly have succeeded in meeting their targets, the post2015 development agenda is faced with the complexity that the majority of the World's ultra-poor people (those living on $1.25 per day or less) live in middle-income countries, while the rest live in fragile states.

Nowhere is this truer than in Africa. On one hand, some African countries are displaying impressive growth rates, and being re-categorized as middle-income (the so-called emerging markets). On the other hand, countries that cannot deliver on political stability and security are becoming increasingly disconnected from the global economy (the so-called fragile states). Whilst emerging markets and fragile states obviously face different developmental challenges, civil society is central to attain sustainable development for emerging markets and fragile states alike.

Globalization has not only been a factor in the re-shuffle of global actors, but also in the development of resource flows into developing countries. With the relative decline of official developmental assistance (ODA), other sources of developmental financing are gaining ground (See Figure 1). The importance of cash transfer and remittances is increasingly discussed both in relation to development, but also in humanitarian assistance. Equally, the developmental effects of the spurring private financial resources into Africa are discussed heavily among practitioners.

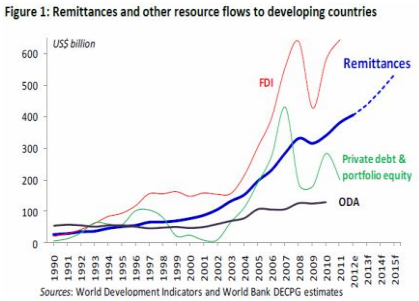

Figure 1: Remittances and other resource flows to developing countries (The World Bank 2012).

This study will, however, examine the call for more effective aid following the relative decline of the ODA. This concern is the Archimedean point for the series of High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness, which has emerged as the main authority with regard to effective aid. One way national aid agencies progressively are implementing the tenets of aid effectiveness is by pooled funding mechanisms, in particular through multi-donor funds supporting civil society in developing countries.

[2] The MDGs are eight goals that all 191 UN Member States have agreed to try to achieve by the year 2015. These include commitments to fight for poverty eradication, improved health and environmental sustainability.

1.1. Puzzle

Denmark is recognized as one of the world's leading donors and civil society has always been a central channel of a substantial part of the Danish developmental assistance. The Danish Civil Society Strategy has traditionally been the central authority in this regard, and now the new Danish Civil Society Policy[3] has been agreed on, consequently transcending the old strategy into a new policy. This will widen the scope of the policy to cover all Danish interactions with civil society, and unlike now not be limited to interactions with Danish civil society organizations (CSOs).

One of the central changes the new policy brings about is an explicit and increased commitment to support civil society in developing countries directly.

> *The Right to a Better Life* emphasises that Denmark will continue to support small and medium-sized civil society organisations. This will be done increasingly through direct support to civil society organisations in the global South. (Policy for Danish Support to Civil Society, p. 4.)

Such direct support will predominantly be channeled through multi-donor funds. However, concerns to the extent that such multi-donor funds actually is 'direct south funding' has been raised. Ultimo 2013 the quasi-confederation NGO Forum arranged a workshop discussing the 'use and misuse of multi donor funds', discussing that concern. While such a debate is highly valuable, more systematic research is needed to understand the intentions behind such funds, and their implications for civil society in partner countries. Some argue that multi-donor funds advance aid effectiveness, while exactly the multi-donor funds' aid effectiveness merits have been questioned recently (Barakat 2009).

Ghana is an emerging market, which Denmark has a long and proud history of assisting in development. Moreover, Ghana has a rich tradition for such multi-donor pools, where STAR-Ghana is, currently, a quintessential example of such a multi-donor fund.

[3] Policy for Danish Support to Civil Society.

These dynamics has inspired me to the following research question: *What are the main economic reasoning and political motivation behind multi-donor funds as STAR-Ghana and what are the main implications of this particular institutional framework for civil society in Ghana?*

1.2. Structure of the Thesis

This brief guide of the structure and content of the thesis concludes the introductory chapter (1). The next chapter (2) will outline and justify the methodological choices. In discussing the philosophy of social science, American Pragmatism will be highlighted because of its problem-oriented approach to research. Further, with point of departure in Yin's (2009) typology, the design of the case study will presented. A review of the data collection and its limitation will conclude Chapter Two.

Due to the inconsistent language of civil society, only by reviewing the literature and presenting some definitional boundaries can the study be situated and compared to other contributions. Thus, a literature review will open the following chapter (3). Based on a comprehensive review of the role of civil society in a developmental studies and policy, the Aid Effectiveness Agenda will be introduced. Ending Chapter Three, the link between New Public Management in Danida[4] and the support to civil society in Ghana will be discussed.

The empirical chapter (5) starts with an introduction into the history of Ghana and an analysis of today's civil society in order to provide the necessary context for the subsequent case study analysis. Further, some global trends in the international aid debate will be highlighted, before tuning in on STAR-Ghana and the case study analysis. The subsequent case study analysis will then be used to document and discuss the central aspects underlying the institutional setup and how this most likely will implicate civil society in Ghana. First, a section will generate hypotheses about the relation between STAR-Ghana and the Paris Declaration, and subsequently a section test them against the data collected for the study. Finally the concluding chapter (5) will summarize the study's main points relating to the motivation behind STAR-Ghana and its implications for civil

[4] Danida is the term used for Denmark's development cooperation, which is an area of activity under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

society in Ghana. An identification of future research grounds will conclude the empirical section.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Methodology

2.1. The Philosophy of Social Science

Social science research arguably enjoys an ambivalent relationship to the philosophy of science. Andrew Collier (1994, p. 17) reasons: “that the alternative to philosophy is not **no** philosophy, **but** bad philosophy. The "unphilosophical" person has an unconscious philosophy, which they apply in their practice - whether of science or politics or daily life”. Still, more often than not, explicit ontological and epistemological considerations are not expressed in social science. This is problematic since, arguably, all research comes with some inherent assumptions about the demarcation of knowledge and reality - and have done so ever since the Antiquity where the ‘Stranger’ in Plato’s his conversation-series states: “What we shall see is something like a Battle of Gods and Giants going on between them over their quarrel about reality” (Moses and Knutsen 2007, p. 7).

Essentially, it is the ontological and epistemological differences that are the basis of the grand debates of science. In practice, this is expressed in the schism between positivism and interpretivism. In short, positivism is based on the view that information derived from logical and mathematical treatments and reports of sensory experience is the exclusive source of all authoritative knowledge, and that there is valid knowledge (truth) only in scientific knowledge. On the contrary, interpretivism argues that agents construct their own worlds, and thus the truth can be a plural construct. Moreover, they argue that social science should focus on meaning and not causal patterns (Moses and Knutsen 2007).

Obviously the two stands are ideal-types, and as for the case of most ideal-types: extremes. Although most scholars in practice find themselves writing in some kind of hybrid (Ibid), such old belief can, arguably, reinforce old dichotomies. Some scholar like Cohen (2008) argues that entire academic fields

can be divided based on their methodological differences. Leander (2009) among others, however, argues that such classification does more harm than good, as method and not arguments are used to assess research (Leander 2009).

This paper applies a more pragmatic approach to such metatheoretical debates, as the study is designed by a problem-driven approach. As such, real world problem solving is the ethos of this study.

2.1.1. American Pragmatism

This paper follows the ethos of Rudra Sil and Peter Katzenstein (2010) rooted in American pragmatism, and is inspired from their concept of 'analytical eclecticism'. They call for some degree of pragmatism in relation to the view of the world and to: "set aside metatheoretical debates in favor of a pragmatist view of social inquiry" (Sil and Katzenstein 2010, p. 417). They argue that a problem-driven approach is more appropriate. Building on 'the canonical trinity' of pragmatism (John Dewey, Charles Pierce, and William James) they argue that the main tenets of pragmatism is to rethink rigid 'knowledge claims' and employ an 'open-ended ontology' (Ibid).

Sil and Katzenstain (2010) argue that while pragmatism emerged and proliferated in the late 19th century it soon found itself demoted. In the late 1960's pragmatism received a renewed attention and resurgence in a resistance against logical positivism, mainly driven by Hilary Putnam and Richard Rorty (Ibid).

2.1.1.1 Ontology and Epistemology

Pragmatism at the same time rejects positivism's preoccupation with cause and effect relationships and interpretivism's overall criticism and focus on the social construction of meaning. Rather, as implied by the etymology of pragmatism (practical), it has a less stringent attitude to the grand debates of the philosophy of social science.

Ontology is the theory of being, in layman's terms it is the theory of how things really work. While other stands are seeking to discover law-like causalities or abstract structure-agency linkages, pragmatism are not concerned with such metatheoretical beliefs. Rather "to a pragmatist, the mandate of science is not to

find truth or reality, the existence of which are perpetually in dispute, but to facilitate human problem-solving" (Powell 2001, p. 884). Thus, the ontological stand becomes the practical implications of ideas i.e. the truth is what is useful. This study applies a very problem-oriented research design. Due to scope of the study, the data are neither longitudinal nor do they consist of first-hand observations in Ghana, which would yield higher validity for the findings[5]. As such, the truth claim for this present study is derived from the interview subjects' perceptions of STAR-Ghana's implications for civil society in Ghana.

In abstract terms, epistemology is the theory of knowledge. Distilled in a way that for philosophers might be banal, epistemology *de facto* deals with what can be known and how can it be acquired. Pragmatism is epistemologically characterized by its practical approach to acquire knowledge. It is well known that other stands either has very formal and codified rules for generalization or are considered skeptical towards generalization of knowledge and rather preoccupied with the specific context of study. Such knowledge claims pragmatists view as too rigid. John Dewey coined the concept of 'reconstruction' to be applied in this regard. He argued that traditional and rigid knowledge claims was reproduced and defended, totally disregarding the specificity of the real-world problems (Sil and Katzenstein 2010). Pragmatism values whatever approach solves the problem, i.e. the method that answer the research question. Accordingly, in a quest to "clip the wings of abstract concepts in order to ground philosophy in the practicalities of everyday life", pragmatism can be said to be producing middle-range theories (Kaag 2009 in Sil and Katzenstein 2010, p. 417). In section 2.3. on data collection, it will be showed that the scope of the study did not allow for field-research and empirical observations, however, from a quintessential pragmatic reasoning interview subjects with first-hand knowledge was then interviewed through Skype or in Denmark.

With a point of departure inspired by 'analytical eclecticism', this study holds a problem-driven approach. The findings will be based on abduction (also called

[5] This will be elaborated in section 2.3.1. 'Validity'.

Inference to the Best Explanation), which pays special tribute to explanatory considerations. Abbott (2004) explains by his notion 'circles of critiques' how no *one* method is perfect. All methods come with weaknesses or limitations, thus often sound and robust method is acquired by a combining quantitative data with qualitative, interviews with observation and so forth. From a pragmatic point of view it is however important to stress that the research problem should inform the research design. This will now be discussed below.

2.2. Research Design

2.2.1. Research Method

Choosing a research method is a defining choice, which holds implications for throughout the entire study. As argued by Abbott (2004) no method is *per se* better than any other, each comes with clear merits and limitations.

Table VI Research strategies versus characteristics

Strategy	Form of research question	Requires control over behavioural events?	Focuses on contemporary events?
Experiment	How, why	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, what, where, how many, how much	No	Yes
Archival analysis	How, why	No	Yes/No
History	How, why	No	No
Case study	How, why	No	Yes

Source: Yin (1994)

Table 1: Research approaches and characteristics (Yin 2009).

Assuming Abbott's claim is true, how is one then to choose? Yin (2009, p. 2) argues that the choice should be based: "upon three conditions: the type of research questions, the control an investigator has over the actual behavioral events, and the focus on contemporary as opposed to historical phenomena". Yin (2009) reasons that case studies are beneficiary when the research question is 'how or why', as case studies holds great explanatory merits. Further, case studies are optimal when the researcher has little control over the behavioral events, and holds a contemporary focus (See the Table 1 above[6]). As such Yin (2009, p. 18) defines a case study as: "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context is not clearly evident".

[6] Yin's research approaches (which he himself calls strategies) are by no means an exhausted list. Still it suffices for the purpose of justifying a case study for research strategy.

As this study seeks to analyze how the increased commitment to multi-donor funds supporting civil society -as STAR-Ghana- in the new Danish Civil Society Policy (contemporary dimension) affects the civil society in Ghana, and I, as researcher have a very limited control over this event, a case study approach seems optimal.

2.2.2.1. Case Study Design

Following Yin's (2009) typology[7] on case studies (See Figure 2 to the right), one should first decide on the number of cases. This present study is a single-case design. This is justified, as the case study is 'revelatory' (Ibid), in the form that the policy is so new, that it only during the study has been formally approved by legislators. By focusing on a single case, as opposed to a multiple-case design, it allows for an even more thorough inquiry. In subsequent research, though, a multiple-case design could highlight valuable comparative political insights. Next, holistic designs are preferable when no logical subunits can be studied, or the underlying theory is of a holistic nature (Ibid). However, this risks becoming overly abstract in effect producing celestial grand theories as opposed to pragmatic middle-ranging theories. This present study has the ambition of documenting the motives behind the policy's commitment to 'direct south funding' as well as its implementation, and the consequences for civil society. Hence, several units of analysis are studied. As such, this present thesis follows a single-case embedded design.

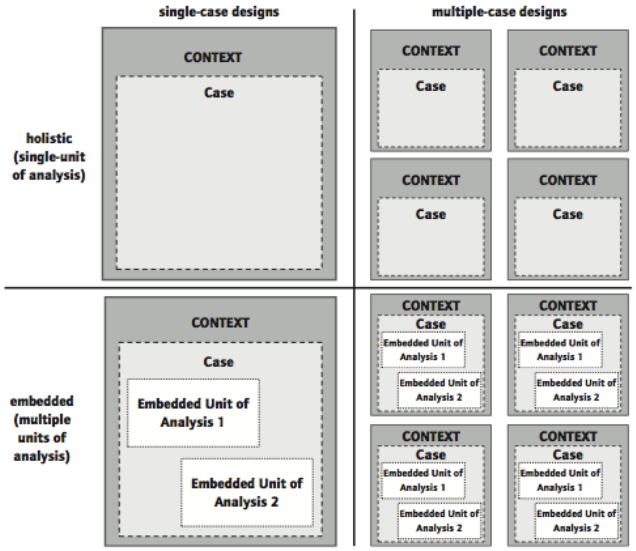

Figure 2.4 Basic Types of Designs for Case Studies
SOURCE: COSMOS Corporation.

Figure 2: Case study designs (Yin 2009).

[7] Various other typologies exist, which Gary Thomas (2011) in a well written article in depth goes through, however, as the other focus on data, Yin (2009) stresses the role of the unit of analysis.

2.2.2.2. Prejudices against case studies

Having assessed the strengths of this research method above, it is – following Abbott (2004) and Yin (2009) – important to openly acknowledge the method's limitations. However, more often than not, the case study method has been subjected to unshaded and biased critique.

While the case study method allows for an in-depth examination of a phenomenon, this very merit is often subject to criticism. Flyvbjerg (2006) highlights, in his outline of 'Five misunderstandings about case study research', that context-dependent knowledge is not valued as highly as context-independent knowledge, which among other factors troubles generalization. However, Kreiner (2011) draws attention to Burawoy's (1998, p. 13) argument that "…context is not noise disguising reality but rather reality itself". Thus, Kreiner (2011) argues, one needs to understand the empirical uniqueness to fully understand a phenomenon. Further, Flyvbjerg (2006) raises the interesting idea, that context-independent knowledge might be an illusion. Somehow - by research design, data collection or analysis - a researcher always will affect a study, making total context-independence utopic.

So: "if case study methodology celebrates the uniqueness of the chosen case; and if knowledge to some extent must build on generalizations; what claims to knowledge can be made from a case study?" (Kreiner 2011, p. 11). The short answer is that a case study is not adept at 'enumerate frequencies', but rather useful for expanding and generalizing theories. This implies analytical generalizations rather than statistical generalizations (Yin 2009). A prime example hereto is Allison's (1969) case study of the Cuban Missile Crisis, which generate analytical generalization highly influencing political science as well as organizational theory ever since.

Another central issue regarding case studies is the (mistaken) belief that methods have a hierarchical relation and case studies only are appropriate for preliminary research and generating hypothesis. On the contrary, case studies can be more than exploratory (Yin 2009). Descriptive and explanatory case studies are common and significant (Allison's case study of the Cuban Missile Crisis also illustrates this).

Having discussed the main concerns regarding case study research, it is still important to be open about its actual limitations. The main implication for this present study is that the method holds little - if any - merits outside the 'how/why' dimension, thus being unable to generate statistical knowledge.

2.2.2. Case Selection

Having argued for the relevance of studying new aid modalities, as multi-donor funds, in the introduction, this section will justify the limitation of only looking at the implications for civil society in Ghana.

Africa is often, assumed incorrectly to have developed a form of civil society only recently (this will be documented section 3.3. and 4.1.). The truth, as will be discussed later, is that civil society in Africa is diverse and distinct. Recently, donors are increasingly supporting modalities of direct south funding, including Denmark. Still, knowledge is scattered and limited on the role of local civil society in the development in Africa.

While Africa is constituted of 54 countries, and Sub-Saharan Africa by 48, Denmark only has representation in 13 of these, and of these 13, only 8 countries are 'Priority Countries'[8]. A central methodological concern for this present study's validity with regards to analytical generalization was to choose a case country with substantial Danish involvement. Consequently, the case selection took into account where the main activity will occur. And while a substantial amount of ODA recently has been relocated to civil society from the Ugandan government – due to their anti-gay bill – Ghana's civil society is more vibrant, and the Danish commitment to Ghana more substantial (in detailed outlined in section 4.1.3.). Further, Ghana has a rich tradition for multi-donor funds supporting civil society. Today STAR-Ghana is one of the most prominent examples hereon, and is supported by DFID, Danida, USAID and the EU[9]. A more thorough case presentation will follow (in section 4.1.4.).

[8] Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe (UM 20014A).

[9] The Department for International Development (UK's national aid agency) and The United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

2.3. Data Collection

The validity of research is highly dependent on the validity of the sources applied. In the same way, the quality of an argument is a function of the particular type of source applied and the way it has been retrieved. One commonly distinguishes between primary and secondary sources. The demarcation, though often indistinct, lies in whether or not it is a contemporary account. A primary source is written or created during at the time of the event or phenomenon. On the contrary, secondary sources report on primary sources, and are not necessarily contemporary accounts (Booth et al. 2008). Further, primary sources are commonly associated with first-hand accounts, contrary to secondary sources. Though the distinction is frequently understood as either-or choice between two ideal-types, in practice one benefit by understanding them as trade-offs on a continuum instead.

Still, the distinction has implications for research. Pioneering *Quellenkritik* Leopard von Ranke suggested a hierarchy of sources, where primary sources take supremacy over secondary. However, such a hierarchy is misplaced. Primary sources do not *per se* guarantee objectivity and could be biased if they marginalize relevant, but undocumented events. Rather, the skills of the researcher to critically judge and select among sources is the guarantor of validity and reliability. Therefore, the next paragraph will engage in a discussion of how this present study constructs validity.

2.3.1. Validity

This present study strives towards being very well documented, and for that purpose relies on a mixture of primary and secondary sources including - but not limited to – observations, handbooks, formal and informal interviews, published case studies, government documents and photographs.

The mixture and multiplicity of sources is at the heart of Yin's (2009) notion of validity. Further, he suggests establishing a clear chain of evidence. This is secured through a thorough data analysis, which will be elaborated on in a separate section below (Section 2.4.). Finally, peer-reviews and ensuring that key informants review a draft, enhances the validity of the findings. As mentioned in the preface this has been the case for this present paper.

2.3.2. Sources and Reliability

A distinct component of validity is reliability (Yin 2009). A central issue – of particular relevance dealing with Sub-Saharan countries – is the reliability of sources. Moravcsik (1998 cited in Buch-Hansen 2008) argues that: "the reliability of a source is a function of the extent to which the activity it documents is one in which it is costly to manipulate or misstate the truth". In consistence with the quote, he cautions against basing research on journalistic sources, as readers are unable to evaluate the reliability, exactness and underlying assumptions (Ibid). Accepting this claim, the thesis will not base definite claims on such sources, nor any other secondary sources. However, to an extent they will function as supplement to primary sources. Thus, references to newspapers like The Economist will appear. More to the point, government documents and analyses by international organizations are, more often than not, incomplete and disputable in a Sub-Saharan context due to the difficulties in gathering information. To make the data collection of this present study more robust a method of triangulation will be applied. First, through thorough desk-research, the available secondary sources have been collected, and the primary sources located. Second, formal and informal interviews were conducted to elaborate, qualify and expand the preliminary findings. Third, observations through workshop participation and from relevant organizations secure a third input. Despite the numerical sequence this is by no means a linear process. Rather, observations have been done all along the study, and some (informal) interviews were conducted before the research question was raised.

Hence, the data was collected in a nonlinear manner. The first data was collected during the early summer of 2013 and the final span into ultimo 2014. This arguably further strengthens the reliability of the study. Having secured the data through a longer period of time does not, however, characterize the study as longitudinal as separate time series are not analyses. As such the study is not a longitudinal study.

2.3.3. Interviews

Consistent with the above, secondary sources will only be supplement, and limited to reliable outlets. The study, thus, predominantly relies on primary data.

According to Kreiner and Mouritsen (2005, p. 153) interviews are: “probably the most prevalent method for collecting data in the social sciences”. The aim of these contemporary accounts is to secure a holistic and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon.

Conventionally the structure of an interview serves as demarcation of the type of interview one conduct. Unstructured interviews are particularly appropriate in the initial stage of a study and generally, when the interviewer knows little about the given topic at hand. Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to take more control of the conversation by following an interview guide. Arguably, both the interviewer and the interviewee learn during an interview, and the semi-structured interview enables the interviewer to probe into such new knowledge. Finally, the structured interview is more rigorous, and strictly follows the interview guide. This is mostly reserved for survey purposes.

This present study will build on a number of informal interviews conducted with experts from development non-governmental organizations (DNGOs). This is done to get a sense of direction, often, following a popular saying, to ‘pick their brains’.

Further, a number of (6) semi-structured interview was conducted. The participants were chosen on the basis of representing relevant stakeholders from as many sides as possible.

However, the quality of an interview is a function of the skills of an interviewer. All who have conducted interviews know that there is no such thing as a perfect interview, but some mistakes are more severe than others. In the interviews conducted for this present study, I was much very aware neither to ask leading questions nor to put words into the interviewees’ mouth. Further, by interviewing the central stakeholders, combined with observations through workshop-participation, I hope to accede to such claims of bias. Finally, some scholars per default distrust qualitative data, such as qualitative interviews. This discussion is beyond this paper to conclude, however it is the central discussion in section 2.4.

2.3.4. Limitations

All concerns about validity, reliability and generalizability are only second to the concern for an explicit and well-argued section discussing the limitations of the data collection.

While the aforementioned validity procedures are clear and simple in theory, practice is another thing. A triangulation of data (desk-research, interviews and observations) is a common technique to validate findings in social science. However, due to the scope of the study, the actual data collection did not meet such an ideal scenario. While the desk-research has been thorough and well documented at all stages of the study, more interviews would have been beneficial. In particular, more interviews with the Ghanian CSOs receiving grants from STAR-Ghana could have been advantageous.

More essential, empirical *in situ* observations would have given me the chance to contrast the interview respondents' perceptions of aid effectiveness and implications for Ghana's civil society with my own observations. In section 5.3. an outline of the ideal study is described while discussing further research.

This holds implications for the format of the study as well. Earlier Yin's (2009, p. 18) definition of a case study analysis was outlined (in section 2.2.): "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context is not clearly evident". While this from the offset was the ambition of the study, in retrospect, these expectations have not been met. Without additional interviews and empirical *in situ* observations it is in fact more a *bricolage* analysis, rather than a case study analysis.

The study has been documented to the best of my abilities, with all its limitations. The hereinbefore mentioned limitations of the data collection is however a result of the scope of the study. Overall, this study in effect resembles a pilot study or mapping, which a subsequent study, granted time and money, could be constructed in manner, which actual fulfill the requirements to a case study outlined in Yin's (2009) definition.

This is, however, not to say that the findings herein are without any authority, quite the opposite (all findings have been subject to validation and discussion with

experts). However, they are best understood as tentative conclusions rather than 'the whole story'.

2.4. Data Analysis

2.4.1. Credibility

The fundamental virtue of the qualitative research interview[10] is its openness. This openness allows for a continued and constant learning, even during the interview itself. However, as Kvale (2007, p. 34) reminds us: "no standard procedures or rules exist for conducting a [qualitative] research interview". The lack of codified (or rigorous) standardized methods in qualitative research is central to the scientific traditionalists' skepticism towards qualitative research. Such prejudice is however misplaced. Andersen (2010) explains how all data initially have been 'raw data' and thus, per definition, qualitative. Categorization and the assignment of 'arbitrary Arabic symbols' (numbers), he argues, do not make data more trustworthy. Rather, quantitative research is more often than not based on 'strong' assumptions, and is just as vulnerable to manipulation and various biases as qualitative research (For an elaboration of quantitative research errors see: Zikmund et al. 2009, pp. 188-194).

According to Andersen (2010, p. 185) an analysis is "the separation of a phenomenon's constituent parts and the examination of these constituents' relations to each other and the unity". Having established that qualitative analysis is distinct from, though not any less scientific, than quantitative analysis, Kvale (2009) draws attention to the '1,000 pages question'. How should one start analyzing 1,000 pages of interview transcripts? Kvale's (2009, p. 103) answer is simple: "Too much and too late". Qualitative research analysis is much more integrated than quantitative research and takes place prior, during and after the interview.

2.4.2. The Seven Stages of an Interview

Though agreed upon modes of analysis has yet to be diffused across social science, Kvale (1996) introduced 'The Seven Stages of an Interview" in order to

[10] As opposed to quantitative, closed-end, survey-style interviews.

abstract an approach to analyze qualitative interview. As this thesis' conclusions have chiefly been derived from qualitative and primary data, Kvale's (1996) conceptualization is well suited as a 'frame' (See Table 2).

The Seven Stages of an Interview	
1.	Thematizing – what do you want to investigate and why?
2.	Designing - plan the design of the study and the interview guide.
3.	Interviewing -conduct the interview based on the guide.
4.	Transcribing - prepare the interview material for analysis.
5.	Analyzing - decide on the mode of analysis that is appropriate.
6.	Verifying - ascertain the validity of the interview findings.
7.	Reporting - communicate the findings of the study.

Table 2: The Seven Stages of an Interview (Kvale 1996).

As the theme of the study has been outlined above, there is no reason to go into further details in this regard. The design of the interview manifests itself into the materialization of the interview guide. Here, several topical domains will be singled out for each interview, making subsequent analysis more amendable (for examples hereon, see Appendix 1). Further, probes for the interview were prepared, as well as some visual presentations were made in order to accede to the potential lack of responds to an initial question. The format of the interviews was semi-structured. This finds expression in that most topical domains begin with a 'grand-tour' question, asking the interviewee to describe a phenomenon. For instance: "describe the impact of the policy". By starting with such an open question, the interviewer can gain new knowledge and get familiar with the interviewee. Subsequently more focused questions can document the particular significance for the interviewee's organization.

Transcribing a semi-structured interview can be a challenging task. Here the topical domains come in handy. To avoid walking into the trap of the 1,000 pages, rigid structures in the transcriptions ease the subsequent analysis. The analysis can be strictly categorizing or interpretive, however typically some degree of mixture is the norm. Kvale (2009) applies the notion of 'bricolage' to signify the commitment to an eclectic form of generating meaning. As such, the transcripts are reread, compared and related. Finding quotes, capturing the interview subjects' perceptions develops narratives. Some meaning is sometimes visualized through flow charts.

This approach is in the nature of things subject to the researches interpretation, and potential bias. To concede hereto, the process of validation (as described in paragraph 2.3.1.) incudes triangulation of data sources, reviews and re-interviews. This reasserts the validity. Finally, the findings will be the basis for the present study's findings.

2.5. Summary

The study's overall methodological choices have been outlined. Following Yin's (2009) typology the study is a single embedded case study. The data is predominantly qualitative and six semi-structure interviews are the most central contribution to the primary data. It was further argued, that due to the scope of the paper observations and additional interviews, or re-interviews have not been done. In discussing further research, section 5.3. elaborates on how to fully develop this present study.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Theory

Civil society has been a point of study among theorists since the philosophers of the Western Antiquity. Concerned with good governance, a just society and the rights and responsibilities of citizens, they essentially studied the nature of the good society (Edwards 2009).

While such omnipresent issues continue to dominate the civil society agenda, civil society has profoundly changed during the last two decades. First, the external environment – as described in the introduction – has changed, enabling the recent proliferation of CSO's. Second, following The World Economic Forum (2013, p.3) "a renewed focus on the essential contribution of civil society to a resilient global system alongside government and business has emerged". As such, civil society is now recognized as both vibrant and influential. Though having stopped short of a democratic transition, The Arab Spring showed the world how influential a vibrant civil society, even in oppressed regimes, can be. The Stop Kony campaign famously, and successfully, utilized the opportunities of new media with its 'Kony 2012' Youtube[11] video, which was the most viral video in 2012[12] and earned TIME's appraisal: "it's undeniable that Kony 2012 set a new bar for all things viral" (TIME 2012). Finally, as the landscape of

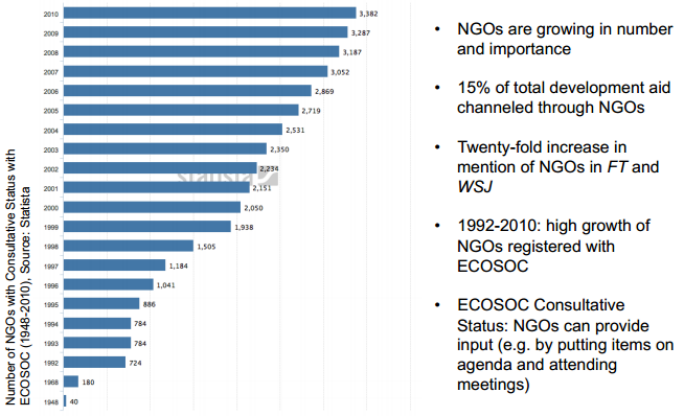

Figure 3: Number of NGOs with Consultative Status with ECOSOC (Statista 2014)

[11] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4MnpzG5Sqc
[12] Today (October 2014) it has been was watch just short of a 100,000,000 times.

CSOs is both scatetred and fragmented an absolute number is difficult to obtain, hence the number of organizations with cosultuncy status to ECOSOC[13] can be used as a proxy meassure to indicate the proliferation and trend (suggested to me by Profesor Andreas Rache). Figure 3 above clearly shows the exponetial growth from 724 organizations in 1992 to almost 3,400 CSO's in 2010 (Today the number exceeds 3,900).

The global trend is, however, not universal. As Figure 4 shows, an alarmingly high percentage across CSOs in 33 countries views their national regulations as at least limiting for their operations. In effect, the space for civil society is in some countries shrinking, most often in countries with democratic challenges and regular human rights violations. While very few countries outright ban civil society activities, burdensome regulation and media control is proving increasingly challenging for civil society (World Economic Forum 2013). This is particular true for the majority of African countries (Ibid).

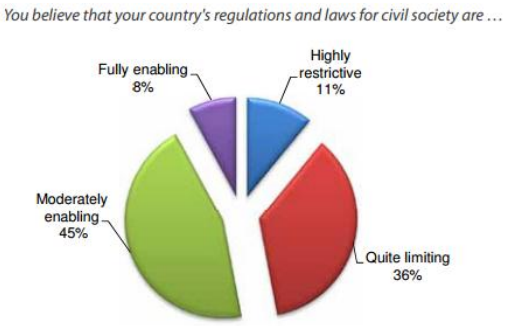

Figure 4: Civil Society's Perception of Laws and Regulation (Civicus 2011).

As such, civil society has meaning both in time and space: from the Western Antiquity to today, and from Europe to across Africa. Therefore, it is necessary to explicitly reflect on the particular meaning ascribed to civil society in this paper.

3.1. What does civil society mean and where does it come from?

Today civil society studies are no longer retained to a body of Western Philosophers. The study of civil society has diffused to various academic traditions such as anthropology, political science and development studies, explaining why civil society never has enjoyed a single uncontested definition (Keane 1998). The inconsistent use of the concept and different language applied to study it complicates comparison, and an elaborate account for the present applications is needed in order to situate this present study.

[13] ECOSOC is a principal organ at the UN, coordinating the economic and social work of 14 UN specialized agencies and is arguably a vital forum for CSOs.

Thus, before considering how civil society has been involved in the quest for development in Sub-Saharan Africa it is important to understand what civil society *actually* denotes. A popular and common understanding of civil society is as 'the realm outside the state and market', and hence as 'the third sector' (e.g. UNDP 2011 and generally the work of John Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies). However, to understand the inherent implications of such a definition, one must consider the origin of the concept.

The literature is not scarce of contributions suggesting different approaches to conceptualize studies on civil society (e.g. Edwards 2009; Cohen and Arato 1992; Brink Lund 2014). Goran Hyden (1997, p. 5) admits that dissecting a complex discourse and highlighting its founding fathers 'is always fraught with difficulty'. According to Hyden (1997) civil society should be understood in relation to the rise of capitalism and 'the modern state[14]' (defined in a Weberian sense of rational legal government structures, see Weber 1968 or section 1.2. in this paper). Hence, civil society is in fact associated with the thoughts and ideas of European philosophers and political theorists of the Enlightenment, in particular Locke, Hegel, Tocqueville and Paine.

Hyden (1997) distinguish between two defining parameters (Figure 5): The extent that civil society is autonomous or linked with the state and whether civil society is seen as an economic realm or an associational sphere. He then links with the classical thoughts of notable civil society theorists (see Hyden 1997), and secondly to four modern-day schools within civil society studies, depicted in Figure 5 above.

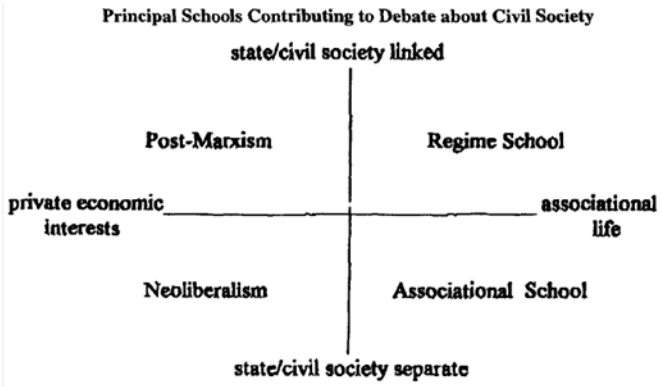

Figure 5: Principal Schools Contributing to Debate about Civil Society (Hyden 1997).

[14] Pending on definition one could, righty, argue that civil society dates as far back as the Western Antiquity.

3.2. Theorizing Civil Society in an European Context

Such typology is ideal to get an overview of theoretical contribution and group scholars. Moreover, it provides a necessary common language enabling comparison. However, this typology carries very little analytical power, which often is the case for ideal-types. First, clear lines are in general difficult to draw. It as argued by the World Economic Forum that this is particularly true for civil society as: ”civil society today includes an ever wider and more vibrant range of organized and unorganized groups, as new civil society actors blur the boundaries between sectors and experiment with new organizational forms, both online and off” (WEF 2013, p. 5). Complicating this further is the fact that new organizational forms blur the horizontal differentiation and state funding and cross-sector partnerships blurs up with the vertical distinction.

The new dynamics of civil society suggests that labeling it as a third sector is an inadequate definition. It is far more than a NGO dominated sector, and “should be the glue that binds public and private activity together in such a way to strengthen the common good” rather than a separate sector in itself (WEF 2013, p. 5).

In a Danish context three distinct developments illustrates the difficulty of applying that particular definition. Firstly, in Denmark most volunteering (a central element within civil society) are done within organization but not all. Recent developments suggest that volunteering within the state is becoming more central to the preservation of the welfare state. Further, corporate volunteerism is on the rise too. This is rooted in the diffusion of corporate social responsibility into larger Danish companies (Henriksen 2014). Secondly, it is true for most Danish CSOs working with aid assistance that they supported directly or indirectly by Danida, and as such the Danish state. Some of these organizations even are totally at the mercy of upon this support (U-landsnyt 2013A). Thirdly, and final, Neergaard (et al. 2009) have documented the scope of cross-sector partnership[15] in Denmark. They documented an increasing tendency of activities. As such, it is fair to assert that even in an advanced economy as Denmark, the definition of a third sector seems inadequate, as ‘as new civil society actors blur

[15] In this paper it is defined as the collaboration between civil society actors and businesses.

the boundaries between sectors'. This is true for the different perspectives on civil society suggested by Hyden (1997) too. The World Economic Forum illustrates this development in Figure 6.

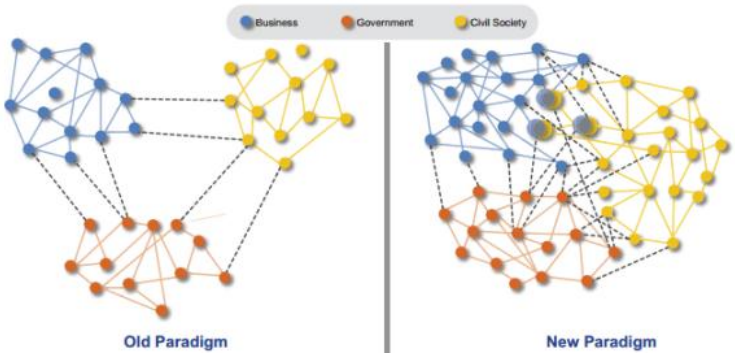

Figure 6: Changing paradigms for sector roles (The World Economic Forum 2013).

Therefore, rather than viewing civil society through the theoretical lens of a particular school, or black boxing it as a separate sector, a more pragmatic view taking the geo-political context of Sub-Saharan Africa into consideration will be applied in this study.

3.3. Theorizing Civil Society in an African Context

Having established that the dominant conception of civil society is rooted in Western political experience and theory, one can question the global applicability and relevance of the concept – or at least its definition. Among the most influential academics doing so are Mamdani (1996), van Rooy (1998) and Lewis (2002). Mahmood Mamdani (1996) argues that the concept is over-politicized by competing ideologies (as illustrated by Figure 5 in the previous section) and as such only reproduces old dichotomies, rather than contributing with new insights. Slightly less skeptical is Alison van Rooy (1998) when portraying the usefulness of the concept for developmental policy-makers as an 'analytical hat-stand' in which to hang all their ideas. This led David Lewis (2002, p. 574) to ask: "is the concept of civil society relevant to Africa?"

Given the turbulent geo-political history and situation of many Sub-Saharan states, it is a very valid question. While the application of the civil society discourse in Sub-Saharan Africa has provoked a critical response from notable scholars, policy-makers and international organizations (IOs) are very much advocating the application.

Trying to create some synthesis Söderbaum (2007, p. 323) notes that "one of the major reasons why civil society in Africa is widely misunderstood is the fact that Western political thought has dominated the debate on the topic". Arguably, the Atlantic understanding of civil society has led to the popular belief, that civil society did not exist in Africa until three decades ago, where 'the third wave of democratization' (Diamond 1994) and the structural adjustments programs (SAPs) catalyzed the proliferation of civil society organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa (Wamucii 2014; Tar 2014).

While the 1980's definitely marked a significant change in civil society in Africa, it is wrong to assume that civil society did not exist in Africa prior to this. According to Mamattah (2014, p. 144): "Civil association has always been an important part of communal life all over Africa". This view is supported by Tar (2014, p. 264) who argues that the dominant understanding of civil society has led to: "the glorification of a narrow segment of civil society – specifically, urban civil associations". Later Tar (2014) argues civil society had a prominent role during the fight for independence during the colonial time.

Thus, following Shankar (2014, p. 26): "rather than focusing on definitions of civil society that originate with the state, liberal secular political theory, or Euro–American standards that have been acknowledged to be incompatible with the practical realities of African politics" one must rethink civil society's defining boundaries in order to utilize the understanding in an African context.

The typical Western definition of civil society is in a Sub-Saharan African context challenged by at least three factors. Firstly "there is a lack of a clear distinction between the state and associational life in Africa" (Shankar 2014, p. 26). Secondly, African civil society activities and organization often lack the ability to transcend "primordial family, kin, or even communal ties" (Chabal and Daloz 1999, p. 19). This implies that 'the realm outside the market and the state' is non-existing as distinctions at best would be arbitral drawn and secondly, that civil society is highly informal. Third, African civil society is a Janus-faced conception with a progressive and regressive side. The Nigerian terrorist-like organization of Boko Haram and the role of some civil society organization in the

2008 xenophobic violence in South Africa –unfortunately- well illustrate the regressive side.

In short, African civil society is distinct by

1. Blurred lined between civil society and the state;
2. It is very informal, often confined to the extended family;
3. And both progressive and regressive groups fight for influence.

As a consequence the definition needs to take into account the blurred line between market, state and civil society in Africa, and exclude violent groups, as an inclusion would render the analytical usefulness of the concept. In this respect one could direct attention to Orvis' (2001, p. 20) definition of civil society as: "a public sphere of formal or informal, collective activity autonomous from but recognizing the legitimate existence of the state[16]". The virtues of this definition is that it recognizes the informal character of civil society in Africa and by excluding groups not acknowledging the legitimate existence of the state, one safeguard the analytical usefulness of the concept. However, one can rightly criticize Orvis for being a little vague on the implications of the term 'public sphere'. While Habermas (e.g. 1962/1989) has made the concept famous, one should not ascribe more meaning to the term -in this regard- than as a demarcation of civil society from the state and family[17].

Having explained that the dominant conception of civil society is rooted in Western political theory, the need to zoom in on Africa was self-evident. This of course raised the question whether the concept was relevant at all in an African context anyway, and while some still doubt that, it was argued that civil society is relevant for Africa. However, the understanding must be rooted in local conditions. As such, it is now time to recall the ethos of the research question (which is to assess the implications of supporting civil society through multi-donor funds from an effective aid perspective) and thus document the link between civil society studies and developmental theory.

[16] Note the inherent link to Hegel's trichotomy of the family, state and civil society. As Hegel's *Bürgergesellschaft* in the Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Orvis does not assume then separation of the market and civil society.

[17] Thus, contrary to Habermas' conception, public sphere in this thesis does not come any reference to democratic norms.

3.4. Civil Society and Developmental Theory

American sociologist Robert Putnam (1993) argues in a neo-Tocquevillean tradition that social capital is generated by active participation in the local civil society, both through bonding and in particular bridging of activities. A high level social capital in a community could, when harnessed, arguably positively promote a more productive economy and more efficient and democratic-led government (Bukenya and Hickey 2014). In particular the neoliberal economists, which ideology underpinned the Washington Consensus, find Putnams reasoning appealing, due to their inherent skepticism towards the government (Nordtveit 2005).

Whilst Hyden (1997) argues that civil society emerged with the rise of capitalism and 'the modern state', Bukenya and Hickey (2014, p. 317) explains that: "its current popularity and usage in development is a recent phenomenon that can be traced from around the 1980s after the failure of state-based strategies to address societal problems between 1945 and 1970s, and market-based ones between the 1970s and 1980s (Edwards 2009)".

The recent enthusiasm for a more prominent role for civil society in development nevertheless has its critics. Recall Mahmood Mamdani's (1996) scientism (in section 3.3.). He is concerned with civil society being a normative, rather than an analytical phenomenon in development studies. As such, policy-makers are naïve to assume that: "the driving force of democratization everywhere is the contention between civil society and the state" (Mamdani cited in Willems 2014, p. 47). Echoing this Comaroff and Comaroff (1999) stresses the uniqueness of civil society locally, questions whether civil society necessarily leads to more democracy and promote economic development.

Despite sporadic skepticism there is an undeniable link between civil society and development studies, predominantly based on the neoliberal agenda of good governance. The need for efficiency gains and value for money is at the heart of neoliberalism, as well as the aid effectiveness agenda, which both are crucial elements to understand the reasoning and motivation behind the Danish commitment to direct south funding through multi-donor funds.

3.5. Aid Effectiveness and Support to Civil Society

The external environment around civil society has undergone radical changes recently. One of the main changes is globalization and the resulting hyper-connectedness. As such, the resource flow into developing countries has been altered significantly the last two decades compared with its conventional division as Figure 7 to the right shows. In particular, globalization has been an enabling feature for the increasing significance and rapid acceleration of remittances.

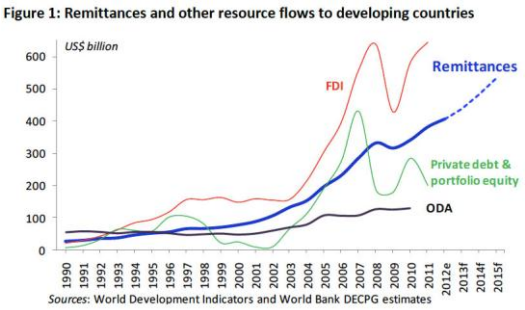

Figure 7: Remittances and other resource flows to developing countries (The World Bank 2012).

The focus of this paper is, however, only the official development assistance (ODA). As Alan Fowler (2014) rightly shows (in Figure 8 below), unpacking ODA to Africa is like opening Pandora's Box. The complexity of aid modalities and its dynamics in the twenty-first century is simply enormous.

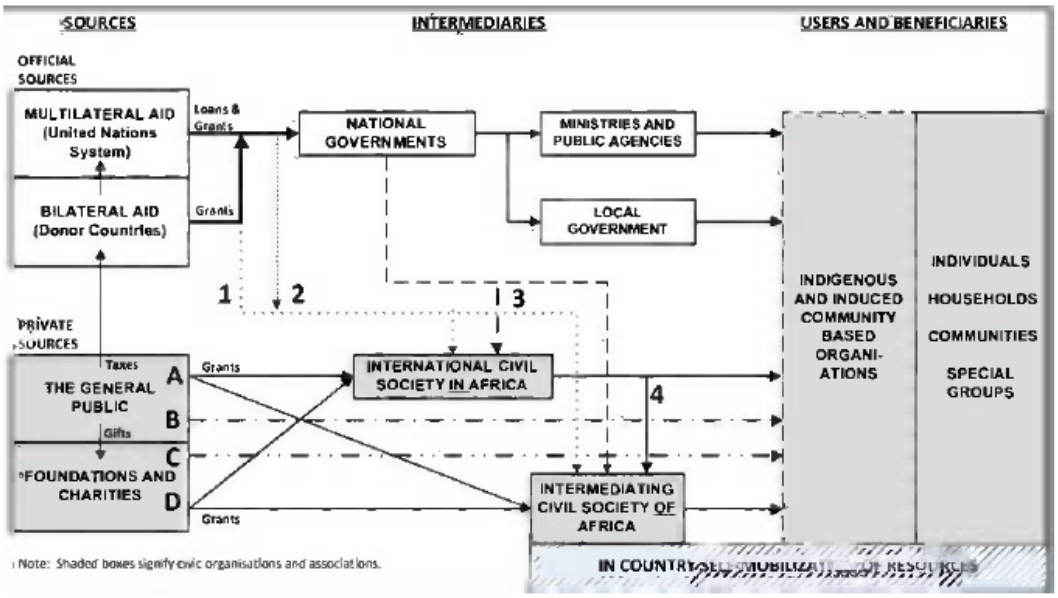

Figure 8: Aided sources for civil society in Africa (Fowler 2014).

Following Fowler's (2014) map above, the Danish Civil Society Policy is informing the bilateral aid given from Denmark (**source**) to both the national governments and NGO's (**intermediaries**) to whoever the **user** and **beneficiaries** are.

Born in succession to the end of the Second World War by American funds to re-build Europe, international aid is no newcomer, and following the post-war optimism, international development cooperation surged in the early 1960's. As development assistance per definition is international it is constantly exposed to a changing world, as the end of The Cold War, the proliferation of civil society and the effects of globalization. As such: "the Marshall Plan era transfers of funds to trusted regimes were no longer considered a viable option with instability and corruption seen as rife within developing nations" (Barakat 2009, p. 108). Moreover, the international aid system has some inherent pathology because of donor fragmentation, political self-interest and complicated governance structures. There have, however, since the mid-1990's been a renewed determination to address these pathologies (Hayman 2009). This has culminated in a series of High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness convened by the OECD. Until today, four conferences have been held in Rome, Paris, Accra and Busan in respectively 2003, 2005, 2008 and 2011. The conferences have increased in scale and significance, and now include a wide range of actors, including civil society.

The desire to address the mounting challenges led to a paradigm shift within developmental assistance (ibid). Donors decided to increasingly support national poverty reduction strategies and recipients were required to improve local governance. As outlined in Figure 9, the first conferenced formalized the new paradigm by strengthening local ownership, alignment and donor harmonization. The second meeting added a commitment to manage for result and mutual accountability. These five principles on aid effectiveness are known as the Paris Declaration, which today still remains the principal authority in regard to aid effectiveness. The latter two conferences have deepened

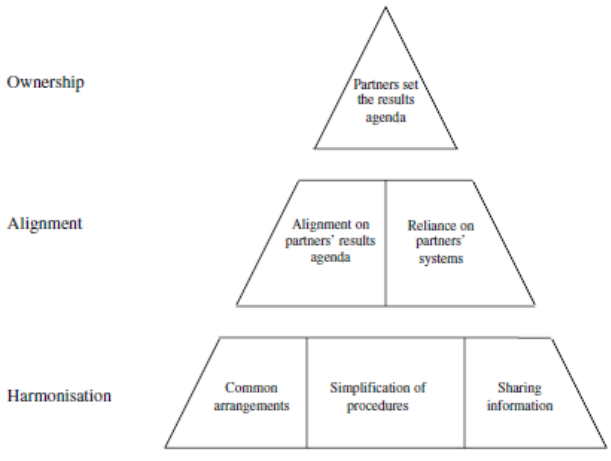

Figure 9: Aid Effectiveness Pyramid (Rogerson 2005).

the commitments to the Paris Declaration to developing countries (South-South co-operation) civil society and private funders.

To better understand the content of the Paris Declaration a short presentation follows:

- National Ownership: The first principle bolsters the commitment to support local poverty reduction strategies. This is done in order to boost the national capacity of governments, which arguably is needed to create sustainable development. However, as it defines national ownership as government ownership, there is a significant challenge in fragile states, where the link between state and civil society is weak (Roberts 2010).
- Donor Alignment: This principle stresses that donors should align behind the objectives above and use local systems. This is again a commitment to sustainable development. However, again in fragile states such support can become overly politicized (ibid).
- Donor Harmonization: Donor countries should increasingly coordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication.
- Managing for results: The first new principle the Paris Declaration formally codified, was that both donors and developing countries should shift focus to development results and results should get measured.
- Mutual accountability: Finally, donors and partners akin are accountable for the development results.

The Paris Declaration marked another transition too. It was openly acknowledging that the responsibility for the aid systems pathologies should not only be exclusively put on developing countries, but an improvement required donors to improve their act significantly too (Hayman 2009).

3.6. New Public Management

While the effects of globalization and fall of communism created new practical issues to be dealt with for the international aid system, there were internal drivers for change too.

New Public Management is an umbrella term for the application of private sector efficiency and accountability to the public sector formally conceptualized by Hood (1991). Michael Power (1997) has famously argued that since the late 1980's there has been an audit explosion. This is mainly driven by three factors: quality assurance in organizational control, demand for enhanced accountability and transparency and thereby the rise of new public management (Power 1997). Power argues that today we are in an audit society. Accountability and auditing is a vital part of being a rational individual and has emerged as a defining virtue of bureaucracy. One of Power's (1997) significant contributions is his remark that new public management is reinventing governance. The application of private-sector efficiency-seeking is in particular manifested in the application of value for money auditing. However, Power (1997) rightly points to the paradox that while value for money auditing is viewed through the neutral lens of bureaucracy: "value for money auditing is more than just a neutral monitoring technique. It is bound up with programmes to shape the performance of the auditee in terms of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness" (Power 1997, p. 11). This entails that auditing not only is a technical program, but also a tool promoting a particular management paradigm valuing auditable performance measures arguably created for and by auditors.

Despite these worries new public management have indeed diffused into public administration. A discourse of efficiency enhancements and results based management is prevailing, also within the international aid system.

Following the new public management's quest for efficiency gains, a particular modality gains a foothold in the international aid system: Multi-donor funds. Recently bilateral aid is increasingly distributed through such a modality, as it is perceived to be transparent, thus improving accountability, and efficiency, as funding is often distributed based on tenders (Some of new public management's key tenets).

A literature search on the link between aid effectiveness and multi-donor pools (Described in the Appendix 2), nevertheless, proves the peer-reviewed literature in this field is in its nascent phase. The relevance and current popularity of such a

link is, however, proven by an immense number of reports on the matter authored by NGO's, multilateral organizations and national developmental agencies.

As shall be clear from this section, the merits of multi-donor pools are not uncontested. However, defining the concept is rather straight-forward from a functionalistic point of view, as done by UNDP: "arrangements where two or more donors jointly finance a set of programmes or actions on the basis of commonly agreed objectives, criteria for allocations and reporting modalities" (UNDP 2012).

In a study published by the Danish Foreign Ministry (INTRAC 2014, p.11) fairly well explains the link between the Paris Declaration and multi-donor pools: "By administering funds from several donors under a single governance structure, multi-donor funds in support of civil society are clearly an expression of the dominant consensus on what constitutes aid effectiveness". In particular, the link between multi-donor pools and donor harmonization and alignment are highlighted as an advance of the Declaration. The governance system of multi-donor pool is further hailed for its reduction of transaction costs for donors when co-operating and coordinating (ibid).

Concerns about national ownership have been raised. The management of such pools is often undertaken by international accounting companies, who at times are more occupied by resolving inter-organizational disputes and priorities, rather than include local civil society in some sort of advisory position (INTRAC 2014). Another concern is the resulting competition such multi-donor funds lead to, and hence the increased focus on activity-funding over core-funding. Arguably, this challenge the diversity of local CSO's as professional urban-based organizations are far more capable of making the cut.

As such, the literature clearly disagrees on the aggregated merits of multi-donor pools. The summary below will review this, and outline the implication of that.

3.7. Summary

In the present I have argued for an inclusive definition of civil society. Some scholars have questioned the extent to which the application of the very concept of 'civil society' was relevant to Africa. I have argued it is. Indeed the prevailing

conception of civil society is rooted in Western political experience and theory, however, a vibrant civil society exist in Africa too. Though, it needs to be understood against its local conditions, which often blur analytical demarcation, as such the need for an inclusive definition.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Analysis

Whereas the theoretical chapter could be described as an abstract argument, in this case about the foundation and role of civil society, this chapter will by contrast engage with empirical data. This data will then be related to the theory presented in Chapter Three, in order to adduce the reasoning behind multi-donor funds and its implication for civil society.

An analysis, according to Ib Andersen (2010), implies breaking down a phenomenon into its constituent parts. One then analyzes these parts separately and attempts to synthesize them. In order to understand the rationale for multi-donor pool funding and how it affects civil society in Ghana, one must then dissect the phenomenon.

In the following analysis, the first section (4.1.) will account for Ghana's socio-economic development and present a concise analysis of the civil society in Ghana today. An understanding of the socio-economic development of Ghana is needed to understand the development and context of current characteristics of civil society in Ghana. A brief account of the Danish-Ghanaian development history will then outline the rationale for supporting civil society in developing countries and in Ghana in particular. Subsequently a review of multi-donor funds in Ghana will outline the case of STAR-Ghana and conclude the first section. The second section (4.2.) will relate the implications of the design and management of STAR-Ghana to the Aid Effectiveness Agenda, partly to document the political motivation for such modality and partly to problematize and nuance the implication of that particular modality for Ghana's civil society. This will be manifested in five guiding hypotheses about STAR-Ghana and the aid effectiveness agenda, which will frame the empirical analysis concluding Chapter Four. While the two first sections principally rely on secondary data, the third and

final section (4.3.) on Aid Effectiveness exclusively relies on primary data. The findings adduced in this section will be based on the previous hypotheses, and subsequently related to the study's research question in order to highlight the papers core claims. As accounted for in the in Chapter Two (section 2.3.4.), the scope of the thesis did not entail first-hand observation, rather six semi-structured interviews with civil society experts are the source (See Appendix 3 for details on their background).

4.1. Introducing Ghana

In 1957 Ghana - formerly known as the Gold Coast - was the first African colony to gain independence. Prior to independence Ghana was under British rule and was acknowledged as the most prosperous colony-economy, with a well-functioning and stable society. Today Ghana is still considered an oasis of peace, stability and democracy in a region full of fragile states, terrorist-organizations and conflicts (Danida 2014A). However, as was the case with most other post-colonial countries, Ghana experienced serious post-independence political instability, including four military coups in its first 26 years! Moreover, the economy suffered through the instability and despite that Ghana always has been well-endowed with natural resources, Ghana was in the 1980's one of many countries who experienced the World Bank and IMF's tough structural adjustment programs. Today, almost a quarter of a century of stable and sound economic management, with sustained poverty reduction have led to Ghana in 2010 being re-categorized as a middle-income country and is now again considered a prosperous emerging market in Sub-Saharan Africa (CIA World Factbook 2014).

4.1.1. A Brief History of Ghana

Before continuing with a discussion of the current state of the civil society in Ghana, a historical account of Ghana follows. This is done as: "the history of Ghana's civil society is closely linked and shaped by the country's political developments from the pre-colonial era to the present" (Darkwa et al. 2006, p 20). As such, the account is necessary to contextualize the inquiry against Ghana's particular socio-economical narrative.

The territory today known as Ghana was largely uninhabited by humans until the 11th century, where a number of kingdoms, predominantly Akan's, emerged. Today Akan descendants still makes up the largest ethnical group in Ghana. Prior to onset of the colonialism, the Ashanti Empire was one of the most influential kingdoms in Sub-Saharan Africa. Their rather sophisticated economy was based on trade with resources, mainly gold (GhanaWeb 2014).

Already in the late 15th century colonial powers started taking notice of the resource-rich territory, and while the Portuguese were the first to arrive, the Dutch, British, Swedish and Danish soon followed suit. Henceforth a struggle to maintain a profitable trade from the territory followed. A struggle in which slave trade and gold commodities was the principal economic activities (Ibid).

Following the anti-slavery movements in Europe in the early 19th century, colonial powers started to pull back. Some historians attribute the diminishing economic profit labor had compared to capital during the industrialization as the driving force, rather than idealistic concerns, and whilst the importation of slaves into the US was banned in the early 19th century, the sustained demand from the plantations, mainly in the South, resulted in that it took at least 50 years to *de facto* end the slave trade (Ibid). This led the Danes and Dutch to leave their interest at the Gold Coast around 1848 and 1874 respectively, formally marking the annexation into the British Empire as the 'British Crown Colony of the Gold Coast'.

It is at the same time we find the first CSOs. Previously, the 'asafo' groups, which was a deference group in Akan culture who searched for lost kinsfolks and where assigned the deference of the village, had resembled early CSOs. However, participation was by no means voluntary, and accordingly in conflict with the very definition of a CSO. As stated though, the first real CSOs emerged in the mid-19th century. Across Ghana villages cooperated around traditional farming activities in a system known as 'nnoboa'. The system has continued well beyond colonialism and in today's post-colonial Ghana the concept still thrives and is no longer confined to traditional farming. Rather it is an essential part of the country's social capital (Owusu-Amankwah et al. 2014). Moreover, an element in the early quest for independence was the: "Fante Confederation and the Aborigines Rights

Protection Society, with the core function of protecting the rights of the indigenous population. This was a first step in the drive to independence (Civicus 2013)". It is further argued that across Africa, including Ghana, voluntary associations, in particular community-based organizations (CBO's) were the predecessor for the independence movements.

By the beginning of the 20th century CSOs were by no means mushrooming. Nevertheless, CSOs started to proliferate in the interwar years. Concurrent with a prospering economy, based on a rising cocoa production, the increased urbanization led to a more vibrant civil society (Darkwa et al. 2006). Whereas CSOs had existed prior to colonialism, and under the British Crown, it was only in 1947 the first nationalist movement emerged. The United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), which famously aimed for 'self-government in the shortest possible time' was predominantly consisting of professionals whom sought after wider appeal for independence. Towards independence – in 1957 - the UGCC merged with the Convention Peoples Party, who through Kwame Nkrumah gained power on independence (GhanaWeb 2014).

Whereas independence led to the formation of a variety of voluntary organizations, the regime soon integrated the most notable associations into the state apparatus, including trade unions and farmer councils (Civucus 2013). The optimism succeeding independence was just as soon brought to a halt when Kwama Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966 in a military coup. This marked the transition to grave post-independence political and economic instability. The two following decades saw no less than four military coups and a total of nine changes in governments (Darkwa et al. 2006). In particular the influence of the military hindered civil society development. The media became severely restricted, as did the free formation of and exercise of activities by voluntary associations and organization (Ibid).

Moreover the instability hampered the hitherto so prosperous colony-economy past recognition. While the political volatility famously ended when Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, leader of The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, over two times seized power in a military coup and suspended the constitution in 1981, the net continued to close around civil society with the

subsequent ban of political parties. Nor did the economy prosper as a result of the newfound political stability. With inflation well above 100% a total economic collapse was approaching (IMF 2014). As such, it seemed that Mr. Rawlings and his ruling Provisional National Defense Council had no other option than to give in to the strict conditions associated with the economic recovery program in which IMF and The World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programme[18] was the backbone.

The tide did not turn before 1987, where donors began to push for the inclusion and assistance of CSOs in service delivery, as Ghana's government fell well short of the capacity needed to be up to the task (Civicus 2013). Soon CSOs would have more reasons to be cheerful. From 1987 to democratization in 1992, pro-democracy organizations proliferated. Such CSOs had more autonomy than the concurrent spur of government organized NGOs (GONGOs) who focused on service delivery (Ibid). Hence, democratization and international pressure from donors ensured a paradigm shift in the environment for civil society in Ghana from the early 1990's. The more enabling environment was manifested in commitments by the state to civil liberties such as freedom of speech, associations and media. However, only a few, mostly urban-based, CSO's focused on advocacy activities. Thus, until early 2000 the proliferation of CSOs was rather confined to service-delivery activities (Ibid). By year 2000 another significant change had come around. The international development paradigm increasingly committed to the concept of 'good governance', which aims to improve education, health and other fundamental public services; a cornerstone in the then newly agreed Millennium Development Goals. CSOs were consequently assigned greater credibility and increasingly recognized for their role in development. In Ghana more CSOs took up public policy advocacy and civil society engagement was further bolstered.

Today a variety of CSOs exists in Ghana, though some are more established and influential than others (Table 3 in section 4.1.2.2. will elaborate heron).

[18] See http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story084/en/ for explanation.

As argued above, the history of Ghana's civil society is closely linked and shaped by the country's political and economic development. The account above has in detail explained that development. An explanation that is fundamental in order to contextualize the remaining analysis and discussion of Ghana's civil society. Yet a thorough analysis of the quintessential characteristics of today's civil society in Ghana is still required. Only by shedding light on that, one can document the implications of the increased commitment to multi-donor pools, which is the main inquiry of this paper. As such, the next section will examine the current state of civil society in Ghana in depth.

4.1.2. The Current State of Civil Society in Ghana

If one recalls the previous elaborate discussion on the very definition of civil society, it is clear that there is no *one way* of structuring an account of civil society. One could begin by examining the list of registered CSOs in Ghana; the relevant legislation governing civil society in Ghana; or by analyzing civil society role in Ghana's current socio-economic development. However, this author is by no means the first facing such a challenge. One of the principal authorities on civil society typology is CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. Despite it can be argued that it is predominantly oriented at policy-makers and practitioners, the civil society diamond (CD) is a framework developed to systematically analyze civil society and CSOs.

The analysis will however, not replicate the detailed application of the tool, which Civicus (see: 2006 and 2013) has done already. Rather only the structure, governed by four somewhat interrelated dimensions (organization structure; environment; values; and impact) will be applied. As such, the following will be based on, but not a summary of, their earlier work.

4.1.2.1. Organizational Structure

Beginning by looking at the civil society actors in Ghana and their characteristics, the level of organization among civil society actors is possibly the greatest cause for concern. Only few umbrella organizations exist, and membership and participation is rare. As such, inter-organizational cooperation and communication is not nourished. According to Civicus (Darkwas et al. 2006), 77% of civil society

representatives asked in a survey found inter-organizational communication amongst Ghanaian CSO's as only moderate or limited. Moreover, it is well known that finance is a very scarce resource for CSO's, not only in developing countries, but also in more advanced economies. By advocating for the need more financial resources to meet social needs, a strong level of civil society organization can be helpful in attracting finance. In Ghana such advocacy is not widespread, and not in the least organized.

Therefore it must come as no surprise that the majority of CSO's in Ghana is affected by limited technological and financial resources. The most organized CSO's are highly dependent on donor funding, as local financiers tend to favor service-delivery rather than advocacy or capacity-building activities (Civicus 2013). This results in a fierce competition amongst the local civil society actors' further hindering cooperation.

Burger and Seabe (2014) distinguish between upward, lateral and downward civil society accountability. Where the first is accountability towards the state and donors, lateral is amongst civil society actors themselves and downwards is towards the beneficiaries. Due to the high donor dependency, civil society actors in Ghana mainly commit to upwards accountability. However, the state is to a large extent neglected, and focus is directed straight towards the donors. The sophisticated reporting and auditing system often demanded by donor, can trump downwards accountability to such an extent that it is a real cause for concern (ibid).

A tangible consequence of the low downward accountability is the divide between the North and the South in Ghana, in effect a rural/urban divide, with the capital in the south. The recent economic and social progress has by no means been equally distributed. CSO's tend to work out of Accra (the capital) as such civil society in the north is far less organized. As CBO's and faith-based organizations (FBOs) are the main types of rural organizations, gender equality in terms of women participation and leadership in civil society suffers. This has to do with the fact that authority in Ghana, particularly in the north, is related to gender and age, which respectively favors men and elders (Ghana Venskabsgrupperne 2013).

Overall, Ghana has a widespread civilian participation in communal activities. However, it is at the same time characterized by intra-generational and gender inequality. Furthermore, CSOs' *raison d'être* is primarily service-delivery leaving advocacy with little priority. In effect, non-partisan political involvement is thus confined to sporadic activities (Civicus 2006 and 2013).

4.1.2.2. Environment

In the wake of democracy legal reforms backing civil liberties such as freedom of speech and assembly and press freedom, Ghana begun democratization in 1992 (Civicus 2013). Thus, when Ghana, *de jure*, became democratized in 1992 the environment for civil society became significantly more conducive. As explained previously, the demand for good governance by international donors also helped creating an even more enabling environment.

No.	Civil society types	Power rating out of 10	Examples
1	Media	**10**	TV and radio stations
2	Political parties	**10**	Convention People Party (CPP), National Democratic Congress (NDC)
3	Trade unions	**9**	TUC
4	Professional associations	**7**	Ghana Bar Association
5	Youth/students associations	**6**	
6	NGOs	**6**	
7	Business associations	**6**	
8	Academia	**5**	University lecturers
9	Pressure groups	**4**	Committee for Joint Action, Let My Vote Count
10	Ethnic based associations	**4**	Any tribal association
11	Trade associations	**4**	Dressmakers associations
12	Communal groups	**2**	Neighbourhood associations
13	Consumer groups	**1**	Consumer Protection Agency (CPA)

Table 3: Power Mapping of Civil Society Actors in Ghana (Civicus 2013)

Today Ghana is one of only four African countries with a free press (Freedom House 2013). Whereas media was confined to state-owned outlets until democratization, and no private FM station existed until 1995, today: "around 240 authorised private FM stations, a dozen private television stations and around 1,500 registered newspapers and magazines, of which approximately 50 appear on at least a weekly basis" (Civicus 2013, p. 21). The resilience of the media is well illustrated by the power mapping Civicus made over civil society actors in Ghana.

Though the rule of law is generally respected in Ghana, some legal challenges remains. The registration procedure for civil society organization is quick and well-established. Still, civil society actors point out that it is expensive, unpredictable and therefore complex. The registration procedure thus acts as a major entry barrier for organized collective activity in Ghana (Civicus 2013). One

could as a result speculate in whether the registration procedure in fact contributes to the high prevalence of informal collective activity in Ghana.

Another legal concern is the Right to Information Bill, which has been more than 10 years underway, and currently is subject to parliament approval. The bill, arguably, aims to ease public and in particular rural access to information from the state.

Transparency International (2010) reckons that Ghana has realized significant improvements with regards to corruption recently. However, petty corruption is still widespread and due to Ghana's winner takes all political system, nepotism and other varieties of political corruption still remains today (This will be further discussed in section 4.3.5.). Nor do civil society actors themselves enjoy uncontested trust. Civicus (2013) reports that 35% either do not trust civil society or are not sure they do.

Finally, illiteracy, poverty and other socio-economic issues challenge the environment in which civil society in Ghana operates.

4.1.2.3. Values

It became clear from the theoretical section that an important theoretical notion with regards to civil society's prevalence in Africa is its Janus-faced dimension. Whereas the rest of the region is full of examples with repressive CSO's, Ghana has largely been spared. However, diversity remains a central challenge.

Building on the proliferation of pro-democracy organizations in the wake of democratization, civil society in Ghana exhibits a significant degree of democratic values. Membership participation and internal democracy including decision-making is widespread (Civicus 2013). Diversity, however, remains a challenge. Women are under-represented in memberships based organizations and all but excluded from leadership roles.

Another positive contribution is the strong commitment to eradicate poverty in the wake of the inequality following the structural adjustment programs. Outside Accra it remains the top-priority of civil society. Such organizations experience challenges with regards to accountability and transparency on a permanent basis. Lack of reporting skills, internal codes of conduct and few, but widely cited, abuses of funding are the top challenges.

4.1.2.4. Impact

Civil society is by no means the most influential actor in Ghana. If anything one should ask if civil society is indeed influential at all. The overall perception is that civil society is in fact is more effective than the state in supporting marginalized groups and providing rural communities with basic services. However, civil society's influence on public policy and ability to hold the state and the private sector accountable are far less impressive, with a few exceptions. As explained in detail above, non-partisan political activities are only sporadic, resulting in the military and the donor community having far more influence than the civil society. The fact that the traditional state (with tribes, queen-mothers and chiefs) exists alongside the modern state, complicates the assessment of how much impact civil society has (Darkwa et al. 2006).

Further, the media, which is the most powerful civil society actor in Ghana, is not much concerned with developmental issues. The low level of inter-organizational collaboration, particularly true for the media, explains why civil society's impact on policy issues is insignificant.

To end with a familiar problem, the low level of organization and lack of strong umbrella organizations results in a very low national ownership influence for civil society actors in Ghana, a concern that will be elaborated in detail.

All things considered, there is plenty of evidence for the existence of a civil society in Ghana. It is fundamentally different from what the Western definitions emphasizes, mainly due to its informal character. The values associated with civil society tend to be exclusively positive, in stark contrast to rest of Sub-Saharan Africa. However, civil society's positive impact on service-delivery yet has to see a spillover into real influence on public policy.

4.1.3. Danish Aid to Civil Society in Ghana

Having argued for the existence of a civil society in Ghana above, the next logical question is therefore to what extent this matter for the development of Ghana.

It is commonly argued that a vibrant and diverse civil society is central to democratization (Danida 2014B). The main argument is that civil society represents the rights-holders and on behalf of them, should hold the duty-bearers

accountable to their responsibilities[19]. In a country as Ghana, with great regional differences and where a traditional state thrives side by side with the modern state, it is important that civil society is diverse and holds a great reach, so it can represent as many rights-holders as possible.

Denmark is known as one of the world's leading donors of developmental assistance. CSOs have always been a significant channel of the Danish developmental aid. The high amount of Danish CSOs working with aid have manifested in a broad range of inter-organizational initiatives. NGO Forum, a quasi-confederation, with 62 enlisted organizations and CISU, an association of more than 260 Danish CSOs with aid activities, highlights the scope of the Danish CSOs aid commitments. The largest of their member organizations are directly supported by Danida[20].

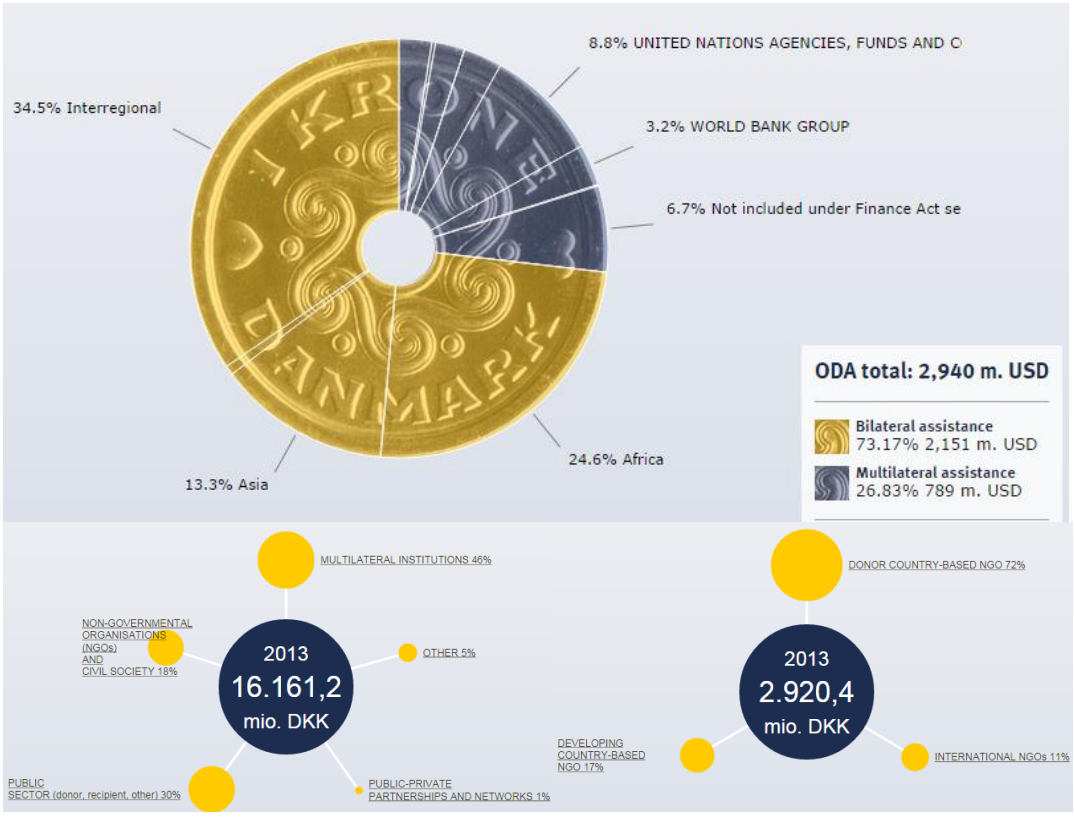

Figure 10: Udviklingskronen (OpenAid 2014).

[19] In a human rights-based approach, human rights determine the relationship between individuals and groups with valid claims (rights-holders) and State and non-state actors with correlative obligations (duty-bearers) (UNICEF 2004, 92).
[20] The so-called framework organization receives direct support in the Budget.

Currently Denmark is spending DKK 16,512bn on ODA (DKK 12,082bn on bilateral assistance and DKK 4430bn on multilateral assistance). Above the so-called *Udviklingskronen* shows the distribution amongst actors and within the civil society category.

This macro-economic overview backs the claim that Denmark indeed is a leading donor in the world. This is particularly true in Ghana. Denmark's annually support amounts to a total of odd DKK453m. which is distributed according to Figure 11 to the right.

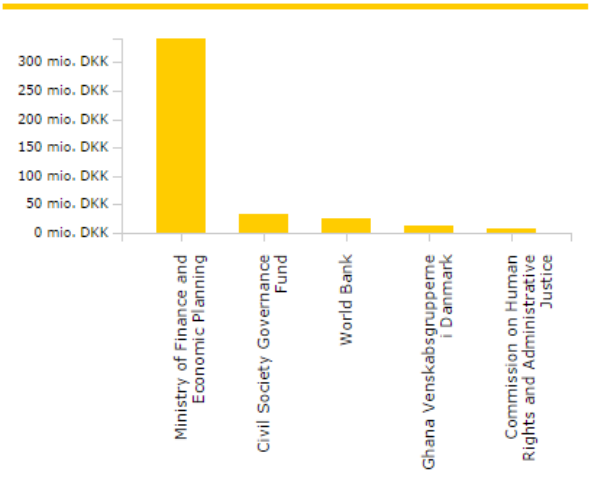

Figure 11: Danish Development Support to Ghana (OpenAid 2014)

The history of Danish-Ghanaian development co-operation began in 1957 and today Ghana is indeed one of Denmark's leading partners (Ghana UM 2014).

The Danish engagement began with a Danish CSO established and administered educational activities in the Volte region, east of the capital. Soon official development cooperation with Ghana was initiated. The Danish embassy was established in 1961, but closed in 1983 due to the political instability. In the wake of democratization the embassy reopened and Ghana became a Danida program country[21]. Today the leading activity is to support the implementation of Ghana's Shared Growth & Development Agenda, mainly through the general budget support (Ibid).

However, Danish support is not limited to the duty-bearers. The rights-holder (by proxy: civil society) is also generously supported. As Figure 11 depicts, direct Danish support to civil society in Ghana is substantial. As the category 'Civil Society Governance Fund' illustrates such support is both comprehensive and continual.

[21] Countries where Denmark is present with a long-term engagement and with political and financial weight (Danida 2013).

The next section will outline the setup and rationale behind such direct support.

4.1.4. Multi-Donor Funds in Ghana

Civil society in Ghana is highly fragmented, inter-organizational communication and collaboration is sporadic, despite common interests such as access to financing and technological resources. Attempts to establish national networks have failed, and membership of umbrella organizations is rare. The lack of coordination and collaboration affects civil society's ability to further an enabling environment.

With New Public Management becoming ever more embedded into public administration, efficiency concerns has diffused into all branches, including official development assistance. Dealing with a fragmented civil society - *ceteris paribus* - increases transaction costs, reducing the amount spent on actual development projects. A rational solution to reducing transactions cost when dealing with a fragmented civil society is thus for donors to pool their recourses together and create pooled funding mechanisms, which civil society can then compete for. In doing so, donors harmonize their priorities and reduces the costs of managing various projects.

Though aligned with the Aid Effectiveness Agenda, such pooling of resources is not without cost and trade-offs are inevitable. Whether one considers such trade-offs as wicked problems, without an optimal solution or seek an optimal solution based on cost-benefit calculations, the implications for civil society are real. As such, this analysis will probe into these consequences focusing on the conditions for local civil society.

Since 2003 Ghana has been on the forefront of multi-donor funding. Impressive economic growth often well beyond the typical level of its region (Sub-Saharan Africa) combined with continued democratic elections and a peaceful transition of powers between two democratically elected governments, donors strengthened their commitment to Ghana in 2003 (Johnson and Jørgensen 2013). Ten donors offered multi-donor budget support to Ghana. The direct funding should be understood as an approval of Ghana as a 'beacon of hope' and stability in a region

and continent otherwise filled with conflicts and political instability (Ibid). In effect, the new modality marked the transition from a sector and project-driven approach, to a more strategic partnership. This was put into practice with further and more predictable funding in support of the local poverty reduction plan, the *Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy*.

Equally there have been an abundance of multi-donor funds in Ghana pooling resources for civil society. The relatively prosperous, but highly fragmented civil society is equally very enabling conditions for such funds. In the following, perhaps, the most prominent three will be outlined.

The first noteworthy multi-donor fund supporting civil society in Ghana was the 'Ghana Research and Advocacy Program, known as G-RAP. Four of the ten donors from the multi-donor budget support, including Denmark, established the fund. The focus, aligned with the shifting developmental paradigm at that time, was to strengthen civil society political involvement in non-partisan activities. As such, civil society organizations were encouraged to act as watchdogs against the government's distribution and management of public funds (G-RAP 2014). The significant change from supporting service-delivery to advocacy marked the beginning of commitment to rights-based approaches, which today still governs Danish aid. The program was initiated in 2004 and ran for six years.

In 2008 the KASI initiative was launched as a civil society branch of a government program promoting sustainable management and administration of natural resources, which Ghana is so well endowed with. The initiative followed the tendency to promote civil society's advocacy capability. Aiming at improving the capacity media and civil society to held actors in extracting industry accountable and advocate for more transparency. The initiative ran until 2010, and today remains in a transition phase (Johnson and Jørgensen 2013).

The final case and the point of departure for the remaining analysis is STAR-Ghana (Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana). Jointly established and funded in 2011 by DFID, Danida, USAID and EU, STAR-Ghana is a five-year project that aims to increase the influence of civil society and the parliament in public policy (Danida 2011). The STAR-Ghana fund

builds on themes and lessons learned from the two funds above. Ghana is set to make the transition to upper middle-income country during the lifespan of the fund, as such sustainable and transparent management of natural resources and accountability with regards to public spending is absolutely critical. By strengthen the influence of civil society and the parliament, STAR-Ghana hopes to keep the momentum for pro-poor policy.

STAR-Ghana distribute grants to civil society through three competitive funding windows, in addition to that, it offers non-competitive support to parliament and media. There is an open window, a thematic window with seven thematic calls and a sustainable funding window for civil society (STAR-Ghana 2014A). The distribution of funds is based on call for proposals or merely 'tenders'. This particular configuration, however, probes some almost wicked trade-offs, which shall be dealt with in the forthcoming sections.

4.2. Case Study Presentation: Aid Effectiveness and STAR-Ghana

The previous section introduced the multi-donor fund STAR-Ghana, and contextualized its background in relation to other pooled funding mechanisms and developmental-political tendencies in Ghana. This section will set out to frame the succeeding analysis (4.3.) by dissecting STAR-Ghana's claim of effectiveness in relation to the Aid Effectiveness Agenda as outlined previously. This will lead to the advancement of five hypotheses, which guides the remaining analysis (4.3.).

Due to the scope of the paper the thorough review of Aid Effectiveness debate will not be recapped. This was however reviewed in the theoretical section (3.5.). It is though still important to state that the following analytical frame will be based on Paris Declaration's five principles: National Ownership; Donor Alignment; Donor Harmonization; Managing for Results; and Mutual Accountability.

4.2.1. National Ownership

The foundational principle for aid effectiveness and sustainable development is widely recognized to be national ownership (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2006). Developing countries *must* have their own development strategies, and as such take ownership over their own development. Lessons learned, among others,

from the neoliberal structural adjustment programs advanced by IMF the World Bank (the Bretton Woods Institutions), shows effective and sustained reforms only will emerge from priorities grounded in a country-led process (CDDE 2014A).

The principles of the Paris Declaration are of course governing for multi-donor funds too. The design of a multi-donor fund will to a large extent determine the degree of which a multi-donor fund furthers national ownership. As there is no *one-way* of designing a multi-donor fund,[22] there is no one answer to how it affects national ownership. As such: "fund governance structures can be placed on a continuum that ranges from donor-led to national ownership" (INTRAC 2014, p.22).

STAR-Ghana, which is funded by DFID, Danida, USAID and EU, is widely recognized to be a donor-led fund, and thus not endorsing national ownership:

> It [STAR-Ghana] has rightfully been criticized for being donor-driven, since the priorities and work plans for STAR Ghana were developed exclusively by the donors without prior consultation. Consequently, civil society views STAR Ghana as a funding facility rather than a political platform. The EU delegation acknowledges the lack of civil society involvement in the start-up and agrees that it has affected the CSO ownership. (Hansen 2013, p. 18)

The extract, from a report published by the Danish umbrella organization Concord Danmark, strongly indicates that national ownership has not been a priority for the donors', when setting-up STAR-Ghana. There can be a number of reasons explaining the little attention paid to national ownership, one of which is that donors view the aim of STAR-Ghana as already being aligned with the Ghanaian government's priorities. Thus, the need for additional influence could arguably be reduced.

However, the implication of the scanty local embeddedness can be severe. As STAR-Ghana is viewed as a 'funding facility' rather than an engaging political platform, it indicates that sustained development –in form of capacity-building- is second to arms-lengths transactions.

[22] A recent study by INTRAC, commissioned by Danida, in detail reviewed a variety of pooled funding mechanisms in developing countries.

When civil society is not engaged in the political development and strategy, they risk becoming more reactive to donors priorities. This instrumentality of civil society is a well-establish cause for concern for sustainable development. Further, when civil society has little influence on the direction of the development strategy, policy-makers miss out on valuable insights from 'the men on the ground'. Further, an instrumental approach does not hold any merits with regards to capacity-building or building resilience among local civil society actors, which is a key tenet in the aid effectiveness agenda's founding principles. The operation and management of multi-donor funds do not necessarily need to be local embedded. However, there is a widespread demand from civil society to influence the political priorities further.

In Ghana the issue of representation is a particular challenge in systematically including CSO's in political processes though. As such, it is known that the officials in Ghana sometimes exclude civil society from political influence on the ground of representation, i.e. CSOs in Ghana have difficulties documenting who actually they represent. (AfriMAP 2007). Nevertheless, from the review of civil society in the previous section it is clear that representation is a western based concept. Civil society in Ghana is characterized as either informal or mostly donor-financed, in contrast to Western NGO's which to a large extent are membership financed. So while it is arguably not a bad idea to promote a popular anchoring of CSO's in Ghana, it should not be basis for exclusion. These legitimacy considerations will however be further elaborated in the last of the Paris Declaration's principles: 'mutual accountability'.

Despite civil society's obvious hesitations towards the disadvantages of multi-donor pools, designed the right way they can at least theoretically strengthen local ownership. Still, it is fair to hypothesize based on the extract above, that STAR-Ghana has some concerns with regards to national ownership. This challenges the sustainable impact of such pooled funding mechanisms, as local CSO's risk becoming instruments for donors' priorities rather than partners in a developmental context. As one CSO representative points out: 'all funding modalities have their challenges', so the problem is perhaps not solved by shifting

funding modality, but rather by including civil society systematically in the political processes.

4.2.2. Donor Alignment

Donor alignment has been a codified principle from the offset of the aid effectiveness debate (See Figure 9 in section 3.5.). To recap, donor alignment is the principle that compels donors to align their support behind national strategies (as such, both overlapping with and a continuation of 'national ownership') and use local systems wherever possible. The Bretton Woods Institutions' structural adjustment programs' failure to sustain effective reforms had been an expensive lesson learnt for the aid community that exclusively donor-deigned and driven reforms have a hard time providing successful and sustainable impacts:

> The failure of structural adjustment programmes in the 1990s proved that, where policy initiatives are developed by foreigners and signed off on by governments solely to access finance, they are rarely implemented effectively or sustained over time. Under the Paris Declaration, donors therefore agree to base their overall support – including country strategies, policy dialogues and development co-operation programmes – on partners' national development strategies. (CDDE 2014A)

While the merits of the structural adjustment programs are perpetually disputed, it is undeniable that Ghana experienced a macro-economic surge during the 15 years the programs ran for. However: "it would be fair to say that the distribution of the so-called achievements under SAPs might have been quite uneven. The people in the rural areas as well as the poorest of the poor in the urban areas seem to have suffered significantly due to their inability to compete in the market" (Konadu-Agyemang 2000).

The quote above both establishes the reasoning for donor alignment, and signals a differentiation between policy alignment and system alignment. As discussed in the previous section, little indicates that STAR-Ghana embody impressive merits with regards to political alignment. In particular, the lack of inclusion of civil society could be a cause for concern. Though one could assert that multi-donor funds not *per se* are ill equipped for civil society inclusion and

political alignment, STAR-Ghana seems to have prioritized differently. In all fairness it is appropriate to note that STAR-Ghana's *raison d'être*: "to contribute to increased accountability and responsiveness of government, traditional authorities and the private sector" (STAR-Ghana 2014B) hardly conflicts with local interests though!

The policy alignment has insofar been dealt with comprehensively. However, the system alignment, which advocates for using existing national systems, has not been sufficiently documented to this point.

The pivotal part of system alignment is that: "country structures are used to implement aid programmes rather than parallel structures created by donors" (OECD-DAC 2014). From a sustainable development perspective two reasons come to mind on such merits. Firstly, instead of attracting expensive and often short-term foreign expats, the use of local systems and staff often contribute to a more resilient and sustainable development. Secondly, even though the necessary human resource capacity is not available, partner countries would be better off by the donor developing such resources locally in order to develop the capacity of the local workforce, which the Accra Action Agenda saw an immense backing of (Devex 2014).

Previously (in section 4.2.1.) it was documented that STAR-Ghana originated in a donor-led process where the lead-donor is DFID. DFID has to a large extent been affected by the new public management reforms, which have spread around both the developed and developing world for more than two decades, but which originated in Britain (Power 1997). As such, DFID's preoccupation with efficiency and accountability, and in particular financial accountability, is rooted in a broader institutional context. It is thus fair to assume that DFID will properly continue tendering the operation of its pooled funding mechanisms. Hence, as long as DFID is the lead-donor in funding STAR-Ghana, system alignment will presumably not be strengthened, however, it is important to keep two details in mind: First, STAR-Ghana is a temporary project, set to expire in 2016; and Ghana did in 2010 make the transition into an upper middle-income country (CIA World Factbook 2014). The temporary status of STAR-Ghana opens for a transition

phase, where more and more responsibility of the management and administration of the fund can gradually be put in local hands. Further, experiences with similar pooled funding mechanisms suggest such a transition is widespread (INTRAC 2014). However, at the moment there is no way of being conclusive, as it has not yet been decided. Nevertheless, Ghana's transition into an upper middle-income country can influence this. Despite the majority of the ultra-poor people in the world lives in middle-income countries, national aid agencies are not particularly keen on systematically supporting middle-income counties as opposed to lower-income countries. The new Danish civil society policy documents that trend:

> Danish development cooperation continues to focus on poverty reduction in poorer countries. Some civil society support will be channelled to civil society actors in middle-income countries, but only through programmes targeting specific geographical priority areas e.g. the Neighbourhood Programme and the Danish-Arab Partnership Programme, or specific thematic areas such as indigenous people. (Danida 2014C Policy for Danish Support to Civil Society)

Therefore it is reasonable to speculate that the donors will reduce their operations in Ghana in the coming years, and as such it would be only natural for local actors, e.g. a NGO to resume responsibility for the management and administration of STAR-Ghana.

In sum, the institutional donors behind STAR-Ghana seems to have aligned their in-country priorities, these priorities – as discussed under the 'National Ownership' heading – seems however to be a result of a donor-designed process without inclusion of local civil society. With regards to the 'system alignment' it is suggested that DFID insists that such an alignment is second to accountability. Thus instead of capacity building the local system, it indicates that DFID has opted for new public management's demand for value for money and upward accountability.

4.2.3. Donor Harmonization

Since the first High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Rome 2003 it has been clear for donors and partners alike that donor fragmentation challenged effective aid. Partly because donors lack coordination amongst them, consequently

endangering duplicating each other's projects, and partly because, donors insisted on distinct application, monitoring and evaluation regimes. In response these concerns, donors have experimented and developed a new array of approaches (CDDE 2014B). As discussed in the background and introduction to STAR-Ghana (Section 4.1.4), Ghana has indeed been subject to these new approaches, including the multi-donor budget support to the government and the recent spur in multi-donor funds for civil society to name a few.

The willingness to look into new funding modalities is much welcomed by civil society actors. Senior civil society professionals will often go to great lengths to explain the difficulty of obtaining financial resources. Typically distinct reporting and auditing requirements are linked with funding. The costs for civil society to adapt to such a variety of application and evaluation regimes can be described as transaction costs. The predominant motivation for pooled funding mechanisms, including multi-donor funds as STAR-Ghana, is to improve aid effectiveness by reducing such transaction costs, both for the donor and the partner. Multi-donor funds should therefore be ideal for donors to harmonize rules and procedures. However, in practice this is not always the case:

> Just to give you some examples of the administrative challenges: in spite of the pooling of donor funds, we deal with six currencies to date and work within four different financial years. We have also seen continuous changes in staff on the donor side[23]. (G-RAP 2008)

Pooled funding mechanisms are seen as innovative way to promote aid effectiveness in alignment with new public management's quest for effectiveness and efficiency gains. In addition, it should per definition reduce donor fragmentation, as several donors align behind the priorities of a particular fund. Thus, its merits with regards to improving coordination amongst donors are widely recognized. On the other hand the two previous sections problematized this when done, as in the case of STAR-Ghana, exclusively on the donors' premises *de facto* disregarding the principle of national ownership.

In addition to contributing to more effective aid, reducing transaction costs is a critical objective. However, some will argue, that pooled funding mechanisms do

[23] Whilst the quote is about STAR-Ghana's predecessor, the G-RAP fund, many of donors and their procedures are replicated in STAR-Ghana.

not *per se* reduce transaction costs, rather it would appear as the burden of these transaction costs are taken from the donors and put onto local civil society:

> There is a growing tendency to favour big projects and funding consortia of CSOs at the expenses of small-scale actions at grassroots level, including funding those CSOs led by organisations headquartered in the south. Donors move towards joint funding, as a cost-saving measure, reducing transaction costs and administration but also to align with the Paris Agenda principles of harmonisation and alignment. This however, increases requirements for and costs of coordination among CSOs, as CSOs are expected to work in consortia with a lead agency taking the contractual responsibility. (Keijzer and Spierings 2011, p. 16)

STAR-Ghana's main operation is to call for proposals, which subsequently are tendered off to local civil society actors. Hansen (2013) summary of the implications hereof is worth quoting at length:

> Still, many donors do not see civil society actors as strategic intermediaries in reaching their own development objectives (INTRAC 2010), and CSO funding therefore tend to follow changing donor policy preferences and other opportunities (Keijzer 2011). Donors still prefer to support the urban-based CSOs and networks, which can meet the financial requirements. It also seems that there is a growing tendency to favor big projects and funding consortiums of CSOs at the expense of small-scale actions at grassroots level (Keijzer 2011). In the case of EU, the calls for proposals clearly tend to favor the best-resourced, mainly urban-based, organizations over under-resourced and mainly rural-based organizations. (Hansen 2013, p. 8)

As such, both Hansen and Keijzer (In their reports to Concord Denmark and the European Centre for Development Policy Management respectively) problematize the implication for the diversity of civil society by on the one hand converging requirements, but with the other hand putting the bar for application and evaluation even higher. In a report on 'Support to Civil Society through

Multi-Donor Funds', commissioned by Danida, INTRAC also found frustration with this among local CSO's in Ghana:

> A natural, predictable consequence of greater collaboration between donors through pooled fund arrangements is an increasing convergence of donor priorities and a reduction in the number of sources of funding for civil society. In Tanzania, national CSOs expressed concern over the merging of donor thematic priorities. Small CSOs, in particular, were concerned that if they did not fit with specific priorities they would not have a chance of funding. This concern was identified by the study in relation to other funds e.g. AGIR and Star Ghana. (INTRAC 2014)

As such, one can justify asking how direct 'direct south funding' really is? Based on the arguments above, one could hypothesize that the transaction costs are not reduced, but the burden is shifted onto civil society. It seems as though multi-donor funds only harmonize evaluation-regimes to a certain extent, different currencies and fiscal years still challenge civil society actors, and donors' preference for resourceful CSO's challenge the diversity of civil society in Ghana.

The aspect of funding directly to South organizations, thus, appears to be more of a rhetorical concept. The aid is still channeled through the embassy or/and STAR-Ghana, and if that is on expense of the partnerships Danish CSO's have, one can raise the question of what one misses out on then. In particular, the sustainable capacity building of partner organizations, which Danish CSOs are renowned for, is at risk. At the same time the Danish CSO could control that the aid is put into the best use.

Overall, donor harmonization is equally concerned with a political harmonization to avoid duplication and fragmentation of aid operations, and a regime harmonization streamlining the audit requirement on civil society. STAR-Ghana of course harmonizes a number of institutional donors' priorities. As previously discussed, STAR-Ghana is predominately donor-designed, which indicates that there is left little influence to civil society, in effect harmonizing priorities, but without the inclusion of civil society (Hansen 2013). With regards to system harmonization, I will suggest the following hypothesis: the very nature

of STAR-Ghana's operations challenges the diversity of civil society in Ghana. Well-resourced CSOs are, arguably, preferred, as smaller and less formal CSOs cannot lift the financial and administrative requirements.

4.2.4. Managing for Results

Managing for results was the first principle the Paris Declaration added to the principles already agreed on in the first High Level Forum in Rome in 2003 and a key component in the Accra Agenda for Action in 2008 as well (CDDE 2014C). Arguably, aid agencies have always been keen on measuring and communicating development results, if for nothing else, then to secure public support and additional funding. Such accounts tended to be rather unsophisticated though, as the impact was measured in simple terms of input (aggregated ODA) or output (e.g. number of wells dug). The diffusion of new public management, and its mantra: value for money, into the aid industry brought about a new commitment to monitoring and evaluation (Ibid). The introduction of the Millennium Development Goals, with tangible targets for the beneficiaries was early evidence of that transition. Most recently this trend is finding its way to civil society actors as well:

> I will improve flexibility for the framework organizations [the type of Danish CSOs that receives the most funding]. At the same time I want to enhance the expectations results. This already applies both to bilateral and multilateral partners. I suggest the same expectations should be applied to civil society organizations.
>
> Former Minister for Development Cooperation Christian Friis Bach. (Altinget 2013)

While this applies to Danish CSO's working in Ghana, the trend is clear, funding and results should become more aligned. The focus on value for money is by no means confined to Danida. Rather most institutional donors are working with value for money auditing and new public management's discourse of efficiency enhancements and results-based management. In the case of STAR-Ghana, which is DFID led, this is presumed to be true too.

While the rationale for results-based management is clear and appealing (i.e. accountability, effectiveness and thus legitimacy) there is more to results-based

management than what meets the eye. Power (1997, p. 11) rightly draws attention to the paradox that while value for money auditing and result based management is viewed through the neutral lens of bureaucracy: "value for money auditing is more than just a neutral monitoring technique. It is bound up with programmes to shape the performance of the auditee in terms of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness".

Having established the rationale for managing for results, an analysis of the discourse's implication on STAR-Ghana will follow. At the same time, the implication hereof for the civil society in Ghana will be discussed.

International aid assistance and Danish ODA in particular, is currently based on a rights-based dogma. STAR-Ghana has not escaped a continuation of the ubiquitous discussion on how to measure results: "Reviews of multi-donor funds [including STAR-Ghana] (and other forms of civil society funding) consistently emphasize the challenge of identifying the right kind of indicators to measure the results of rights-based programmes" (INTRAC 2014, p. 44). Despite multi-donor funds having generally been perceived as doing little to further a 'managing for results' approach (Barakat et al. 2014), STAR-Ghana has from its founding been ambitious in this regard:

> Projects will be required to have clear, agreed, measurable performance frameworks in the form of logical results frameworks. These will help STAR-Ghana better assess performance of organizations and link funding to RESULTS based performance over the project life. The process is designed to lead to a higher performing mechanism with an emphasis on value for money and results. (STAR-Ghana 2013, p. 14)

STAR-Ghana's supposed strong commitment to measurable performance indicators is in line with DFID's preoccupation of value for money auditing and demand for results to prove effectiveness. The focus put on demonstrating progress and results unfortunately carry with it some unintended consequences. In its review for Danida of multi-donor funds as STAR-Ghana, INTRAC pointed out that:

> In both strategic and programme funding, the evidence suggests that a results-based approach to development will tend to favor more competent CSOs to deliver demonstrable results, cost-efficiently, in the shortest period of time possible, and at least risk, unless a fund is specifically designed to reach out to a wider range of civic associations. (INTRAC 2014, p. 8)

In short, one can dissect two central issues from the extract: a concentration of resources among fewer actors, and a risk of jeopardizing long-term development.

As previously outlined, STAR-Ghana seems to further a professionalization of civil society, as it is suggested that they favor supporting CSO's which can fulfill its organizational and financial requirements. In their Grants Management Manual (2013, p.8) they state that: "Project plans and budgets must be realistic and based on valid measurable indicators and developed by knowledgeable individuals". From the account of civil society in Ghana we know that civil society is very fragmented, and due to problematic registration issues, often informal. Detailed budgets and plans developed by 'knowledgeable individuals' require resources, which the majority of civil society in Ghana is denied. INTRAC's reflection hereon is quoted at length:

> There is some evidence of civil society concern that the convergence of donor priorities in a limited number of joint funds may reduce the sources of funding for many, particularly smaller, CSOs. It may encourage others to divert from their primary mission to obtain funding since there are fewer alternative sources of funding; reduce CSO access to individual donors; and undermine the mediating role donors have played between civil society and governments. (INTRAC 2014, p. 5)

Picking up the second implication (long-term development) STAR-Ghana and other similar multi-donor funds are subjected to an inherent paradox: "A tendency to focus on short-term, measurable results in logframes, even when results should be anticipated over a longer time scale e.g. in human rights and democracy programmes" (INTRAC 2014, p. 9). As such, STAR-Ghana recognizably has an interest in funding projects that yield tangible short-term results, however, long-

term sustainable development in form of women empowerment and poverty eradication in the traditional northern part of Ghana are not overnight achievements. Moreover, accountability, which will be further elaborated on in the next section, complicates matters too. The focus on measurable results is aimed at pleasing institutional donors (upwards accountability) and not the beneficiaries (downward accountability).

Summarizing, there is of course is a need for control over aid and development programs. Recall, from the account of civil society (section 4.1.2.2.) that corruption is still perceived as a critical challenge for civil society in Ghana. That said, the narrow focus on controlling through a requirement to demonstrate, often, short-term results, arguably, comes with some unintended consequences. A concentration of funding among CSOs able to fulfill the demanding financial and organizational requirements presumably challenges the diversity of civil society in Ghana. Moreover, the above suggest that long-term development is at risk of becoming second to short term tangible result, challenging sustainable development.

4.2.5. Mutual Accountability

Perhaps this category is somewhat vague. It is definitely the category with the least guidance (OECD-DAC 2014). As in the case of 'managing for results' mutual accountability was a new component on the aid effectiveness agenda in the Paris Declaration. Where previously commitments (harmonization, alignment and ownership) were exclusively put on the donors, the Paris Declaration formally introduced reciprocity in the donor-partner relationship.

The guide to operationalizing this of course contains commitments for donors and partners akin to act transparent and accountable. However, as discussed by Burger and Seabe (2014) under the presentation of Ghana's civil society (Section 4.1.2.1.), accountability is not a one-way street. Downward-, lateral- and upward accountability are all of concern. STAR-Ghana's configuration suggests that these are not of equal concern though.

Important institutional donors finance STAR-Ghana, which suggests that civil society in Ghana is first and foremost accountable to STAR-Ghana (their financier), which in turn is accountable to its donors. These institutional donors,

i.e. the national aid agencies in Denmark and the UK, Danida and DFID respectively, are then accountable to their domestic policy-makers and ultimately their domestic population. As such, problematic scenario –to say the least- is unrolled, as the accountability of STAR-Ghana's projects is of more concern for the Brits and Danish, than Ghana's population. As such, Professor Thorsten Borring Olesen states that developmental civil society actors: "have two main tasks: to provide assistance within particular areas and be responsible for the popular support base in the society" (U-Landsnyt 2013B).

While in practice STAR-Ghana (and thus indirectly Danida) is promoting a system of upward accountability, Danida is keen on stressing the importance of downward accountability (support base) in donor-partner relations:

> It is vital for civil society actors to have a support base, whether in Denmark or in the global South. Denmark supports the notion that a strong, vibrant, representative and accountable civil society is a prerequisite for a sustainable and democratic development. CSOs need to be closely linked to and involve the communities they serve, understand their issues, and demonstrate full transparency and accountability. This will ensure long term appreciation of the role of civil society and the issues they advocate for in Denmark. (Danida 2014C Policy for Danish Support to Civil Society)

In practice, though, there is presumably paid more attention to the donors' domestic public support base. Though, the downward accountability is an explicit concern for STAR-Ghana too. In supporting the Youth Advocacy on Rights and Opportunities program, STAR-Ghana is boasting about their improved monitoring and evaluation regime:

> M&E is now an integral part of YARO's programme implementation and this improved efficiency in programme management. The improved M&E is also ensuring programme sustainability through downward accountability and feedback to beneficiaries. (STAR-Ghana 2014C)

As such, monitoring and evaluations are used to audit STAR-Ghana's projects. This is done as auditing and reporting is viewed as neutral and legitimizing of operations:

> Audit has become a benchmark for securing the legitimacy of organizational action in which auditable standards of performance have been created not merely to provide for substantive internal improvements to the quality of service but to make these improvements externally verifiable via acts of certification. (Power 1997, p. 10-11)

As such, "performance must be constructed in such a way that it can be measured, audited, and communicated to external agencies in a legitimate, rational and, yes, 'hard' form" (Power 1997, p. 114).

Having given an account of how accountability in STAR-Ghana is manifested through audit requirements, which are perceived as neutral, but they are in fact tools promoting certain values, the reciprocity of the of the donor-partner relationship will now be discussed.

Recently a discourse of 'partner countries' rather than aid recipients has emerged. This was rooted in the recognition that partner countries added value too, for instance by providing national development strategies and securing stability. This 'mutual dependence' is essentially the background for mutual accountability.

While aid from donors to partners can go through a myriad of channels, multilateral organization or bilateral country programs (Fowler 2014), direct funding of local civil society has recently become an important priority. By supporting civil society directly, and thus circumvent national government, donors can support local and of-the-government-independent civil society actors. However, the popular perception of Danida supporting local CSOs in Ghana is a utopian perception. Rather STAR-Ghana acts as an intermediate between Danida and Ghana's CSOs. One can understand STAR-Ghana's role as the brokers between the resource environment and the project environment.

The idea behind Figrue 12 below is that both donor and partners are mutually accountable and dependent. Put simply: The donors, who have the resources are dependent on partner countries to host aid projects, and partner countries are dependent on the donors' resources. This dependence then leads to the mutual accountability.

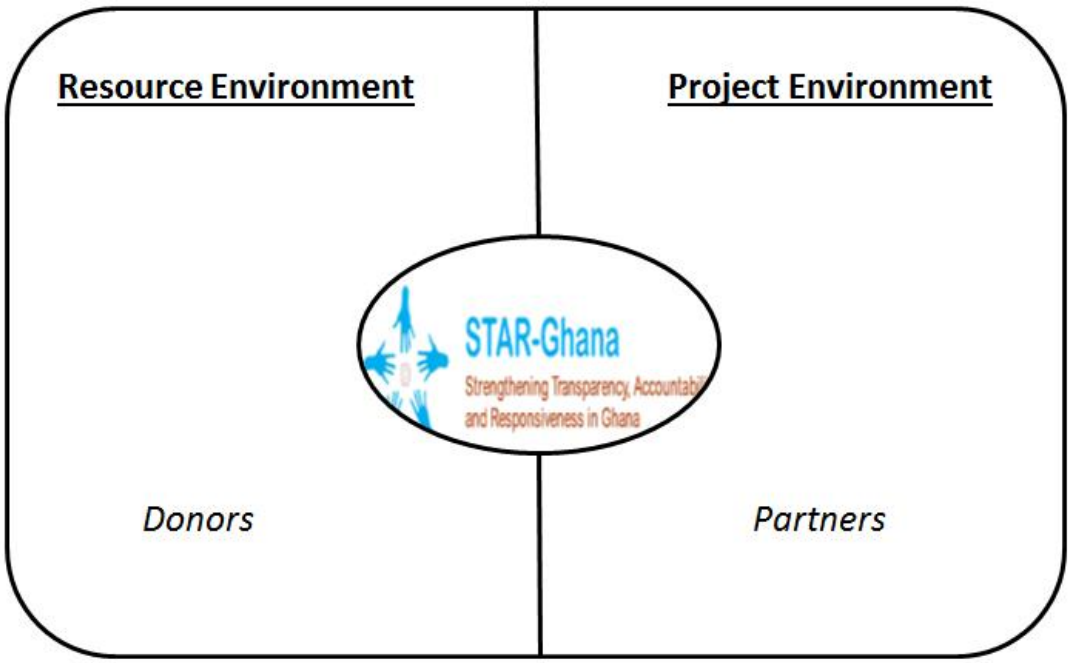

Figure 12: Mutual Dependency; Resource and Project Environments (Inspired by Kreiner).

This mutuality is then expressed in two separate environments: A resource environment and a project environment. Per definition the actors within these environment do not interact directly, besides in ceremonial activities. Rather, STAR-Ghana functions as an intermediary, or broker, between the two environments. While this is nothing new (e.g. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has specialized in such intermediation for years), the discourse of 'direct south funding' is simply wrong. The aid is channeled from Danida, to the Danish embassy in Accra and then to STAR-Ghana, which finally distributes them to local organization.

In sum, the discourse of partner countries is a progressive development in acknowledging the capabilities of such countries and south organizations. Reasonably such mutual dependency has led to the need of mutual accountability. However, the desk-research pointed out that such accountability often lead to a stiff focus on upward accountability through short-term results-based

management. The extent to which this is a concern for STAR-Ghana will be examined below (section 4.3.5.)

4.2.6. Case Study Hypotheses

In the introduction to the analysis, it was specified that the analysis aimed at explaining the rationale for multi-donor funds in Ghana and how such a modality has implications for civil society in Ghana. Based on thorough and context-specific desk research I have to the best of my ability, through the discussion above, framed such an analysis. Below I will summarize the desk research in five hypotheses, which will be tested in next section, based on six semi-structured interviews with central stakeholders (see Appendix for presentation of these and an example of the interview guide applied).

The main rationale behind pooled funding mechanisms as STAR-Ghana, or their *raison d'être*, is to reduce the transaction cost associated with dealing with a fragmented civil society and improve aid effectiveness. Power (1997) remarked that new public management (which aid effectiveness is linked to) is reinventing governance, in particularly manifested through the application of private-sector efficiency-seeking instruments to public governance. However, such efficiency-seeking is not only a technical program, but also a tool promoting a particular management paradigm valuing auditable performance measures with distinct implication for the civil society in Ghana.

So rather than reducing transaction cost *per se*, it was argued that STAR-Ghana actually shifts the burden of these cost from the donors to the CSOs, as their monitoring and evaluation requirements increases. All financing modalities have their challenges, and this study makes no inferences on the aggregated development impact of pooled funding mechanisms compared to other forms.

Based on the discussion of the relationship between the Aid Effectiveness Agenda and STAR-Ghana, the following five hypotheses, which will guide the remaining paper, have been generated. In bulleted summary the main hypotheses generated (and related to the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness) are:

- STAR-Ghana scores badly with regards to 'National Ownership', as it was developed exclusively by the donors without prior consultation. This

challenge the sustainable outcome as civil society regards it as a 'funding facility rather than a political platform'.

- STAR-Ghana is exclusively donor-designed. Despite several similar funds having been in place in Ghana, STAR-Ghana does not use the national systems. It is hypothesized that donors put emphasis on accountability over using national systems, in effect increasing the gap between the locals and the donors, due to accountability issues.
- Although the institutional donors behind STAR-Ghana have indisputably aligned and harmonized behind the manifest of STAR-Ghana this has indeed challenged the diversity of civil society funding, as the threshold for funding has increased. Accordingly, the hypothesis is that STAR-Ghana prefers to support urban-based CSOs, which live up to the financial and organizational requirements, in effect challenging the diversity of civil society in Ghana.
- The preoccupation with managing for results threatens long term development as priority has been given to provide tangible short term results, and linking funding to results-based performance over the projects' life.
- While multi-donor funds as STAR-Ghana are viewed as a way to fund south organizations directly, it is not. STAR-Ghana is a mediator between the donors and recipients, in effect bridging a resource-environment and a project-environment.

STAR-Ghana holds distinct implications for civil society in Ghana. These implications have been documented through desk-research. However, to validate such propositions it is essential to test them. In this study this has been done through six semi-structured interviews. The results of this will be presented in the following section.

4.3. Case Study Findings

The preceding section problematized the claims of aid effectiveness associated with pooled funding mechanisms and in particular multi-donor funds with point of departure in STAR-Ghana. This led me to suggest five, somewhat connected, hypotheses. In the following section the findings of my own empirical data

collection will be presented. This will result in some tentative conclusions on STAR-Ghana's implications for civil society in Ghana.

The data collection for this thesis has been rather comprehensive. A thorough desk research, including mass media, reports and academic journals, was done to grasp the existing knowledge. Further, I have attended scores of seminars and workshops in the civil society-sphere in Denmark. This led to a dozen of informal interviews with people from the Danish DNGO-sphere. Finally a total on almost four and a half hours of six semi-structured interviewed (close to 50 pages of transcription) was conducted with six central stakeholders, i.e. representing Danida, Ghanaian civil society and Danish DNGOs[24].

While the secondary data was used to introduce and frame the analysis, the semi-structured interviews will now be used to present the results of my study. However, it goes without saying that the academic validity of the conclusions will be open to criticisms as 'only' six persons was interviewed. This, however, has to do with the scope of the paper. Given more time and financial resources, the study would benefit from an even more comprehensive data collection, including fieldwork in Ghana. Yet, the findings have been presented to a number of stakeholders, which has contributed to verifying the tentative conclusions.

The remaining part of this chapter will present the findings adduced from the interviews, and relate them to the hypotheses established in the previous summary. Each of the following sections will be introduced with a recap of the puzzle. Subsequently extracts from interviews will document the interview respondents' views in this regard. This finally leads to the part where a tentative conclusion will be offered.

4.3.1. National Ownership

It is beyond any doubt that donors alone designed STAR-Ghana. This is however not to say that 'national ownership' was completely disregarded. As stated previously STAR-Ghana's *raison d'être*: "to contribute to increased accountability

[24] For more details regarding the data collection, please see the methodology section.

and responsiveness of government, traditional authorities and the private sector" (STAR-Ghana 2014B) is hardly conflicting with local or regional interests.

Still, the question remains whether this pronounced lack of civil society involvement and influence on political priorities as already documented, leads to an instrumentality for CSO's in Ghana. Meaning that civil society in Ghana shape their activities based on donor agenda –through funding– rather than their own organizational strategies.

In general there was agreement among the respondents that civil society in Ghana increasingly is becoming more and more independent and not *per se* is letting donor-priorities entirely govern them:

> Well, the world has changed since 2000. The CSOs in South have become much more clear and firm, better organized and have gained a lot of experience. And self-continuousness! All in all the developing countries have advanced financially in a way so North based organizations no longer have monopoly over the agenda, and command this and that. No we wouldn't! They'll say. (Nielsen May 2014, my own translation)

Moreover, there was a coherent acknowledgement of civil society in Ghana, and other developing countries, recently has nourished capable organization and thus better partners:

> There is a recognition that civil society in the developing countries has developed and changed too. And there are a lot of places where the organizations are professional and capable and well-equipped to formulate and implement projects, report and fulfill the audit requirements. They are perfectly able to do that themselves and do not need support from Danish organizations to do that. (Rasmussen May 2014, my own translation)

This quote implicitly signals another significant change too. When the south organizations are perceived as capable of meeting reporting requirements, Danish CSOs needs to document what 'added value' they bring into such partnerships.

One must thus assume that if the Danish CSOs fail to do so, even more funding can be channeled circumventing Danish CSOs.

However, a distinct disagreement was evident among the respondents on the extent to which civil society in the South can withstand becoming an instrument of donors' priorities through financing. A respondent had a significantly different view in this regard than the two quote above:

> I'm afraid of, or I believe that, a lot of them [CSO's in Ghana] follow the money and then adapt to the [donor's] requirements. It is safe to say that they become rather instrumental in that process. So where do they really want to go themselves? And what do they hope to accomplish? (Højlund May 2014, my own translation)

Echoing this, another renowned CSO representative agrees to the extent that:

> There certainly is a dimension of that [instrumentality]. And one of STAR's challenges is that they operate based on these calls for proposal. And there is a huge discussion on who actually defines these. For all of a sudden you have a lot of organizations that are super skilled at working within the extracting industry… So it is clear that the opportunity for funding to an extent defines [the CSOs] activities. (Asboe May 2014, my own translation)

As such, it seems fair to assert that with regards to the case study of STAR-Ghana, the respondents are concerned that the multi-donor pool *de facto* instrumentalizes civil society actors. Though, with some disagreement of the extent to which they become instrumentalized. It is clear that this does not further national ownership, and even less sustained long-term development. However, the respondent on their own initiative offered advice in this regard.

While the extent to which STAR-Ghana is donor-driven is problematic, it is of course perfectly legitimate for donors to have their own agendas. Thus, if we accept the premise that STAR-Ghana's way of funding and operating to some extent instrumentalizes civil society actors, it is critical to allow the local civil society to influence the very political priorities of STAR-Ghana:

> It is still important that local civil society has a substantial influence on prioritizing what activities that will be supported and funded,

> though, not necessarily on the operation and administration of them, as we have [a Danish umbrella organization]. Preferably you could come up with a modality, which on the on hand could secure local civil societies embeddedness and influence and on the other hand secure a smooth accountability. (Asboe May 2014, my own translation)

The extract above indicates that the need for accountability and civil society influence seems to pull in different directions. Nevertheless, by establishing a politic organ with civil society representatives, who could influence STAR-Ghana's calls, a trade-off seems straight-forward. However, as shall be discussed later, the institutional donors themselves try to influence the calls. Consequently, it is difficult to imagine the same donors include civil society even more.

In the previous section where the hypotheses, which framed this analysis was developed, a study was quoted arguing that civil society regards STAR-Ghana as 'funding facility rather than a political platform'. In consequence civil society 'follow the money' instead of influencing the future political-developmental strategy. The findings from the interviews further supported this. Though, all conceded that South organization had developed organizational the last decades, there is still room for improvement. The respondents had to a certain extent experienced such an instrumentalization. As the road to change these mechanisms seems far, an agreement around giving CSOs in Ghana more influence in political priorities emerged among the respondents.

4.3.2. Donor Alignment

Donor alignment is constituted of two components, a political alignment and a system alignment respectively. In this case study there are two sides to the political alignment, where donors align their strategies and priorities behind national development plans. On the one hand STAR-Ghana was exclusively designed by donors, which looked more at the experienced they had with similar projects than on national strategies and civil society priorities. On the other hand, promoting transparency and accountability hardly clashes with responsible governance, and some respondent found it pressing:

> If you take Ghana we must admit that they [civil society] are mixed up in the political system down there. They have a lot of rhetoric about poverty eradication and democracy, but they are mixed up in a political system, which is characterized by corruption and little transparency. So you need a lot of control. (Nielsen May 2014, my own translation)

When analyzing the respondents' reflections on donor alignment in STAR-Ghana they, as with regards to 'national ownership', found it open to criticism. As discussed above, it is perfectly legitimate for donors to have their own agendas, however all 'Aid Effectiveness' literature suggests the best results are accomplished through supporting national strategies (OECD 2012).

This, however, does not seem to be prevailing amongst STAR-Ghana's donors. For example, the new Danish Civil Society Policy is in fact a step in the wrong direction for donor alignment:

> It's really great that the link between the overall policy and the civil society policy now becomes clearer. Not least since it shall guide the support not channeled through Danish CSOs [i.e. STAR-Ghana]… So we are signaling what we want from Denmark, so our partners now know where we stand. (Rasmussen May 2014, my own translation)

As such, it is evident that at least one of STAR-Ghana's donors, Denmark, in fact is committing themselves further to their own political priorities in preference to aligning behind national strategies. Keeping this and the above in mind, it is uncontroversial to claim that STAR-Ghana in fact is not rather supportive of national strategies. In the conclusion this part will be elaborated by discussing the role of the need for a domestic public support base.

The other leg of donor alignment is for donors to align behind national systems rather than building parallel systems themselves, the so-called system alignment. STAR-Ghana has not built on Ghana's existing system. Rather a contractor is in charge of the operation. A fact one of the respondents explained was an outcome of the particular institutional setup:

> It is an interesting modality [multi-donor pools], and most of the multi-donor pools in South has been initiated and managed by DFID. Then a lot of other institutional donors have joined in, including Danida. DFID's approach is characterized by their keenness to hire a contractor to be responsible for the operation, and then invite to tenders [through calls for proposals]. (Asboe May 2014, my own translation)

STAR-Ghana is governed through a so-called lead-donor approach, where DFID has the main responsibility. Contextualizing national aid agencies, and in particular DFID, against the new public management awaking helps explain DFID's reluctance against relying on national systems. Yet local engagement is crucial for sustained development. In that relation, history might by on the locals' side though:

> Nobody believes DFID will back down on having internationally renowned firms, due to the financial accountability… But who knows if STAR in the future could become an example of a donor transferring responsibility to a local operator, even a NGO… Under all circumstances one needs to be aware of designing some governance structures under which the local civil society can have decisive influence on the political priorities. (Asboe May 2014, my own translation)

Experiences from the previous multi-donor funds supporting civil society in Ghana suggests, that when such temporarily project organizations expire, a subsequent transition phase often involves the transfer of responsibility to local operators. So while the respondents unanimously agreed that the donors, and especially DFID, would not relax its requirement on contractor-driven operation, some of them voiced confidence in a transition involving more local ownership.

The findings I have adduced from the interviews are an unambiguous recognition of a low donor alignment, as in the case of national ownership. This was evident with regards to political and system alignment alike. Despite this consensus little concern was voiced over the resulting implications of the

institutional setup. As in the case of national ownership, a greater involvement of civil society in strategy-making was wished for though.

4.3.3. Donor Harmonization

Civil society in developing countries has throughout time been subject to a vast number and variations of different monitoring and evaluation regimes from donors. Moreover donors have lacked coordination resulting in duplications of development projects.[25]

From the case study we learned that the institutional donors indeed aligned behind the priorities of STAR-Ghana, thus having minimized the risk of operational duplications. Nevertheless, it was hinted that this setup had some unintended consequences as well.

As such, most respondents commented on the new Danish Civil Society Policy, and how Danida is coming through with its own agenda:

> Denmark has been keen advocators for a very inclusive definition of civil society, and maintaining that CSO's have an important role in effective development policy, with diversity and embeddedness in the local areas. Denmark has recently upheld a rights-based approach to development, where the CSOs are critical to promote rights-holders access to their rights. So I believe Denmark has contributed positively and progressively. (Hove May 2014, my own translation)

This of course confirms the proposition that donors have their own agendas. In effect explaining the low donor alignment, as institutional donors promote their own policies:

> I know STAR is worried over they are *de facto* donor-driven. Danida has by the way influenced some of the latest calls, so it could fit into their sector-programs. I strongly believe that is an important discussion to have, whether that is deemed appropriate. (Asboe May 2014, my own translation)

[25] It is worth noting that this was the main motivation for the reform of the national UN systems: 'Delivering as One'.

Further, the extracts suggest that donor harmonization is more linked to a process of inter-donor agreement rather than donor alignment (a central point in section 4.3.1. and 4.3.2. as well).

However, as suggested previously, the harmonization of donors' agendas -which STAR-Ghana positively contributes to- through pooled funding mechanisms, leads to an increased professionalization of the audit requirements. This development is further reinforced in the new Danish 'Civil Society Policy', with an explicit and increased commitment to direct south funding:

> I believe it [the implementation] primarily will fall on the embassies. In that connection we have made a study of multi-donor pool supporting civil society as we expect that to be a dominant approach in the future… [Though] I don't think the embassies should expect further resources for this though. (Rasmussen May 2014, my own translation)

By transferring more direct responsibility to the embassies for the Danish development assistance, without accompanied funding does by no means suggest a greater focus on the challenges such funds as STAR-Ghana poses for civil society.

It was suggested in the case study's hypotheses that multi-donor funds and STAR-Ghana raises the bar with regards to financial and technical resources of civil society. 'Knowledgeable persons' should draw up detailed plans and preference is given to, predominantly urban-based, organizations, which fulfill such requirements. A great many of the respondents spoke about a 'professionalization' of civil society, and one termed it as an outcome of an 'evaluation-tyranny'. This, according to the CSOs respondents challenges the very diversity of Ghana's civil society:

> If more and more [aid] becomes direct south funding, I think a lot of our niche organizations will disappear. People are concerned with the increased concentration. And maybe we are sawing of the very branch we are sitting on when you are diluting Danish CSO's collaboration with South organization, which the popular support to a large extent is

> dependent upon. But in the long run, maybe it doesn't make a difference, because in a way all bilateral aid assistance to Ghana will vanish *pari passu* with the African countries become richer. There is a GNI limit on $3200 and according to the World Bank Ghana is on $1550[26] now. (Højlund May 2014, my own translation)

The extent to which Ghana's civil society is geared to handle such an increased burden was somewhat disagreed on amongst the respondents:

> We are able to account for whatever money that is given for whatever, in a manner that is verifiable internationally as by their standards. We are able to deliver on that, as required. I don't say there have not been issues. But we have tried our best to be responsible and accountable. (Philip June 2014)

However, the background for the extract above is an elite NGO, which has been capacity built by Danish partners since the mid 1980's. So while Mr. Philip speaks positively on NGOs' ability to report in Ghana, the other findings in the data suggest that this is not spread out to CBOs and other smaller and less formal organizations:

> Not at all! I think it will be those that can fulfill the New Public Management's requirement, which will be supported... We have been quite fond of how social movements have been able to impact. However, we must admit that it had nothing to do with us. They are organized through some entirely different structures. So if we come with our logical framework we can forget all about that! (Nielsen May 2014, my own translation)

In agreement with several previous arguments, there is a pronounced acknowledgement that NGOs in the global south and in Ghana in particular, is capable of meeting north organizations at eye level. However, CSOs in Ghana with less organizational capacity face a tough time meeting the increased requirements put by STAR-Ghana.

[26] Lower-middle-income and upper-middle-income economies are separated at a GNI per capita of $4,125, and Ghana is currently on $1,760 (The World Bank 2014).

By and large, it is widely accepted that donors will try to promote their own agendas regarding donor harmonization. This suggests that the real politics of a multi-donor pool is between the donors themselves and not between the institutional donor and the partner country. Further, most such multi-donor funds and in particular STAR-Ghana, has heightened the requirements for CSOs to be applicable to apply for funding. From my interviews it is clear that the respondents view this as a challenge for the diversity of Ghana's civil society. On that basis one could argue that this conflicts with the Danish aim to secure a widespread and diverse civil society in order to hold the duty-bearers responsible to the rights-holders.

4.3.4. Managing for Results

One of the tenets of effective aid is to secure that the aid has a sustained impact and is resilient. Arguably, 'managing for results' is a commitment to secure tangible results for the development aid. However, as the case study hypothesis pointed to, a too rigid focus on short-term measureable results does not *per se* further a sustained and resilient development. Rather, it could be argued that it conflicts with long-term development practices (see Burger and Seabe 2014).

A respondent point towards the diffusion of new public management practices into the national aid agencies as the main driver for the results-based frameworks aid agencies currently promote:

> New public management comes with certain costs. It can be very corrective and controlling for how you operate. But we have had a significant influence on what we should be measured on. Danida is more or less desperate to make us self-managed for such matters. (Nielsen May 2014, my own translation)

Much has already been said about STAR-Ghana's contribution to a concentration of funds amongst fewer actors, however, 'logical frameworks' and other technical requirements unmistakably moves the resources from the underdeveloped North to the capital in the South:

> We have what we call the North and the South divide. Now generally the South is more developed than the North. So the needs were there,

> and you used to call the North the capital of NGOs in Ghana. Today that is not the situation. The organizations that are strong today, most of them are based in the capital Accra. (Philip June 2014)

Further, it is obvious that such a preoccupation with 'managing for results' favors traditional and well-established civil society actors. However, the Arab-Spring was enlightening for the international aid community and in particular the national aid agencies. Perhaps the real agents of change are in fact social movements and informally organized groups, and not traditional and established CSOs:

> That will be the challenge for social movements, which by the nature of things, are not organized in the same way as traditional CSOs: they don't have a board, no membership or an income statement… Are we able to support them, and should we? Because there is a growing recognition that major changes are driven by them, and not the traditional CSOs. As such it would be disappointing if we believe in them as agents of change, that we then can't support them. (Rasmussen May 2014, my own translation)

However, this brings us back to the issue of an instrumentalized civil society, since if requirements are relaxed some respondents feared an influx of 'fortune hunters' to such new modalities:

> You should not underestimate that the locals often has a sort of 'salesman's logic'. They can sell everything! They are vibrant and very talented on picking up on what they can get funding to. Thus they often have an uncritical attitude towards the ideas we put forward. And that is a problem. (Nielsen May 2014, my own translation)

Further, all the respondents talked about the need for accountability, *inter alia* to fight corruption, which is a real problem in Ghana. A problem which a local CSO respondent nuances in the following way:

> The problem with corruption in Ghana is that we can't assert its magnitude. When you talk about corruption in Ghana, most blame underdevelopment on corruption. So when a development-program fails to deliver, it means you were corrupt. So it is perceived

> corruption. Then there are others there feel somebody somehow have used the resources to benefit political cronies... I can't see the corruption, but I've the perception that some people are corrupt and mismanaging resources. (Philip June 2014)

As such, Mr. Philip argues that there of course is a problem with corruption in Ghana, but the problem is amplified as corruption also connotes mismanagement and if someone is not able to deliver what they promised. Based on the extracts above, it is fair to infer that some level of management by objectives and results are needed, however, it should not compromise the long-term development focus needed to attain sustainable development.

Where the case study presentation was predominantly concerned with how short-term results-based performance indicators affected long-term development, the respondents was ones again preoccupied with how this contributes to a centralizations of resources amongst fewer actors and thus challenge the local diversity of civil society. The respondents' main hesitation towards such a professionalization of civil society is that a vibrant a diverse civil society contributes to democratization of society. Further, is was evident, that less formal organizations in fact currently is viewed as perhaps the most effective agents of change, and thus support to them is desirable too.

4.3.5. Mutual Accountability

Mutual accountability is the last of the Paris Declaration's five principles. It is also the most diffuse principle, to say the least. Essentially, it urges donors and partners akin to be accountable and be transparent in their development work.

One should recall that if you write STAR-Ghana's name in full it is actually Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana. As such, the very aim of the multi-donor fund is to enhance accountability and transparency. All the respondents obviously supported this. However, instead of ending the chapter here or continue a diffuse story of accountability, all the respondents independently touched upon the very issue of direct south funding, with regards to accountability.

First of all, though, a Danish CSO representative explains the very logic behind supporting civil society in development intent:

> Most poor don't live in low-income countries but in countries as India [middle-income countries]… State-State aid is for no use their, as poverty is a political distribution problem. Then it's hopeless anyhow to support the state, but we should instead support the CSOs. The poverty problem can only be solved through support to civil society. (Nielsen May 2014, my own translation)

Thus the reasoning underlying civil society support, as opposed to state-aid, is to enhance responsiveness, accountability and arguably also transparency: The very *raison d'être* of STAR-Ghana. A senior Danida official who likewise phrases the rationale behind direct south funding further boosts STAR-Ghana's positive contribution:

> Speaking in a rights-based language, we support the government, administration and other authorities as duty-bearers. On the other side we want to support the right-holders too. And by proxy civil society is representing the right-holders and should hold the government accountable on their duties and their promises to their own populations as well as to the donors. As such we support both sides of the scale. (Rasmussen May 2014, my own translation)

However, whereas the case study introduction to a great extent dealt with the ill balanced concern for upward accountability over downward accountability as a result of STAR-Ghana's institutional setup, the respondents had little to say about that. Though, all the respondents, one way or another, agreed that civil society in Ghana has significant challenges accounting for which rights-holders they in fact represent:

> There is no doubt that CSO's in Ghana have a massive challenge in accounting for whom they represent. A fact the government sometimes exploits… We have just talked about Læsø. I believe there are 200 associations, in a population of 2000 people. And they all convene for general assembly in January. Well, you don't see that in

> Ghana… Representation is a big issue: whom do they actually represent? (Højlund May 2014, my own translation)

This distinct (less formal) way of organizing civil society was also reflected in the analysis of civil society in Ghana. However, despite its distinct organizational forms, civil society in Ghana is credited with a great deal of autonomy, compared with other countries in the region. As such donors are keen, for a number of reasons including advancing the public support base, to support civil society directly, typically through multi-donor funds as STAR-Ghana. Still Danish CSO's are hesitating fully embracing the development:

> On the other side we are a bit skeptical to which extent we [Danish CSOs] are becoming redundant and replaced by direct south funding. There are a lot of good reasons why we are so, amongst others that despite it is called direct south funding, it is not as direct as you might expect. It is channeled through embassies and what have you. It doesn't circumvent the usual control mechanism. So in fact it doesn't really become more direct, does it now. However you lose out on the quality assurance the Danish CSOs can contribute with regarding accountability. (Nielsen May 2014, my own translation)

The extract above essentially summaries civil society's concern regarding 'direct south funding', i.e. pooled funding mechanisms as STAR-Ghana. They disregard the very notion of 'direct funding' as it -at least- is channeled through the embassy and the multi-donor fund, before benefiting local civil society. As such, the argument that circumventing the Danish CSOs as a funding channel reduces transaction costs is questioned.

While there has been a lot of discussion of accountability issues under the previous four principles, there is no reason to recap them here. What is worth noting though, is that most concerns regarding accountability are rooted in a concern for a public support for development cooperation, predominantly domestically.

4.4. Summary

Today civil society in Ghana is vibrant and diverse, but very fragmented and under-resourced. The proliferation of CSO's following democratization in 1992 combined with their fragmented structure, proved ideal for donors to set up multi-donor funds in Ghana to support civil society, amongst them STAR-Ghana, which is the case study in this chapter.

In the analysis it was documented that the political motivation underlying STAR-Ghana was a commitment to 'direct south funding'. All the respondents acknowledged that South organizations have become more capable partners recently, and as such they are less in need of guidance from Danish partner CSOs. In continuation of the political motivation, the economic reasoning behind STAR-Ghana is grounded in the Aid Effectiveness Agenda and in new public management's efficiency-seeking mantra of reducing transaction cost. However, the effectiveness and efficiency concerns are pooling in opposite directions. While the aid effectiveness is linked increased donor harmonization, etc., this is triumphed by efficiency-seeking reasons. This is well illustrated by how national aid agencies, like Danida, try to affect STAR-Ghana's call for proposal, rather than linking them to national strategies.

Following the political motivation and economic reasoning, the implications for civil society in Ghana was discussed in relation the Aid Effectiveness Agenda. The main findings included a lack of civil society influence over the political priorities of STAR-Ghana resulting in STAR-Ghana is perceived more as a 'funding facility rather than a political platform'. Further, most respondents was concerned with STAR-Ghana contributing to a further professionalization of civil society as 'CSOs are expected to work in consortia with a lead agency taking the contractual responsibility'.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusions, Discussion and Further Research

Whilst new public management is reinventing public governance and institutional donors seek private-sector efficiency gains, multi-donor funds have moved center stage in current discussion on aid effectiveness. The assumed transaction cost reductions for national aid agencies is a perfect match for their lean exercise, and is fully legitimized by its claims of effectiveness. However this study shows that this is most likely a truth with modifications.

The following three sections will conclude the study. First, section 5.1. will address the research question and offer some tentative conclusions. Second, section 5.2. will discuss the role of public support for development assistance, as it is viewed central for the continuation of development cooperation. Third, and final, section 5.3. will outline future research grounds.

5.1. Multi-Donor Funds: The failed promise of effectiveness?

The case study has to the best of my ability with all its limitations, outlined and documented the study's core claim covering the motivation and reasoning behind STAR-Ghana and what the main implications of this particular institutional framework are for the civil society in Ghana.

Initially it is documented that civil society in Ghana is rather fragmented, though civil society in Ghana is recognized to hold important merits for the country's development. This has proven ideal for donors to legitimize the establishment of multi-donor pools in Ghana, as the donors thereby provide an organizational platform for the progressive but resource-struggling civil society. This is further driven by an efficiency-seeking motivation by national aid agencies, encouraged by the new public management discourse of reducing

transaction cost for obtaining the most 'value for money'. However, a central finding was that the effectiveness and efficiency motivations are pooling in opposite directions. The opposing interests with regards to 'managing for results' highlights this well. From an 'aid effectiveness' perspective managing for results are supposed to manifested in long-term impact measured in partners framework, however it was evident that the efficiency-seeking motive prevailed, since short-term tangible results was pivotal for STAR-Ghana's way of operating.

While this -in short- described the reasoning and motivation underlying STAR-Ghana, and arguably other pooled funding mechanisms too, it did not document the implications for civil society that STAR-Ghana holds. Thus STAR-Ghana's claims of effectiveness (arguably thereby legitimacy too) were then dissected. Besides a clear warrant to problematize its *de facto* contribution to aid effectiveness, two main finding stood out. First, most actors predominantly associated accountability concerns with upward accountability, ultimately to a domestic support base of the development assistance. Second, the discourse of direct south funding is a qualified truth, as it is still channeled through local embassies and STAR-Ghana. As such, transaction costs are essentially not reduced - merely they are shifted onto civil society actors. Hence, in particular smaller CSOs, risk becoming redundant to donors if they do not fit into their call for proposals. This obviously can challenge the diversity of civil society, and lead to an increased professionalization of civil society.

This increased professionalization -both amongst Danish CSOs and South organizations- arguably challenges the public support to development cooperation by further alienating the public, as experts monopolize decision-making and information. This puzzle will be further elaborated in the following section.

5.2. Ghana's Mass Corruption or Danish Misperception?

Whilst the above conclusion provided a summary of the main findings of the study, in relation to the research question, this subsection will strive towards being more normative.

A central concern documented in the study was to enhance accountability, whether it was with respect to demonstrating transparency, promoting tangible

results or political priorities. Hitherto, chiefly the diffusion of new public management's efficiency-seeking discourse into public administration was credited this advance. Still, it was hinted (e.g. in section 4.3.2.) that the public support to development aid was a driver too. The Danish politicians and the department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark are keenly aware that the future of Danish development cooperation is linked to the public support. However, as this study documents the increased professionalization of civil society, arguably creates a tension between efficiency and public support.

The ODA Denmark gives to Ghana amounts to some DKK80 per capita in Denmark. As such, the domestic public support to such activities is absolutely crucial. The legitimacy is often linked to the perceived effectiveness. This is regularly evaluated in popular media in terms of the percentage spent on administration, or other measurable activities such as number of vaccines given. This gives rise to two particular challenges. First, the civil society in Ghana is distinct, particularly in its organizational form, from the Danish civil society. Yet, more often than not it is the Western understanding of civil society (typically in in form of well-organized NGOs) that the media and domestic population evaluate the effectiveness upon, in effect disregarding the local context. Secondly, both media and the general public does not *per se* distinguish between humanitarian aid and development assistance. While the first can be measured in terms of number of vaccines or tons of food, the latter, which furthers a rights-based approach to development, produces results that civil society and policy-makers continuously struggle to communicate effectively.

Recently Danida has advanced the responsibility of civil society for securing the public backing of the development cooperation. This is partly done through Danida increasingly demanding more funding generated through operations and membership by the Danish CSOs and partly the cross-sectorial partnership 'the World's Best News', which communicates the developmental progress of Denmark's partner countries.

However, if we accept that the future of the Danish development cooperation is linked to the public support hereto, it would be to live in fool's paradise not to be worried.

Within the Danish development-sphere there is a famous quote from then (1960) Prime Minister Viggo Kampmann (S): "Presumably it would do the Danish people good to help, and therefore the help must be of such a size that the individual arouse from his laziness". However, despite that Denmark is one of the world's leading donors in absolute terms as well as in relative terms, more than two-thirds of the Danes do not think they know much about the conditions in developing countries. The increased professionalization of civil society both in Denmark, and in the developing countries, further alienates the people from engaging in it. This is however central to the public support, as improving information on development aid is to strengthen public support.

Thus, unless information hereon is furthered and the Danish population is engaged, public support will die out. As such, -phrased rather theatrical- it is not the Ghanaian mass corruption, but rather the Danish misconception, that is a threat to the future of Danish development cooperation.

5.3. Further Research

This study has documented a wide array of issues, many of which give cause to further research, two of which will be highlighted herein.

The first cause could be to develop upon this present study. This would ideally be done by picking up on the limitations of the study (discussed in section 2.3.4.). Most pressing is the need for observing first-hand the implications of STAR-Ghana, and arguably other multi-donor funds, on the civil society in Ghana. Preferably that would require at least 3-4 months of observations, distributed among various stakeholders. First, up to a month inside STAR-Ghana's organization to grasp the way they operate and culture of the organization. Interesting and relevant questions to be answered could be: what guides the decision-making process?; which criteria are ascribed the most value?, and how do they try to promote diversity among civil society. Second, interviews with both successful and unsuccessful grant applicants would further qualify the perception gained from the observation within STAR-Ghana and from the desk-research. As such, much of the same questions would be asked to the grants applicant as to the STAR-Ghana professional: Does STAR-Ghana contribute to the diversity of civil society? What do you perceive STAR-Ghana values are in the applications, etc.?

Third, and final, observation from the way the Danish embassy in Accra deals with the distribution of ODA to civil society could be beneficial in order to further shed light on the economic reasoning and political motivation behind STAR-Ghana, and such pooled funding mechanisms in general. Following Abbot's (2004) typology, this would in effect be applying an ethnographic approach, which main merit is to uncover deep and stratified knowledge, as thick description of the phenomenon is produced. While this undeniably is a very qualitative approach, the findings and observations could be utilized in a quantitative dimension as well. For instance one could use a five-point Likert scale to test how STAR-Ghana rated their contribution to civil society against how civil society in Ghana rated their contribution. As such, the study would be methodologically cross-disciplinary, which arguably would contribute to the validity of the findings. This would indeed enable the application of Yin's (2009) demanding 'case study' definition.

The second cause for further research (instead of or following the above) is to expand the present study. From my point of view two particular interesting ways to do that would be to either make it a multiple case study analysis, or to increasingly mirror the Danish civil society with Ghana's.

First, by expanding the study to Uganda (from the Central East Africa) and Tanzania (from East Africa), one could gain insights from a comparative study. These countries are well chosen as they represent different regions, but all are between Denmark's prime partners and have similar multi-donor pools. It goes without saying that no two countries and -probably- not two multi-donor funds are completely similar, however, valuable insights to how such multi-donor funds promote diversity, national ownership or sustainable development could yield valuable knowledge, which could inform policy-makers of best-practices or pitfalls, as well as inform academia about loose couplings between organizational design or culture of a multi-donor fund and its main contributors.

Secondly, instead of expanding the present study to other partner countries one could instead look on the implications that 'direct south funding' has on Danish organizations. Through a study among CISU's members (The Danish CSO's that

administrates ‘the Development fund’, approx. DKK135m) one could research whether they, partly perceived the direct funding as a threat, and partly if it actually diminished their operations. A quintessential starting point could be to study whether Ghana Venskabsgrupperne experienced less activity, as STAR-Ghana receives more money. My guiding hypothesis would be that, if both the Danish and the Ghanaian civil society are increasingly professionalized at the same time, then public support will be threatened, as the development aid again is distanced from the public sight.

CHAPTER SIX

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CHAPTER SEVEN

7. Appendix

Annex 1: An example of one of the interview-guides used in the study.

Topical Domain:	Questions:	Notes:
Introduktion	Thank you for taking the time to speak to me. Could you start by explaining me a little about your organization? To the extent you have been involved in the organizational collaboration with Bjarne and GV; how would you characterize your partnership?	
Civil society in Ghana	How would you describe the civil society in Ghana? Is it spread beyond Accra and other main cities? As I understand it, there are a lot of CSO's in Ghana, but who do they represent? – Membership-based organizations? Again as I understand it, the family in Ghana is very important, and trusts outside is no easy? –how can you engage in a civil society beyond the family? Also for business? We talk about the space for civil society, legally and politically, how do you see that in Ghana? There are allegations that some of the national development programs have had issues with corruption, is this affecting CS? Are there any legal limitations opposed on civil society? Which values does one typically associate with CS in Ghana? (Gender, development, poverty reduction, HR, democracy) As such, where do you see (in which policy	

	areas) CS having the greatest impact? This impact dimension, is this greatest in advocacy or service-delivery? How central are they inorder to empower the population, literacy, gender etc.? Are they able to hold the government and business' accountable?(watch-dog role)	
Multi-pools	I have read some reports about mulit-doner pools and found that there a quite a lot in Ghana – do you know why? How do you see such pool? Pros-cons? Is it easier to work with them rather than partner organizations or Embassies? Civil vs. Civic society? Which role does the CSO's have in Ghana? With a lot of different finance sources available, don't you risk being instrumental for Western priorities? –Rather than a robust national ownership? How does it affect your organization to be subject to donor reporting and auditing schemes? Resource-demanding? As i see Ghana, there is a rich and diverse landscape of CS, but is there a tendency among donors to centralize resources among fewer and bigger organizations? Will multi-donor pool increase such centralizations?	
Afslutning	Finally I would like you to rank the CS in Ghana from 0-5 on four dimension (Struktur;Space;Value; and impact) Development Tanko, Ghana Star middle-class	

Table 4: The interview guide.

Annex 2: The (systematic) literature search on multi-donor funds and aid effectiveness.

The analytical focus of this paper is the increased commitment to direct south funding. My initiation assumption, which an interview with a Danida official confirmed, is that such an increased commitment is to be managed by the local embassies, though without further means for administration. As such, multi-donor funds (MDFs) are becoming increasingly influential.

MDFs are conventionally recognized to reduce transactions costs and as such create more value for money. Further, some believe civil society's influence is increased and as such national ownership, as they interact with such MDP.

From my empirical data, however, it has been well established that such conventional wisdom not necessarily is true. With point of departure in conversations about STAR-Ghana, national ownership issues are a much-debated issue. Further, the truth appears to be, that such constructs simply transfer transaction costs, rather than minimizes them. Moreover, such a shift challenge the sustainable development of civil society in the global south, as aid relations are reduced to arms-lengths interactions through tenders, and as such downplays the role of capacity building.

Keeping this puzzle in mind, the literature review covered the linkage between 'direct south funding' and the aid effectiveness agenda, in order document the discussion above. Therefore the following search strand (Table 5):

Multi donor (trust) funds	**And**	**Aid Effectiveness**	**In**	**Ghana**
Direct (south) funding		National ownership		West Africa
Basket funding		Paris agenda		Sub-Saharan Africa
Crowd funding		Value for money /results		Fragile states
ODA		Mutual accountability		Emerging markets /developing countries

Table 5: Literature Search on Multi-Donor Funds and Aid Effectiveness.

1. Barakat, S 2009, 'The failed promise of multi-donor trust funds: aid financing as an impediment to effective state building in post-conflict contexts' Policy Studies - Routledge, vol 30, no. 2, pp. 107-126.
2. Eyben, R. (2010) 'Hiding Relations: The Irony of 'Effective Aid", European Journal of Development Research, 1-16.
3. Hayman R. (2009) "From Rome to Accra via Kigali: 'Aid Effectiveness' in Rwanda", Development Policy Review, Vol. 27, Issue 5, pp. 581-599,
4. Rogerson, A. (2005)"Aid Harmonization and Allignment: Bridging the gaps between Reality and the Paris Reform Agenda" Development Policy Review, 23 (5), pg 531-52.
5. Woll, B. 'Donor harmonisation and government ownership: multi-donor budget support in Ghana', European Journal of Development Research 20(1), 2008, pp 74-87.

The literature search was done online through Google Scholar, after having synchronized it with the university database. Focusing on peer-reviewed articles, there is a vast literature on aid modalities and aid effectiveness respectively. However, the linkage between those concepts is largely unexplored. In the period from the 2005 and forward only five articles was remotely discussing such linkage[27].

However, an immense amount of reports from government agencies, NGOs and other organizations exists on this particular matter (exactly 1690).

Further bibliographical references can be forwarded on request.

[27] The articles featured respectively European Journal of Development Research and Development Policy Review (two each) and one in Policy Studies.

Annex 3: Presentation of the interview respondents.

Name	Organization	Description (**IN DANISH**)	Duration
Henrik NIELSEN	NGO Forum	Henrik Nielsen er 50 år og uddannet cand.scient.soc. et Ph.D. Henrik glæder sig til, som akademisk medarbejder i NGO FORUM, at være med til at fastholde den nye regering på dens ambitiøse målsætninger på udviklingsområdet, særligt m.h.t. civilsamfundets rolle. Han kommer fra en stilling på DIIS, hvor han netop har færdiggjort et studie for udviklingsministeriet om "Pro-poor Growth through Export Sector Support - What works, Where and Why".	45.00
Bjarne HØJLUND	Ghana Venskabsgrupperne	Den 55-årige folkeskolelærer og cand.scient.soc. har siden 1995 arbejdet med udvikling i Tanzania, Uganda og Ghana på kommune- og landsbyniveau, især indenfor kapacitetsopbygning af civile organisationer og lokale regeringer.	45.00
Søren ASBOE	CISU	Søren Asboe Skriver Om Donor Diversificering i Ghana Sydfondene er kommet for at blive	45.00
Jens Kåre RASMUSSEN	Danida	Teamkoordinator: Jens Kåre Rasmussen Arbejdsområde: Civilsamfundsstrategi, mål- og resultatstyring, MS/Action Aid, CISU, NGO Forum	45.00
Mads HOVE	Concord Danmark	Konstitueret sekretariatsleder, arbejdsområde: civilsamfund og funding	45.00
Gmabi A. PHILIP	GDCA Ghana	Sub-component Manager, CBO-Local Organisation and Mobilisation Gmabi A. Philip har som ansat i Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA) arbejdet for fred og forsoning i området siden 2010 gennem organisationens Dagbon Peace Initiative (DPI)	45.00

Table 6: Presentation of interview respondents