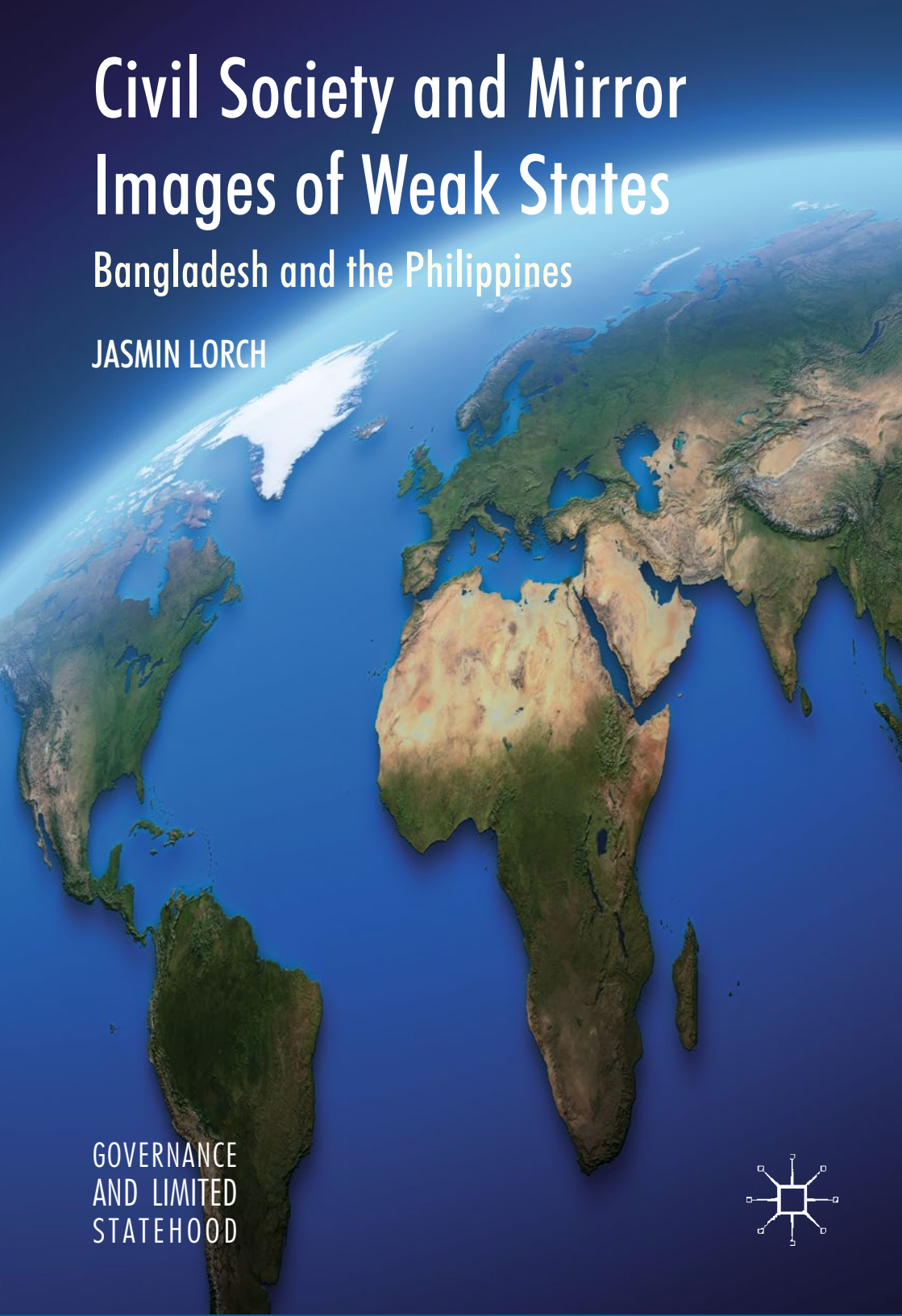
Civil Society and Mirror Images of Weak States

Bangladesh and the Philippines

JASMIN LORCH



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List of Abbreviations

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
ADAB	Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AL	Awami League
APSU	All Party Students' Unity
ARC	Alliance for Rural Concerns
ASA	Association for Social Advancement
BCCs	Basic Christian Communities
BCC-CO	Basic Christian Communities-Community Organising
BCP	Bangladesh Communist Party
BDR	Bangladesh Rifles
BEC	Bangladesh Election Commission
BEI	Bangladesh Enterprise Institute
BINGO	Big NGO
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BWLA	Bangladesh Women Lawyers' Association
CAFGUs	Citizen Armed Force Geographical Units
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CARP	Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program
CARPER	CARP-Extension with Reforms
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement
CBCP	Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines
CBCP-NASSA	Catholic Bishops Conference-National Secretariat for Social Action
CBOs	Communist-Based Organizations
CC	Corporation Code

CCS	Centre for Civil Society
CCS-LSE	Centre for Civil Society-London School of Economics and Political Science
CD	Chattra Dal
CL	Chattra League
CNL	Christians for National Liberation
CODE-NGO	Caucus for Development NGOs
COMELEC	Commission on Elections
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue
CPEP	Communist Party of East Pakistan
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
CPP-NPA	Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army
CTG	Caretaker Government
DAR	Department of Agrarian Reform
DFID	Department for International Development
DKMP	Democratic KMP
DoF	Department of Finance
DoH	Department of Health
DoL	Department of Labour
DSS	Department of Social Services
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
DU	Dhaka University
DW	Democracy Watch
EC	European Commission
EDSA	Epifanio de los Santos Avenue
EWG	Election Working Group
FDC	Freedom from Debt Coalition
FFF	Federation of Free Farmers
FFW	Federation of Free Workers
FHI	Freedom House Index
FISO	Fast-Track, Issue-Based, Sweeping Organizing
FNB	Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh
FSI	Fragile States Index (previously Failed States Index)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HuJIB	Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICS	Islami Chattra Shibir (previously Islami Chattra Sangha)
ICT	International Crimes Tribunal
INGO	International NGO
IOJ	Islami Oyika Jote

IPD	Institute for Popular Democracy
JCS	Jatiya Chattra Samaj
JI	Jamaat-e-Islami
JMB	Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh
JP	Jatyia Party
KDF	*Kabalaka* Development Foundation
KF	Khan Foundation
KM	Kabataang Makabayan (Nationalist Youth)
KMP	Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas
KMU	Kilusang Mayo Uno
LDC	Local Development Council
LGC	Local Government Code
LFS	League of Filipino Students
LM	Laban ng Masa
LP	Liberalista Party
LSE	London School of Economics and Political Science
MBC	Makati Business Club
MIN	Movement for an Independent Negros
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NP	Nacionalista Party
NAMFREL	National (Citizens') Movement for Free Elections
NASSA	National Secretariat for Social Action
NCBD	National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Seaports Bangladesh
NCCLRP	NGO Coordination Council for Land Reform Program
NDF	National Democratic Front
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NFPD	Negros Foundation for Peace and Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGOAB	NGO Affairs Bureau
NPA	New People's Army
ODA	Official Development Aid
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
PARRDS	Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services
PBBC	Philippine-Businessmen's Bishop Conference
PBSP	Philippine Business for Social Progress
PDB	Philippine Development Bank
PDAF	Priority Development Assistance Fund
PEACe	Poverty Alleviation and Eradication Certificates
PEACE	Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Development

PECCO	Philippine Ecumenical Council for Community Organising
PEF	Peace and Equity Foundation
PKP	Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas
PO	People's Organization
PPRC	Power and Participation Research Centre
PRRM	Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement
RAB	Rapid Action Battalion
RAM	Reform the Armed Forces Movement
RIHS	Revival of Islamic Heritage Society
RPO	Representation of People's Order
RTUB	Regional Trade Union Bureau
SDF	Sugar Development Foundation
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
TFPD	Task Force for Political Detainees
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
TI-CPI	Transparency International Corruption Perception Index
UN	United Nations
UNCAC	UN Convention against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNORKA	Ugnayan ng mga Nagsasariling Lokal na Organisasyon sa Kanayunan
UP	University of the Philippines
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
YOUNG	Young Officers New Generation (or Para Sa Bayan)

Contents

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Civil society has remained a key term for both academics and international development practitioners throughout the past two and a half decades. Since the collapse of the authoritarian regimes of Eastern Europe, in which civil society actors supposedly played an instrumental role, studies focusing on the USA and Europe, whether theoretical or empirical in nature, have emphasized the importance of civil society for the functioning of democracy (Edwards 2004, pp. 1–17; for examples see Cohen and Arato 1992; Klein 2002; Putnam 2000; Schmalz-Bruns 1994). Similarly, transformation theory and studies on newly democratized countries have investigated the role that civil society actors can play in the context of democratic transition and democratic consolidation (e.g. Croissant et al. 2000; Diamond 1999, pp. 218–260, esp. 233–250; Linz and Stepan 1996, esp. pp. 7f.).

Building on the predominantly positive assumptions about the democratic potential of civil society, which have prevailed in the academic and policy discourses since the fall of the Berlin Wall, international donor agencies have supported the growth of civil society as a means to promote democratization in the developing world (e.g. Banks et al. 2015, pp. 708f.; Carothers and Ottaway 2000, p. 6; Ottaway 2004; for examples see Ashton 2013; EC 2012; UNDP 2012; USAID 2014). According to Carothers and Ottaway (2000, p. 6), since the mid-1990s, "the general notion that civil society development is critical to democratization has become a new mantra in both aid and diplomatic circles".

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Specifically, many international donors have assumed that by laying the foundations for self-help and participatory development, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society groups empower vulnerable groups in society to stand up for their rights and advocate democratic reforms (e.g. Banks and Hulme 2012, esp. p.2, 5; Banks et al. 2015, pp. 708f.; Edwards 2004, p. 14; Carothers and Ottaway 2000). Since the mid-2000s, most major donor agencies have included "bottom-up" or "demand-side" approaches, which incorporate civil society promotion as a key component, in their good governance programmes (Carothers and de Gramont 2013, p. 136ff.). The trend of supporting civil society organizations active in developing countries has continued in recent years.[1]

So far, however, the academic and the international aid communities have hardly paid attention to the question of whether there are any stringent conditions necessary for civil society actors to be able to promote democratization. Particularly, there is a tremendous lack of systematic research on whether civil society needs a specific kind of state in order to strengthen democracy. This research lacuna is highly problematic given that most developing countries are what the academic and policy discourses have termed "weak" or "fragile" states (e.g. Lambach and Bethke 2012; Milliken and Krause 2003; OECD 2011; Rotberg 2002, 2004; PBS Dialogue 2014; Schneckener 2006). What does civil society look like under such conditions? Without doubt there are strong ties between civil society and democracy. Is this true, however, for civil society and democratization processes in weak states as well? How much and what kind of political influence does civil society have in such settings? And are its actors really capable and willing to contribute to democracy in contexts where the independent and legal bureaucratic institutions of the state are weak?

Although both civil society and state weakness remain prominent subjects in the modern social sciences, the two strands of theory have so far remained largely unrelated. More specifically, as of yet, only a few academic works have explicitly dealt with the relationship between state weakness and civil society (e.g. Götze 2004; Englehardt 2011; Lorch 2006, 2008; Ottaway 2004; Shah 2008; van Leeuwen and Verkoren 2012; Verkoren and van Leeuwen 2014; Würfel 2006), and most of these studies are either general theoretical reflections on how existing definitions of civil society fail to capture the empirical reality in weak

states, or single case studies focusing on individual empirical cases. While peace research studies sometimes also touch upon the role of civil society in weak or collapsed states, they usually remain confined to exploring how civil society actors can contribute to the forging and/or the implementation of peace agreements (for an overview see Paffenholz 2014). Consequently, these few existing works on civil society in contexts of state weakness fall short of offering a systematic analytical framework that could be used for analysing and comparing civil society development in and across weak states.

The research on governance in areas of limited statehood, which focuses on what happens *within* areas where the institutions of the central state are weak, convincingly shows that such spaces are often populated by a plethora of non-state actors, including NGOs and other civil society groups, which provide governance, and thus perform functions normally ascribed to the state (e.g. Beisheim et al. 2014, pp. 3ff.; Börzel 2012; Risse 2012, pp. 5ff.). Civil society-based strategies form part of various international state-building efforts (Dowst 2009, p. 1; Schneckener 2006, pp. 35f., 2011), and both academics and international development practitioners have reflected on how to best strengthen, and cooperate with, civil society in weak or collapsed states (van Leeuwen and Verkoren 2012, p. 81; for examples see Dowst 2009; Rombouts 2006; de Weijer and Kilnes 2012). However, they have largely failed to address the questions of what civil society groups look like, and whether they really contribute to democracy in such contexts.[2]

The present book theoretically and empirically investigates how civil society constitutes itself in weak states, and how this affects its potential to contribute to democracy. Based on an in-depth comparison of the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines, the study finds that *while state weakness can be conducive to the emergence of civil society*, *national civil societies that operate in contexts of state weakness mirror the deficits of their respective states.* Consequently, their role for their countries' democratization processes is highly ambiguous.

The book makes an important contribution to theory development, linking civil society theory and the existing research on weak states. By using a theoretically grounded comparative approach, it also differs from most of the previous works on civil society, which tend to be either overly theoretically oriented or based on single case studies whose findings are hard to generalize on a broader theoretical level. In addition, the study

also generates new empirical findings on Bangladesh and the Philippines. In particular, it focuses on trends within the two countries' national civil societies that have not yet been discussed in the existing literature, most of which was written in the 1990s. Last but not least, the theoretical and empirical findings of this book also have important practical implications for international development cooperation and the promotion of civil society in weak states. Above all, they may provide some guidance regarding the question of how aid can best be provided to civil society organizations in countries where the institutions of the central state are weak.

The following introductory sub-chapters summarize the state of the literature on civil society and state weakness, identifying the gaps in both strands of literature that this book seeks to bridge. Sub-chapter 1.1 introduces the definition of civil society used in this study and locates it within the more empirically oriented literature on civil society. Sub-chapter 1.2 sketches the debate on state weakness, highlighting in particular the important, but often neglected, contributions of pre-9/11 scholarship on the topic, and outlines the concept of the weak state, which forms the basis of the study's comparative analytical framework. Sub-chapter 1.3 presents the study's research question and methodological approach, while Sub-chapter 1.4 shows how the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines can be used as empirical starting points for an integration of civil society theories and theoretical approaches to state weakness. Section Sub-Chapter 1.5 outlines the structure of the book.

1.1 Civil Society in Normative Theory and Empirical Reality

While the notion of civil society has a long intellectual history ranging from classic political theory to European Enlightenment thought and Marxist theories, the concept as it is used today was predominantly shaped by normative liberal democratic theory. This influence is mostly due to the context of the democratic transitions of Eastern Europe in which the idea of civil society re-emerged. Since the early 1990s, civil society in this sense has mostly been viewed as an important prerequisite for democracy (Edwards 2004, pp. 72ff.; Guan 2004; Ottaway 2004, p. 120; for examples see Cohen and Arato 1992; Klein 2002; Putnam 1993, 2000; Schmalz-Bruns 1994).

Most normative approaches define civil society as a sphere of voluntary associations that is highly autonomous from both the state and the market

and is characterized by a set of normative core features, which are seen as being highly conducive to the democratization of the state and the broader society (Dekker 2004; Edwards 2004; Gosewinkel et al. 2004, p. 11; Guan 2004). More specifically, due to their perceived autonomy from the state and the market, civil society groups are assumed to display high degrees of self-organization and self-regulation (Anheier et al. 2000; Cohen and Arato 1992, pp. 201–255, pp. 345–421; Schade 2002, pp. 29ff.; Schmalz-Bruns 1994). Moreover, as the presumed realm of "civility", civil society is generally seen as being characterized by non-violence and, in fact, as being determinedly opposed to the use of violence (Edwards 2004, pp. 36ff.; Knöbl 2006; Leonhard 2004; Reichardt 2004; Stacey and Meyer 2005). Specifically, one influential strand of research has stressed the potential of voluntary associations to generate *social capital*, defined in terms of relationships of mutual trust, reciprocity, solidarity and tolerance (e.g. Putnam 1993, 2000). Third sector research and normatively oriented works on NGOs in developing countries have likewise identified a number of *democratic functions* that can supposedly be performed by civil society, such as being a *watchdog* or serving a *representative and/or a democratic intermediary function* for marginalized constituencies.[3] Normative approaches have further assumed that the internal organizational structures of civil society groups are non-hierarchical, inclusive and pluralistic in nature, and display high levels of accountability and transparency. As such, civil society groups are seen as bridging social cleavages and as being constituted by horizontal networks where all members have equal opportunities to participate in decision-making (e.g. Edwards 2004, esp. pp. 7; 76f.; for a prominent example see Putnam 1993).

Starting in the late 1990s, a number of historical studies on civil society in the USA and Europe, as well as several empirically oriented works on civil society in the contemporary developing world, began to question the core assumption of normative approaches that civil society necessarily contributes to democracy.[4] Generally, most of these more analytical studies criticized normative democratic approaches to civil society for lacking adequate empirical contextualization. In particular, they argued that real, existing civil societies, which operated in geographical and historical settings outside modern "Western countries", constituted themselves differently from what was commonly assumed by normative definitions, displaying many so-called dark sides (e.g. Croissant 2000; Lauth 2003; Monga 2009). More specifically, civil society in such contexts has been found to frequently lack autonomy from the state, political society, the

family or the market, and to be tainted by informal practices, clientelism, or even violence. By the same token, it has been shown that civil society groups in developing countries are often internally hierarchical and lack accountability vis-à-vis their members and constituencies. Similarly, their organizational structures may be exclusive and run along—rather than bridge—social, religious or ethnic cleavages. Historically and empirically grounded studies have also provided some preliminary insights into the question of how their specific organizational set-up might affect the democratic potential of civil society groups. For instance, it has been pointed out that where the internal structures of civil society organizations are exclusive, the social capital generated by these groups may be particularistic, or, in other words, bonding rather than bridging in nature (e.g. Croissant 2000; Croissant et al. 2000).[5]

Unfortunately, however, most empirically oriented works have confined themselves to describing how real, existing civil societies deviate from normative ideal-type definitions. In other words, they have largely limited themselves to exploring what "real civil society" (Alexander 1998) is *not*, rather than defining what it is, leaving researchers to wonder which specific groups to choose for investigation in particular historical and developing world contexts. A noteworthy exception is formed by the predominantly empirical definition developed by the Centre for Civil Society (CCS) of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) (2006), which conceptualizes civil society as follows,

> Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups.

The present book uses this definition for selecting the civil society groups to be studied in Bangladesh and the Philippines. It locates itself within the more empirical, analytical debate on civil society, building on the latter's

core assumption that the concept of civil society must be thoroughly contextualized in order to determine the contributions that real, existing civil society groups can make to national democratization processes.[6] However, the study also contributes to developing this strand of research further in two particular ways.

First, what has so far been missing from the literature on civil society in general, and normative approaches to civil society in particular, is a systematic analytical and theoretical linkage between the assumed organizational characteristics of civil society and its presumed democratic potential. For instance, many normatively oriented works have presupposed civil society groups to be characterized by democratic internal structures, resulting in the generation of social capital and democratic values. However, there has been no systematic analysis of how specific organizational features relate to the ability of civil society groups to perform certain democratic functions. More significantly, existing approaches have largely failed to conceptualize what it means for the democratic potential of civil society organizations if their internal structures factually differ from the normative democratic ideal.

Second, and most importantly, while many empirically analytical studies have acknowledged that the undemocratic features, which real, existing civil society organizations may display, are generally reflective of the context in which these groups operate (Croissant 2000, p. 360; Lauth 2003, pp. 40ff.), they have failed to systematically link these dark sides to the nature of the state in question. The few isolated works that have explicitly dealt with the relationship between civil society and state weakness (e.g. Englehardt 2011; Götze 2004; Lorch 2006, 2008; Ottaway 2004; Shah 2008; Verkoren and van Leeuwen 2014) show that the weakness of the state might, in fact, be conducive to the emergence of civil society, because in weak states civil society actors tend to take over tasks usually ascribed to the state. Moreover, they also suggest that certain dark sides, such as a lack of autonomy, tend to characterize civil society especially in contexts where the state is weak.

However, many of these and other generally valuable empirically oriented studies on civil society are single case studies. What is more, even comparative volumes focusing on civil society development in different countries, which have applied a sound theoretical framework, have rarely combined the latter with the use of systematic comparative methods (for a noteworthy exception see Alagappa 2004). Consequently, existing empirically oriented studies have thus far fallen short of developing a systematic analytical

framework for studying civil society in weak states. By the same token, they have also failed to systematically assess the impact of the state in shaping the structure of national civil societies in relation to the role that other factors, such as history, religion, or the economy might play in this regard.

The present book contributes to filling these gaps by developing a *relational approach*, which consequently relates civil society to the relative strength or weakness of the state in which it operates.[7] Notably, this approach also links the specific organizational characteristics, which civil society assumes in different kinds of states, to the contributions it is able to make to processes of national democratization. The study uses a systematic comparative approach in order to determine the impact of the state in relation to the impact that other factors, such as historical legacies, a country's majority religion or its level of economic growth, might possibly have on national civil societies (see Sect. 1.3). In doing so, it contributes to an enhanced and more consistent empirical embedding (Edwards 2004, p. 93; Wischermann 2005) of civil society theory.

1.2 State Weakness in Academic and Policy Discourse

State weakness has long been a prominent subject in the academic and international policy discourses. Following the wave of decolonization, development cooperation focused on the state as the main perceived agent of economic and political modernization. In the late 1960s, Gunnar Myrdal (1968) questioned this approach by pointing to the fact that many developing countries in Asia were ruled by "soft states", which frequently failed to implement their own policies due to widespread corruption and the existence of powerful middlemen in society. In 1988, Joel S. Migdal's landmark volume *Strong Societies and Weak States* explored the question of why many post-colonial states had developed only very limited autonomy and highly insufficient capacities to control the societies living within their territories. Midgal argued that the authority of such states was contested both by "power centres" within the state apparatus, such as powerful military units, and by "power centres" outside the state, such as large landowners and other "local strongmen". According to Midgal, political elites in weak states often relied on patronage, the use of repression and violence, or other "dirty tricks" in order to gain "social control" and secure their own political survival (Migdal 1988).

In the 1990s, when violent internal conflicts shook many African countries, the literature on state weakness started to focus increasingly on security issues (e.g. Zartman 1995). As researchers, development practitioners and international policy makers started searching for ways to counter the rise of violent non-state actors, who sometimes operate in failed states, the academic and policy discourses on state weakness became highly interrelated, a trend which increased after the 9/11 terrorist attacks (e.g. Andersen 2006; Grimm et al. 2014, pp. 197ff.; Nay 2014, pp. 211f.). In line with the assumption that failed states can provide a breeding ground for terrorism, much of the research that followed focused on developing indicators and early warning systems in order to enable policy makers to forecast when weak states become an international threat. While some of these projects have been quantitative in nature, others have developed qualitative indicators, while still others have combined qualitative and quantitative methods (Lambach and Bethke 2012, pp. 6ff.; Debiel 2005; for examples see Carment 2003; Carment et al. 2010; King and Zeng 2001; Milliken and Krause 2003; Rotberg 2002, 2004; Schneckener 2006). In 2005, the Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK coined the term "state fragility", defining it primarily as a state's lack of capacity or political will to provide important political goods. Various development and research institutions began to develop indices and rankings of state fragility, one of the most prominent being the *Fragile States Index* (FSI) (2015), called the *Failed States Index* until 2013, launched by the US-based Fund for Peace in 2005.[8] As Patrick (2011) has prominently argued, however, the link between state fragility and the rise of terrorism and/or other transnational threats is far from automatic, and a more nuanced analysis is needed in order to understand the challenges posed by different types of states that lack either capacity or political will or both (see also Patrick 2006). In 2008, the Index of State Weakness in the Developing World attempted to provide a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon of state weakness, focusing on state performance in the areas of economic development, the establishment of legitimate political institutions, security and social welfare (Rice and Patrick 2008). Ultimately, however, most such indices run the risk of conflating weak state capacity with poor governance and neglect the fact that welfare, security and other collective goods can also be provided by actors other than the state (Risse 2015, esp. p. 701). Moreover, they often use the strong, "Western" liberal capitalist state as a "benchmark", which is problematic both from a normative and an analytical point of view (ibid.).

Most existing approaches to state weakness draw on Max Weber's conception of the modern territorial state as an autonomous administrative entity that exercises political authority and holds a monopoly on the legitimate use of force (Andersen 2006, pp. 4ff.; Migdal and Schlichte 2005, pp. 2f.). Nevertheless, there are at least two different strands of approaches to determining what constitutes state weakness or failure (Chesterman et al. 2004, p. 5; Khan 2002; Lambach and Bethke 2012, pp. 7ff.). According to functional or service delivery-oriented approaches, state weakness finds its expression in the inability of the state to perform its functions with regard to the provision of security, civil rights, welfare services and other political goods. As they can be broken down into indicators, functional definitions often form the basis of works and research projects that attempt to measure various degrees of state weakness or fragility (e.g. Carment 2003; Clapham 2003; Debiel 2005, p. 12; Doornbos 2003; Milliken and Krause 2003; Rotberg 2002, 2004; Rice and Patrick 2008; Schneckener 2006). Capacity-oriented approaches, by contrast, define weak states as states that have only limited autonomy from other powerful social actors and lack the capacity to penetrate society, implement their policies, regulate social relationships, promote economic growth and steer processes of capitalist transformation. Given their focus on the interaction between state and society, many earlier works on weak and post-colonial states tended to rely on such capacity-oriented approaches (e.g. Migdal 1988; Myrdal 1968). Since the mid-2000s, scholars and development practitioners have concentrated increasingly on state-building. As a consequence, the administrative capacities and social coalitions that underlie a strong state have, once again, become an important topic of research (e.g. Chesterman et al. 2004; Eriksen 2005).

As yet, neither of these two strands of approaches has been consistently integrated with civil society theory. Some functional conceptions of state weakness have usefully distinguished between several specific functions that are normally ascribed to the sovereign state, such as a security function, a welfare function and the function of democratic institution-building (e.g. Milliken and Krause 2003, pp. 4–10; Rotberg 2002, pp. 87f.; Schneckener 2006, pp. 21ff.). This differentiation is useful, because it delineates the areas in which civil society actors may become active in weak states. Approaches focusing more thoroughly on the social and political power relationships prevailing in weak states are needed, however, in order to comprehensively assess the factors that influence civil society in such contexts. Similarly, aggregated indices, which build on functional definitions

of state weakness, particularly the FSI (2015), can be used as tools to preliminarily assess the strength or weakness of states in the developing world, and to select the cases to be studied within this book's comparative framework. Beyond this, however, quantitative works focusing on measuring various degrees of state weakness or fragility are of limited use for this study, as they usually suffer from a lack of adequate theorization of both the state and the patterns of state-society relations that exist in contexts of state weakness. Consequently, they offer hardly any insights into the question of how national civil society actors constitute themselves in such settings.

Several capacity-oriented works on state weakness, which were written primarily before 9/11, have paid a great deal of attention to the state-society relations in which weak state institutions are embedded (see especially Migdal 1988; Myrdal 1968). As a consequence, these studies provide highly valuable starting points for an integration of theoretical approaches to state weakness and civil society theories (for previous such attempts see Ottaway 2004; Shah 2008). Most importantly, various capacity-oriented works have shown that weak states usually exist in an environment of social conflict (see especially Migdal 1988). Accordingly, their administrative capacity is circumscribed and their autonomy is contested by powerful non-state actors, such as clans or local strongmen, who may even have a substantial capacity for organized violence (ibid.; see also Biró 2007; Eriksen 2005; Myrdal 1968; Smith 2004, pp. 159ff.). Given that such non-state power players frequently exercise considerable social and political influence outside the institutions of the state (Migdal 1988), it is reasonable to assume that they will contribute to shaping the actions and structures of civil society as well. In addition, capacity-oriented approaches have also shed light on the strategies of rule, which political elites inside and outside the state apparatus may employ in order to exercise authority in weak states. In many cases, these strategies boil down to *patronage* (or *corruption*) or the use of *violence* or a combination of both (Eriksen 2005; Migdal 1988; Myrdal 1968)[9]. Obviously, this may have serious repercussions on how national civil society groups are able to operate. Unfortunately, however, capacity-oriented approaches have rarely distinguished between civil society in the more narrow sense and the society at large, making it difficult for researchers to identify the impact of state weakness on civil society actors specifically.

A good starting point for this book is the research on governance in areas of limited statehood, which uses a capacity-oriented understanding

of the state and focuses on what happens *within* areas where the institutions of the central state are weak (e.g. Beisheim et al. 2014; Börzel 2012; Risse 2012, 2015; Risse and Krasner 2014). From the point of view of this study, the most important aspect of these works is that they clearly show that civil society can exist in states that fail to effectively exercise political authority and lack a monopoly on the use of force, and that civil society actors in such contexts even fulfil many functions normally ascribed to the state (e.g. Risse 2012, pp. 8f.). This observation is in line with existing studies on civil society in weak states, which suggest that state weakness may, in fact, often contribute to the growth of civil society groups, because in such settings the latter often fulfil fundamental welfare needs not met by the state (e.g. Englehardt 2011; Götze 2004; Lorch 2006, 2008; Ottaway 2004).

According to the conception employed in this book, weak states are states that contain a significant number of "areas of limited statehood" in which central state authorities "lack the ability to implement and enforce rules and decisions and/or in which the legitimate monopoly over the means of violence is lacking, at least temporarily" (Risse 2015, p. 702). The term "areas of limited statehood" in this sense can refer to territorial spaces, to certain sections of the national population, or to specific policy areas over which central authorities lack control (ibid.). Employing the notion of "limited statehood" as a starting point for conceptualizing state weakness as the context of action for civil society is useful, because this concept makes it possible to distinguish between the strength (or weakness) of the state's administrative apparatus on the one hand and the collective goods and services that are provided either by the state or different types of non-state actors (for a similar argument see Beisheim et al. 2014, pp. 10f.; Risse 2015, pp. 701f.), including civil society groups, on the other. However, in order to fully capture the different types of influences that shape civil society in weak states, the concept of the "weak state", which informs the analytical approach of this book, also has a specific focus on the social and political conditions in which weak state institutions are embedded (see especially Chap. 2). Most notably, the existence of *powerful social and political forces that compete with the central state for social control*, the use of *patronage and corruption* by state elites and powerful non-state actors, and the prevalence of an environment of *violence and insecurity* are interrelated with the weakness of central state authorities. Drawing on this, the book investigates whether and how these factors influence national civil society actors in weak states. In order to specify these conditions and how

they interact with the phenomenon of state weakness, the study also draws on previous works on state-society relations in "weak" or "soft" states (e.g. Migdal 1988; Myrdal 1968), as well as on the literature on patronage (e.g. Clapham 1982; Lemarchand 1981; Piattoni 2001; Roniger 1994a, b) and on violent non-state actors (e.g. Biró 2007; Humphreys and Weinstein 2006, Mair 2002).

1.3 Research Question, Methodology and Research Techniques

The book investigates, both theoretically and empirically, *whether* and (if so) *how state weakness influences the way in which national civil societies are able to constitute themselves*. It analyses the impact of state weakness on three different, yet closely related, aspects: first, on the *ability of national civil societies to emerge and persist*; second, on the ability of civil society actors *to exert political influence*; and third, on the ability and willingness of national civil society groups *to contribute to democratization*.

In order to answer these questions, the study uses a combination of theoretical deduction and different qualitative comparative and case study methods.[10] As a first step, it develops a *relational approach* that consequently links civil society to the state in which it operates (for a related argument see Gosewinkel 2003, esp. pp. 9ff.; Gosewinkel and Rucht 2004; Gosewinkel et al. 2004, esp. pp. 14f.; 18–21; see Chap. 2). In order to conceptualize state weakness as the context of action for civil society, five main categories of influences on national civil societies in the context of a weak state are derived from the literature. With regard to the national level these are: first, the existence of an environment where *non-state actors perform functions normally ascribed to the state*; second, the existence of an environment of *social conflict between different power centres* inside and outside the state apparatus, such as powerful political parties, religious forces, military units or insurgent groups[11]; third, the existence of an environment of *patronage* and *corruption*; and fourth, the existence of an environment of *violence and insecurity*. Based on the literature on international aid and donor-supported NGOs (e.g. Banks et al. 2015; Banks and Hulme 2012; Edwards and Hulme 1996a, b; Carothers and Ottaway 2000; Ottaway and Carothers 2000; Seckinelgin 2002), influences by the international donor community are identified as an important intervening factor that can have an influence on both civil society and the state (see Chap. 2). These five categories of influences form the basis of the

book's analytical framework for analysing civil society in weak states. As noted, only a handful of articles have explicitly dealt with the relationship between civil society and state weakness as yet. Chapter 2 shows, however, that the phenomena of non-state actors providing services in contexts in which the state fails, the prevalence of social conflict between different power centres, as well as the existence of an environment of patronage and corruption, and of violence and insecurity, which the study conceptualizes as the most important structuring conditions for civil society in weak states, do, in fact, form part of both existing debates on state weakness and existing civil society theories.

This analytical framework is applied consistently to the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines in a *structured, focused comparison* (George and Bennett 2005, pp. 67–72). While it takes the holistic character and the particularities of each individual case into account, the method of structured, focused comparison standardizes the collection and analysis of empirical data by applying the same research questions and the same theoretical framework to all cases under investigation. As this method is particularly well suited for the identification of *causal mechanisms* (George and Bennett 2005, p. 206) in the relationship between civil society and state weakness, it not only provides important insights into the question of *whether* state weakness has an impact on the way in which national civil societies constitute themselves, but also into the question of *how* state weakness influences the ability of civil society to emerge, exert political influence and promote democratization.

Within the two cases studied, the causal mechanisms that explain *how* state weakness influences the national civil society in question are identified primarily through *process tracing* (Checkel 2005; George and Bennett 2005, pp. 205–23) in the form of *analytic explanation*. Thereby, the causal relationship examined is described in explicitly theoretical terms, while the underlying empirical narrative can be dealt with rather selectively (George and Bennett 2005, pp. 207ff.). The study takes into account that systematic process tracing requires large amounts of empirical data gathered either through historical studies or extensive interviews and field research (Checkel 2005; p. 2; George and Bennett 2005, p. 223; Neuman 2003, p. 41). As a first step, it analyses the existing secondary literature on civil society and state weakness in Bangladesh and the Philippines. More importantly, however, its empirical findings are based on approximately 14 months of field research and more than 300 qualitative, in-depth

interviews. Major local English-speaking newspapers in the two countries and relevant posts on local and international blogs were also analysed.

These more case-oriented methods are framed and compounded by the application of the more variable-oriented *Comparative Method* in the form of the *most dissimilar cases design* (Nohlen 2004, pp. 1046f.; Ragin 1987, pp. 36–39). This method can be used to identify the existence of a causal relationship between the presumed dependent variable (civil society) and the presumed independent variable (state weakness) and thus provides further insights into the question of *whether* state weakness has a significant impact on national civil societies. The most dissimilar cases design requires the largest possible variance in the conceivable independent variables. Subsequently, it allows for, and, in fact, necessitates a comparison of two countries that differ with regard to their ethnic composition and their majority religion (on the possible independent variables that may influence civil society, see further below). Therefore, this comparative approach also enables the study to test and to challenge the culturalist argument that the concept of civil society has no meaning outside its "Western" and Christian origins (Guan 2004; Lewis 2001, p. 1).[12] In view of the ongoing contestations over whether or not civil society can exist in Islamic countries (e.g. Kamali 2001; Tanvir 2012), it is particularly useful in this regard to choose a primarily Christian and a primarily Islamic country as cases to be analysed.

Six main factors that may potentially have an impact on national civil societies can be derived from the literature: first, a country's historical legacy; second, its political system; third, its ethnic composition; fourth, its majority religion; fifth, its level of economic growth; and, sixth, the strength or weakness of its state institutions (e.g. Bailer et al. 2007; Croissant et al. 2000; Götze 2004; Gosewinkel 2003, p. 1, pp. 9ff.; Howell 1999; Knöbl 2006; Reichardt 2004, p. 67; Verkoren and van Leeuwen 2014). As will be shown in the following section, Bangladesh, the world's third largest Muslim majority country, and the Philippines, a primarily Christian one, differ with regard to almost all of these factors, except for the fact that both countries are weak states (FSI 2015). In the present research design, the weaknesses of the most dissimilar cases design are mitigated by combining this method with theoretical deduction, and the methods of structured, focused comparison and process tracing (see also George and Bennett 2005, pp. 215, 223).

The empirical data for this book was gathered primarily through extensive field research. Exploratory visits were conducted in the Philippines

from August to September 2007 and in Bangladesh from October to December 2007. From November 2008 to March 2009, a second research trip was undertaken to Bangladesh, followed by another such visit to the Philippines from August to December 2009. In analysing the key characteristics of civil society in Bangladesh and the Philippines, the study draws heavily on the empirical insights gathered during these field visits. As will be further elaborated in the empirical chapters and in the conclusion, these features continue to characterize the civil society landscape in the two countries to this day. During the altogether fourteen months of field research, more than 300 qualitative, in-depth interviews were conducted with state officials, civil society activists and representatives of the military, local academics and journalists, as well as foreign experts. Each interview lasted between one and three hours on average. In order to trace the political and social processes examined, and to investigate the activities of individual civil society groups, the study relied mainly on elite interviews, defined as interviews with individuals "from any political arena or position" (Tansey 2007, p. 770) who are "most closely involved in the process of interest" (ibid, 769). In addition, expert interviews were conducted with academics and policy experts, both local and foreign, in order to gain more general insights into the subject of state-civil society relations in Bangladesh and the Philippines. All interviews were loosely or semi-structured, and only open questions were asked. The selection of interviewees was mainly based on chain-referential criteria, such as nomination from peers. Moreover, where the focus was on examining the internal structures of civil society associations, interviewees were also chosen according to their specific positions within the respective organizations. Thereby, information about a group's internal structures was generally collected from at least two of its members with different positions in the organizational hierarchy. Focus group discussions involving lower and higher ranking group members were sometimes held as well. Where the interview partners gave their consent, the interviews were recorded and later transcribed using verbatim transcription. Oftentimes, however, notes had to be taken during the interview, which were later transcribed into comprehensive interview protocols. In most cases, the sources of information had to be made anonymous in order to protect the people interviewed. Occasionally, information was also gathered through in-depth observations. Triangulation was used throughout to cross-check the information gathered.

1.4 Empirical Starting Point: Civil Society and Weak Democracy in Bangladesh and the Philippines

Bangladesh and the Philippines are appropriate cases to be studied in the framework of the above research design because they are *dissimilar cases*, which clearly contradict the assumption of normative democratic approaches that civil society necessarily promotes democracy. More specifically, the two countries are highly dissimilar with regard to their historical legacies, their political systems, their ethnic composition and their majority religions, as well as their levels of economic growth. The Philippines were first colonized by Spain, briefly gaining independence in 1898, which was followed by US colonial rule until 1946. The path to independence from the USA was largely non-violent. Bangladesh (called East Bengal at the time) gained independence from Great Britain in 1947 as part of a united Pakistan. In 1971, however, it broke away from the western part of the country in the course of one of the world's most bloody wars of independence. While the Philippines have a presidential system with extremely weak political parties, the political system of Bangladesh is parliamentarian with parties that have strong roots in the population (Blair 2015, p. 254). Bangladesh and the Philippines are also highly dissimilar with regard to their religious and ethnic composition. The Philippines are highly heterogeneous in ethno-linguistic terms, with the largest ethnic group (Tagalog) comprising less than 30 per cent of the population. Around 83 per cent of all citizens are Roman Catholic (CIA WFB: Philippines 2016). Bangladesh, by contrast, is uniquely homogenous in ethnic and religious terms. Nearly 90 per cent of its population are Muslim, and around 98 per cent belong to the Bengali ethno-linguistic majority (CIA WFB: Bangladesh 2016; see also Karim and Fair 2007, pp. 5f.). Finally, the two countries also display different levels of economic development. According to the World Bank (WB), as of 2014, the Philippines, with a population of 99.14 million, had a gross domestic product (GDP) of USD 284.8 billion, while Bangladesh, with a population of 159.1 million, had a GDP of USD 172.9 billion (WB Bangladesh 2016; WB Philippines 2016).[13]

In spite of all these differences, however, both countries display *the same ambiguous relationship between civil society development and democracy*. In both cases, civil society actors played a prominent role in bringing about democratic regime change. In 1986, a peaceful popular upheaval, generally referred to as "People Power", toppled the authoritarian regime

of Ferdinand Marcos in the midst of a rebellion taking place inside the military in the Philippines (e.g. Thompson 1995). Similarly, popular protests led by student groups in 1990 also played an important role in the overthrow of the military regime of Muhammad Ershad in Bangladesh (e.g. Quadir 2003, p. 436; Rizvi 1991).

Today, civil society groups still exist in abundance in both countries. In Bangladesh, more than 55,000 local civil society organizations were registered with the Department of Social Services (DSS) as of 2009 (MSW WS 2009)[14], with roughly 2340 of them receiving foreign funding through the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) (NGOAB 2008). According to its own estimates, from late 1990 to late 2008, the NGOAB approved nearly USD 5.55 billion for and released around USD 4.24 billion to a total of 16,291 development programmes implemented by NGOs in Bangladesh (NGOAB WS 2009; see also NGOAB 2008).[15] In the Philippines, an estimated 76,512 civil society organizations were registered as non-profit corporations with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) as of 2009 (CODE-NGO 2009).[16] While donor support to NGOs and other civil society organizations in the Philippines has declined significantly since the late 1990s, such support was strong during the Marcos dictatorship, and even more so in the years following the country's return to democracy in 1986 (e.g. Abella and Dimalanta 2003, pp. 235ff.; EU 2014, p. 3; Racelis 2000).

Nevertheless, in spite of this high density of civil society organizations, democracy has remained weak in both cases. Most notably, both countries continue to be characterized by oligarchic politics. More specifically, in Bangladesh, both the parliament and other democratic institutions have remained crippled by the fierce, and often violent, conflict between the country's two major political parties, the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) (e.g., ICG 2012; Moniruzzaman 2009), while in the Philippines, the electoral process continues to be dominated by traditional political elites and populists (e.g., Thompson 2013). In the 2000s, both countries experienced interventions by the military into the political sphere. A military-backed Caretaker Government (CTG) ruled Bangladesh from 2007 to 2008 (e.g. ICG 2008), and the Philippines experienced two military mutinies and one attempted military coup between 2003 and 2007 (e.g. Coronel 2007; Montesano 2004). Bangladesh returned to electoral politics in late 2008, but the AL government that took office in early 2009 has since monopolized political power, and the 2014 elections were boycotted by the political opposition (e.g. Ahmad 2014; Feldman 2015). Under the presidency of Benigno (Noynoy) Aquino III, the Philippines returned

to relative political stability from 2010 onwards. However, power has remained in the hands of the established political elite, and both heated quarrels between the major elite forces and large-scale corruption scandals characterize the political process to this day (e.g. Sidel 2014, 2015). In addition, serious human rights abuses, including extra-judicial killings, and severe restrictions on civil liberties also continue in both countries. As of 2015, the *Freedom House Index* (FHI) (2015) still categorized both states as only *partly free*, as it did in the years when the field research for this study was conducted. Why might this be the case? It can be assumed that this is because both countries have long been ranked as weak states (FSI 2015)[17], a condition that also limits the ability of civil society to promote democracy.

1.5 Structure of the Book

The following chapter constitutes the main conceptual chapter of the book. It starts by outlining the study's *relational approach* to civil society, which links the relationship between the democratic features and the dark sides that characterize real, existing civil societies, to the strength (or weakness) of the state in which these groups operate. Most importantly, the chapter presents the book's *analytical framework* for analysing civil society in weak states and locates it within the broader literature on civil society and state weakness. The empirical part of the book is made up of Chap. 3, which analyses state-civil society relations in Bangladesh, and Chap. 4, which explores the relationship between the state and civil society in the Philippines. Both of these chapters are structured along the lines of the theoretical analytical framework laid out in Chap. 2. They start by describing how civil society actors in both countries have frequently *performed functions normally ascribed so the state*, particularly in the field of social service delivery (Sub-chaps. 3.1 and 4.1). Subsequently, the two country chapters depict how civil society organizations in Bangladesh and the Philippines are influenced by the *context of conflict between different power centres* (Sub-chaps. 3.2 and 4.2), by the environment of *patronage* and *corruption* (Sub-chaps. 3.3 and 4.3) and by the environment of *violence and insecurity* (Sub-chaps. 3.4 and 4.4) in which they operate. In both chapters, influences by international donors are assessed in relation to the analytical framework's four categories of national influences on civil society and, therefore, discussed at different points throughout the chapters, rather than in separate sections.

Using a structured, focused comparison along the lines of the study's theoretical analytical framework, Chap. 5, which forms the main comparative chapter of the book, shows that both in Bangladesh and the Philippines the *deficits of the weak state are reflected in the national civil society*. In both cases, *state weakness has been conducive to the growth of civil society*, because in both countries a plethora of civil society organizations, including development NGOs, religious groups and political associations, have emerged to perform tasks which would normally be the responsibility of the state. However, both in Bangladesh and the Philippines civil society organizations *lack autonomy because they are affiliated with different power centres* inside and outside the state apparatus. Moreover, in both cases, civil society actors are often *integrated into existing patronage and corruption networks*, and some civil society groups also *advocate, or even engage in, the use of violence*.

The concluding chapter discusses the study's key finding that, while state weakness can be conducive to the growth of civil society, the *contributions that national civil societies in weak states make to their countries' democratization processes are ambiguous because they mirror the deficits of their respective states*. Drawing on the causal mechanisms, which the study has identified in the relationship between state weakness and the existence of undemocratic features in civil society, the concluding chapter develops coherent linkages between civil society theories and existing approaches to state weakness. It concludes by depicting avenues for future research and by discussing the implications of the book's main findings for international development cooperation and the promotion of civil society in weak states, with particular reference to Bangladesh and the Philippines.

Notes

1. See e.g. Carothers and de Gramont (2013), INTRAC (2013) and OECD (2013) on this point.
2. Similarly, Dowst (2009, p. 3) and Sen (2008, p. 1) also stress that international donors often poorly understand the role of civil society in weak states.
3. On the democratic dimensions attributed to the third sector see e.g. Anheier et al. (2000), Anheier et al. (2004, esp. p. 137); Kramer (2000, p. 16). For a summary of the democratic functions that are often ascribed to NGOs see for instance Edwards and Hulme (1996a, b) and Seckinelgin (2002). On the democratic functions of civil society see also Diamond (1999, pp. 228–250).
4. For examples see Alexander (1998); Croissant (2000); Croissant et al. (2000); Edwards and Hulme (1996a, b); Heng (2004); Henry (2011); Howell (1999); Knöbl (2006); Kopecky and Mudde (2003); Mitra (2003);

Leonhard (2004); Reichardt (2004); Tandon (1996); Wischermann (2005); Yang (2004).

5. On the distinction between bridging and bonding social capital see e.g. Coffé and Geys (2006).
6. See also Wischermann (2005) on this point.
7. In this study, the author further develops a *relational approach* to civil society first conceptualized in a study on civil society in Burma (Lorch 2006). In developing her *relational* approach the author was inspired by Gosewinkel (2003, esp. pp. 9ff.), Gosewinkel et al. (2004, esp. pp. 18–21) and Gosewinkel and Rucht (2004) to whom she is indebted. See further Chap. 2.
8. For an overview of these attempts and developments see Rice and Patrick (2008, pp. 5ff.).
9. For a similar argument see Schneckener (2006, pp. 30f.).
10. For a prominent example of such a combination see Skocpol (1979; esp. p. 39).
11. See especially Migdal (1988); for an elaboration on the present study's definition of power centre see Chap. 2.
12. Guan and Lewis refer to this critique but they do not share it.
13. A similar difference with regard to the two countries' levels of economic development existed from 2007 to 2009, when the field research for this study was conducted.
14. See also interview with a DSS official, Dhaka, 12.03.09.
15. See also interviews with two NGOAB officials Dhaka, 09.03.09 and 11.03.09.
16. More recent figures were not available at the time of writing (see also EU 2014, p. 4).
17. From 2007 to 2009, when the field research for this study was conducted, the FSI also ranked both countries as weak states. The scores for earlier years are also available on the webpage of the FSI (2015). As of 2015, the index used the categories "sustainable", "stable", "warning" and "alert" to classify the stability status of countries. On the specific rankings of Bangladesh and the Philippines see Chaps. 3 and 4.

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CHAPTER 2

Analysing Civil Society in Weak States

To explore how civil society constitutes itself in weak states and how the state and other factors, such as a country's historical legacy, its political system, its ethnic composition, its majority religion, or its level of economic growth, influence the development of national civil societies, this study takes the empirical, analytical literature on civil society as a starting point (e.g. Alexander 1998; Guan 2004; Lauth 2003; Lewis 2001; Wischermann 2005). Notably, this literature suggests that the concept of civil society must be systematically contextualized. A *relational understanding* that consequently relates civil society to the context of action in which it operates is a fruitful approach to this endeavour (Lorch 2006). Building on the works of Alexander (1998, pp. 7f.), Gosewinkel (2003), Gosewinkel and Rucht (2004), Gosewinkel et al. (2004) and Croissant et al. (2000, pp. 11ff.), such a relational approach assumes that in real, existing civil societies, normative characteristics, such as "civility", the generation of social capital and the performance of certain democratic functions, can exist only *in degrees*. Concurrently, the relational approach likewise supposes that real, existing civil societies will also always display certain dark sides, such as clientelism and organizational hierarchies, and that the relationship between the democratic features and dark sides within such real, existing civil societies depends on the scope of action available to civil society actors.

When analysing national civil societies in particular countries, the relational approach selects the civil society groups to be studied on the basis

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of the broad, predominantly empirical definition of the CCS-LSE (2006), which encompasses a large variety of associations that can differ tremendously in terms of their organizational characteristics. It then proceeds to describe how these civil society groups constitute themselves within, and because of, their specific empirical context, and to what extent they are characterized by democratic features and dark sides, respectively. More specifically, it can be assumed that real, existing civil society groups will always display a certain degree of autonomy from the state, political society and the market and can, therefore, be characterized by a certain extent of self-organization and self-regulation. As far as their internal organizational structures are concerned, civil society groups are likely to show a certain commitment towards horizontal forms of decision-making and practise some measure of accountability and transparency. Similarly, they can, to a certain degree, be assumed to be inclusive and pluralistic in nature and to bridge social cleavages. Accordingly, real, existing civil societies, in this sense, can be expected to be characterized by a certain degree of "civility" and, to a certain extent, to *perform democratic functions*, such *as watchdog and representative functions* or the *generation of social capital*. Similarly, they may, to a certain degree, act as *democratic intermediaries*, conveying the needs and interests of marginalized social groups to the state (e.g. Anheier et al. 2000; Anheier et al. 2003, esp. p. 137; Cohen and Arato 1992; Diamond 1999, pp. 228–250; Putnam 1993; Priller and Zimmer 2003).[1] At the same time, however, the autonomy of real, existing civil society groups is always bound to be limited and, depending on the context in which they operate, the internal structures of civil society organizations may also display unrepresentative, exclusive and hierarchical features. Moreover, in real-world settings, civil society groups can be tainted with varying degrees of informality, clientelism, or even violence. The social capital they generate may also be particularistic, at least to a certain extent. Consequently, it can be assumed that a vibrant civil society is not always good for democracy (e.g. Lauth 2003; Monga 2009; Ottaway 2004; Roniger 1998; Verkoren and van Leeuwen 2014).

Moreover, the empirical, analytical literature on civil society also suggests that both the relationship between the democratic features and the dark sides of real, existing civil societies and the relationship between the internal organizational structures and the democratic potential of civil society groups are complex in nature. For example, Alexander (1998, pp. 7f) has argued that where there is a high degree of "interpenetration" between the sphere of civil society and the state (or other social spheres, such the market), the resulting lack of autonomy of civil society can lead to the emergence of

"non-civil" forms of behaviour within the sphere of civil society. Similarly, several empirically oriented studies show that civil society groups whose internal organizational structures are hierarchical and do not allow for active involvement of their members in decision-making often fail to perform a representative function and are frequently unable to contribute to popular participation (e.g. Edwards and Hulme 1996a, b; Tandon 1996). Under certain conditions, however, so-called dark sides, such as a lack of internally democratic structures, may also enable civil society actors to perform certain democratic functions. Rueschemeyer's (1998, pp. 13f.; 16) reflections on the relationship between internal organization and organizational effectiveness suggest, for instance, that especially where the social and political system is exclusive, hierarchically structured groups may sometimes be more effective in the struggle for a widening of avenues for popular representation than internally democratic ones. Similarly, German transition theory finds that the readiness of civil society actors to militantly oppose existing power structures can play an important role in making a democratic transition succeed. Once democracy is established, however, such militant modes of behaviour may weaken democratic institutions and prevent civil society from serving an intermediary function between citizens and the state (Croissant 2000, pp. 354–62.; see also Croissant et al. 2000).

2.1 The State as the Context of Action for Civil Society

The *relational approach* suggests that the relationship between the democratic potential and the dark sides of civil society is contextually contingent. But what are the contextual conditions that can be expected to be most relevant in shaping national civil societies? As noted earlier, the existing literature has identified various factors that may influence national civil societies, including, in particular, a country's historical legacy, its political system, its ethnic composition and majority religion, its level of economic growth and the strength or weakness of the state. A quick comparison of Bangladesh and the Philippines, following a *most dissimilar cases design*, suggests, however, that the relative strength or weakness of the state constitutes the most important condition that influences the ability of civil society to emerge, exert political influence and contribute to democratization. This preliminary empirical finding is supported by several works that touch upon the relationship between civil society and the state (e.g. Götze 2004; Gosewinkel 2003, pp. 1, 9ff; Gosewinkel et al. 2004, p. 14f., 18–21; Englehardt 2011; Evans et al. 1985; Kaviraj

2001, pp. 366ff.; Knöbl 2006; Reichardt 2004, pp. 65–68; Rueschemeyer 1998, esp. pp. 18f.; Rueschemeyer et al. 1998a, pp. 4ff.; Stepan 1985; Weiss and Hobson 1995; pp. 1–10, 238–252). Weiss and Hobson, for instance, stress the *causal primacy* of the state in shaping the development of civil society (Weiss and Hobson 1995, pp. 1–10, 238–252), and Kaviraj (2001, pp. 366ff.) points to the pre-eminent role played by the (post-)colonial state in structuring civil societies in developing countries. Similarly, Gosewinkel (2003, pp. 9ff.) has noted that, depending on its specific character, the state can constitute either an enabling condition for or an impediment to the emergence and existence of civil society.

But what kind of state produces what kind of civil society? Englehardt (2011, p. 337) argues that common theories of civil society, which build on liberal democratic theory and were influenced by the historical experience of the democratic transformations in Eastern Europe, tend to view "civil society as spontaneously self-organized harmony". Civil society, in this sense, is perceived as a bulwark against despotic state power and is supposed to flourish best when the state interferes least. Drawing on theoretical considerations, the case of Somalia and available cross-national data, Englehardt (2011) refutes these assumptions. Instead, he proposes an alternative, Kantian view of civil society according to which a harmonious civil society can emerge only after the state has reduced violence and established centralized control over predatory groups. The development of a strong and "civil" civil society, in this sense, requires a strong state. Ultimately, Englehardt argues, this finding is also confirmed by the democratic transformations in Eastern Europe, where strong and democratically oriented civil societies emerged in authoritarian states that were, however, strong and centralized (ibid, pp. 356f.)[2]. This corresponds with the *neo-statist* approach, advanced by Weiss and Hobson (1995, pp. 1–10, 238–252), which assumes that strong states and strong civil societies constitute two sides of the same coin. The conclusion that a strong and democratic civil society requires a strong state is also shared by other authors who have focused on the relationship between civil society and the strength, or weakness, of the state. For instance, Götze's (2004, pp. 201ff.) work on the Red Cross in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania also shows the importance of the state's monopoly on the use of force and the existence of a reliable legal framework for the emergence of a civil society that is strong and democratic. Götze argues that civil society in this sense is legally enabled, framed and protected by the state, and that by holding a monopoly on force and by establishing binding rules for social behaviour a strong state

constitutes an important precondition for an autonomous and non-violent civil society to emerge (see also Gosewinkel et al. 2004, pp. 14f.; 18–21; Knöbl 2006; Reichardt 2004, pp. 65–68).

However, Götze (2004, pp. 201ff.) also states that to conclude that civil society can only exist in strong states would be misleading, because in many developing countries voluntary associations flourish precisely because the state is weak. This view is shared by other authors who focus on the development of civil society in weak states and in the developing world more generally (e.g. Croissant et al. 2000; Lorch 2006, 2008; Ottaway 2004, p. 125; Shah 2008). The research on governance in areas of limited statehood also supports this view, showing that in contexts where central state institutions are weak, civil society actors, such as NGOs, often take over functions normally ascribed to the state (e.g. Risse 2012, pp. 5ff.).

This apparent paradox is unravelled by Ottaway (2004) who shows that, while in many weak states civil society groups exist in abundance, they often constitute themselves differently from what is assumed by normative civil society theory. Specifically, Ottaway's analysis suggests that civil society groups operating in weak states may often lack autonomy from powerful social forces and frequently engage in rather uncivil forms of behaviour. This finding corresponds with other studies on civil society in weak states, which likewise suggest that so-called dark sides characterize civil society especially in contexts where the state is weak (e.g. Englehardt 2011; Götze 2004; Lorch 2006, 2008; Shah 2008).

But how exactly does state weakness lead to the emergence of dark sides in civil society? The few existing theoretical investigations into this issue often revolve around the state's monopoly on the use of force (e.g. Englehardt 2011; Götze 2004; Knöbl 2006; Reichardt 2004). More precisely, it has been argued that the centralization of the means of violence in the hands of the state leads to pacification, creates social order and generates predictability, thereby enabling the development of voluntary associational activities (Englehardt 2011, pp. 338ff.; see also Reichardt 2004, pp. 65–68). Similarly, it has been noted that the state's monopoly on force, compulsory education, conscription and taxation have a disciplinary effect on society, because they lead to social affect control and promote the sublimation of aggressions (Götze 2004, p. 201; Knöbl 2006, pp. 4ff.; Reichardt 2004, pp. 62–68). In this sense, the varying degrees of "civility" of different national civil societies can be seen to depend on the extent to which the states in which they operate manage to uphold a monopoly on force (Gosewinkel et al. 2004, pp. 18–21.; Knöbl 2006, pp. 1–7; Leonhard

2004; Reichardt 2004, pp. 65–68.). On the whole, however, existing studies have not been able to sufficiently operationalize these theoretical findings in order to explain how state weakness may generate the various different types of dark sides that real, existing civil societies have been found to display.

To solve this problem, the present study disaggregates the phenomenon of state weakness and also examines the social and political conditions in which weak state institutions are embedded. Specifically, the literatures on governance in areas of limited statehood and on weak states show that the prevalence of an environment in which non-state actors perform functions normally ascribed to the state (e.g. Beisheim et al. 2014; Risse 2015), the existence of powerful social forces that compete with the central state for social control (see especially Migdal 1988), the widespread use of patronage and corruption by state elites and powerful non-state actors (e.g. Eriksen 2005), the prevalence of a context of violence and insecurity (e.g. Biró 2007; Schneckener 2006) and external influences in the form of international aid (e.g. Carothers and Ottaway 2000) are highly interrelated with the weakness of central state authorities. Interestingly, the few existing studies on civil society in weak states (e.g. Englehardt 2011; Götze 2003; Lorch 2006, 2008; Shah 2008; Verkoren and van Leeuwen 2014) and the broader empirical analytical literature on civil society (e.g. Alexander 1998; Croissant et al. 2000; Lauth 2003; Roniger 1998) have also identified these conditions as having an important impact on national civil societies. Drawing on this, the book investigates whether and how these conditions influence civil society in weak states. In order to specify these further, the study also draws on previous scholarship on state-society relations in "weak" or "soft" states (e.g. Migdal 1988; Myrdal 1968), as well as on the literatures on patronage (e.g. Landé 1977; Lemarchand 1981; Scott and Kerkvliet 1977), on violent non-state actors (e.g. Biró 2007; Mair 2002; Schneckener 2009) and on foreign-funded NGOs (e.g. Banks et al. 2015; Banks and Hulme 2012; Edwards and Hulme 1996a, b).

Building on analytical categories that can be found in both the literature on civil society, and in the literatures on governance in areas of limited statehood and on weak states, the theoretical analytical framework, which guides the empirical analysis of this book, constitutes a "focused theory frame" following Rueschemeyer (2009, pp. 12–17). As such, the framework cuts across the research on civil society, on governance in areas of limited statehood and on weak states, and structures the book's theoretical

and empirical investigation into the relationship between civil society and state weakness. However, while "theory frames" have a sharp focus and constitute highly effective "analytical tools", they do not constitute comprehensive theories (ibid). Consequently, the book's theoretical analytical framework also falls short of determining the multiple connections and interrelations that might exist *between* the analytical categories and tentative causal patterns it identifies. Moreover, to ensure that its findings can be generalized on a higher theoretical level, the present study must combine the application of its "focused theory frame" with the Comparative Method in the form of the *most dissimilar cases design* and with structured, focused comparison.

The following sub-chapters develop the five analytical categories of influences that shape civil society in weak states: first, the existence of an environment where non-state actors perform functions normally ascribed the state (Sub-chap. 2.2); second, the lack of state autonomy and the prevalence of a social conflict between different alternative power centres inside and outside the state apparatus (Sub-chap. 2.3); third, the existence of a context of patronage and corruption (Sub-chap. 2.4); fourth, the prevalence of an environment of violence and insecurity (Sub-chap. 2.5); and, fifth, external influences in the form of international aid, which are conceptualized as an important intervening variable that can have an impact on both civil society and the state (Sub-chap. 2.6). Specifically, the following theoretical sections will focus on the influence that these contextual conditions can have on the ability of national civil societies to emerge, exert political influence and contribute to democratization. Throughout the book, the influence that other possible independent variables, such as the country's historical legacy, its political system, its ethnic composition, its majority religion or its level of economic growth, may have on national civil societies is tested empirically through comparative methods.

As noted, the empirically oriented literature on civil society suggests that real, existing civil societies generally mirror the contexts in which they operate (e.g. Croissant 2000, esp. p. 360; Howell 1999; Lauth 2003, pp. 40ff.). Taking this as a starting point, the following theoretical and empirical analysis builds on the *guiding assumption that national civil societies in weak states mirror the deficits of their respective states across the above-mentioned categories of state weakness.*

2.2 Civil Society in a Context Where Non-State Actors Perform Functions Normally Ascribed to the State

Existing studies on civil society in weak states have found that in such contexts civil society actors often take over functions normally ascribed to the state, such as the provision of welfare services (e.g. Götze 2004, pp. 201ff.; Lorch 2006, 2008; Ottaway 2004; Rombouts 2006, p. 32; Shah 2008, p. 39; Verkoren and van Leeuwen 2014, p. 469; Weijer and Kilnes 2012, pp. 12ff.; Zaidi 2006, p. 3557). Similarly, the literature on governance in areas of limited statehood shows that, where central state institutions are weak, essential collective goods are often provided by different types of non-state actors, including private businesses, public-private partnerships or NGOs and other civil society groups (e.g. Beisheim et al. 2014, pp. 3ff.; Risse 2012, pp. 5ff.). This finding is supported by scholarship on weak states, which argues that if the state fails to perform its functions with regard to the provision of social services, security or other political goods, other actors can move into the gaps that exist (e.g. Milliken and Krause 2003, p. 15; Rotberg 2004, pp. 6ff.; Schneckener 2006). Against this backdrop, this sub-chapter explores the relationship between the existence of an environment in which non-state actors perform functions normally associated with the state and the ability of national civil societies to constitute themselves.

The existing literature on civil society in weak states clearly suggests that the inability or unwillingness of the state to perform certain functions and the subsequent self-help efforts of local communities to provide makeshift solutions to the resulting problems can be highly conducive to the emergence of civil society (e.g. Götze 2004, pp. 201ff.; Lorch 2006, 2008; Ottaway 2004; Shah 2008, p. 39; Zaidi 2006, p. 3557). But what are the specific functions that can be assumed by civil society actors, and what are the specific sectors in which civil society is most likely to emerge in contexts of state weakness?

Studies that rely on a functional understanding of state weakness largely fall short of illuminating the social and political conditions that influence national civil societies in weak states. However, they delineate and describe the functions that are normally attributed to modern states and can thus be used to identify the sectors in which civil society actors may become active in contexts of state weakness. Specifically, many of these studies identify three core functions that are normally associated with the state: first, the

delivery of social services; second, democratic institution-building; and, third, the provision of security (e.g. Doornbos 2003; Milliken and Krause 2003; Rotberg 2002, 2004; Schneckener 2006). To what extent are civil society actors capable of performing these functions if the state is unable or unwilling to do so?

There is a relatively broad consensus in the existing literature on civil society in weak states that civil society groups can provide makeshift solutions in the field of social service provision. Civil society actors, such as community-based associations, NGOs or religious groups, can cater to fundamental welfare needs not met by the state, such as the provision of food, healthcare or education (Götze 2004, pp. 201ff.; Lorch 2006, 2008; Ottaway 2004; Shah 2008, p. 39; Verkoren and van Leeuwen 2014, p. 468; Zaidi 2006, p. 3557). As Ottaway points out, if civil society organizations have access to sufficient resources, they can develop into professional agencies that may deliver welfare services more effectively than weak state bureaucracies. As such, in many weak states, civil society groups constitute the most important providers of welfare services (Ottaway 2004, p. 129). Notably, studies on civil society under authoritarian rule suggest that this can be the case even if the political system is highly authoritarian (e.g. Croissant et al. 2000, pp. 28f.; Lorch 2006, 2008).

But how do civil society groups active in the welfare sector relate to the institutions and the bureaucratic elites of the weak state? In strong states, civil society–based welfare organizations often form part of mixed-welfare systems, complementing social service delivery by the state. Moreover, where central state institutions are strong, the delivery of social services by civil society is usually coordinated, monitored and regulated by the state (e.g. Evers and Laville 2004; Lamping et al. 2002; Lewis 2004). By contrast, in contexts where the bureaucratic institutions of the state are weak, the delivery of social services may simply be left to NGOs and other civil society groups without any kind of coordination or supervision (Ottaway 2004, p. 131; see also Edwards and Hulme 1996a, p. 5). Sometimes, mixed-welfare systems and contracting-out arrangements may formally be in place in weak states as well. But if regulatory state institutions lack capacity and the political environment is characterized by patronage and corruption, such systems of complementary service provision may become severely distorted (e.g. Smith 2004, esp. pp. 166f.). However, the question of how this may influence civil society groups active in the welfare sector has not yet been sufficiently explored.

The existing research on civil society also shows that the capacity of citizens to participate in voluntary associations is dependent on their socio-economic and educational backgrounds (e.g. Lamping et al. 2002, p. 20; Reichardt 2004, p. 74). More specifically, where comprehensive welfare provision and broad-based access to education are not in place, civil society groups may often be unrepresentative in nature and exclude citizens belonging to marginalized social strata (e.g. Reichardt 2004, pp. 73f.; see also Rueschemeyer et al. 1998b; p. 281). Ottaway (2004, pp. 128ff.) and Shah (2008, p. 35) show that a lack of representativeness and elitist features characterize civil society organizations particularly in contexts where the state is weak. As Ottaway (2004, p. 129) notes, for instance, in weak states, civil society elites frequently make claims on behalf of certain constituencies without being accountable to the latter. Additional research is needed, however, to clarify to what extent such problematic features can be attributed to the weakness of the state and/or the lack of comprehensive social service provision, and what role the level of economic development and international factors—such as foreign donor influences—may play in this regard.

As noted earlier, normative approaches to civil society generally suppose that civil society actors are also capable of contributing to democratic institution-building. Therefore, international donor programmes aimed at the promotion of democracy frequently entail measures to encourage civil society growth (e.g. Carothers and de Gramont 2013, pp. 136ff.; Carothers and Ottaway 2000). Contrary to this view, the more empirically analytical literature on civil society is sceptical about the ability of civil society to promote democracy. Based on the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines, the questions of whether and to what extent civil society actors in weak states are able to exert political influence and contribute to democratization will be tackled throughout the book, and the answers will be presented in the comparative chapter and in the conclusion. In addition, the empirical chapters will also explore the question of whether civil society can contribute to democratic institution-building by empirically assessing the contributions that civil society actors in Bangladesh and the Philippines have been able (or unable) to make in the field of election monitoring.

Some authors suggest that in weak states civil society actors may, at times, also provide makeshift solutions in the field of security provision (e.g., Ottaway 2004, pp. 126f.; see also Andersen 2006, pp. 15ff.). Ottaway (2004, p. 127) claims, for instance, that in contexts of state weakness "(v)igilante groups … are a civil society response to insecurity".

Similarly, Gosewinkel and Reichardt (2004, p. 65f.) suggest that certain violent actors, such as gangs and vigilante groups, are often characterized by organizational features that are suposedly found in civil society as well, such as self-organization and mutual solidarity (see also Reichardt 2004, p. 69). However, the ability to effectively provide physical security ultimately depends on a group's capability to use organized violence, and most definitions of civil society exclude such groups. Accordingly, many authors define vigilante groups not as civil society actors but as non-state armed groups (e.g. Schneckener 2009). Nevertheless, additional research is necessary to explore the extent to which civil society actors in weak states may be able to provide security as well as whether and to what extent they may have to link up with or transform themselves into armed groups for this purpose.

On a more general level, it must be asked whether civil society groups that operate in weak states where the authority of central state institutions is contested by powerful non-state actors (e.g. Migdal 1988) can perform any of the above-mentioned functions independently at all, or whether they have to align themselves with state elites or alternative power players for this purpose. Conversely, investigating whether non-state power players trying to increase their social and political influence in the weak state strive to co-opt civil society groups that deliver social services or other benefits not provided for by the state would also appear to be useful. These questions will be explored in the following sub-chapter.

2.3 Civil Society in the Context of Power Centre Competition

Empirical case studies on civil society in weak states show that, in such contexts, civil society groups are often aligned with powerful social forces, such as state elites, semi-authoritarian political parties or insurgent groups (Götze 2004; Lorch 2006, 2008; Shah 2008; South 2007; Verkoren and van Leeuwen 2014; see also Ottaway 2004). At the same time, state capacity approaches to state weakness stress that weak states generally exist in an environment of social conflict and lack autonomy from alternative power players, such as military factions, powerful political parties, local strongmen or warlords (Migdal 1988; see also Biró 2007; Chesterman et al. 2004; Migdal and Schlichte 2005). Against this backdrop, the current sub-chapter seeks to identify tentative theoretical linkages between the limited autonomy of the state, the existence of non-state power players and the limited autonomy of civil society in weak states.

While strong states are autonomous bureaucratic entities that hold a monopoly on the use of force and are capable of enforcing authoritative decisions and controlling the social sphere, the autonomy and the authority of weak states are contested by powerful social forces, that is *alternative power centres* (Migdal 1988; see also Biró 2007; Eriksen 2005; von Trotha 2005). Drawing on Migdal (1988), this study uses the term alternative power centre to denote collectives of political and/or social elites both inside and outside the state apparatus, which are capable of circumventing the state's formal rules and have the power to exercise *social control* over significant parts of the population.[3] Alternative power centres include collective elites as different as military units, landed dynasties, political parties, insurgent groups and religious organizations (Biró 2007; Eriksen 2005; Migdal 1988; von Trotha 2005). Weak state bureaucracies compete with such alternative power centres for social control in an environment of social conflict (Migdal 1988).

Weak states are fragmented polities and "oligopol(ies)" of authority in which dependent segments of the population are controlled vertically by state elites and alternative power centres (Migdal 1988, esp. pp. 208ff.; see also Ruud 1996, esp. p. 191f.). As Chesterman et al. (2004, p. 5) note, where a strong and neutral bureaucracy is lacking, even the existence of vibrant political parties, otherwise an important prerequisite for democracy, can enhance political fragmentation, as the former may capture the judiciary and other parts of the state and import inter-group conflict into public institutions. Obviously, there are different degrees to which the autonomy of the state can be curtailed by alternative power centres, and weak states can be linked to alternative power centres in various ways (Biró 2007, pp. 41ff.; Migdal 1988, esp. pp. 206–258; Migdal and Schlichte 2005, p. 19). In some cases, certain bureaucratic entities of the state may be connected to alternative power centres through flexible alliances and negotiated settlements (Migdal 1988, esp. pp. 206–258; see also von Trotha 2005, pp. 36f.). In others, by contrast, state elites may be able to establish a certain amount of supremacy over alternative power centres by co-opting or even incorporating them into the state apparatus (Migdal 1988, pp. 229ff.). However, alternative power centres, such as elite families, military units, warlords or local strongmen, may also actively seek to capture the state, or parts of it, for the purpose of enhancing their own social and political influence (Biró 2007, pp. 24ff.; Chesterman et al. 2004, pp. 2ff.; Eriksen 2005, pp. 397ff.; Migdal 1988, pp. 238–258). The various types of alliances that can exist between state institutions and alternative power centres may differ considerably in terms of their flexibility and durability.

How do these patterns and dynamics influence civil society? As noted, conventional approaches generally define civil society as an autonomous social sphere that is characterized by a high degree of self-organization. In contrast to this, the *relational approach* supposes that the degree of autonomy of real, existing civil societies depends on their context of action and, in particular, the state in which they operate (for a related argument see Gosewinkel 2003, pp. 9ff.; Gosewinkel and Rucht 2004; Gosewinkel et al. 2004, pp. 14f.; 18–21). Similarly, empirical case studies show that in weak states civil society groups are often affiliated with powerful social forces, which can be considered as alternative power centres as defined in this study (Götze 2004; Lorch 2006; Ottaway 2004; Shah 2008; South 2007). For instance, Götze's (2004, esp. p. 208) work on Bosnia-Herzegovina suggests that where the state fails to guard both its own autonomy and the autonomy of the public sphere, civil society becomes vulnerable to co-optation by political elites. Most existing studies on co-opted civil society groups focus on co-optation by elites in authoritarian regimes (e.g. Heng 2004; Lorch 2006; Perinova 2005; Yang 2004). However, several authors also show that, in contexts of state weakness, civil society groups can likewise be aligned to powerful opposition groups, such as opposition parties or even warlords or insurgent movements (Biró 2007, p. 43; Ottaway 2004, p. 130; Shah 2008; South 2007).

The work of Migdal suggests that alternative power centres will enter into alliances with civil society primarily for the purpose of enhancing their social control (Migdal 1988, esp. pp. 24–33). Some empirically oriented studies confirm and provide further insight into this pattern. Biró (2007, esp. pp. 37–43) shows, for instance, that both in Africa and Afghanistan, warlords seeking to stabilize their rule have often had to move beyond coercion and provide social services to local constituencies. However, as their primary character as entrepreneurs of violence has often prevented them from directly engaging in service delivery, many of these warlords have established linkages with civil society groups, such as "local solidarity networks" or foreign-funded NGOs. Moreover, several warlords have even transformed some of their armed factions into welfare-oriented groups. Similarly, armed ethnic groups in Burma have often sought to support the development of the regions they control by opening up spaces for civil society groups, such as NGOs (Lorch 2006, pp. 24ff.; South 2007). This indicates that alternative power centres may deliberately seek to make use of the ability of civil society groups to provide social services in order to enhance their potential for social control. Further research is needed, however, in order to explore this assumption further.

Moreover, Linz's (2000, pp. 175ff.) elaborations on mobilizational authoritarian regimes, Midgdal's (1988, pp. 232ff.) work on the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI, Partido Revolucionario Institucional) of Mexico and Biró's (2007) research on violent non-state actors suggest that socialist parties, liberation movements or "reform insurgencies" (Biró 2007) in particular may also establish or co-opt loyal civil society groups for the purpose of spreading their political beliefs and enhancing their ideological control. Based on the case of Nepal, Shah (2008, p. 46) further argues that in weak states, different types of political parties may use civil society as a "mobilization strategy" to build popular support for regime change. Additional, comparative insights are needed, however, to gain a more thorough understanding of why alternative power centres may link up with civil society groups and whether specific types of alternative power centres are more likely to engage with civil society than others.

Similarly, the questions of why civil society actors link up with alternative power centres and how such alliances impact on these actors' ability to exert political influence have also remained largely unexplored so far. Studies on civil society in authoritarian contexts have argued that civil society actors may deliberately allow themselves to become co-opted by political elites in order to promote their own interests (e.g. Yang 2004, pp. 13f.; Perinova 2005, pp. 6ff., 28). Similarly, Shah (2008, esp. pp. ix, 25ff., 46f.) shows that in the weak state of Nepal, civil society actors forged an alliance with the armed Maoist party to overthrow the monarchy. Moreover, those civil society groups that played an important role during the transition were also able to exercise considerable influence on the post-transition government. Similarly, in Pakistan, various secular NGOs welcomed the military coup of Pervez Musharraf, because they perceived it as a remedy against growing Islamization. After the coup, several NGO leaders acted as service contractors, advisers or even cabinet members of the military government, which provided them with substantial political influence (Zaidi 2006). Comparative findings are needed, however, to investigate these issues in depth.

How do alliances between civil society groups and alternative power centres impact the structure of civil society? Existing studies on civil society in weak states suggest that national civil societies that are characterized by power centre alignments will *mirror* the structure of the power centre competition which prevails in the respective weak state (Götze 2004; Rombouts 2006, p. 34ff.; Weijer and Kilnes 2012, pp. vf., 5ff.). Specifically, Götze shows that in post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina, the

national Red Cross remained divided into two sub-organizations, the Red Cross of the Bosnian-Croatian Federation and the Red Cross of the Serbian Republic, both of which were aligned with powerful nationalist parties and groups, thereby reflecting the main fault lines of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian state (Götze 2004, esp. pp. 207–11). Similarly, civil society in the weak state of Pakistan has long reflected the competition between Islamist forces on the one hand and the military and other secular forces on the other (Zaidi 2006). Additional empirical findings and theoretical reflections are necessary, however, to explore these observations further.

Moreover, the existing literature suggests that power centre alignments may also influence the internal structures of individual civil society groups. Specifically, studies on civil society in China and Vietnam show that communist or socialist parties frequently set up *sectoral mass organizations*, such as worker, peasant or women groups, which operate within the sphere of civil society and may enhance their organizational autonomy over time (Perinova 2005, esp. p. 14; Wischermann et al. 2015). Sectoral organizations in this sense comprise, and are confined to, members of the same occupational status, gender or age (e.g. Hawes 1990). Both Migdal's work on (post-)revolutionary Mexico (1988, pp. 232ff.) and Linz's (2000, pp. 175ff.) research on mobilizational authoritarian regimes suggest that the pattern of sectoral organization can sometimes be found in civil society groups aligned with liberation parties and other types of revolutionary parties as well. Additional research is needed, however, to confirm and further investigate this assumption.

In addition, findings from Vietnam suggest that civil society organizations that are controlled by socialist or communist parties that rely on the Marxist-Leninist principle of *democratic centralism* will usually be highly hierarchical in nature and also practise democratic centralism themselves (Wischermann et al. 2015). This is because democratic centralism constitutes a direct link between socialist or communist parties and their affiliated mass organizations. Moreover, as an organizational mechanism, democratic centralism codifies the three core principles of subordinating the minority to the majority, the individual to the collective and the lower organizational units to the higher ones (Angle 2005; Wischermann et al. 2015). Similarly, drawing on Chakrabarty, Ruud (1996, p. 192) notes that in the segmented polity of India, where individuals and social groups often tend to be attached vertically to political and social elites, the internal structure of trade unions is also often hierarchical and leader-centred, an observation that may apply to other civil society organizations as well. Comparative research must further investigate, however, to what

extent civil society groups aligned to power centres other than socialist or communist parties are also internally hierarchical, and why this might be the case.

Zaidi's (2006, p. 3557) work on Pakistan suggests that close linkages between civil society groups and alternative power centres lead to a "close accommodation between civil and uncivil society" or, in order words, to the emergence of dark sides in civil society. More specifically, Weijer and Kilnes (2012, p. 5) note that in weak states "conflict tends to strengthen bonding social capital within identity groups, to the detriment of social capital across groups". Drawing on this, it might be concluded that civil society groups that are aligned with different types of alternative power centres in the weak state are likely to generate particularistic or bonding forms of social capital that run along, rather than cut across existing social cleavages. However, this issue has not been investigated in depth as of yet. Similarly, the question of how power centre alignments impact the ability of civil society groups to perform other *democratic functions*, such as watchdog and representative functions, or the function of being democratic intermediaries, has also remained largely unexplored to date.

The literature on weak states suggests that the strategies that state elites and alternative power centres employ to enhance their social and political control can often be reduced to patronage, violence or a combination of both (Eriksen 2005; Migdal 1988;[4] Myrdal 1968; Schneckener 2006, p. 31). These strategies are bound to have an impact on national civil societies.

2.4 Civil Society in the Context of Patronage and Corruption

Both the empirically oriented literature on civil society and German transition theory show that in developing countries and countries undergoing political transformations, civil society groups are often tainted by patronage and corruption (e.g. Croissant 2000; Croissant et al. 2000; Holloway 1997; Lauth 2003). Similarly, the literature on weak states has found that patronage and corruption are particularly salient in weak states, which lack the capacity to implement administrative decisions and establish full-fledged social control over the entire population (e.g. Clapham 1982, p. 25; Eriksen 2005; Myrdal 1968; Migdal 1988; Schneckener 2006, p. 30). Against this backdrop, the present sub-chapter focuses on identifying the possible interfaces between civil society, patronage and corruption in the context of a weak state.

Patronage and *clientelism* can be defined minimally as "a relationship of exchange between unequals" (Clapham 1982, p. 4),[5] whereby the aspect of inequality can refer to either the socio-economic status or the political power of the parties involved. While the benefits traded can be both material and non-material in nature, clientelistic exchanges generally follow particularistic rather than universalistic criteria. Patron-client ties thus constitute interclass linkages, tying members of the lower social strata vertically to social and political elites. Nevertheless, clientelistic relations are, to a certain extent, mutually beneficial in character and entered into voluntarily (e.g. Roniger 1994a, p. 24; Günes-Ayata 1994; Landé 1977; Lemarchand 1981, p. 15; Piattoni 2001a, b; Scott and Kerkvliet 1977, pp. 439f.)

From the point of view of social and political elites, patronage is predominantly a *strategy of social control* (Migdal 1988; see also Clapham 1982, pp. 19f.; Günes-Ayata 1994, p. 21; Piattoni 2001a, p. 2; Roniger 2004), a pattern that often holds for corruption as well (Lorch 2014). The literature on weak states shows that where the state lacks the administrative capacity for authoritative decision-making, state leaders and bureaucratic elites frequently resort to patronage or corruption for the purpose of exercising a minimum of social and political control (e.g. Eriksen 2005, p. 400; Migdal 1988; Myrdal 1968; Schneckener 2006, p. 30). Patronage and corruption, in this sense, can take various forms, including political jobbery, that is, the appointment of state officials on the basis of loyalty rather than qualification, the biased allocation of development projects or the selective implementation of laws (Clapham 1982, pp. 25f.; Migdal 1988, pp. 217ff.; Smith 2004; WB 2016; Roniger 2004, pp. 357, 368). These observations are fully consistent with the older literature on patronage, which has pointed out that in contexts of administrative ineffectiveness, patron-client relations can be highly functional, because they can act as "addenda" "to institutions whose deficiencies they remedy" (Landé 1977, p. xxi). Thereby, patronage can serve functions as diverse as physical protection, the delivery of social services and representation (ibid; see also Clapham 1982; Lemarchand 1981, pp. 13ff.; Piattoni 2001a; Scott and Kerkvliet 1977). With regard to the latter function, Clapham (22ff.) has stressed, for instance, that in post-colonial states the introduction of the universal suffrage has often resulted in a blending of the security and welfare functions of clientelism with representative politics, leading to the emergence of a particular type of clientelism that he calls "clientelism of representation". Similarly, Landé has noted that, with regard to electoral

politics, patronage sometimes "protects an ordinary member or citizen against the risk of being left out during the distribution of particularistic benefits, while giving elected officials some voters who can be counted upon" (Landé 1977: xxi–xxii). However, the use of patronage as a strategy of social control is not limited to state elites and political parties. Instead, very different types of alternative power centres, including large landowners, local strongmen, warlords or insurgent groups, can employ patronage in order to strengthen their social control over dependent populations and increase their political influence in weak states (Migdal 1988; see also Biró 2007).

Given that they prevent the emergence of class-based linkages and tie local constituencies vertically to social and political elites, patron-client relations usually form part of fragmented political orders (Landé 1977, p. xxixf.; Scott and Kerkvliet 1977, pp. 439f.). Moreover, as it centres on the distribution of particularistic benefits, patronage can reinforce social divisions and, thus, have a disruptive effect on social groups and communities. Patronage can thus further aggravate existing conflicts and reinforce dynamics of violence within oligarchic orders (e.g. Clapham 1982, pp. 11f.; Landé 1977, p. xxxiif.; Piattoni 2001b, p. 199).

In most states where patronage is widespread, a relatively small number of patrons are confronted with a comparatively large number of (potential) clients. Consequently, such states are usually characterized by the existence of multiple clientelistic chains that link dependent constituencies, alternative power centres and state elites to each other. Within such clientelistic chains, alternative power centres and individual elites can act as *middlemen*, also referred to as clientelistic *intermediaries*, mediators or (electoral) brokers in the literature. *Middlemen*, in this sense, control access to the higher echelons of social and political power and, oftentimes, to avenues of resource conversion (Clapham 1982, pp. 8f., 13; Günes-Ayata 1994, pp. 22f.; Migdal 1988; Migdal and Schlichte 2005, p. 13; Myrdal 1968, pp. 814f.; Roniger 1994a, b).

How do these patterns and dynamics impact civil society? Scholarship on civil society based on normative democratic theory and international donor discourses usually consider patronage and civil society to be opposites. Similarly, they normally view civil society organizations as strong guardians against corruption (Holloway 1997; Roniger 1994a, pp. 8f.; for a prominent example see Mungiu-Pippidi 2013). Several studies on patronage and various critical studies on civil society, by contrast, have pointed to the complex interrelations between civil society and patronage

in many contemporary settings (e.g. Alexander 1998, pp. 12ff.; Günes-Ayata 1994; Roniger 1994a, b; Piattoni 2001a, b).

In fact, the concepts of civil society and patronage share various important characteristics. Specifically, just like civil society organizations, patron-client networks generally exist between the public and the private realms. Moreover, both social interactions that take place in civil society and clientelistic exchanges are characterized by *voluntarism*, because, unlike primordial ties, patron-client relations are non-ascriptive in nature. Furthermore, despite their unequal character, clientelistic relationships are, to a certain extent, mutually beneficial in nature and may thus display various features that are supposedly found in civil society as well, such as reciprocity, solidarity or trust (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984, pp. 9ff.; Günes-Ayata 1994, pp. 23ff.; Lemarchand 1981, p. 15; Piattoni 2001a, pp. 12f.; Powell 1977, p. 148; Roniger 1994a, pp. 4–13; Roniger,1998, p. 72, Scott and Kerkvliet 1977).

The literature on the demand side of clientelism suggests that in contexts where state elites and alternative power centres distribute patronage for the purpose of enhancing their social control, *civil society groups might react by using clientelism as a deliberate strategy to realize their own goals* as well (e.g. Günes-Ayata 1994; Piattoni 2001a, b; Roniger 2004). Roniger (2004, p. 363) has argued, for instance, that researchers should treat clientelism as "one of various strategies stemming from civil society" and that it may sometimes constitute a "means to advance rights and popular demands" (ibid: 359). Similarly, Piattoni (2001b, p. 2) has noted that

> clientelism and patronage are strategies for the acquisition, maintenance, and aggrandizement of political power, on the part of the patrons, and strategies for the protection and promotion of their interests, on the part of the clients, and … their deployment is driven by given sets of incentives and disincentives. As such, their relative diffusion is connected with … the emergence, transformation, and demise of constellations of institutional and historical circumstances which make these strategies politically more or less viable and socially more or less acceptable.

The same tendencies appear to apply to the *strategic use of corruption by civil society actors* as well (Lorch 2014). Patron-client relations and corruption connect civil society groups to state elites and alternative power centres, and it can be assumed that the stability of these linkages depends on the degree to which the respective civil society actors' expectations are met

(for a similar argument see Günes-Ayata 1994, p. 23; Scott and Kerkvliet 1977, p. 448). The existing literature further suggests that civil society actors may enter into clientelistic alliances with state elites and alternative power centres in order to gain preferential access to resources and promote the material interests of their constituencies (e.g. Günes-Ayata 1994, pp. 25ff.; Piattoni 2001a, p. 7; Roniger 1994a, p. 10; Roniger 2004, pp. 357ff.). Comparative empirical research is needed, however, to further explore these patterns in depth.

The literature on patronage also suggests that in weak states, civil society actors may act as *middlemen* in clientelistic chains involving state agencies and alternative power centres (Landé 1977; Piattoni 2001a, b; Powell 1977). As Piattoni (2001b, p. 203) argues, for instance, in post-traditional societies the position of the patron is accessible to anybody who has the necessary "capacity as mediator". Similarly, Landé (1977, p. xxxvi.) has noted that in contexts of administrative ineffectiveness, the role of the middleman can be assumed by a large variety of actors, including semi-educated peasant leaders and representatives of the middle class. By the same token, it has argued that many post-feudal societies have seen the emergence of "new brokers", such as "small intellectuals" (Powell 1977),[6] whose mediating skills and "intermediate" socio-economic status enable them to perform this function (Powell 1977, pp. 149f.). As noted, third sector research and scholarship on civil society sometimes points to the *intermediary function* of civil society actors as well. However, they usually define this function in the democratic sense of the term, that is they often view civil society as an interlocutor, conveying the interests of marginalized social groups to the state (e.g. Croissant et al. 2000; Edwards and Hulme 1996a, b; Kramer 2000, p. 16; Lewis 2004). The possible overlaps and tensions between the democratic and the clientelist intermediary function of civil society in weak states have, by contrast, been insufficiently investigated to date.

Existing research on civil society and patronage further suggests that civil society groups embedded in patron-client networks are bound to reproduce the latter's organizational features (e.g. Clapham 1982, pp. 29f.; Roniger 1994b, p. 210). Most notably, civil society groups that engage in clientelistic exchanges are likely to replicate the "hierarchical logic of patronage" (Roniger 1998, p. 71), leading to the emergence or consolidation of strong intra-organizational hierarchies (ibid.; see also Alexander 1998, pp. 13ff.; Günes-Ayata 1994, pp. 19ff.). Moreover, given that patronage is based on the distribution of particularistic

benefits, it may lead to the emergence of standards for inclusion and exclusion, which run counter to universalism and fairness (Günes-Ayata 1994, pp. 24ff.; Piattoni 2001a, p. 18), compromising the democratic potential of civil society groups. Concurrently, Roniger (2004, p. 354) has noted that clientelism can constitute a form of "partial political mobilization". Consequently, it can be assumed that patron-client relations not only promote the emergence of fragmented political orders (e.g. Landé 1977, pp. xxixf.) but can also cause severe divisions within civil society. However, this assumption has not yet been discussed extensively in the literature on civil society.

Given that corruption has been found to exist inside the sphere of civil society as well (e.g. Holloway 1997; Trivunovic 2011), similar organizational problems can be expected when civil society groups in weak states engage in outright corruption. However, further comparative empirical evidence is needed to explore this assumption.

2.5 Civil Society in the Context of Violence and Insecurity

Several recent studies on civil society in weak states as well as some historical studies on civil society in the USA and Europe show that in contexts where the state's monopoly on force is not fully established, civil society groups are often tainted by violence (e.g. Englehardt 2011; Henry 2011; Knöbl 2006; Leonhard 2004; Mitra 2003; Reichardt 2004; Shah 2008). At the same time, the literature on weak states holds that state weakness is often associated with high levels of violence (e.g. Doornbos 2003; Milliken and Krause 2003; Schneckener 2006; Rotberg 2002, 2004). But how exactly does state weakness contribute to the emergence of violent practices within the sphere of civil society?

Where the bureaucratic institutions of the state are weak, the use of violence often constitutes a *political strategy* that can be employed by both state elites and alternative power centres for the purpose of exercising social control and enhancing their influence in the weak state (Biró 2007; Mair 2002; Migdal 1988; pp. 223ff.; Milliken and Krause 2003, pp. 4f.; Schneckener 2006, pp. 12f., 22, 31; Schneckener 2009). As Migdal (1988, pp. 223–28) argues, in weak states that lack capacity, state elites often resort to "dirty tricks", such as enforced disappearances, imprisonment or torture, in order to contain political opponents and safeguard

their political survival. This strategy encompasses violent repressions against actors in civil society, such as student activists, trade union members or peasant leaders (for a similar argument see Rotberg 2004, pp. 16f.; Schneckener 2006, p. 31).

Moreover, the inability of the state to exercise a monopoly on force can lead to the emergence of alternative power centres that are capable of using violence as a political strategy as well. This includes violent non-state actors as diverse as armed big landowners and local strongmen, Communist insurgencies and liberation movements, terrorist groups or criminal gangs. The forms of violence employed by these different types of power centres differ greatly, owing to differences in their political motivations, strategies and organizational strength. Communist and liberation insurgencies, for instance, often employ violence for the purpose of capturing state power or achieving territorial control (Biró 2007; Doornbos 2003, pp. 47ff.; Mair 2002, pp. 9–20; Schneckener 2009). More specifically, Maoist insurgencies and other ideological insurgent movements in particular often build up their military capacity through step-by-step organizing and by gradually trying to win the hearts and minds of the local population (Biró 2007, pp. 30f.). Concurrently, they frequently target military installations or state institutions and seek to avoid civilian casualties (Mair 2002, pp. 9–20). Terrorist groups, by contrast, are often uninterested in territorial control and use violence indiscriminately, seeking to cause high numbers of civilian casualties. Still other violent power centres, such as warlords or local strongmen, may use violence as a means to realize their economic interests or carve out spaces of local autonomy for themselves (Biró 2007; Doornbos 2003, pp. 47ff.; Mair 2002, pp. 9–20; Schneckener 2009).

Weak states are often spaces of tremendous insecurity, either because the security agencies of the state fail to protect the population from onslaughts by violent non-state actors or because state elites and members of the state security apparatus engage in violent repression and, thus, constitute sources of insecurity themselves (e.g. Doornbos 2003; Milliken and Krause 2003, pp. 4f.; Schneckener 2006, p. 22; Rotberg 2004, p. 16). Furthermore, in contexts of violent conflict, rudimentary forms of security may, at times, not be provided by the state, but rather by non-state power centres with a capacity for violence, such as insurgent groups or armed local strongmen. More precisely, such non-state power centres may protect local communities from state repression or violent onslaughts by rival armed groups, thereby gaining local support (e.g. Andersen 2006; Migdal 1988; Ottaway 2004; Rotberg 2004, pp. 5ff.).

What does all this mean for civil society? According to normative definitions, civil society is characterized by a high degree of "civility" that finds its expression in the use of dialogue and other means of peaceful dispute resolution and is, thus, diametrically opposed to violence (Gosewinkel 2003, p. 18; Henry 2011, pp. 97ff.; Leonhard 2004, p. 27; Knöbl 2006, p. 1; Reichardt 2004, p. 64; Stacey and Meyer 2005). This dichotomy between civil society and violence, which is dominant in the literature on civil society, is also reinforced by existing research on political violence (Henry 2011, p. 97). But how can we explain the occurrence of violence within national civil societies in weak states, which several studies have observed?

As already mentioned earlier, some authors argue that violent practices characterize national civil societies particularly in those contexts where the state's monopoly on the use of force is weak (e.g. Englehardt 2011; Knöbl 2006; Reichardt 2004). More specifically, these studies have noted that where the centralization of violence in the hands of the state remains incomplete, it is often relatively easy for civil society and other social actors to access guns and other means of violence: a condition that increases the likelihood of social and political conflicts being settled through physical force. Moreover, the state's monopoly on force is generally seen to have a disciplinary impact on society, which, along with the provision of legal channels for expression, leads to social affect control and the development of social norms, which delegitimize the use of inter-personal violence (Knöbl 2006, esp. pp. 8ff.; Reichardt 2004, pp. 64–74). However, these studies do not clearly distinguish between civil society and society as a whole. In addition, their findings have so far remained largely unrelated to the different forms of violence that have been found to exist in weak states.

Stacey and Meyer (2005, p. 184) claim that civil society is capable of "deliberate violence", or, in other words, that civil society actors may employ violence as a *deliberate strategy* to realize their goals. To date, however, this argument has been insufficiently tested through comparative empirical research. Similarly, the questions of how the strategic use of violence by civil society actors may be related to the violent strategies that are employed by state elites and alternative power centres in weak states and what specific motives may drive civil society actors to resort to violence have, likewise, remained largely unexplored.

The few existing studies that focus explicitly on the relationship between civil society and violence suggest that civil society actors may employ violence both as a means self-defence (Henry 2011, pp. 102ff.; Reichardt 2004, p. 64) and as part of a broader strategy to realize certain higher

political goals, such as democracy or the enlargement of civil society space (Reichardt 2004, pp. 64ff.). More specifically, it has been argued that civil society actors may resort to violence when they operate under an authoritarian regime in which peaceful forms of resistance have been proven ineffective (Henry 2011; Stacey and Meyer 2005, pp. 186ff.). This assumption is in line with Schneckener's (2006, pp. 28ff.) more general finding that, in contexts of state weakness, repression by state security forces can trigger social unrest and violent opposition. Moreover, it is also supported by the findings of Humphreys and Weinstein (2006, p. 9), who argue that people sometimes join armed rebellions in order to counter state repression in contexts where "non-violent channels" of political expression are blocked. However, whether civil society actors, driven by these or similar motives, are capable of using violence autonomously remains open to debate.

As indicated earlier, civil society groups in weak states are often affiliated with alternative power centres, and existing research shows that this also includes violent non-state actors, such as warlords, local strongmen or insurgent groups. Moreover, the existing literature also implies that civil society actors may enter into alliances with such violent power centres for purposes of protection as well as in order to gain access to economic resources or realize their goals (e.g. Biró 2007; Humphreys and Weinstein 2006; Migdal 1988; Ottaway 2004; Shah 2008; Verkoren and van Leeuwen 2014). More specifically, the case of the Burmese pro-democracy movement suggests that alliances with non-state armed groups can have a profound impact on civil society organizations. Specifically, they may come to support armed struggle or even transform themselves into armed groups over time (for a similar argument see Henry 2011). Further research is needed, however, to clarify the relationship between the existence of alliances between civil society groups and violent power centres on the one hand and the emergence of violent practices in civil society on the other.

Some historical and sociological studies argue that, under certain conditions, violence can, in fact, constitute an *enabling condition for civil society* to emerge (e.g. Gosewinkel 2003, p. 19; Leonhard 2004; Mitra 2003; Reichardt 2004, pp. 69f.). Drawing on the example of India, Mitra (2003, p. 1) notes that collective violence can sometimes constitute "a form of violent participation, which, in the final analysis, acts as the midwife of civil society". Similarly, other authors show that in the history of Europe, wars and violent conflicts have often played an important role in facilitating the emergence of a civil society space (e.g. Gosewinkel

2003, p. 18f.; Leonhard 2004). Leonard (2004, pp. 29f.) shows, for instance, that both in Western Europe and in the USA the development of many voluntary associations was directly linked to nationalist mobilization in the context of warfare. These observations also suggest that some forms of violence tend to be more conducive to the emergence of civil society than others. However, existing studies have not yet related the emergence of civil society to the different forms of violence found in weak states.

A final important question relates to how an environment of violence and insecurity shapes the internal workings of civil society groups. Research, which touches upon this issue, tentatively suggests that the internal organizational structures of civil society groups that operate in contexts of insecurity tend to be rather hierarchical and centred on individual leaders (e.g. Krok-Paszkowska 2003, p. 120)[7]. To substantiate this assumption and gain a better understanding of how exactly insecurity may lead to the emergence of intra-organizational hierarchies within civil society groups, further comparative research is needed.

2.6 The Intervening Variable: The Impact of Foreign Aid

Research on civil society promotion by international donors is largely unanimous in stressing the enormous impact that foreign funding and other forms of donor support can have on civil society groups and their relationship to the state (e.g. Edwards and Hulme 1996a, b; Carothers and de Gramont 2013, esp. p. 176; Ottaway and Carothers 2000; Seckinelgin 2002). By the same token, the literature on weak states points to the important role of colonial state-building, external dependence and foreign funding in shaping the political structures and policy decisions of weak states (e.g. Chesterman et al. 2004; Clapham 2003; Eriksen 2005; Migdal 1988; Schneckener 2007). Against this backdrop, the present sub-chapter conceptualizes international donor influences as an important intervening variable that can have a tremendous impact on state-civil society relations in contexts of state weakness.

As discussed extensively elsewhere, colonial rulers around the world generally sought to extract from their colonies as many resources as possible at the lowest possible cost. Consequently, post-colonial state leaders frequently inherited state apparatuses with strong repressive, but very

weak administrative, capacities (e.g. Leftwich 2004, pp. 145ff.). In addition, colonial powers generally relied on the co-optation of powerful social forces for the purpose of governing peripheral areas. As a result of this, formerly independent local patrons, such as feudal landowners or rural strongmen, were incorporated into the colonial state apparatus or turned into middlemen, connecting dependent segments of the population to the state. In many weak states, the prevalence of patronage is thus rooted in colonial state formation (Clapham 1982, p. 10; Kivimäki and Laakso 2000, p. 20; Migdal 1988, e.g. pp. 262ff.).

The availability of external sources of funding, such as revenues from the export of natural resources or international aid, can also be conducive to weak state formation, because it may release political elites from the need of building strong state institutions for the purpose of taxation or the promotion of economic growth. Moreover, foreign aid in particular is often subject to political conditionalities, which curtail the recipient state's autonomy with regard to policy decision-making (e.g. Eriksen 2005, pp. 398ff.; Smith 2004, pp. 151, 165ff.). In the 1970s and 1980s, donor conditionalities usually included administrative downsizing, market liberalization and privatization. Since the late 1980s, many donors began to promote the contracting-out of social services to NGOs and other civil society actors, thereby departing from their earlier approach of leaving the generation of welfare services entirely to the market (Banks et al. 2015; Edwards and Hulme 1996a, p. 2ff.; Seckinelgin 2002, Smith 2004, pp. 166f.). Finally, starting from the mid-2000s, many international donor agencies adopted "bottom-up" or "demand-side" approaches to democracy promotion, which included civil society support as an important component (Carothers and de Gramont 2013, pp. 136ff.).

Against this backdrop, this sub-chapter focuses on the impact that foreign aid can have on the ability of civil society to perform functions normally ascribed to the state (see Sub-chap. 2.2), on the relationship between civil society actors and alternative power centres (see Sub-chap. 2.3) as well as on the way in which civil society is affected by the environment of patronage and corruption (see Sub-chap. 2.4) and of violence and insecurity (see Sub-chap. 2.5) that often prevails in weak states.

The existing literature shows that in many developing countries international donor support has strengthened the ability of local civil society groups to deliver social services not provided for by the state. Since the 1980s, international aid agencies have channelled increasing amounts of money through service-oriented NGOs. At the same time, they have often

pressured weak state bureaucracies to outsource welfare tasks to civil society and to establish institutional agreements for contracting-out social services to NGOs, thereby promoting the emergence of mixed-welfare systems (e.g. Banks et al. 2015; Edwards and Hulme 1996a, pp. 1ff.; INTRAC 2013; Smith 2004, pp. 166f.). Given that it usually offers rather attractive salaries and working conditions, the foreign-funded NGO sector has often lured educated professionals away from the civil service, leading to a brain drain that has weakened the administrative capacity of weak states even further (e.g. Abuzeid 2009). Moreover, in many weak states the growth of the local NGO sector has been donor-driven and has lacked sustainability, with many local NGOs disappearing when foreign funding dries up (Ottaway and Carothers 2000, pp. 299f.). However, the questions of how different kinds of national welfare systems shape the sizes and the structures of local NGO sectors and what role different international donor paradigms play in this regard have thus far remained largely unexplored.

Many international donors assume that by generating social capital, representing the interests of marginalized constituencies, acting as intermediaries linking disenfranchised communities to the state and by performing a watchdog function vis-à-vis the state, civil society groups in general, and donor funded NGOs in particular, can also contribute to democratic institution-building (Edwards and Hulme 1996a, b; Ottaway 2004, pp. 128f.; Carothers and Ottaway 2000; Ottaway and Carothers 2000; Seckinelgin 2002). In contrast, some more critical studies on NGOs have argued that there is often a trade-off between the latter's involvement in social service delivery and their ability to act as political advocates. Specifically, in order to receive foreign funding, local NGOs may expand their apolitical welfare activities at the expense of their advocacy programmes (e.g. Banks and Hulme 2012; Edwards and Hulme 1996a, pp. 5ff.). Moreover, the engagement of NGOs in large-scale and standardized service delivery is highly conducive to the professionalization and bureaucratization of these formerly more voluntary associations, a trend that is reinforced by the reporting and accounting requirements of international donors (Edwards and Hulme 1996a, p. 8; Ottaway and Carothers 2000; Uphoff 1996, pp. 23ff.). Accordingly, many local development NGOs in weak states are not member associations, but run by salaried staff, leading several authors to question their potential to generate social capital and serve a representative function for their constituencies (e.g. Carothers and Ottaway 2000; Ottaway 2004, p. 128; Ottaway and Carothers 2000).

Furthermore, several critical works have argued that foreign aid may depoliticize local development NGOs and national civil societies in developing countries more generally (e.g. Banks et al. 2015, p. 709; Harriss 2002; Rahman 2006; Zaidi 2006, p. 3557). More specifically, it has been shown that donor funding often promotes the professionalization and bureaucratization of NGOs and that the latter often form part of international donor programmes, which conceptualize development as a technical and apolitical endeavour (e.g. Banks et al. 2015, p. 709). Harriss (2002) has argued that NGOs are thus part and parcel of what Ferguson has termed, the "anti-politics machine" of international aid. In addition, many international donors equate civil society with NGOs and, therefore, allocate huge amounts of resources to support the growth of the NGO sector, while marginalizing other, more politically active civil society actors, such as social movements (e.g. Edwards 2004, pp. 14, 24; Ottaway and Carothers 2000, pp. 295f.; Seckinelgin 2002). However, the question of how exactly foreign funding depoliticizes civil society in weak states and what role different donor paradigms, the structure of the local NGO sector and the influence of alternative power centres play in this regard have not, as yet, been fully explored.

The literatures on civil society, state weakness and foreign aid all suggest that international donor support can act as an intervening variable that can have a strong impact on the relationship between civil society, the state and alternative power centres (e.g. Carothers and de Gramont 2013; Carothers and Ottaway 2000; Ottaway and Carothers 2000; Shah 2008; Seckinelgin 2002; Zaidi 2006). For example, international donors often make their financial support to weak states conditional on consultation with civil society, thereby strengthening the latter's position vis-à-vis the state (e.g. Seckinelgin 2002, pp. 18ff.). Moreover, by providing them with an independent resource base, foreign aid can also enhance the autonomy of civil society groups from the state and alternative power centres. However, this increase in local autonomy often comes at the cost of increased dependence on foreign donors, making civil society groups susceptible to foreign agenda-setting (Shah 2008, p. 43).

At the same time, foreign aid may also be appropriated by alternative power centres that oppose the state, including both non-violent opposition parties and violent non-state actors, such as warlords or insurgent groups. As noted earlier, such alternative power centres may try to exert social control over local constituencies by delivering welfare services through co-opted civil society groups or may even establish loyal civil society

groups in order to access donor funding (Biró 2007, pp. 42f.; Ottaway 2004; Schneckener 2009, p. 11). During the Cold War, many "Western" aid agencies promoted explicitly apolitical NGOs in order to marginalize Communist parties and other leftist movements (e.g. Carothers and Ottaway 2000, pp. 6ff.; Ottaway and Carothers 2000, p. 299), which, in turn, were often supported by the Soviet Union (Mair 2002, pp. 13ff.). However, additional research is needed to determine when international donor support enhances the autonomy of civil society, breaking the ties between civil society groups and alternative power centres; and when such support instead serves to strengthen existing linkages between civil society groups and alternative power centres or state elites.

Regarding the impact that international donor support can have on the relationship between civil society, patronage and corruption, critical scholarship has argued that foreign funding can spur corruption in the NGO sector (e.g. Holloway 1997, Ottaway 2004, p. 132). Weak states usually lack the capacity to monitor foreign-funded NGOs (e.g. Edwards and Hulme 1996a, p. 8f.): a condition that can enable the emergence of clientelistic practices within these groups. Moreover, in weak states the contracting-out of welfare services, which is often promoted by foreign donors, frequently leads to the emergence of complex patterns of patronage and corruption (e.g. Smith 2004, p. 166). This tendency is bound to affect civil society groups acting as social service contractors as well. Nevertheless, the question of how donor interventions influence the way in which local civil society actors relate to the manifold patronage and corruption networks that exist in weak states has remained largely unexplored.

Existing research shows that patronage and corruption are facilitated by a lack of accountability and that clientelistic exchanges usually follow a hierarchical logic. Critical scholarship on foreign-funded NGOs finds that the internal organizational structures of these civil society groups are often hierarchical and lack transparency (e.g. Ottaway and Carothers 2000, pp. 305f.; Uphoff 1996). More specifically, Tandon (1996, p. 56) claims that many NGOs in developing countries are characterized by informality and exclusiveness and are dominated by "founder-leaders". A quantitative study of 492 NGOs in six Asian countries finds that internal hierarchies in NGOs are strongly correlated with high levels of foreign funding (Lyons and Nivison-Smith 2008). Several qualitative works also suggest that interactions with foreign donors can render the internal structures of local NGOs more hierarchical, because those NGO leaders who are able to "talk the donor's talk" often acquire disproportionate influence over their

organizations (Ottaway and Carothers 2000, pp. 300ff.; Shah 2008; Zaidi 2006, p. 3557). Moreover, donor reporting requirements frequently lead to the distortion of NGO accountability upward to their donors, at the expense of downward accountability towards their beneficiaries (Edwards and Hulme 1996b, p. 254; see also Tandon 1996). To date, however, the relationship between donor influence, internal organizational hierarchies and the involvement of civil society groups in patronage and corruption has been insufficiently explored.

The literature on civil society, state weakness and foreign aid, which was reviewed for the purposes of this study, is largely silent on how international donor support influences the way in which civil society actors relate to the patterns of violence that can exist in weak states. Some authors have noted very generally that foreign donors may protect local civil society actors from state repression and threats by political elites (e.g. Carothers and Ottaway 2000, pp. 14f.; Shah 2008, p. 43). However, scholars have also found that foreign-funded civil society groups are sometimes affiliated with violent power centres, such as insurgents or warlords, that establish civil society organizations in order to be able to engage with the international community (e.g. Biró 2007). Additional research is thus needed to further explore the relationship between civil society, violence and donor support in weak states.

In summary, a review of the literatures on civil society, governance in areas of limited statehood, state weakness, patronage and corruption, violent non-state actors and on international development cooperation thus suggests an analytical framework consisting of five major categories of influences on national civil societies in weak states. With regard to the national level, these categories are the existence of an environment in which non-state actors perform functions usually ascribed to the state (Sub-chap. 2.2), the lack of state autonomy and the existence of competition for social control between different alternative power centres (Sub-chap. 2.3), a context of patronage and corruption (Sub-chap. 2.4) and an environment of violence and insecurity (Sub-chap. 2.5). International donor influences constitute an important intervening variable that can have a significant impact on the relationship between civil society and state weakness across the four other categories (Sub-chap. 2.6). The following chapters apply this analytical framework to Bangladesh and the Philippines.

Notes

1. For an overview of the democratic functions attributed to NGOs in particular see for example, Edwards and Hulme (1996a, b) and Seckinelgin (2002).
2. This corresponds with the observation of other authors that the assumption of the existence of a strong state is implicit in many conventional, normative civil society theories, which makes it difficult to apply these theories to contexts of state weakness (Croissant et al. 2000, p. 17; Knöbl 2006, p. 13; Shah 2008).
3. My definition of the term "alternative power centre" is based on Migdal (1988). It should be noted, however, that Migdal uses the term "power centre", rather than "alternative power centre" and that his definition does not explicitly refer to "power centres" as "collectives of political and/or social elites".
4. Migdal uses the term "dirty tricks" to describe acts of political violence by state elites.
5. For a similar definition see for example, Landé (1977, p. xx) and Roniger (2004, p. 353). Like many other works (e.g. Piattoni 2001a, p. 4; Roniger 2004, p. 354), the present study uses the terms patronage and clientelism interchangeably.
6. As cited in Powell (1977, p. 150).
7. On the relationship between the existence of a restrictive environment and the development of internal hierarchies in different types of organizations, see also Rueschemeyer (1998, p. 13f; 16).

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CHAPTER 3

State Weakness and Civil Society in Bangladesh

From 1858 to 1947, the Muslim-majority region of East Bengal, which would later become Bangladesh, formed part of colonial British India. To strengthen their control over the local population, the British colonizers relied on the *zamindars*, feudal landlords belonging to the Hindu faith. In 1947, East Bengal became part of Pakistan, following the two-nation theory that the Hindu and the Muslim populations of British India should live in separate states. The Pakistani government passed land reform laws that effectively abolished the *zamindar* system, thereby eliminating an important section of the local colonial elite (Chowdury 2010).

Political domination from Islamabad as well as ethno-linguistic and socio-economic grievances, however, soon gave rise to a new independence movement. Popular outrage over the declaration of Urdu as the only official language culminated in the Language Movement led by the AL and its student wing, the *Chattra League* (CL). In 1970, the AL won the national elections in a landslide, but the (West) Pakistani government refused to hand over power, leading to a bloody war of independence that finally resulted in the creation of Bangladesh (Baxter 1997, pp. 61–82; Khan et al., p. 2008). On the Eastern Pakistani side, the war was mostly fought by the AL and its *Gonobahini* (people's forces), irregular insurgent units made up of armed politicians, student activists and civilians that lacked formal military training (Jamal 2008; see also Codron 2007). Given that large sections of the Eastern Pakistani elite had come

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to consider Islam as an instrument of repression by (West) Pakistan, the secessionist forces pushed for a secular state with a national identity rooted in the region's ethno-linguistic Bengali heritage (Karim and Fair 2007, p. 4; Sikand 2001, pp. 97ff.).

The Eastern Pakistani wing of the Islamist *Jamaat-e-Islami* (JI) and its student front, the *Islami Chattra Sangha*, stayed loyal to (West) Pakistan with many of their cadres joining the *Al Badr* and *Al Shams* militias that supported the (Western) Pakistani army. Towards the end of the war, these militias and the (Western) Pakistani military conducted large-scale massacres that targeted the Eastern Pakistani political and intellectual elite in particular, killing between one and three million people (Codron 2007; see also Karim and Fair 2007, p. 4; Sikand 2001, pp. 98f.; Upadhyay 2007).

Following military intervention by India in late 1971, Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation-state with most of its infrastructure destroyed both by the bloody war of independence and a devastating cyclone, which hit the country one year earlier. Owing to the massacres against the country's Bengali intellectuals and the exodus of Western Pakistani administrative officials after the war, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, which was established in 1972, largely lacked both an established political elite and experienced administrative personnel (e.g. Codron 2007). Moreover, while the British had established a relatively efficient civil service, state institutions lacked social acceptance because they were considered impositions of colonial rule (on the relationship between institutional weakness and colonial rule see also Lewis and Hossain 2008, p. 17).

In the absence of strong bureaucratic institutions, successive post-independence state leaders relied on patronage and repression to preserve their rule. The AL, which formed the first independent government, soon started to monopolize political power, establishing de facto one-party rule (Codron 2007; ICG 2006, pp. 2f.). However, in 1975, President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Mujib), the founder of the AL and leader of the independence struggle, was assassinated in a military coup. From 1975 to 1978, the country was then ruled by General Ziaur Rahman (Zia), who established the BNP, which remains one of the country's two most important political parties and the AL's main rival (Khan et al. 2008; Codron 2007).

To this day, the AL is more left-leaning in character and upholds the country's ethno-linguistic Bengali heritage as the main foundation of the Bangladeshi state, while the BNP is more right-wing and places greater emphasis on the Islamic character of the nation, leading the two parties to be categorized as "opposing stereotypes" (ICG 2006, p. 3). Since the late 1970s, the AL has been led by Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Mujib,

while the BNP has been led by Zia's widow, Khaleda Zia. The personal feud between the two women has further fuelled the conflict between the AL and the BNP (e.g. Lorch 2014). Since the 1980s, the party conflict has created a political vacuum (e.g. ICG 2006) that has been highly conducive to both military involvement in politics and the rise of Islamist groups. From 1980 to 1990, the inability of the AL and the BNP to find common ground allowed General Muhammad Ershad to keep the country under military rule. Then from 1990 to 2006, the AL and the BNP alternated in holding power, with Islamist parties, such as the JI, acting as "political kingmakers" (Karim and Fair 2007, p. 1; see also Ganguly 2006; Lorch 2008, pp. 12f.). The JI and the *Islami Oyika Jote* (IOJ) formed part of a BNP-led coalition government from 2001 to 2006, enabling them to significantly expand their political influence (ICG 2006). Owing to the lack of political trust between the AL and the BNP, election results have generally been rejected by the losing party (ibid., p. 3). Following violent confrontations between the AL and the BNP over the conduct of the 2006 polls, the army intervened in January 2007 and established a "military-backed" CTG, which remained in office until late 2008 (ICG 2008). In late 2008, the CTG held elections that were won by the AL, which quickly moved to monopolize political power. The 2014 elections were boycotted by the BNP, leading to the establishment of de facto one-party rule (e.g. Feldman 2015).

From 2005 to 2015, Bangladesh has continuously been ranked as a weak state by the FSI (2015)[1]. *Central state agencies have often been unable or unwilling to provide basic social services and have also largely failed with regard to the establishment of impartial and sustainable democratic institutions.* As of 2005, an estimated 40 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line (WB Bangladesh 2016). By 2010, the rate had dropped to 31.5 per cent (ibid.), although it remains unclear to what extent this improvement can be attributed to the enhanced performance of central state institutions or to an increase in social services provided by NGOs and other non-state actors respectively.[2] Throughout the period from 2005 to 2015, the FHI (2015) categorized Bangladesh as only "partly free".[3]

Bangladesh's *state institutions lack autonomy* (Lewis and Hossain 2008, pp. 16f.), *being only poorly insulated from alternative power centres*, including, in particular, the country's two main political parties, the military and, to a lesser extent, Islamist groups. As already touched upon earlier, the weakness of the state and the fierce and protracted conflict between the AL and the BNP are two sides of the same coin, with both parties resorting to patronage and violence for the purpose of extending their political influence and weakening their respective rival (Lorch 2014).

Given the lack of strong administrative capacities, *patron-client relations* constitute "the template for much social interaction" (Hossain 2004, p. 11) and both bureaucratic elites and alternative power centres use patronage to establish social control (e.g., Khan et al. 2008; Codron 2007). Similarly, *corruption* is "endemic" in the country, with corrupt practices prevailing not only in the state apparatus and the party system but also in the economy and the NGO sector (Norad 2011, pp. 14; 121). The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (TI-CPI) gave Bangladesh scores between 1.7 and 2.7 in the period from 2005 to 2011, and scores of 25 or 26 in the period from 2012 to 2015 respectively, thereby continuously ranking it as one of the most corrupt countries in the world (TI-CPI 2015).[4]

In addition, the political context of Bangladesh is characterized *by high levels of violence and insecurity*. Both the AL and the BNP rely on violence, often in the form of violent street demonstrations and assaults on political opponents (e.g. Moniruzzaman 2009), in order to strengthen their political influence. Corruption within the police force has led to the emergence of powerful *mastaans*, local mafia with links to the political elite. Human rights violations by state security forces are rampant, and the paramilitary Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) in particular has been implicated in large-scale extra-judicial killings (HRW 2011, pp. 282ff.; Lewis and Hossain 2008, p. 17). From 2001 to 2006, the country experienced various Islamic terrorist attacks, including a grenade attack on an AL rally in 2004 as well as over 400 simultaneous bombings nationwide and a bomb attack on the British High Commissioner in 2005 (e.g. ICG 2006, pp. 9f., 2011).

From the early 1970s to the early 2000s, Bangladesh received high levels of foreign aid and was considered a classic case of aid dependence. As a consequence, considerable sections of the local elite had strong ties to the "aid industry" and international donors exerted strong influence over national policy-making processes (Lewis and Hossain 2008, pp. 15ff.). Since the 1990s, however, aid dependency has steadily declined, increasing the autonomy of local state elites in policy-making (Hossain 2004).

The emergence, growth and structural characteristics of Bangladesh's national civil society can be seen as the consequence, rather than the cause of state weakness, given that the bureaucratic and political structures of the post-colonial state were already quite firmly established at the time when civil society started to grow. The post-colonial state in this sense was already entrenched enough "to create its own weaknesses", when civil society began to take shape, as a renowned local scholar aptly said.[5] Against

this backdrop, the following sub-chapters focus on how the five above-mentioned categories of influences identified in the study's theoretical analytical framework (Chap. 2) have shaped the ability of Bangladeshi civil society to emerge, exert political influence and contribute to democratization. With regard to the national level, these sub-chapters thus investigate how civil society has been influenced, first, by the inability/unwillingness of the state to perform certain functions and the existence of an environment in which non-state actors perform functions normally ascribed to the state (Sub-chap. 3.1); second, by the lack of state autonomy and the existence of a competition between various power centres (Sub-chap. 3.2); third, by the context of patronage and corruption (Sub-chap. 3.3); and, fourth, by the context of violence and insecurity (Sub-chap. 3.4). As discussed in the theoretical chapter (Chap. 2), the influence exerted by foreign donors is treated as an intervening impact that has shaped state-civil society relations across the four other categories.

3.1 Civil Society in a Context Where Non-State Actors Perform Functions Normally Ascribed to the State

Shortly after the war of independence that had left much of the country's infrastructure destroyed, Bangladesh was affected by large-scale flooding, leading to a massive famine in 1974. The inability of the state to simultaneously address the tasks of post-war reconstruction, disaster management and poverty alleviation led to the emergence of a plethora of civil society initiatives in the welfare sector. These included, among others, local self-help groups, welfare projects initiated by former independence activists and religious charities. Moreover, the inability of the state to tackle the country's tremendous welfare needs, combined with the massive influx of foreign funding, also led to the growth of donor-supported NGOs that provided the population with essential social services (e.g. Haque 2002, p. 417; Feldman 2003; pp. 6ff.; Lewis 2008, p. 132; White 1999). As one local NGO worker put it bluntly, "The reason why the NGOs are there is just the failure of the government".[6] Similarly, Ahmad (2001) has written that "Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the state has largely failed to assist the poor or reduce poverty, while NGOs have grown dramatically, ostensibly to fill this gap".

As noted earlier, as of 2010, an estimated 31.5 per cent of the population still lived below the poverty line, with many of them facing extreme

poverty (WB Bangladesh 2016). In this context, foreign-funded NGOs have continued to cater to undamental welfare needs not met by the state, such as healthcare and livelihood development (e.g. Banks et al. 2015, p. 711; Kabeer et al. 2010). Starting in the 1980s, massive donor support led to the emergence of highly professionalized Big-NGOs (BINGOs), such as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and *Proshika*, which have taken over functions normally ascribed to the state, such as the provision of primary education, the establishment of health clinics and the provision of credit (DFID 2005; Stiles 2001, p. 74; White 1999, p. 312).

Another factor that has contributed to the tremendous growth of the local NGO sector has been the lack of effective state regulation. To this day, the legal framework governing NGOs and other civil society organizations has remained outdated and inadequate, with many overlapping and contradictory laws. In addition, it also contains a number of restrictions. Most notably, according to the existing laws, NGOs are formally prohibited from engaging in political activity. While there is a plethora of regulatory agencies in charge of registering and regulating NGOs, the most important of them being the DSS and the NGOAB, their ability to effectively monitor and regulate these non-state social service providers has remained limited, due to a serious lack of administrative capacity (DFID 2005; TIB 2008; WB 2005).

Although they are often neglected by the existing literature, more politically oriented civil society initiatives, such as student organizations or trade unions affiliated with the AL and the BNP as well as leftist peasant groups and rural movements, have often played an important role in delivering basic social services to local constituencies as well.[7] Islamic religious charities also frequently deliver basic welfare services not provided for by the state. At the village level, poor people often rely on "traditional networks of mutual support" based on Islamic principles, such as *zakat* (alms giving), which is mandated by the Quran and obliges the economically prosperous to donate one fifth of their income to the needy. Originally, the practice of *zakat* implied huge transactions of resources to the vulnerable sections of rural society, but in many places its scope has now become limited due to the activities of micro-credit NGOs.[8]

Similarly, *madrassahs* (Islamic schools) have long played an important role in providing poor children without access to the formal schooling system with basic education and literacy skills (Asadullah and Chaudury 2008; Ellis 2007). There are two main types of *madrassahs* in Bangladesh,

Alia and *Qwami*. Although privately run, *Alia madrassahs* are monitored by the state and teach the state's curriculum, along with the *Quran* and the *Hadith*. They also impart basic knowledge on a large variety of secular subjects, including Bengali, English, mathematics and history. Normally, *Alia madrassahs* have five educational levels: elementary (*ibtedai*), secondary (*dakhil*), higher secondary (*alim*), Bachelor's (*fazil*) and Master's (*kamil*) (Ahmad 2004, p. 105; Ellis 2007; Riaz 2007b, p. 37). In contrast, *Qwami madrassahs* operate outside the purview of the state, many of them focusing exclusively on religious education. Several adhere to the orthodox *Deobandi* faith (Ellis 2007; Hossain 2008, p. 8; Lorch 2008, p. 13). Many *Qwami madrassahs* belong to umbrella organizations, all of which have remained outside state control, such as the *Qwami Madrassah Education Board* (Riaz 2007b: 37). Other, less important types of *madrassahs* include the *Furkania/Hafizia madrassahs* and the *Nurani madrassahs/Maktabs*, which are usually run by local imams and operate at the pre-primary level. As such, they usually offer courses for small children outside regular school hours, thereby acting as a "supplement to standard school" (ICG 2006, p. 14; see also Mehdy 2003, pp. 31–42; Riaz 2007b, pp. 36ff).

Foreign funding has contributed to the depoliticization of an important part of Bangladeshi civil society (Rahman 2006; esp. pp. 456–58). Two major trends stand out in this regard: first, the depoliticizing impact of the growth of the foreign-funded NGO sector on the broader national civil society and second, tendencies towards depoliticization within the foreign-funded NGO sector itself. As noted, there is a robust consensus in the literature that, along with the inability of the state to provide sufficient welfare services, the massive availability of donor funding played a key role in enabling the growth of the Bangladeshi NGO sector (e.g. DFID 2005; Khair 2004; Mannan 2005, p. 285; Lewis 2008, p. 132; White 1999, pp. 308ff.; Stiles 2002, pp. 836f.). What is more, since the 1970s, many international donor agencies have channelled their funding through NGOs, while neglecting other local civil society groups. As the foreign-funded NGO sector expanded, the social space available for other civil society actors, such as informal self-help associations, leftist groups and social movements, shrank (e.g. Stiles 2002, p. 840; Mannan 2005). Specifically, there is broad consensus among local academics that, by the late 1980s, the massive growth of service-oriented NGOs in general and the proliferation of micro-credit NGOs in particular had marginalized the leftist peasant and landless movements that struggled for land reform and played a crucial

role in representing the self-defined interests of the peasantry.[9] Moreover, where foreign-funded NGOs worked with the peasant movements themselves, they often contributed to the latter's demobilization. As one local development expert elaborated, attempts by foreign-funded NGOs to create "registered movements" had frequently destroyed the potential of social movements to contribute to far-reaching social change. This tendency, he said, had been promoted by donor preferences to fund officially registered organizations, such as NGOs, rather than social movements or other, more informal civil society groups.[10]

Since the early post-independence period, the foreign-funded NGO sector also absorbed many more radical political activists, such as former freedom fighters, student leaders and local academics, who had participated in the independence struggle. Specifically, the expanding sector of foreign-funded development NGOs accommodated large sections of the country's leftist intellectual elite, who might otherwise have opted for more militant forms of social organizing (Lewis 1997, p. 34; Lewis 2010, pp. 3f.; Stiles 2002, pp. 842f.).

Furthermore, foreign aid contributed to the depoliticization of the local NGO sector itself. Staring in the 1970s, many international donors adopted a neo-liberal development paradigm, which promoted administrative downsizing and the outsourcing of social services to NGOs and the private sector (Feldman 2003, pp. 10ff.; Mannan 2001, pp. 84f.; White 1999, pp. 307ff.). Owing to the frustration of many donors over the corruption and inefficiency of local state agencies, the share of direct contributions to NGOs continued to rise significantly in the 1990s (Stiles 2002, pp. 836f.). By the late 2000s, around 34 per cent of all donor funding went to NGOs (TIB 2008). In other words, several donors refrained from promoting the establishment of complementary welfare systems and provided funding directly to local NGOs, rather than channelling them through the agencies of the state.

Donor support has strengthened the ability of local NGOs to substitute social service provision by the state in areas such as healthcare, education and human development. At the same time, however, it has weakened the latter's ability to conduct political advocacy. Starting in the 1980s, many Bangladeshi NGOs became predominantly service-oriented, focusing their activities almost exclusively on the non-political welfare programmes, which were favoured by foreign donors (e.g. Banks et al. 2015, p. 711; Feldman 1997; Rahman 2006, pp. 457f.; White 1999). As their development projects grew in size and became technically diversified, most NGOs began to

rely on professional staff rather than members or volunteers. In addition, the professionalization and bureaucratization of the local NGO sector was also promoted by donor pressures for standardized reporting and accounting practices (Feldman 2003; Rahman 2006; pp. 456ff.; Stiles 2002, pp. 838f.; White 1999, pp. 322f.). As a result, the internal organizational structures of many local NGOs became highly hierarchical, with central management staff making decisions on most major policy issues and field workers given few opportunities to participate in internal decision-making.

The preference of many foreign donors to fund professionalized NGOs capable of conducting large-scale development projects and delivering social services in a highly standardized manner also led to the emergence of BINGOs, which soon began to dominate the national NGO landscape (DID 2005, p. VI; Lewis 1997, p. 36; Stiles 2002, p. 837). By the mid-1990s, Bangladesh was home to some of the biggest and most well-known NGOs in the world, including BRAC, *Proshika* and the Association for Social Advancement (ASA) and some BINGOs rivalled state agencies in terms of manpower (White 1999, p. 312; see also Haque 2002). As of 2005, the 15 largest Bangladeshi NGOs received around 90 per cent of all donor funding to local NGOs and provided an estimated 85 per cent of all local NGO social services. As the largest local NGO, BRAC received approximately 60 per cent of this funding and accounted for 50 per cent of local NGO service provision (DID 2005, p. VI).

From the early 1970s to the mid-1980s, most Bangladeshi NGOs followed a *Freirean* approach to development, which was aimed at empowering marginalized social groups in order to enable them to challenge the structural conditions of their poverty. Accordingly, many early NGO programmes also focused on social conscientization and social mobilization and encouraged the poor to form pressure groups for the purpose of fighting exploitation. Notably, most BINGOs, including BRAC, *Proshika* and ASA, also came from this Freirean tradition (Lewis 1997, p. 34; Rahman 2006, pp. 454f.; Stiles 2002, pp. 842ff.). Donor pressure for the provision of standardized welfare services and financial sustainability, however, soon led many NGOs to shift to more top-down forms of service delivery and an enhanced focus on micro-credit activities (Haque 2002, p. 428; Feldman 2003, pp. 9ff.; Lewis 2010, p. 5). Their dependency on foreign funding also led many local NGOs to adopt a more technical and apolitical understanding of development, which emphasized the delivery of social services over efforts to challenge the political root causes of poverty (Rahman 2006, p. 457; Feldman 2003).

Most notably, the increasing reliance on the micro-credit approach, which was pioneered by the Bangladeshi Grameen Bank but then promoted further by foreign donors, led many NGOs to prioritize a one-dimensional understanding of poverty, which defined the latter almost exclusively as a lack of access to capital. Correspondingly, NGO micro-credit programmes have depoliticized large sections of the rural poor by deflecting their attention away from the structural root causes of their poverty. Moreover, as NGO micro-finance and skill training activities have usually focused on non-land-based income generation strategies, such as poultry farming and handicrafts, they have often weakened social movements for land reform (e.g. Feldman 1997, 2003; Haque 2002, p. 428; Mannan 2001, pp. 92ff.).

At the same time, the structure of the Bangladeshi NGO sector has also been shaped by the country's low level of economic development. According to the World Bank, as of 2014, Bangladesh had a population of 159.1 million but a GDP of only USD 172.9 billion (WB Bangladesh 2016). More importantly, however, with most corporate businesses being affiliated either with the AL or the BNP (Norad 2011, p. 12), the country has largely lacked an independent capitalist sector. In this context, the massive influx of foreign funding after independence led to the emergence of a local NGO sector that has since displayed strong similarities with the private sector (Feldman 1997, p. 51; Feldman 2003, p.17). More specifically, given the lack of business opportunities, donor-supported NGOs soon became job machines and "vehicles for corporate interest" (Feldman 1997, p. 64) for members of the educated middle class, providing the latter with considerable opportunities for upward social mobility (Feldman 1997, 2003). By the early 1990s, the foreign-funded NGO sector constituted the second largest employment sector after the state, with the two biggest NGOs having more than 15,000 employees each (Offenheiser 1999, p. 12). As NGOs financed by foreign donors have often been able to pay their employees much higher salaries than the civil service (Lewis 2008, p. 132; Offenheiser 1999, p. 12), they have frequently lured educated professionals away from the public sector, leading to a "brain drain" that has weakened the state even further.

Given that international donors have often pressured their partner NGOs to become financially self-reliant, some Bangladeshi NGOs have engaged in major income-generating activities, a tendency that has encouraged the commercialization of the local NGO sector. By the late 1990s, BRAC owned various garment enterprises and the country's largest chain

of retail shops, while *Proshika* and the Grameen Bank ran several shopping complexes, commercial fishery projects and transport services (Haque 2002, p. 421; Stiles 2002, p. 843; White 1999, p. 321). Moreover, the commercialization of local NGOs was also promoted by an extensive expansion of micro-credit programmes operating at high interest rates. As a result of these tendencies, the country's NGO elite has come to constitute its own distinct section of the national elite and can be described as the class of the "development capitalists", as one local expert aptly put it.[11]

3.2 Civil Society in the Context of Power Centre Competition

Civil society groups in Bangladesh usually lack autonomy, being affiliated with different types of power centres, including the country's two main political parties, the AL and the BNP, smaller leftist parties, Islamist groups and even the military (Quadir 2003; Stiles 2002, pp. 839–842). As Stiles (2002, p. 839) has noted, a "key feature of Bangladeshi civil society is its lack of autonomy from political forces". Consequently, civil society is fragmented and mirrors the struggles for social control that exist between the major power players in the weak state. A well-known local academic stated that Bangladesh has highly politicized state institutions and civil society is "fractured on that basis". The country has a deeply divided political society, he said further, forcing civil society actors to "take positions".[12]

3.2.1 The AL's and the BNP's Struggle for Social Control and the Growth and Development of Partisan Civil Society

Following the war of independence, Bangladesh lacked an established bureaucratic and political elite and central state institutions were wholly weak. In order to maintain control over the country and safeguard his political survival, the first post-independence president, Sheikh Mujib, established de facto one-party rule under the AL, starting a vicious cycle of partisan politics and weak institution-building (Codron 2007; ICG 2006, p. 3; Lewis and Hossain 2008, p. 17). As Codron (2007, [24])

> The vacuum felt within the Bangladeshi bureaucracy after Pakistani officials left also facilitated the establishment of the 'AL rule'. There were simply no other legitimate institutions able to head the newly emancipated nation. The decay of the post-war civil administration was indeed very similar to

> that of the military bureaucracy. Consequently, in order to hold together his overpopulated country, wherein authority had already began to dissipate, Mujib had no choice but to build a partisan civilian, as well as military, administration officered by AL leaders whom he tried to control.

To strengthen its social control, the AL set up sectoral organizations, such as youth, peasant and workers' groups, and also enhanced its influence over loyal civil society groups that were already in existence. For instance, the AL's student wing, the CL, had been included in the AL's constitution since 1949, but it remained relatively autonomous with regard to its internal workings throughout the independence struggle. Starting in 1971, however, the AL strengthened its control over its student wing.[13]

In 1977, General Zia assumed power in a military coup. Seeking to legitimize his government, he established the BNP and held presidential elections in 1978. While Zia was himself a freedom fighter, the BNP was not a liberation party like the AL. Rather, it constituted a "loose conglomerate of different interest groups" (Khan et al. 2008, p. 46), including military officers, renegades from the AL and various rightist forces (ibid, pp. 13f., 45ff., 115f.). Nevertheless, in order to enhance its social control and counter the ideological influence of the AL, the BNP established sectoral organizations along the exact same lines as its rival party. Specifically, in order to limit the CL's dominance over national university campuses, Zia founded the *Chattra Dal* (CD) as the BNP's student wing and used state resources to bolster its capacity. The CD's local units quickly grew in size and organizational strength (Alam et al. 2011, p. 6046).[14] Following the example of the AL, the BNP also included its affiliated sectoral groups in its constitution.[15] To this day, both parties have student, youth, women's, peasant, labour and volunteer fronts (e.g. Molla 2004; BNP WS 2016). However, while the AL's and the BNP's struggle for social control promoted the growth of sectoral civil society groups, it also led to severe divisions in civil society.

From 1991 to 2006, the AL and the BNP alternated in holding power, both marginalizing the opposition and politicizing the bureaucracy, the judiciary and the security apparatus whenever they held office (ICG 2006, 2012; Lorch 2014). This led to a well-known local academic describing the Bangladeshi state as an "extension of the political parties".[16] During this period of parliamentary rule, the co-optation of civil society by the political parties increased further (e.g. Rahman 2006), and eventually, most politically

active civil society groups aligned themselves with either the AL or the BNP (e.g. ICG 2006, p. 3; Quadir 2003; pp. 430ff.).

The extent to which partisan sectoral organizations, such as student or worker groups, have been co-opted and controlled by their mother parties is reflected by the terms "front organisations" (e.g. Quadir 2003, p. 432) or "party wings", which have since been widely used to describe these groups. According to Stiles (2002, p. 841), the AL's and the BNP's labour unions, for instance, have been "entangled in promoting the priorities of this or that party by supporting its *hartals* [general strikes; J.L.], attending its rallies and intimidating opposition candidates and voters at election time". Similarly, the CL and the CD have usually supported the election campaigns of their mother parties by distributing leaflets and staging rallies on public university campuses. Given that many of their activists have come from rural areas, the CL and the CD have usually played a particularly important role in spreading the parties' manifestos to the countryside. During election season, both the AL and the BNP have recruited activists from their respective student fronts to return to their own home villages and campaign by, for instance, going house to house and meeting voters directly. University students are often highly respected in their home villages, owing to their rhetorical skills and the fact that they are at times the only literate members of their communities. Similarly, activists in the CL and the CD have also acted as "polling agents" and monitored the counting of the ballot papers on election day. In addition, both the AL and the BNP have also used their student fronts to mobilize participation in public demonstrations and *hartals*. The *Krishok League* and the *Krishok Dal*, the peasant wing of the AL and the BNP, respectively, have also played an important role in mobilizing rural voters during elections (Alam et al. 2011, p. 6053).[17] Since the 1990s, many local development NGOs have also been aligned with either the AL or the BNP (Haque 2002, p. 42;, Quadir 2003, p. 432).

3.2.2 The Growth of the Foreign-Funded NGO Sector and the Decline of Leftist Political Parties and Their Aligned Civil Society Groups

Bangladesh's small, but vocal, leftist parties have also sought to enhance their social control through aligned sectoral groups. However, leftist political parties were weakened after the colonial period (Chowdury 2010), and, consequently, the size and influence of the civil society

groups and social movements aligned to these parties have also remained limited.[18] Following the partition of India, the Eastern Bengali section of the Communist Party of India (CPI) reconstituted itself as the Communist Party of East Pakistan (CPEP). It remained organizationally weak, however, owing to state repression. After the split of the international Communist movement into pro-Moscow and pro-China camps in 1962, the CPEP splintered along the same lines. The Communist left was weakened further by the war of independence, as the CPEP's pro-Moscow faction followed the Soviet Union in supporting the independence of Bangladesh, while the party's pro-Beijing faction followed China in opposing it (Chowdury 2010, esp. pp. 3ff.; Khan et al. 2008, pp. 83ff.).

The Bangladesh Communist Party (BCP), which was formed after independence, has likewise remained divided into pro-Russia and pro-China factions up to the present day. Leftist student organizations, such as the *Chattra Moitree* and the *Chattra Federation*, have usually been affiliated to one of the two factions. Leftist peasant and landless movements, which retained some influence until the late 1980s, have generally been aligned with either the pro-China or the pro-Soviet fraction of the BCP as well.[19] Starting in the early post-independence period, militant leftist parties and peasant movements advocating for land reforms faced massive state repression. Notably, the first AL government and Indian border guard forces conducted joint military operations against rural movements linked to the *Naxalites*, a Maoist movement that first emerged in the village of Naxalbari in the Indian province of West Bengal, in which many people were killed. As a consequence, many leftist party leaders and civil society activists either went underground or allowed themselves to become co-opted by the mainstream political parties.[20] As a well-known leader of an activist NGO stated, "They often had no other choice. [...] For their own survival they had to join the major parties".[21]

Furthermore, successive state leaders supported the growth of the foreign-funded NGO sector in order to marginalize more radical rural movements (Haque 2002, esp. p. 428)[22], and, thereby, enhance the social and territorial control of the state. According to a local academic, all post-independence governments promoted NGOs, because the latter were "reformist" rather than "revolutionary" in character, and, thus, easier to "accommodate".[23] Similarly, Haque (2002, p. 428) has argued that "development NGOs often function as a stopgap measure substituting for a more basic structural change in landownership". This tendency was particularly strong during military rule when foreign-funded NGOs

expanded rapidly both in numbers and size. Both Zia and Ershad encouraged the proliferation of welfare-oriented NGOs in order to please the donor community and because the latter delivered social services not provided for by the state, thus helping to prevent the growth of a genuine political opposition (Haque 2002, pp. 413f.; Offenheiser 1999, p. 12). As Offenheiser (1999, p. 12) has stated, "Military leaders took the view that this service focus [of NGOs; JL] was a useful vehicle for political patronage that would enable them to build popular support for their regime".

Since the 2000s, civil society initiatives aligned with Bangladesh's leftist parties have often focused on issues such as poverty, environmental degradation and the exploitation of natural resources. An example of this is the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports Bangladesh (NCBD), a combination of various leftist groups led by Anu Muhammad, a well-known local scholar and leading member of the BCP's pro-China faction. The NCBD focuses on the preservation of Bangladesh's natural resources for domestic use and will be depicted in more detail in Sub-chap. 3.4.3.

3.2.3 The AL's and the BNP's Struggle for Social Control and the Growth and Development of Islamic and Islamist Civil Society Groups

In order to gain popular legitimacy, both Zia and Ershad strengthened the role of Islam in politics and tolerated the growth of Islamist parties and civil society groups (e.g. Milam 2007, pp. 156f.). In 1977, Zia abolished the ban of religious parties, which was enshrined in the 1972 constitution, leading to the re-establishment of the JI and its student wing, the *Islami Chattra Shibir* (ICS; previously the *Islami Chattra Sangha*). In 1988, Ershad also passed a constitutional amendment that made Islam the state religion. Since the late 1970s, the ICS has been advocating for the Islamization of the education system and the establishment of an Islamic state. By the mid-1980s, it had gained considerable influence over many national campuses and established extended networks within the country's *madrassah* structure, which it has since used strategically to strengthen the support base of the JI (ICG 2006, pp. 15f.; SATP 2016a; Upadhyay 2007).

In order to compensate for the failure of their respective military governments to provide adequate welfare services, both Zia and Ershad also promoted the growth of Islamic welfare associations (Lorch 2008, pp. 8f.). In 1980, Zia introduced state funding for the *Alia madrassahs* and two years

later the government of Ershad declared the latter's secondary (*dakhil*) and higher secondary (*alim*) degrees as equivalent to the corresponding degrees of state-run schools (Mehdy 2003, pp. 27–31; on state funding for the *Alia madrassahs* see also Ahmad 2004, p. 105). Furthermore, both Zia and Ershad tolerated the funding of *madrassahs* and other Islamic welfare organizations from the Gulf (Karim and Fair 2007, pp. 5f.). Among the prime beneficiaries of this policy were the *Qwami madrassahs*, whose financial autonomy from the state has since allowed them to resist political and social pressures for modernization and reform (Mehdy 2003, p. 34)[24].

Similarly, the military regimes of Zia and Ershad also tolerated the growth of the apolitical, yet highly orthodox *Tablighi Jama'at* (TJ), a social movement that has sought to spread the *Deobandi* faith and marginalize traditional, syncretic religious beliefs rooted in Sufi Islam (Sikand 2001). As Sikand has argued, both Zia and Ershad, as well as other representatives of the political elite, acted as patrons to conservatist Islamic organizations, such as the TJ, because they hoped that the latter's "promises of 'Islamic justice'" would pose an "effective counter to radical groups among the dispossessed", and thus, stem the influence of Communism (ibid., pp. 101; see also p. 107).

During the period of parliamentary rule from 1991 to 2006, the conflict between the AL and the BNP allowed Islamist parties, such as the JI and the IOJ, to exercise political influence far beyond their share of the vote. In this period, the percentage of votes for all Islamist parties combined declined from over 14 to around 5 per cent (Riaz 2007a, p. 28). However, given the country's first-past-the-post system and the inability of the AL and the BNP to compromise with each other, Islamist parties were repeatedly able to act as kingmakers (Karim and Fair 2007, p. 1; ICG 2006; Riaz 2007a, p. 28). During the legislative period from 1991 to 1996, the BNP relied on the support of the JI in order to secure a parliamentary majority. In 1996, however, the JI helped the AL to oust the BNP by joining the former's protests for the installation of a Caretaker Government. From 2001 to 2006, the JI and the IOJ formed part of the BNP-led four-party government and cadres of the JI headed the ministries of agriculture, social welfare and industry. Moreover, the JI also used its time in government to staff the administration, the security apparatus and the judiciary with its own loyalists (ICG, p. 15; Lorch 2008, p. 12; Riaz 2007a, p. 27f.; Roy 2008).

Owing to the BNP's dependence on the JI and the IOJ for its parliamentary majority, the number of Islamic and Islamist civil society groups grew tremendously during the four-party government. Specifically, in order to strengthen its popular support, the JI initiated various community-based

development projects, some of which explicitly aimed at countering the influence of secular NGOs. For example, the Islamist party set up Islamic micro-credit programmes that disbursed interest-free loans (ICG 2006, pp. 11f., 19f.). Furthermore, the JI also bolstered the size and organizational strength of its student wing, the ICS, by granting the latter generous material support and by allowing it to receive foreign funding from Pakistan and the Gulf (ICG 2006, p. 16, SATP 2016a; Upadhyay 2007).

State support to *madrassahs* increased considerably during the four-party government. In addition, many *madrassahs* were also permitted to access funding from Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East (ICG 2006, pp. 5, 19ff.; Riaz 2007b, pp. 39ff.). From 2001 to 2006, the number of *madrassahs* grew by 22.22 per cent, while the number of state-run schools increased by only 9.74 per cent. Similarly, the number of *madrassah* teachers rose by 16.52 per cent, compared to a mere 12.27 per cent increase in the number of teachers in public schools. The number of *madrassah* students rose by 10.12 per cent, while enrolment in state-run schools increased by only 8.64 per cent.[25] In 2006, the BNP-led government recognized the *dawra* degree of *Qwami madrassahs* as an equivalent to a Master's degree in Arabic literature or Islamic studies, enabling *Qwami madrassah* students to apply for positions in the civil service. This decision was likely brought about by the influence of the JI and the IOJ within the ruling coalition (Ellis 2007, p. 4; Masud 2006). Throughout the legislative period from 2001 to 2006, the JI worked closely with the *Alia madrassas*, while the IOJ exercised considerable influence over various *Qwami madrassas*, by contributing to the formulation of curricula, for instance. As noted earlier, the ICS has also maintained a strong foothold within the *Alia madrassa* system, allowing it to recruit new followers from these educational institutions (ICG 2006, pp. 14ff.; Masud 2006; SATP 2016a; Upadhyay 2007).

By the same token, the number of Islamic NGOs registered with the NGOAB also increased considerably between 2001 and 2006. Owing to their legalization, many of these civil society groups have since been able to legally access funding from the Gulf through the formal banking system.[26] In addition, various Islamic civil society organizations, such as *madrassahs*, development associations and NGOs, have also been receiving funding from the Middle East through informal channels, such as the *hundi* system (ICG 2006, pp. 5, 19ff.)[27].

3.2.4 The Political Influence of Co-Opted Civil Society Groups

Alliances with alternative power centres have often allowed Bangladeshi civil society groups to exercise significant political influence. Owing to the strong linkages with their mother parties, the AL's and the BNP's front organizations have sometimes played a considerable role in shaping politics in their respective sectoral fields.[28] In many universities, for instance, the CL and the CD have dominated campus politics and exercised significant influence over educational policies, the selection of university personnel, the admission of students and the allocation of dormitory beds, often through illegal practices. In addition, the AL's and the BNP's front organizations have also played a crucial role in the recruitment of political elites. For instance, a CD leader explained that there were three main ways of getting into the BNP, first, through the CD; second, through the *Krishok Dal*; and, third, through the *Jatiya Sramik Dal,* the BNP's peasant and labour fronts, respectively.[29] Specifically, most of Bangladesh's acting, and former, ministers have a background in student politics and are former leaders of either the CL or the CD. Consequently, student activists without family connections to the ruling elite have frequently had a limited, but nevertheless real chance to pursue a political career, based on their charisma, education and leadership skills.[30] Conversely, pursuing a career in one of Bangladesh's main political parties without having been a long-standing member of the CL or the CD has usually been difficult, even with wealth and familial connections. As the son of an influential businessman noted, in order to become a party leader "you have to start at the student level".[31] The ICS has likewise served as an important recruiting ground for its mother party, the JI (ICG 2006, p. 15).

In 1990, the CL and the CD played an instrumental role in toppling the military regime of Ershad (1983–1990) (Bergman 1991, p. 382; Rahman 1984, pp. 240ff.; Rizvi 1991), both because of their strong connections with the AL and the BNP and because of the relative autonomy from their mother parties that they had been able to maintain up to that point. From the early 1980s onwards, the two student organizations staged public demonstrations against Ershad, which often mobilized large numbers of non-political students as well as the broader public (Maniruzzaman 1992, pp. 205f.; Rahman 1984, pp. 240f.). During the period of martial law (1982–1986), party activities were banned, turning student politics into an important alternative channel for political expression (Rahman

1984, pp. 240f.). The CL and the CD therefore became "quite powerful in shaping the policies of their parent political parties" (Khan and Husain 1996, p. 324).

The AL and the BNP remained at loggerheads throughout much of the tenure of Ershad. In 1986, Ershad called elections that were contested by the AL and boycotted by the BNP, which subsequently accused the AL of collaborating with Ershad (Bergman 1991, p. 156). In contrast with this, the CL and the CD enhanced their cooperation and established contacts with various leftist student groups. By the late 1980s, growing unity enabled the student movement to fill the vacuum left by the political parties and take over the leadership of the anti-Ershad struggle (e.g. Khan and Husain 1996; Maniruzzaman 1992, pp. 206ff.).

On 10 October 1990, state security forces shot one student dead and wounded several others during an anti-Ershad demonstration in Dhaka. Outraged student activists formed the All Party Students' Unity (APSU), a federation of 22 student organizations, including both the CL and the CD, which vowed to bring down the Ershad regime (Khan and Husain 1996, pp. 323ff.; Maniruzzaman 1992, pp. 207f.). In October and November 1990, student organizations, labour unions and professional associations staged large-scale protests demanding the ousting of Ershad (e.g. Bergman 1991, p. 383; Khan and Husain 1996, pp. 324f.).

The unity among the students finally "shamed" the AL and the BNP into cooperation.[32] On 19 November 1990, the BNP-led eight-party-alliance, the AL-led seven-party-alliance and the five-party alliance, a grouping of leftist parties, issued the "Joint Declaration of the Three Alliances" as a blueprint for a peaceful transition to democracy (Kabir 1995, p. 568; Khan and Husain 1996, p. 324). On 20 November 1990, the AL, the BNP and other opposition parties called a joint *hartal* to demand the resignation of Ershad. On 4 December 1990, Ershad invited the military to take over power, but the Chief of the Army Staff, Lieutenant-General Nooruddin Khan, refused, pressuring Ershad to cede power to an interim government (Maniruzzaman 1992, p. 207, Rizvi 1991, p. 157). While a faction of "interventionist" senior officers favoured a coup, the group of the "constitutionalists" advocated for professionalism and opposed intervention in politics. Many younger "constitutionalists" also tacitly supported the pro-democracy movement (Kabir 1995, p. 560). On 6 December 1990, Ershad resigned and an interim government headed by Supreme Court Justice Shahbuddin Ahmed came to power and national elections were

held. Given its mostly non-violent character, the civil society movement that ousted Ershad has been described as a manifestation of "peaceful 'people power'" (Lewis 2010, p. 132).

Foreign-funded NGOs have also at times been able to exert significant political influence, owing to their alliances with alternative power centres. In fact, some of these civil society groups have deliberately allowed themselves to become co-opted by the AL, the BNP, or even the military in order to realize their interests. A good example of this is the cooperation that existed between foreign-funded NGOs active in the field of agrarian reform and the military regime of Ershad. Given his lack of an electoral mandate, Ershad sought to legitimate his rule through redistributive land reforms. In 1986, Ershad's Secretary of Land, M. Mokammel Haque, presented the idea of a land reform programme to Saidur Rahman, the then Deputy Country Representative of the international NGO (INGO) Oxfam, which supported many local NGOs. As the two men were well-acquainted, Rahman subsequently encouraged Oxfam's local partner NGOs to consider cooperation with the Ministry of Land (Devine 2002; Rahman et al. 1991).[33] Interviews with NGO leaders who were involved in the process suggest that the NGOs who joined Ershad's "Land Reform Campaign" did so voluntarily for their purpose of realizing their own agendas. One of these NGO leaders pointed out, for instance, that the Ershad government had been a military government and "[s]ince they had no good connection with the people, they tried to establish good connections with the NGOs. And the NGOs also took the chance and tried to influence the military government." Ershad made a serious commitment to pursue land reform, he elaborated, making Ershad's tenure "the best period for NGOs in this country".[34] Another NGO representative confirmed that the NGOs had fully understood the motives of Ershad, who had lacked a popular mandate, and, thus, been obliged to take up some popular issues in order to gain legitimacy. "That was our chance", she said, "[n]ow there were windows for NGOs involvement and activities".[35]

In 1987, a Land Reform Cell, which was jointly staffed by civil servants and NGO workers, was set up inside the Ministry of Land. It participated in the formulation of a new land reform policy and controlled the implementation of the land distribution process that ensued afterwards. To strengthen coordination among the NGOs, the NGO Coordination Council for Land Reform Program (NCCLRP) was established, its secretariat being located in the local Oxfam office in Dhaka (Devine 2002, pp. 405–8; Lewis 2008, p. 133; Rahman et al. 1991, pp. 90–96).[36] The

land reform policy, to whose formulation local NGOs and the country chapter of Oxfam contributed, continues to be considered as one of the most progressive laws in Bangladesh (Devine 2002; Rahman et al. 1991, pp. 17ff., 70f.).[37] Moreover, the amount of land distributed to the poor also increased during the Ershad period (Devine 2002, p. 403). In return, the NGOs involved in Ershad's "Land Reform Campaign" refrained from openly criticizing military rule. Similarly, foreign-funded NGOs played no role in the protests that toppled Ershad in 1990, leading to accusations that they had "betrayed the pro-democracy movement" (Devine 2002, p. 406; see also Lewis 1997, pp. 35f.; White 1999, p. 310).

During the period of parliamentary rule from 1990 to 2006, many foreign-funded NGOs aligned themselves with the AL or the BNP (Haque 2002, p. 420f.; Quadir 2003, p. 432). In order to protest what it viewed as an attempt by the ruling BNP to manipulate the 1996 elections, the AL organized large-scale public demonstrations in 1994 and 1995, in which its front organizations and loyal NGOs played a crucial role. The Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB), the main umbrella organization for development NGOs, facilitated the organization of a rally that called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia from the BNP to step down (Quadir 2003, p. 434). Civil society groups affiliated to the BNP also took to the streets, leading to violent clashes. In early 1996, the crisis was solved through a constitutional amendment that provided for the conduct of national elections by a non-partisan Caretaker Government (Jessen 1997). In the run-up to the 1996 elections, the ADAB and the NGO *Proshika*, whose chairman Quazi Farouque also served as the head of ADAB at that time, campaigned for the election of "secular" candidates, many of whom belonged to the AL (Quadir 2003, p. 435). After the elections, the incoming AL government rewarded the civil society groups that had supported its campaign and reinforced its ties with "selected groups of NGOs and civil society organisations" to "strengthen its political support base" (ibid). During the 2001 electoral campaign, *Proshika* conducted voter education programmes, which many BNP supporters perceived as a pro-AL campaign (Lewis 2010).

The elections of 2001 transferred power back to the BNP, which was also connected to various local NGOs, often through family ties and informal linkages (PROBE 2008)[38]. In 2002, the BNP-led government charged *Proshika* with having diverted foreign funding for partisan political activities and ordered the NGOAB to withhold donor funding to the NGO, a move which not only weakened *Proshika* but eventually also led to

the fragmentation of the ADAB (Lewis 2010). In spite of these examples of NGO politicization, it is noteworthy that many foreign-funded NGOs who aligned themselves with the AL or the BNP during the period of parliamentary rule from 1990 to 2006 did so not so much for ideological reasons but rather for pragmatic ones. A representative of an international donor agency, for instance, compared the foreign-funded NGO community to the business sector, arguing that both used party affiliations pragmatically in order to survive and obtain benefits.[39]

Given that open partisan activity by NGOs is legally banned, many Bangladeshi NGOs have also engaged in what Lewis (2008, pp. 134f.) has called "cross-over by proxy" for the purpose of exerting political influence through and vis-à-vis the state. Most notably, many local NGOs have been run by the wives or sisters of ministers, parliamentary delegates or other influential party politicians,[40] who have at times been able to use these family connections to influential policy makers strategically in order realize certain NGO goals. A prominent example of this is the Bangladesh Women Lawyers' Association (BWLA), which was headed by Sigma Huda, the wife of BNP leader Nazmul Huda, who served as Communication Minister under the four-party government (2001–2006). The BWLA and the BNP-led coalition government cooperated closely on issues of human trafficking. For instance, the government referred victims of trafficking to the BWLA where they received shelter, medical care and counselling. While local media and international donor agencies have judged the BWLA's programmes as effective, under the military-backed CTG, both Sigma and Nazmul Huda were arrested on corruption charges (DS 20.06.2004, DS 17.08.2007).[41] Similarly, the strategy of "cross-over by proxy" has also been "used by [political; J.L.] elite families to build and consolidate a political and economic power base" (Lewis 2008, p. 135). Specifically, well-established political families have sometimes founded NGOs as "vehicles" to gain access to foreign funding, improve their material well-being and enhance their reputation in local areas (Lewis and Hossain 2008, p. 68).

Nevertheless, foreign-funded NGOs active in the welfare sector have often been more independent from the two major political parties than more politically active civil society groups, such as trade unions or student organizations. This is primarily because international donor support has provided many local NGOs with an independent financial resource base, thereby enabling them to maintain a certain degree of autonomy from the AL and the BNP (e.g. Haque 2002; Stiles 2001, 2002). Moreover, during

the time when Bangladesh was still highly aid-dependent, international donors also intervened on various occasions in order to protect their local partner NGOs from party interference and/or state regulation. In 1992, for instance, the NGOAB cancelled the licence of the ADAB citing corruption charges, a move that was widely seen as an attempt of the ruling BNP government (1991–1996) to limit the activities of critical NGOs. Consequently, several international aid organizations and foreign embassies intervened with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, leading the NGOAB to reverse its decision (Hashemi 1996: 128ff.).[42] However, this enhanced autonomy from the government and other domestic power players has usually come at the cost of massive dependence on foreign donors, leading a representative of a big European aid agency to conclude that "[t]he biggest political party NGOs are vetted to are the donors."[43]

From the early 2000s on, the foreign-funded NGO sector has not only been characterized by contestations between NGOs loyal to the AL or the BNP but also by serious conflicts between more independent and more partisan NGOs. This is exemplified by the statement made by a non-partisan civil society activist in 2008 who lamented that "civil society is becoming a disappearing breed, if civil society is defined as non-partisan people who speak out their mind and promote the people's interest". Successive party governments had, he said, "only colonized their own breed of civil society" and, consequently, civil society had become split along party lines, with most activists voicing the positions of the AL or the BNP, rather than their own opinions.[44] Conflicts between partisan and non-partisan civil society groups also surfaced with the break-up of the ADAB during the four-party government (2001–2006). In 2002, this BNP-led government stopped donor funding to the ADAB, *Proshika* and three other NGOs considered to be close to the AL, arguing that they engaged in corruption and diverted foreign funds for partisan activities. Shortly after, the ADAB became fragmented and the Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) was established as a new, and explicitly apolitical NGO umbrella organization under the leadership of BRAC, with Muhammad Ibrahim, the brother of Muhammad Yunus, acting as its chairman (Lewis 2010, pp. 8f.; Rahman 2006, pp. 464ff.).

From 2007 to 2008, various non-partisan civil society activists and leaders of foreign-funded NGOs aligned themselves with the military once again. Starting in 2006, the conflict between the AL and the BNP escalated. Fearing that the outgoing BNP government would manipulate the vote, the AL announced to boycott the national elections scheduled for

early 2007. A combination of 14 opposition parties led by the AL staged massive protests and violent clashes between AL and BNP supporters left dozens of people dead. On 11 January 2007, the military forced President Iajuddin Ahmed to declare a state of emergency and a new, "military-backed" CTG that was formally led by a civilian Council of Advisers, but controlled by the military from behind the scenes, was established (Bakht 2008; HRW 2008; ICG 2008; pp. 240ff.).

Frustrated by the inability of the political parties to forge a compromise and restore stability and good governance, many prominent civil society representatives supported the CTG (e.g. Bakht 2008; Mustafa 2007; HRW 2008, pp. 240ff.; ICG 2008).[45] As the International Crisis Group (ICG) (2008, p. 8) stated, for instance, "large sections of civil society and the media embraced the coup". Civil society actors who cooperated with the military-backed CTG exercised considerable political influence during its tenure. Notably, Fakhruddin Ahmed, the director of the *Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation* (PKSF), the main national apex body for the regulation of micro-credit institutions, acted as the CTG's Chief Adviser (DS 12.01.07). The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), a civil society-based think tank, provided expertise to Ahmed on a regular basis (ICG 2008, p. 8).[46] Starting in January 2008, Rasheda K. Chowdhury, the leader of the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and the former president of the ADAB, served as the head of both the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, while Hossain Zillur Rahman, the chairman of the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), headed the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Commerce (DS 10.01.08; FE 11.01.08).

Moreover, several civil society organizations, including the CPD, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), and the advocacy group *Sujan*, contributed to the formulation of the CTG's anti-corruption and electoral reform agenda.[47] Shortly after the CTG came to power, TIB was able to successfully lobby for the ratification of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). A leading TIB official stated that the CTG had passed many reform ordinances that civil society groups had long advocated for, adding that the military-backed government had been more responsive to civil society demands than any previous government.[48] When the CTG's election commission amended the Representation of People's Order (RPO), the centrepiece of Bangladesh's electoral law, TIB, *Sujan*, and the Election Working Group (EWG), an umbrella organization of national election watchdogs, were allowed to provide input on the draft

law.[49] What is more, the civil society groups were allowed to comment on the RPO draft even before the AL and the BNP were permitted to do so. As the above-cited TIB official stated, "The parties said that it […] was unconstitutional and yes, it was. But it was necessary."[50] In the run-up to the 2008 elections organized by the CTG, several civil society groups also conducted voter education programmes and assisted the Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC) in its efforts to draw up a new voters list. In an editorial published in the *Daily Star* in March 2014, A.T.M. Shamsul Huda, who had acted as the CTG's Chief Election Commissioner, sill praised these contributions, noting:

> The civil society also played a significant role in voter education […]. In the new method of voter registration [introduced by the CTG's BEC; J.L.], prospective voters are required to visit the registration centers to give their fingerprints and photos for data entry. […] The BEC planned a countrywide voter awareness campaign but it did not have the needed manpower nor the resources to do this single-handedly. The civil society came forward to assist the Commission in this task (Huda 2014).

The 2008 elections were won by the AL in a landslide. Soon after taking office in early 2009, the AL government started to monopolize political power and marginalize the opposition. In June 2011, the AL used its majority in parliament in order to abolish the Caretaker System, which had provided for the holding of elections by a non-party, interim government since 1996. Since then, the BNP, the JI and other, smaller opposition parties have repeatedly launched large-scale, and often violent, public demonstrations in order to achieve a restoration of the system (Lorch 2014). In 2013, the High Court revoked the JI's registration as a political party, thereby excluding it from the electoral process (BDnews24 01.08.2013). The 2014 elections were boycotted by the BNP and most other opposition parties, leading to the consolidation of AL rule (e.g. Ahmad 2014; Feldman 2015).

Since its coming to power, the AL has also gone after its critics in civil society. For instance, the micro-credit pioneer and Nobel Peace Laureate Muhammad Yunus, who had launched a political party during the tenure of the military-backed CTG, was charged with corruption and forced to resign as the head of the Grameen Bank. Similarly, the government accused Matiur Rahman, the editor of the country's widest circulating newspaper *Prothom Alo* and a supporter of the CTG, of being involved in

a conspiracy to assassinate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (ICG 2012, p. 5; see also Banks et al. 2015, p. 712).

In 2010, the AL government established the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) in order to try the suspected Islamist war criminals who committed massacres during the war of independence. While the move was initially highly praised both by AL supporters and the broader population, there are clear signs that the AL government is increasingly using the tribunal in order to silence its critics. In late 2014, the tribunal found the British journalist David Bergman, who had criticized the tribunal's proceedings, guilty of contempt of court. Fifty-one civil society activists, academics, writers and artists, residing both inside Bangladesh and abroad, criticized the decision in a joint statement. Twenty-six of them later apologized to the court, allegedly owing to harassment or pressure, while 23 were likewise charged with contempt of court (e.g. Chopra 2015; PEN 2015). The incident has reinforced divisions between civil society actors close to the AL on the one hand and both more independent civil society groups and civil society representatives close to the BNP on the other. Most notably, several secularly oriented civil society actors have refrained from defending the 51 signatories of the civil society statement, arguing that supporting the AL government's current initiative to try the war criminals was of utmost importance, given that any future BNP government would most likely stop the trials in order to please its political ally, the JI.[51]

3.2.5 The Internal Organizational Structures of Co-Opted Civil Society Groups

As noted earlier, in order to enhance their social control, both the AL and the BNP have established or co-opted loyal *sectoral groups*, organized on the basis of socio-economic or occupational status, gender or age. More specifically, both of the parties currently have youth, student, women's, peasant, labour and volunteer fronts. In the case of the AL, the strategy of mobilizing social support through such sectoral groups clearly reflects the party's historical legacy as a liberation movement. However, the BNP also established exactly the same types of sectoral organizations after its formation,[52] suggesting that the party *copied* this system of organizing from the AL in order to enhance its own potential for social control and curtail the social and political power of its rival. In order to use these groups for the purpose of social control, both the AL and the BNP have sought to tightly control their sectoral front organizations, particularly since the early 1990s.

Testifying to this lack of autonomy, the AL's and the BNP's sectoral organizations have normally replicated their parties' internal organizational structures.[53] Both the AL and the BNP are structured along regional lines which parallel the administration of the state, with party committees located at the national, the *District*, the *Upazila* (sub-district), the municipal, the *Union Parishad* and the ward (village) levels (Khan et al. 2008, pp. 73f., 120f.; Molla 2004, pp. 232ff.). The parties' front organizations usually follow the same regional structure. Minor exceptions are the CL and the CD, who, in addition to their regional committees, also have dormitory, department, faculty and central committees on almost all public university and college campuses. As in the case of the AL and the BNP, these various committees are the main executive organs of the front organizations and are normally composed of a President/Chairman, several Vice Presidents/Vice Chairmen,[54] a General Secretary, several Joint General Secretaries, one Organizing Secretary and one Assistant Organizing Secretary as well as several Departmental and Assistant Departmental Secretaries, who are in charge of specific thematic areas, such as education or religious affairs.[55]

The example of the parties' student fronts shows how the control of the AL and the BNP over their affiliated sectoral organizations has increased steadily over time. Until the late 1980s, leadership positions within the CL's and the CD's committees were usually filled through relatively free and fair elections by member councils. As the co-optation of the student organizations by the AL and the BNP increased in the 1990s, however, party leaders began to directly interfere in the leadership selection processes of these organizations. Specifically, since the 1990s, the leadership of the CL's and the CD's central committee has usually been determined by Sheikh Hasina, the President of the AL, and Khaleda Zia, the Chairwoman of the BNP, respectively.[56] As a former leftist student leader stated with regard to the CL, "if Sheikh Hasina says, you are gone, then you are gone."[57] Furthermore, leadership positions within the CL and the CD have often been occupied by influential party leaders, including national parliamentarians (e.g. Alam et al. 2011, p. 6050).

The AL, the BNP and the front organizations affiliated with them have frequently applied organizational principles similar to those of democratic centralism, although the term is not widely used in Bangladesh. In theory, the leaders of the AL's and the BNP's regional committees at different administrative levels are to be selected by member councils consisting of party activists from the lower tiers of the party hierarchy. In practice, however, the candidates for such leadership positions are usually

predetermined by local party leaders with links to the parties' national leadership, a pre-selection process that often involves the creation of temporary panels or ad-hoc committees[58]. Very similar practices have prevailed within the AL's and the BNP's front organizations as well. As one former leader of the CL explained,

> Sometimes, elections were held […] but the secret is that […] the party high command always tried to pick a leader […] who will always follow their direction. […] And when election was […] held, a mood was created, a panel was formed with a panel president, a panel general secretary and so on. So there would be a feeling [among the members of the CL; J.L.] that this panel should be elected, because the national [party; J.L.] leaders […] opted for this panel. And all the members [of the CL; J.L.] knew that and they voted for this panel.[59]

Similarly, the CL's and the CD's own central committees have frequently interfered with the formation of hall/dormitory and other campus subcommittees. Most notably, the candidates for leadership positions within the CL's and the CD's dormitory committees have usually been preselected by central committee members, with the dormitory councils, which are formally in charge of electing these committees, playing hardly any role. One campus correspondent from Dhaka University (DU) said that the dormitory councils were only there to "applaud",[60] while another described the elections of the dormitory committees as "eye washing".[61] Similarly, elections to leadership positions within the *Krishok Dal* have been described as "nominal" votes or "support votes" and as being based on "consensus".[62]

3.2.6 The Limited Ability of Co-Opted Civil Society Groups to Perform Democratic Functions

Since the mid-1990s, the AL's and the BNP's front organizations have increasingly acted as transmission belts for their mother parties' political ideologies, limiting their ability to act as watchdogs and represent the sectoral interests of their constituencies (e.g. Quadir 2003, pp. 431ff.; Stiles 2002, p. 841). More precisely, Quadir (2003, p. 433) has noted that the AL's and the BNP's affiliated sectoral groups "often raise issues of particular importance to their groups and […] even sometimes fight for the rights to improve the status of women, peasants, workers, and ethnic or

religious minorities". Ultimately, however, the interests of the front organizations' social constituencies are "subsumed" under the AL's and the BNP's aims to establish "ideological hegemony" (ibid.) and social control more generally.

The limited ability of the AL's and the BNP' front organizations to represent the genuine interests of their members can also be traced to the lack of internal democratic structures, which has characterized these groups since the 1990s. According to Stiles (2002, p. 841), the AL's and the BNP's labour fronts, for instance, have usually been "neither democratic nor accountable" and general members have been "excluded from all key decisions, including when to strike". Similarly, starting from the 1990s, the CL and the CD have become so tightly co-opted by their mother parties that they have frequently been unable to develop their own policy agenda.[63] Notably, in some cases, the AL and the BNP have instructed their student wings to perform specific political activities, while in others, the CL and the CD have had to secure the permission of their mother parties in order to be able to pursue certain political programmes on their own initiative. A leftist student activist stated that, since the late 1990s, the CL and the CD have come to act as "the representatives of the parties on the campus".[64] In 2009, the CD's acting Secretary General called it a "helping organisation" of the BNP,[65] while the acting Organizing Secretary of the CL referred to the AL as "the mother and the main organisation" of his group.[66]

Other civil society groups, such as human rights NGOs, have also often been affiliated with either the AL or the BNP, limiting their ability to perform watchdog functions vis-à-vis both the state and the political elite. As the representative of a local think tank explained, in principle, civil society should monitor the state and constantly remind the government not to deprive its citizens of their basic human rights. This has not been the case in Bangladesh, however, where civil society has been divided along party lines and civil society groups have never criticized the government when their own party was in power. Such partisan civil society groups do not serve the cause of the people, he said, "They side with a party".[67] Similarly, Quadir (2003, p. 432) has noted that the affiliations that many Bangladeshi civil society groups maintain with either the AL or the BNP "create a barrier to their standing behind the principles of democracy and human rights".

The limited ability of such co-opted civil society groups to perform watchdog functions is also exemplified by the country's election monitoring groups. In order to enhance the credibility of the electoral process,

international donors have provided considerable amounts of funding and training to local NGOs active in election monitoring. Oftentimes, however, such domestic election watchdogs have lacked public credibility themselves, owing to allegations that most of them have been affiliated with either the AL or the BNP (ICG 2006, p. 7; PROBE 2008).[68] A leading member of TIB lamented, for instance, that "[m]ost NGOs here are party partisan and instead of observing the election process, they can create problems".[69] Similarly, an election commissioner of the CTG stated that many election watchdogs were causing problems through "omission and commission", that is, both by failing to report election offences committed by the parties they were loyal to and by actively helping these parties to break the electoral rules. Some election monitoring NGOs, for instance, were campaigning in the polling centres, helping their favoured parties to circumvent a legal ban that prohibited campaigning on election day.[70]

A prominent example of an NGO that has faced such accusations of partisanship is Democracy Watch (DW), one of the country's largest NGOs active in election monitoring, which is headed by Taleya Rehman, a former media correspondent and the wife of Shafiq Rehman, who was an influential adviser for the BNP (PROBE 2008)[71]. In the run-up to the 2008 elections, Taleya Rehman came under sharp public criticism when she and her husband welcomed the BNP's Chairwoman and former Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia, with a bouquet of flowers at their family residence. The reception took place shortly after Khaleda Zia had been released from jail, where she had served a one-year sentence, due to corruption charges levelled against her by the CTG (PROBE 2008).

Similarly, the *Khan* Foundation (KF), another big NGO involved in election monitoring, has long been headed by Rokhsana Khondker, a well-known lawyer and human rights advocate and the wife of Abdul Moyeen Khan, who was a long-time parliamentary delegate of the BNP and acted as the Minister for Science and Information & Communication Technology during the BNP-led four-party government (2001–2006). As of 2012, Moyeen Khan sat on the KF's International Advisory Council. Originally, the KF was founded in commemoration of Abdul Momen Khan, who served as a Cabinet Secretary and as the Minister for Food during the tenure of Khaleda Zia's husband, General Zia (KF WS 2012; PROBE 2008).[72] Rokhsana Khondker also accompanied her husband, Abdul Moyeen Khan, during his 2008 electoral campaign.[73]

In 2006, international donors founded the EWG, an umbrella organization of over 30 local election monitoring NGOs (ICG 2006, p. 7). While the EWG was primarily intended to serve as a mechanism for the

coordination of donor funding, some international aid agencies also hoped that it would contribute to mitigating the party affiliations of its members. As the representative of a US-based donor agency opined, for instance, one major advantage of the EWG was that within this coalition the individual member NGOs' partisan biases would "balance each other out".[74] In the run-up to the 2008 elections, both DW and the KF formed part of the EWG's executive committee (PROBE 2008)[75].

In addition, the division of the national civil society into organizations aligned with the AL and the BNP, and, to a lesser extent, with leftist or Islamist parties also severely limits the ability of civil society to generate bridging social capital. More specifically, while such partisan civil society groups display high levels of ideological coherence and thus generate large amounts of *bonding social capital*, they often exclude people from different political affiliations, thereby failing to promote political tolerance. Obviously, these tendencies are strongest in the sectoral front organizations of the AL and the BNP as these, by definition, comprise of people belonging to specific professional, gender or age groups.

3.3 Civil Society in the Context of Patronage and Corruption

Patronage and corruption are endemic in Bangladesh, where numerous state bureaucrats, party politicians and local businesses are involved in informal clientelist practices, monetary corruption or both (Hossain 2004; Khan et al. 2008; Norad 2011). Moreover, it has been acknowledged that clientelist and corrupt practices often characterize civil society as well (e.g. Alam et al. 2011, pp. 6054f.; Norad 2011, pp. 14, 121; Haque 2002, pp. 426f.; TIB 2008). In rural areas, civil society groups often form part of the traditional patron-client ties that exist between established landed elites and local village communities. Lewis and Hossain (2008, p. 68) find, for instance, that the formation of NGOs by rural elite families constitutes an "extension of more traditional patron-client relationship building in rural Bangladesh".

3.3.1 The Use of Patronage and Corruption by the AL and the BNP and Their Affiliated Civil Society Groups

In the absence of strong and independent bureaucratic institutions, state leaders and bureaucratic elites have often used patronage and corruption as deliberate strategies to maintain political and administrative control (e.g.

Codron 2007). Similarly, patronage and corruption have also characterized the party system (Khan et al. 2008; Norad 2011, e.g. 15f.) and both major political parties have employed patronage strategically in order to enhance their social control. For instance, given the lack of a functioning state welfare system, scarce social services have often been channelled through the clientelist networks of the AL or the BNP (Lorch 2014).

The front organizations of the AL and the BNP have often played an important role in the clientelist strategies employed by their mother parties. Most notably, whenever they have been in power, both the AL and the BNP have allowed their student fronts to establish physical control over the dormitories of national university campuses, often by means of force. This control over the dormitories has, in turn, enabled the CL and the CD to distribute selective benefits to loyal followers and, thus, to strengthen their control over rank-and-file activists as well as to recruit new members. For instance, new students have usually been approached by activists of the student wing of the respective ruling party, who have offered them a dormitory bed on the condition that they become members of the organization, or, at least, join its activities on a regular basis (Alam et al. 2011; esp. pp. 6050f.).[76] As a rule, first-year students provided with a dormitory bed have normally been obliged to join one rally every ten days and keep regular contact with their "seniors" from the CL or the CD, respectively.[77]

The ability of the AL's and the BNP's student wings to control their members and recruit new ones has, thus, been closely related to the inability, or unwillingness, of the public administration to provide students from rural areas with sufficient numbers of dormitory beds. A CD activist stated that the leaders of the CL and the CD who controlled access to campus dormitories usually found it easy to recruit new members, because dormitory beds were so scarce.[78] Moreover, such student leaders have also frequently been able to extract personal loyalty from their followers. As a former campus correspondent stressed,

> When [as a student leader; JL] you are offering a seat in the dorm they [i.e. the students; JL] will follow you in every crucial moment and there is also emotional attachment beyond the political affiliation. When any senior takes care of a junior there is a friendship and people […] value such emotional attachment. […] There is also this kind of practice in Chattra League and Chattra Dal. So it is not only for the political interest.[79]

Obviously, this practice has also strengthened the control that the AL and the BNP have been able to exert over their affiliated student wings

and public university campuses alike. Moreover, both the CL and the CD have usually combined the distribution of this and other forms of patronage with programmatic appeals. As an Organizing Secretary of the CL explained, whenever he and his fellow student leaders tried to recruit new members from among the first-year students—a practice that typically involves promising students a dormitory bed—they always pointed out to them that free education and other forms of support formed part of the AL's manifesto.[80]

In addition, the AL and the BNP have also sought to control their affiliated student wings by allowing individual student leaders to engage in extortion and other forms of criminal corruption. Specifically, whenever their mother party has been in office and has protected them from legal persecution, student leaders from both the CL and the CD have manipulated public tenders for construction works on public university campuses in exchange for bribes provided by bidding companies (Alam et al. 2011, pp. 6054ff.).[81] Depending on the degree of influence they have exerted over the respective administrative areas, the CL and the CD have also sometimes manipulated tenders for water, railway or drainage systems, particularly at the *City Corporation* and the *Upazila* levels (Jahan 2003, pp. 226f.).[82] During the BNP-led four-party government (2001 to 2006), several garment and leather factories threatened closure after being forced to pay huge amounts of protection money to Nasiruddin Pintu, a powerful leader of the CD and a national parliamentarian for the BNP (Alam et al. 2011, p. 6054).

Quarrels over the spoils of clientelistic exchanges have repeatedly led to violent conflicts within the parties' front organizations. For instance, after the 2008 elections, which were won by the AL, both the CL and the AL's youth wing, the *Jubo League,* experienced brutal internal fights over the control of campus dormitories and the sharing of bribes paid by construction companies. Competing factions of the CL clashed violently on various national campuses, leaving dozens of students severely injured (BDnews2407.07.2009; DS 26.08.2009).[83]

3.3.2 The Use of Patronage and Corruption by Foreign-Funded NGOs

Both patronage and corruption in the foreign-funded NGO sector have also been frequently related to the clientelistic and corrupt practices employed by the two major political parties. Most notably, since the 1990s, some

welfare-oriented NGOs with access to donor funding have been accused of supporting the electoral campaigns of either the AL or the BNP and have reportedly also asked their beneficiaries to vote for a specific party at times (Haque 2002; pp. 420f.; Lewis 2010; Quadir 2003, p. 435).

Furthermore, well-resourced, foreign-funded NGOs have also resorted to the payment of bribes in order to influence administrative decision-making by regulatory state agencies, such as the DSS and the NGOAB. State authorities in charge of NGO regulation are usually understaffed and overloaded with work and their officials tend to be notoriously underpaid. Consequently, the monitoring capacity of these agencies is weak and corruption is rampant. Specifically, NGO registration is often granted in exchange for a bribe of between 5000 and 10,000 *taka* (approximately USD 62 to 125)[84] rather than after proper scrutiny of an NGO's programme and organizational set-up (TIB 2008, p. 3).[85] Five steps of corruption normally characterize the interactions between the NGOAB and the foreign-funded NGOs operating under its auspices.[86]

> Step 1: In order to be permitted to obtain foreign funding for their projects, NGOs need to get clearance from the NGOAB. However, as there are very few assignment officers in the NGOAB for the examination of NGO project proposals, the scrutinizing process is usually delayed, a situation that is highly problematic for NGOs facing pressure from foreign donors to quickly get their projects off the ground. With both NGOAB officials and the NGO being under time pressure, the two sides often agree on the payment of "speed money" in exchange for project approval.[87]
>
> Step 2: While the NGOAB is legally required to monitor the implementation of the projects it approves, it lacks the financial means and the logistical support necessary to enable its officials to travel to the remote rural areas in which most NGOs work. As a consequence, NGOAB officials seeking to visit NGO projects in rural areas normally rely on the NGOs whom they are supposed to monitor to provide them with transport and accommodation. Where NGOs have access to large amounts of donor funding, monitoring officers from the NGOAB are frequently driven around in modern, air-conditioned cars and provided with comfortable accommodation. Moreover, they are also sometimes invited to lunch, dinner or entertainment functions. As one local NGO expert aptly stated: "It is impossible after taking all these benefits from the NGOs to monitor properly".[88]

Step 3: If the NGOAB officials identify any wrongdoing during the monitoring process, they usually refrain from reporting the concerned NGOs to the police or the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). Instead, they often demand the NGOs to pay a certain "fine" in the form of a bribe and then write embellished evaluation reports about the projects in question.[89]

Step 4: While all foreign-funded NGOs are legally obliged to submit annual reports to the NGOAB, these reports often have "loopholes", especially when it comes to the documentation of the use of funds. When the NGOAB's evaluation officers notice such loopholes, another round of "negotiation" between these officials and the concerned NGOs usually takes place. "Negotiation", the above-cited expert on NGO governance explained, "means there is money involved: certainly bribery".[90]

Step 5: After approving a foreign-funded NGO project, the NGOAB normally does not release the entire sum of donor funding. Instead, NGOs are normally asked to pay additional bribes whenever they apply for the release of the next tranche.[91]

Several foreign-funded NGOs also employ patronage as a strategy for channelling welfare services to their constituencies, to promote the interests of their beneficiaries and for exerting political influence. Some local NGO leaders, for instance, deliberately focus their organizations' activities on their own home districts, where they can draw on their family connections and existing patron-client ties to secure social and political support for their projects.[92] One example of this is *Uttaran*, a local NGO active in the field of agrarian reform. The showcase project of *Uttaran* is the *Tala model*, a land distribution mechanism named after the *Upazila* of Tala, in which it was first implemented (Uttaran 2011). This *Upazila* is located in the district of Shatkira, the home district of *Uttaran*'s founder and chairman Shahidul Islam.[93] From 2005 to 2009, *Uttaran* managed to extend the *Tala model* to various other *Upazilas* as well, an expansion that coincided with the infusion of massive amounts of donor funding. The *Tala mechanism* parallels the structure of the local government system and is officially meant to enhance transparency in the distribution of *khas* land, that is, land owned by the Bangladeshi state, which, according to the existing laws, has to be distributed to the poor. In each *Upazila* where the *Tala model* is implemented, *Uttaran* establishes *Union Bumi Committees*, which are located at the *Union Parishad* level, the lowest tier of the local government system, and *Ward Bumi Committees*, which are

located at the village level. The official function of these committees is to monitor the distribution of agricultural *khas* land by local government agencies and, thereby, reduce corruption in the land distribution process. Moreover, the *Bumi Committees* are also meant to assist poor and illiterate people in applying for *khas* land through the agrarian reform programme of the state. In theory, the *Union Bumi Committees* and the *Ward Bumi Committees* are supposed to consist of local civil society leaders and act as pressure groups (Uttaran 2011).[94]

Field research in the districts of Shatkhira and Gopalganj suggests, however, that the *Bumi Committees* are often composed of well-established local elites, including former freedom fighters, traditional landed elites, local party leaders and members of the local government. Many of these rural elites appear to be deeply involved in the patron-client relations that exist in their respective project areas. Moreover, they sometimes seem to hold rather patronizing attitudes towards the poor. For example, some *Bumi Committee* representatives interviewed stated that they had to deal with the local state authorities "on behalf" of the poor, as the latter were not educated and articulate enough to engage with these authorities on their own.[95] At the time this field research was conducted, *Uttaran's* relations with the local elites that formed part of its *Bumi Committees* were being managed by a former local government official who had a strong network of personal connections in Satkhira and had left his job in the civil service to work for the NGO, because it offered him a larger salary and more attractive working conditions.[96]

Uttaran has also sought to improve land distribution by providing local state agencies with technical support, for example, in the form of computers.[97] In terms of project output, the NGO's strategies appear to have been highly successful, as *Uttaran* reportedly managed to distribute an estimated 8,147.26 acres of agricultural land to 11,589 poor families by May 2010 (Uttaran 2010). However, the NGO has faced criticism on grounds that its interventions have strengthened, rather than weakened, existing patron-client relations and power asymmetries in its project areas. Specifically, the involvement in the *Bumi Committees* set up by *Uttaran* appears to have allowed established local elites to strengthen their control over their dependent constituencies.[98] Local residents also complained that only the beneficiaries of *Uttaran* and poor people affiliated with the local elites involved in its *Bumi Committees* could access land under the *Tala model*, while poor people who had no such affiliations were usually left empty-handed.[99] Similarly, a local government official from Gopalganj lamented that *Uttaran's Bumi Committees* constituted a

"duplicate system", whose representatives acted as "middlemen", preventing him from engaging directly with the landless.[100]

Generally speaking, foreign funding has played an important role in shaping the use of patronage and corruption by Bangladeshi NGOs. As noted earlier, since the 1970s, major international aid agencies have promoted the outsourcing of social services to local NGOs and provided the latter with massive amounts of funding. This financial resource base has contributed to enabling foreign-funded NGOs to provide clientelistic benefits to state officials. Moreover, in the absence of a wage ceiling for NGO workers, local NGO chief executives have often received salaries much higher than those of most leading state bureaucrats. This has enabled foreign-funded NGOs to hire retired or acting state officials with extensive networks inside the bureaucracy, who have then acted as brokers between their respective NGOs and the regulatory agencies of the state (Lewis 2008: 132ff.).[101] Furthermore, by the mid-2000s, the corrupt use of donor money by local NGOs had also emerged as a veritable problem (Iftekharuzzaman 2003; TIB 2008).[102] A prominent example of this is *Samata*, an NGO working in the field of land rights. *Samata's* founder and chairman, Abdul Kader, was accused of misappropriating donor funds for private benefits. In 2007, DFID, formerly *Samata's* main donor, launched a complaint against the NGO with the NGOAB (Ahmed 2013; Iftekharuzzaman 2003).[103]

Starting in the 2000s, clientelist practices and corruption began to create frictions within the foreign-funded NGO sector itself. In May 2003, for instance, the Director of TIB, Iftekharuzzaman, publicly criticized corruption in the foreign-funded NGO sector and stated that the government should look into the issues and problems relating to NGO corruption (Iftekharuzzaman 2003). Around the same time, TIB launched a broad-based research project on NGO corruption. Its results were published during the tenure of the military-backed CTG, whose rigorous anti-corruption drive received widespread support from various elite civil society groups (DS 06.10.07; Iftekharuzzaman 2003; TIB 2008).[104]

3.3.3 Patronage and Corruption, the Internal Organizational Structures of Civil Society Groups and the Role of Foreign Funding

The use of patronage and corruption has often reinforced the organizational hierarchies within Bangladeshi civil society groups. For instance, as explained above, both the AL and the BNP have controlled their affiliated sectoral groups by granting the loyal leaders of these organizations access

to state resources and other forms of patronage. In turn, the ability to distribute selective benefits has strengthened the control that co-opted front organization leaders have been able to exert over their rank-and-file activists: a pattern that is aptly exemplified by the selective allocation of dormitory beds by leaders of the CL and the CD.

Foreign-funded NGOs have often been dominated by powerful "founder-leaders" who have installed relatives and friends in key executive positions and dominated policy decision-making within their organizations (Siddiqi 2001, e.g. p. 3; see also Haque 2002, p. 426). The emergence of such 'founder-leaders' has been promoted both by the involvement of foreign-funded NGOs in clientelist practices and by the way in which international donors have engaged with their local partner NGOs. Specifically, many foreign donors have dealt exclusively with NGO heads in Dhaka, giving them almost unlimited control over their organizations' budgets and policies. As a local academic noted, most Bangladeshi NGOs were "pretty hierarchical", because their funding mostly came from the outside. As a result, those NGO leaders who were able to raise money from the donors could decide on their organizations' policies almost entirely on their own.[105] Similarly, a local NGO expert opined that the chief executives of foreign-funded NGOs often had "the sole authority in respect of financial issues, donor dealing, decision-making [and; J.L.] human resource management", leading to a lack of accountability, which, in turn, increased the NGOs' vulnerability to patronage and corruption.[106]

Foreign funding and donor pressures for standardized service delivery also promoted the growth and professionalization of many local NGOs. As a consequence, many NGO founder-leaders came to preside over both "centralised structure[s] of management" (Haque 2002, p. 426) and large numbers of paid, technical staff, obliged to follow the management's directions (Haque 2002, p. 426; Feldman 2003, pp. 16ff.; Stiles 2002, p. 843). Similarly, as NGOs began to focus on large-scale service delivery, their interactions with their local constituencies became increasingly hierarchical and were characterized by clientelism (Feldman 2003; White 1999), a tendency that is reflected in the common NGO-rhetoric that NGOs "work on behalf of the poor"[107] or that local beneficiaries need to be "enlightened" (White 1999; p. 322) or made "aware".[108] As a consequence, the claim of Bangladeshi NGOs to represent the interests of the poor has become highly questionable (e.g. White 1999). This development has also been aided by the fact that many Bangladeshi NGOs have made significant efforts to be (financially) accountable to their donors, while neglecting the need for more downward accountability towards their beneficiaries (see also ibid, pp. 321ff.).

On the micro-level, several of these tendencies are exemplified by *Uttaran*, whose "founder-director", Shahidul Islam, began his social activism by setting up a private school in Tala *Upazila*. In 1985, he established *Uttaran*, following the establishment of contacts with the Caritas in Dhaka and the Lions Club in Japan.[109] Starting in the early 2000s, financial support from Oxfam, the European Commission (EC) and DFID allowed the NGO to grow into a large and professionalized organization, a restructuring in which it also took advice from a consulting firm. By 2009, the organization employed over 452 staff (Uttaran WS 2012a, b).[110] However, decision-making power remained concentrated in the hands of *Uttaran's* "founder-director", Shahidul Islam, and even long-standing staff members were reluctant to talk about many issues without his permission.[111]

Similarly, Abdul Kader, the founder-director of *Samata*, also became wealthy and influential through his interactions with the international donor community. At the time when the above-mentioned corruption allegations against *Samata* surfaced, relatives of Abdul Kader held leading positions within the NGO's management (Ahmed 2013),[112] and downward accountability towards the NGO's staff members and local beneficiaries was largely lacking. As a former staff member explained, "Those who were *Samata* staff, they were so dedicated. There was no problem with them. All the problems were with the senior staff, those that were the policymakers." Several staff members had tried to talk to Abdul Kader about the unsustainability of the organization's practices, the source said, but he had always sent them away, saying that "Everything will be solved. *Samata* will run". How could the donors provide so much money to an organization with such weak structures, the former *Samata* representative asked, noting that "This is the failure of DFID [one of *Samata's* main donors; J.L.], because their monitoring and supervision is very poor."[113]

3.4 Civil Society in the Context of Violence and Insecurity

Violence and insecurity are pervasive in Bangladesh, where alternative power centres as diverse as secular political parties, leftist movements and Islamist groups use violence strategically in order to enhance their social control and gain political influence. Between 2002 and 2013, over 2400 people were killed and more than 126,300 were wounded in violent confrontations between the AL and the BNP, according to conservative estimates (Suyken and Islam 2015, p. 5). The period from 2001 to 2005

also saw a number of Islamic terrorist attacks. In October 2004, a bomb was detonated during an AL rally with the *Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami Bangladesh* (HuJIB) being the main suspect for the attack, while in 2005 the country experienced over 450 nationwide simultaneous bombings, allegedly committed by the *Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh* (JMB), an attack on the British High Commissioner and several suicide bombings (ICG 2006; esp. pp. if.; 3). In this context of violence and insecurity, civil society groups have also frequently been tainted by violence.

3.4.1 The Use and Endorsement of Violence by Party-Affiliated Civil Society Groups

Both of the major parties have used violence strategically in order to enhance their social, political and territorial control and weaken the power of their respective rival. Notably, whenever they have been in office, both the AL and the BNP have engaged in harassment and committed violent attacks against opposition party activists. Similarly, whenever they have been in opposition, both parties have staged violent *hartals* and street demonstrations in order to extract concessions from the ruling party (Lorch 2014; Moniruzzaman 2009). The parties' front organizations have played an important role in putting the AL's and the BNP's violent strategies into action, a pattern best exemplified by the CL and the CD.

As early as the 1970s, rival student organizations fought each other violently. Moreover, student activists also engaged in violent confrontations with the state security forces, using sticks, stones or brickbats.[114] Given that it formed part of the AL's liberation insurgency, the CL has a certain tradition of violence. Bangladesh's war of independence was predominantly a "people's war", fought mainly by irregular guerrilla forces made up of armed civilians, commonly referred to as *Gonobahini* or "people's forces". One important group within the *Gonobahini* was the *Mujib Bahini*, a guerrilla unit of around 5000 fighters most of whom were recruited from the AL and the CL (Jamal 2008, pp. 6ff.). During his tenure from 1977 to 1981, General Zia founded the CD (e.g. Alam et al. 2011, p. 6046) and used state resources to build up its strength.[115] However, it was under the Ershad regime (1983–1990) that the major shift towards violent student politics occurred, owing to a rise in state repression.

In order to counter the influence of the CL, the CD and various leftist student organizations on national university campuses, Ershad founded the *Jatiya Chattra Samaj* (JCS) as the student wing of his *Jatiya Party*

(JP) in 1986. Reportedly, the Ershad government provided the JCS with money and arms and also allowed notorious criminals to enter its ranks. Backed by the military, the JCS attacked rival student activists, injuring many and even killing some (Alam et al. 2011, p. 6046)[116]. State repression and violent assaults by the JCS united the student movement, as members of the CL, the CD and other student groups began to jointly demand the ousting of Ershad. As a former campus correspondent explained,

> Jatiya Chattra Samaj […] used to take control [over; J.L] universities and colleges. They attacked the other [student; J.L] leaders and they killed some […] students. […] So soon there was [a] common platform against the Chattra Samaj, because they were not good students, they just got backing from the military. Then the students got furious and started taking to the streets. […] There was common ground […] to […] oust the military.[117]

However, in order to protect themselves against the JCS and the military, the CL, the CD and various leftist student groups also increasingly resorted to armed force themselves. In many cases, arms and ammunition were reportedly provided to them by their mother parties.[118] As a former leftist student leader recalled, during the Ershad period, he and his fellow activists had openly put their guns on the tables of the *Madhur Canteen*, a cafeteria that remains a well-known meeting place for students on the DU campus. There had been complete "lawlessness", he said, with the whole campus becoming "militarized".[119]

Since the 1990s, successive party governments have relied on their affiliated student groups for the purpose of establishing territorial and ideological control over national university campuses. Notably, whenever they have been in power, both the AL and the BNP have allowed their student fronts to establish physical control over campus dormitories by means of force, including the use of arms. Physical control over campus dormitories has repeatedly allowed the leaders of the CL and the CD to coerce their rank-and-file members, as well as considerable numbers of non-political students, into supporting their partisan activities. Specifically, leaders of both student fronts have frequently locked students into their dormitories in order to prevent them from attending their courses and to make them join the CL's or the CD's protests and rallies instead. Showcasing their lack of autonomy, university administrations have generally turned a blind eye to the atrocities committed by the parties' student fronts. The state's law enforcement agencies have also largely abstained from interfering in these violent showings of force, owing to a lack of backing from the ruling party.[120]

Since the 1990s, escalating conflicts over the control of campus dormitories have continuously enhanced the frequency and intensity of violent clashes between the CL and the CD. In turn, the increasingly violent struggle between the CL and the CD has led both student groups to strive for increasing physical control over campus dormitories in order to safeguard their activists, leading to a vicious circle of violence.[121] As a campus correspondent explained, the student wing of the ruling party would generally "chase", "harass" and "torture" the student activists affiliated with the opposition. Then, once the opposition came to power, the latter's student wing would retaliate. Thus, from the point of view of both the CL and the CD, establishing physical control over campus dormitories was clearly the best way to make sure that their activists were safe.[122]

As the conflict between the CL and the CD has intensified, both groups have increasingly resorted to armed violence. Taking advantage of the weakness of the state security apparatus, many student leaders have purchased weapons from arms dealers and criminal gangs in Bangladesh, while others have smuggled arms from India over the country's porous border.[123] However, many student leaders have also remained unarmed and the use of guns continues to be viewed negatively by many ordinary members of the CL and the CD.[124]

3.4.2 The Use and Endorsement of Violence by Islamic and Islamist Civil Society Groups

Much of the existing literature is unanimous in tracing the emergence of militant Islamist groups in Bangladesh to the weakness of the state, the instrumentalization of political Islam by secular political elites and foreign influences, rather than to tendencies towards religious radicalization within broader society. From the mid-1970s to the late 1980s, both the Zia and the Ershad regimes strengthened the role of Islam in politics and deliberately tolerated the emergence of orthodox Islamic tendencies. Since the 1990s, the conflict between the AL and the BNP has repeatedly enabled moderate Islamist parties with links to more radical groups to act as political kingmakers (e.g. Ganguly 2006; Karim and Fair 2007; ICG 2006; Lorch 2008). In this context, Islamic civil society groups, such as *madrassahs* and Islamic welfare NGOs, have at times acted as springboards for militant Islamist groups.

Both Zia and Ershad tolerated and even encouraged the financing of conservative Islamic education and welfare organizations by donors from West Asia, the Gulf and the wider Middle East. As a consequence, many of these

groups came under the influence of highly orthodox and sometimes radical interpretations of Islam, such as Salafism and Wahhabism (e.g. Karim and Fair 2007, pp. 5f.). This is especially true for the *Qwami madrassahs*. Since the late 1980s, Bangladesh experienced an expansion of the fundamentalist *Ahle Hadith* movement within the *Qwami madrassahs* (Riaz 2007b, p. 37). Both the JMB and the HuJIB, which staged terrorist attacks in 2004 and 2005, are known to recruit followers from this particular type of *madrassah*. Some *madrassahs* are also reported to have acted as training camps for Islamist militants (e.g. BEI 2008, p. 7; Brandon 2009; Hossain 2008; Riaz 2007b, pp. 39f.; Roul 2010; SATP 2016b, c). The BNP-led four-party government (2001–2006), which depended on the JI and the IOJ for its parliamentary majority, continued the practice of allowing fundamentalist *madrassahs* to receive funding from the Gulf.[125] During this period, the country saw a "growing nexus between the *Qwami madrassas* and militant groups such as the Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al Islam Bangladesh (HuJiB)" (Riaz 2007b, p. 40).

Islamic development associations and NGOs also saw increasing levels of funding from the Gulf and the wider Middle East during the four-party government (e.g. ICG 2006, pp. 5, 19ff.). According to local experts, this has also included NGOs that engage in the promotion of Wahhabism and other fundamentalist interpretations of Islam, which have formed the ideological basis for local terrorist groups, such as the JMB and the HuJIB.[126] As one of them stated, "[m]any NGOs accept Middle East money to promote Wahhabism". The growth of these and other Islamic welfare associations, he said, was also due to the role played by the Gulf countries as destinations for Bangladeshi migrant workers. "Bangladesh is a dependent state", he said, in which many Islamic NGOs are "connected to politics". If the state tried to interfere with their work, influential Middle Eastern countries would resist.[127]

Moreover, various Islamic INGOs active in Bangladesh have been accused of providing financial and technical support to local terrorist organizations. This includes the Kuwait-based Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS), the International Islamic Relief Organisation and the UK-based Green Crescent. Some of these INGOs have also worked through local proxies. For instance, the RIHS has worked closely with *madrassahs* belonging to the *Ahle Hadith* movement. Other fundamentalist *madrassahs* are also known to have been funded by Islamic INGOs. In March 2009, firearms and ammunition were discovered in a *madrassah* financed by the Green Crescent's Bangladeshi branch (Brandon 2009; Riaz 2007b, pp. 83–86.; Roul 2010, p. 5).[128]

Another Islamist civil society group that has benefitted from the conflict between the AL and the BNP is the JI's student wing, the ICS. Banned after independence, the ICS regained prominence during the military regimes of Zia and Ershad, when it managed to establish considerable influence over many national campuses, often through the use of force (Upadhyay 2007). During the four-party government (2001–2006), which included the JI, ICS cells proliferated on many national university campuses. In particular, the ICS was able to establish dominance over the campuses of Chittagong, Rajahi and Jahangirnagar. Similarly, violent onslaughts by the ICS on rival student organizations also increased tremendously during the four-party government, with ICS cadres reportedly engaging in bombings and even murders. In most cases, the JI and other members of the ruling coalition treated the Islamist student organization with impunity. When criminal charges were filed against several ICS cadres in 2003, the Home Ministry intervened to save the accused. Allegedly, the JI also provided the ICS with arms and ammunition during its time in government (ICG 2006, pp. 15f.; SATP 2016a; Upadhyay 2007).[129]

The boundaries between the ICS and militant Islamist groups have sometimes been blurred. For instance, during the four-party government, several JMB activists were also current or former members of the ICS. Moreover, several representatives of the JMB's *Majlis-e-Shura*, the organization's highest decision-making body, were former ICS cadres at that time. Notably, this also included the JMB's top-most leaders, Abdur Rahman and Siddiqur Rahman (alias *Bangla Bai*) (Ashraf 2006; ICG 2006, p. 18; SATP 2016a, b; on the closeness of the ICS to militant groups see also Ganguly 2006, p. 6f.).

In spite of these tendencies, most Islamic civil society actors in Bangladesh are strongly opposed to the use of violence. Following the 2005 terrorist attacks, for instance, many local imams and mosques issued public statements condemning the attacks.[130] As of 2010, the government supported 300,000 local imams in addressing the issue of religious militancy and in advocating non-violence in their sermons (IGC 2010, p. 32).

3.4.3 The Internal Organizational Structures of Civil Society Groups in the Context of Violence and Insecurity

The internal organizational structures of Bangladeshi civil society groups that have faced violence and insecurity have often been highly hierarchical, especially if the groups in question have engaged in the use of violence themselves. For instance, the violent conflict between the CL and the CD

has enhanced their dependency on the AL and the BNP respectively, both of which have boosted their student groups' capacity for violence and, thereby, fuelled this conflict even further. Both the increased dependence on the AL's and the BNP's leadership and the use of violence have, in turn, strengthened existing organizational hierarchies within both the CL and the CD. A former campus correspondent described the vicious cycle between party co-optation, violence and hierarchical internal organization as follows:

> Chattra Dal and Chattra League became more engaged in fighting against each other and that's why they always needed […] support from the [mother party's; J.L.] high command. Because when you are fighting of your own, then […] you cannot continue fighting, you need the support from the high command. So they [the student bodies; J.L.] used to frequently visit the high command saying: We are going to do this, do that and the high command used to say: ok go, we will support you, whatever money you need, take the money, take arms and you go there [and fight; J.L.].[131]

Furthermore, the reinforcement of the internal hierarchies within the CL and the CD can also be traced to the fact that both student groups have been used by their mother parties for the purpose of exercising territorial control over national university campuses. Most notably, in order to be able to quickly establish control over national campus dormitories following elections, both the CL and the CD have relied on a hierarchically structured "chain of command".[132]

Similarly, the organizational structures of the ICS, which has generally been considered to be the most violent of all politically active Bangladeshi student groups, are even more hierarchical than those of either the CL or the CD. Specifically, ICS cadres have generally been obligated to respond to orders by the student group's "high command" within three minutes or face punishment. In addition, the ICS has also enforced discipline by making its cadres keep detailed, written accounts of their daily activities, which have been regularly scrutinized by their superiors. As a former campus correspondent concluded, "the chain of command is more organised in Shibir [ICS; J.L.] than in CL and CD".[133]

A further example of how civil society groups operating in a context of violence and insecurity can come to develop highly hierarchical internal structures is the organizational development of the Fulbari resistance movement. In 2004, local citizens from the district of Fulbari founded the *Rakkha Committee* (Protection Committee) in order to prevent the real-

ization of an open-pit coal exploration project planned by the UK-based extraction company Asia Energy, which may have displaced up to 50,000 people and rendered an estimated 5000 hectares of agricultural land uncultivable (e.g. Gain 2007a, b; Huggler 2006; Moody 2006a, b). When the *Rakkha Committee* entered into a dialogue with the Ministry of Mining, it forged an alliance with the NCBD, a leftist party grouping dominated by the Maoist faction of the BCP.[134]

On 26 August 2006, the *Rakkha Committee* and the NCBD jointly mobilized large-scale popular protests against the planned coal-mining project in Fulbari town. When the protesters approached the local office of Asia Energy, police forces and members of the paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) threw teargas and fired into the crowd, leaving at least seven protesters dead and around 300 injured. In reaction, angry protesters carrying bamboo sticks, stones, bows and arrows and machetes tried to break down police and BDR barricades and fought pitched battles with the state security forces, during which one policeman was killed and several others wounded (DS 28.08.06; Gain 2007a, b; Huggler 2006; Karmaker 2006; Moody 2006b; Quadir 2006).[135] Moreover, the *Rakkha Committee* and the NCBD called an indefinite *hartal* and, in the following days, anti-mining demonstrators besieged Fulbari town, blocking major access roads and railways with barricades and burning tyres. Vast contingents of armed police, the BDR and the paramilitary RAB were deployed to Fulbari, and members of these security agencies reportedly committed numerous violent assaults against the local residents. Angry protesters violently clashed with the police and the BDR, burned down the local information centre of Asia Energy, damaged various drilling holes and ransacked a nearby warehouse that stored various coal samples. In addition, agitated demonstrators burned down and looted the houses of several local employees of Asia Energy and beat up locals who were known to have cooperated with the company (DS 28.08.06; DS 29.08.06a, b, c; Gain 2007a, b, p. 2; Moody 2006b)[136].

During the protests, the NCBD evolved into the main representative of the Fulbari resistance movement. Specifically, high-ranking representatives of the NCBD made various public statements and negotiated with local government officials on behalf of the protesters (e.g. Gain 2007a, b).[137] On 30 August 2006, the siege of Fulbari was ended through an Agreement of Settlement (AOS) signed between the Bangladeshi government and the NCBD, represented by its Member Secretary Anu Muhammad (AOS 2006; Moody 2006a). Nevertheless, activists of the NCBD and the broader Fulbari anti-mining movement continued to face harassment by *mastaans* and private goons allegedly hired by Asia Energy (DS 12.02.07; Muhammad

2007, p. 136). In February 2007, the military-backed CTG arrested M Nuruzzaman, the then Member Secretary of the NCBD's Fulbari Unit and one of the main leaders of the 2006 demonstrations, (DS 12.02.07). As of 2009, the *Rakkha Committee* had ceased functioning, and the local resistance movement against the coal-mining project was represented almost exclusively by the Fulbari Unit of the NCBD, which remained under tight surveillance by the state security forces.[138] Representatives of the state security apparatus also tried to limit the committee's contacts with foreign journalists and researchers. During a 2009 field visit, the author, her research assistant and a high-ranking representative of the Fulbari Unit of the NCBD were visited by an officer of the District Special Branch (DSB), a special investigation agency under the Bangladeshi police.[139]

Likely owing to both its connections with the Maoist faction of the CPB and the context of insecurity in which it operated, the internal structures of the NCBD and its Fulbari Unit were highly hierarchical at the time this research was conducted. Reportedly, the central committee of the NCBD in Dhaka consisted of around 30 leftist leaders, intellectuals and professionals, with its Member Secretary Anu Muhammad playing a leading role. Local units, such as the Fulbari Unit, were formed by the central committee in a rather top-down process that bore resemblance to the practice of democratic centralism. For instance, according to a local expert, new district or *Upazila* committees were generally formed jointly by the NCBD's central committee and temporary "subject committees", consisting of central committee members and representatives of nearby local committees.[140] National policy decisions were generally taken by the central committee without participation by the local committees, who merely implemented them, while decisions concerning Fulbari were taken jointly by representatives of the NCBD's Fulbari Unit and its central committee.[141] At the time this research was conducted, the Fulbari Unit of the NCDB consisted of 51 members, most of whom appeared to belong to the local elite and upper middle class. More specifically, this included several leftist party leaders, teachers, doctors, social leaders and several local businessmen, while farmers, agricultural workers and students, who had formed the backbone of the 2006 uprising, were highly underrepresented on the committee. Decision-making power within the Fulbari Unit of the NCBD appeared to be highly concentrated in the hands of its convener, Syed Saiful Islam Jewel, an influential member of the local landed elite.[142] As one high-ranking representative of the Fulbari Unit of the NCBD stated, the students and farmers were "only the activists" who supported and implemented the decisions of the

committee's leadership. Generally, he added, the local leadership of the NCBD would make decisions and the regular members would follow these decisions without questioning them.[143]

At the same time, the hierarchical organization of the NCBD' Fulbari Unit can also be traced directly to the context of insecurity in which the group operated. For instance, the above-cited leader of the committee opined that, given that the government surveilled him, he had to "maintain secrecy" about his plans and activities. The leaders of the NCBD could not fully reveal their agenda, he added, because the government might try to block their plans if it came to know about them. Consequently, he elaborated further, he usually concealed information about his conversations and negotiations with political decision-makers outside of the NCBDs Fulbari Unit from his fellow local committee members. Moreover, he also had to control the rank-and-file activists. This was what leadership meant, he said, to "keep an eye" and control what everyone is doing.[144]

Notes

1. In 2008 and 2015, the FSI characterized the stability status of Bangladesh as "alert", while throughout the rest of the period from 2005 to 2015, this status was categorized as "warning"; see webpage of the FSI (2015).
2. On the contributions made by Bangladeshi NGOs with regard to poverty reduction and social service delivery, see e.g. Banks et al. (2015, p. 711).
3. The scores for the earlier years are also available on the webpage of the FHI (2015).
4. The scores for the earlier years are also available on the webpage of the TI-CPI (2015). The index changed its scale in 2011. From 1995 to 2010, it ranked countries on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (very clean). Since 2011, the scale goes from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).
5. Interview with a well-known local scholar and representative of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka, 28.11.2007.
6. Interview with a local NGO worker, Dhaka, 03.12.07.
7. See also interviews with a representative of the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), Dhaka, 29.11.07, 03.12.07; focus group discussion with Chattra League (CL) and Chattra Dal (CD) leaders, Dhaka, 15.01.09. On the relationship between foreign-funded NGOs and party-affiliated civil society groups, see e.g. Stiles (2002, pp. 839–42).
8. Interview with a professor of the International University Bangladesh (IUB), Dhaka 18.03.09. See also Mannan (2005).
9. Interviews with a PPRC representative, Dhaka, 29.11.07, 03.12.07; interview with a local scholar and professor of the National University of Singapore (NUS), Dhaka, 05.01.2009; interview with a professor of Dhaka University (DU), Dhaka, 03.01.09.

10. Interviews with a PPRC representative, Dhaka, 29.11.07, 03.12.07.
11. Interview with a IUB professor, Dhaka 18.03.09
12. Interview with a well-known local scholar and CPD representative, Dhaka, 28.11.2007.
13. Interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09. On the relatively independent status of various student unions during the independence struggle and in the early post-independence period, see also Alam et al. (2011, p. 6051).
14. Ibid.
15. Interview with a well-known local scholar and leader of various local NGOs, Dhaka, 08.03.09.
16. Interview with a local scholar and NUS professor, Dhaka, 05.01.2009.
17. See also interview with an international election observer of the 2008 elections, Dhaka, 12.03.09; focus group discussion with CL and CD leaders, Dhaka, 15.01.09; interview with a CD activist and a campus correspondent of Dhaka University (DU), Dhaka, 26.02.09.
18. Interview with a local scholar and NUS professor, Dhaka, 05.01.2009.
19. For instance, interview with a local scholar and NUS professor, Dhaka, 05.01.2009; interview with a DU professor, Dhaka, 03.01.09.
20. Interview with a local scholar and NUS professor, Dhaka, 05.01.2009.
21. Interview with the leader of an activist NGO, Dhaka, 15.02.09.
22. See also interview with a DU professor, Dhaka, 03.01.09; interview with a well-known public intellectual, Dhaka, 17.12.08. On the role played by NGOs in marginalizing more radical rural movements see also Mannan (2001).
23. Interview with a DU professor, Dhaka, 03.01.09.
24. See also interview with a terrorism expert of the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), Dhaka, 24.02.09.
25. *Bangladesh Economic Review* cited after ICG (2006, pp. 13f.) and Riaz (2007b, pp. 39).
26. Interview with a local NGO expert and INGO representative, Dhaka 16.02.09.
27. See also interview with a terrorism expert of the BEI, Dhaka, 24.02.09.
28. Interview with a well-known local scholar and leader of various local NGOs, Dhaka, 08.03.09.
29. Interview with a CD leader, Dhaka, 15.01.09.
30. Focus group discussion with CL and CD leaders, Dhaka, 15.01.09; interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09; on the interfaces between student and high-level party politics see also Alam et al. (2011).
31. Conversation with the son of a local businessmen, Dhaka, 20.02.09.
32. Quote from *The Economist*, cited after Khan and Husein (1996: 324).

33. Interview with a member of the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), Dhaka, 25.01.09; interview with a member of *Dwip Unnayan Songstha* (DUS), Dhaka 07.03.09.
34. Interview with a member of DUS, Dhaka 07.03.09.
35. Interview with a member of the ALRD, Dhaka, 25.01.09.
36. See endnote 33.
37. See endnote 33.
38. Interview with an election commissioner of the CTG, Dhaka, 12.02.09.
39. Interview with the election programme officer of a big INGO, Dhaka, 24.11.2007.
40. Interviews with a representative of the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (GTZ), Dhaka, 20.09.07; Interview with an election commissioner of the CTG, Dhaka, 12.02.09.
41. See also interview with a representative of the GTZ, Dhaka, 20.09.07.
42. Interview with an IUB professor, Dhaka 18.03.09.
43. Interview with a representative of the GTZ, Dhaka, 20.09.07.
44. Interview with a representative of *Sujan*, Dhaka, 25.11.08.
45. See also interview with a representative of *Sujan*, Dhaka, 25.11.08; interview with a source inside the CPD, Dhaka, 15.12.08; interview with a high-ranking representative of the TIB, Dhaka, 25.01.09; interview with a member of *Odhikar*, 30.11.08; interview with a human rights lawyer, Dhaka, 27.11.08; interviews with a retired army general, Dhaka, 22.12.08 and 18.03.09.
46. Interview with a source inside the CPD, Dhaka, 15.12.08.
47. Interview with a representative of *Sujan*, Dhaka, 25.11.08; interview with a high-ranking representative of the TIB, Dhaka, 25.01.09; interview with a well-known local scholar and leader of various local NGOs, Dhaka, 08.03.09; interview with an election commissioner of the CTG, Dhaka, 12.02.09.
48. Interview with a high-ranking representative of the TIB, Dhaka, 25.01.09.
49. Interview with a representative of *Sujan*, Dhaka, 25.11.08; interview with a high-ranking representative of the TIB, Dhaka, 25.01.09; interview with a well-known local scholar and leader of various local NGOs, Dhaka, 08.03.09; interview with the election programme officer of a big INGO, Dhaka, 24.11.2007.
50. Interview with a high-ranking representative of the TIB, Dhaka, 25.01.09.
51. Interview with a country expert and representative of an INGO, Berlin, 30.04.2015.
52. Interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09
53. Interview with a CD activist and a DU campus correspondent, Dhaka, 26.02.09; interview with a former leftist student leader, Dhaka, 16.03.09; interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09.
54. The AL and its front organizations usually use the term President, while the BNP and its front organizations use the term Chairman.

55. Focus group discussion with CL and CD members, Dhaka, 15.01.09; focus group discussion with a *Krishok Dal* Leader, a *Freedom Fighter* and a local NGO worker, Satkhira, 30.01.09; interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09; interview with a CD activist and a campus correspondent of Dhaka University (DU), Dhaka, 26.02.09.
56. Interview with a CD activist and a DU campus correspondent, Dhaka, 26.02.09; interview with a former leftist student leader, Dhaka, 16.03.09; interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09.
57. Interview with a former leftist student leader, Dhaka, 16.03.09.
58. Interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09. On the lack of internal democracy within the AL and the BNP, see also Khan et al. (2008, pp. 73f., 120f.)
59. Ibid.
60. Interview with a former campus correspondent, Dhaka, 11.01.09.
61. Interview with a DU campus correspondent, Dhaka, 26.02.09.
62. Focus group discussion with a *Krishok Dal* Leader, a *Freedom Fighter* and a local NGO worker, Satkhira, 30.01.09.
63. Interview with a well-known local scholar and leader of various local NGOs, Dhaka, 08.03.09; interview with a former leftist student activist, 04.01.09; interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09.
64. Interview with a former leftist student activist, 04.01.09.
65. Interview with a General Secretary of CD, Dhaka, 15.01.09.
66. Interview with an Organizing Secretary of CL, Dhaka, 15.01.09.
67. Interview with the representative of a local think tank, Dhaka, November 2007.
68. See also interview with a local NGO expert and INGO representative, Dhaka 16.02.09; interview with a high-ranking representative of the TIB, Dhaka, 25.01.09; interview with an election commissioner of the CTG, Dhaka, 12.02.09.
69. Interview with a high-ranking representative of the TIB, Dhaka, 25.01.09.
70. Interview with an election commissioner of the CTG, Dhaka, 12.02.09.
71. Interview with an election commissioner of the CTG, Dhaka, 12.02.09; interview with a high-ranking member of Democracy Watch (DW), Dhaka, 13.12.08.
72. Interview with a local NGO expert and INGO representative, Dhaka 16.02.09; interview with an election commissioner of the CTG, Dhaka, 12.02.09.
73. Telephone conversation with the office of Khan Foundation (KF), Dhaka, December 2008.
74. Interview with the election programme officer of a big INGO, Dhaka, 24.11.2007.
75. Focus group discussion with members of DW, Dhaka, 13.12.08.

76. Interviews with an acting and a former CD leader, Dhaka, 17.03.09; Interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09, September 2011; interview with a CD activist and a DU campus correspondent, Dhaka, 26.02.09.
77. Interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09.
78. Interview with a CD activist, Dhaka, 26.02.09.
79. Interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09.
80. Interview with an Organizing Secretary of the CL, Dhaka, 15.01.09.
81. Interview with a well-known local scholar and leader of various local NGOs, Dhaka, 08.03.09.; interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09.
82. Interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09.
83. Interview with a former campus correspondent, Dhaka, 11.01.2009.
84. Based on information from TIB (2008); currency converted at the exchange rate of 29.04.2016.
85. Interview with a local NGO expert and INGO representative, Dhaka 16.02.09. Information confirmed in confidential conversations with representatives of international donor agencies.
86. Interview with a local NGO expert and INGO representative, Dhaka 16.02.09; interview with a local NGO worker, Dhaka, 08.02.09; information confirmed in confidential conversations with representatives of international donor agencies.
87. Interview with a local NGO expert and INGO representative, Dhaka 16.02.09.
88. Ibid.
89. Interview with a local NGO expert and INGO representative, Dhaka 16.02.09; interview with an NGOAB official, Dhaka, 09.03.09.
90. Interview with a local NGO expert and INGO representative, Dhaka 16.02.09.
91. Ibid.
92. Interview with a representative of a German aid agency, Berlin, 30.04.2015.
93. Interview with a high-ranking *Uttaran* representative, Dhaka, March 2009.
94. Interview with a high-ranking *Uttaran* representative, Dhaka, 29.11.07, 21.01.09, 25.02.09; interviews with a leading staff member of *Uttaran*, Shatkira, 29.01.09–01.02.09.
95. Focus group discussion with a *Krishok Dal* Leader, a *Freedom Fighter* and a local NGO activist working with *Uttaran's Bumi Committees*, Satkhira, 30.01.09. Information confirmed in conversations with villagers, local politicians, NGO workers and government officials during the author's field research in Satkhira and Gopalganj, 29.01.09–01.02.09.
96. Interviews with a leading staff member of *Uttaran*, Shatkira, 29.01.09–01.02.09.

97. Interview with a high-ranking *Uttaran* representative, Dhaka, March, 2009.
98. See also interview with a local expert and NGO worker, Dhaka, 05.02.09.
99. Conversations with local residents in Shatkira, 29.01.09–01.02.09.
100. Interview with an Assistant Commissioner for Land, Gopalganj, 30.01.09.
101. Interview with a local NGO expert and INGO representative, Dhaka 16.02.09.
102. Ibid.
103. See also interview with a former *Samata* member, Dhaka, 11.02.2009.
104. Interview with a high-ranking representative of the TIB, Dhaka, 25.01.09.
105. Interview with a well-known local scholar and representative of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka, 28.11.2007.
106. Interview with a local NGO expert and INGO representative, Dhaka 16.02.09.
107. Interview with a leader of *Nijera Kori* (NK), Dhaka, 15.02.09.
108. Interviews with high-ranking representatives of *Samata*, Dhaka, 01.09.07, 11.01.09.
109. Interview with a high-ranking *Uttaran* representative, Dhaka, March, 2009.
110. Interviews with a leading staff member of *Uttaran*, Shatkira, 29.01.09–01.02.09; Interview with a high-ranking *Uttaran* representative, Dhaka, March, 2009.
111. Interview with a high-ranking *Uttaran* representative, Dhaka, March, 2009; interviews with staff members of *Uttaran*, 29.11.07.
112. Interview with a former *Samata* member, Dhaka, 11.02.2009.
113. Ibid.
114. Interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid.
118. Interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09; extended conversations with a former leftist student leader, Dhaka, January to March 2009.
119. Extended conversations with a former leftist student leader, Dhaka, January to March 2009.
120. Interview with a CD activist and a DU campus correspondent, Dhaka, 26.02.09; interviews with an acting and a former CD leader, Dhaka, 17.03.09; interview with a former campus correspondent, 11.01.09; interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09. On the violent occupation of campus dormitories by students close to the ruling party, see also Alam et al. (2011, pp.6050f.).
121. See endnote 120.
122. Interview with a DU campus correspondent, Dhaka, 26.02.09.

123. Interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09.
124. Interview with a CD activist and a DU campus correspondent, Dhaka, 26.02.09.
125. See also interview with a professor of the IUB, Dhaka 18.03.09; interview with a terrorism expert of the BEI, Dhaka, 24.02.09.
126. Interview with a terrorism expert of the BEI, Dhaka, 24.02.09.
127. Interview with a professor of the IUB, Dhaka 18.03.09.
128. Interview with a terrorism expert of the BEI, Dhaka, 24.02.09.
129. See also interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09.
130. Interview with the election programme officer of a big INGO, Dhaka, 24.11.2007.
131. Interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09.
132. Interview with a CD activist and a DU campus correspondent, Dhaka, 26.02.09.
133. Interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09; see also interviews with an acting and a former CD leader, Dhaka, 17.03.09.
134. Interviews with student activists of the Fulbari movement, Fulbari, 13.03.09 and 14.03.09.
135. See endnote 134.
136. Interviews with villagers who participated in the Fulbari movement, Fulbari, 15.03.2009; extended discussions with a high-ranking representative of the NCBD's Fulbari Unit Fulbari, 13.03.09–15.03.09; Interview with student activists of the Fulbari movement, Fulbari, 13.03.2009 and 14.03.09.
137. Interviews with student activists of the Fulbari movement, Fulbari, 13.03.09 and 14.03.09; interview with a local expert and filmmaker, Fulbari town, 14.03.09.
138. Interview with a local expert and filmmaker, Fulbari, 14.03.09; extended discussions with a high-ranking representative of the NCBD's Fulbari Unit Fulbari, 13.03.09–15.03.09.
139. Extended discussions with a high-ranking representative of the NCBD's Fulbari Unit Fulbari, 13.03.09–15.03.09; background conversations with a journalist close to the Fulbari movement, Dhaka, February to March 2009.
140. Interview with a local expert and documentary filmmaker, Fulbari, 14.03.2009.
141. Extended discussions with a high-ranking representative of the NCBD's Fulbari Unit Fulbari, 13.03.09–15.03.09; interviews with members of the NCBD's Fulbari Unit, Fulbari, 14.-15.03.2009; interview with a local expert and documentary filmmaker, Fulbari, 14.03.2009.

142. Extended discussions with a high-ranking representative of the NCBD's Fulbari Unit, Fulbari, 13.03.09–15.03.09; interviews with members of the NCBD's Fulbari Unit, Fulbari, 14.-15.03.2009; interviews with villagers who participated in the Fulbari movement, Fulbari, 15.03.2009.
143. Extended discussions with a high-ranking representative of the NCBD's Fulbari Unit Fulbari, 13.03.09–15.03.29.
144. See endnote 143.

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CHAPTER 4

State Weakness and Civil Society in the Philippines

The current weakness of the Philippine state is largely a product of colonial rule. During the period of Spanish colonialism (1565–1898), power on the local level was exercised predominantly by the Catholic friars and *ecomenderos*, Spanish conquerors with control over vast estates of land and the right to collect tribute and recruit labour from among the local population (Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 55; 66ff.; Hedman 2006a, pp. 25ff.). Within this system, *datus*, traditional rural elites, acted as village and town executives, leading to the emergence of "local strongman monopolies over coercion and taxation" (Sidel 1999, pp. 14f.). By the late nineteenth century, this type of indirect colonial rule, along with the integration of the Philippine economy into the world market, had led to the consolidation of a quasi-feudal native elite consisting of landed families who earned significant wealth through the export of cash crops and owned huge *haciendas* cultivated by dependent tenants (Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 80ff.; Rivera 23–34; Sidel 1999).

The Spanish-American War in 1898 saw the rise of the *Katipunan*, a local liberation movement against Spanish colonial rule, which drew its support mainly from the peasantry. Initially, the *Katipunan* aligned itself with the Americans in order to defeat the Spanish. However, the USA soon turned against the insurgency, fearing popular demands for a dismantling of the *hacienda* system and a collectivization of land. Shortly thereafter, increasing efforts by the USA to bring the Philippines under colonial rule

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led to the Philippine-American War (1899–1902), which was won by the USA and in which around half a million Filipinos died (ibid: 109–119.).

Landed families were strengthened further during the American colonial period, which lasted from 1902 to 1946 (Mc Coy 2007, pp. 10ff.; Sidel 1999). In order to integrate the local economic elite into the colonial state and counter popular pressures for more radical reforms, the American colonizers introduced elections with limited suffrage. Given that strong and impartial bureaucratic institutions were absent, however, the electoral process soon came to be dominated by well-established landed elites who were capable of mobilizing electoral support through their clientelistic networks (e.g. Gealogo 2007, pp. 1ff.; Mc Coy 2007, pp. 11f.; Sidel 1999). Once in office, these local elites were able to further enhance their economic wealth and control over dependent social constituencies through the use of state resources. Sidel (1999, pp. 18f.) therefore concludes that colonial elections played a key role in the consolidation of "local strongmen rule".

During World War II (1939–1945), the Philippines were invaded by Japan. In 1942, the peasant-based *Hukbong Bayan sa Hapon* (Huk; People's Anti-Japanese Army) was formed as the armed guerrilla wing of the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* (PKP; Philippine Communist Party) for the purposes of defeating the Japanese and gaining independence. Towards the end of the war, however, the US army and its loyal Philippine troops moved against the Huk rebellion in order to prevent an abolition of the *hacienda* system. In 1946, the USA granted the Philippines independence (Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 159ff.), and the country thus escaped a violent independence struggle.

The local landed elite was further strengthened after independence, owing to the structure of the post-colonial state. Most notably, while bureaucratic state institutions remained weak, the material resource base of the state was relatively strong due to the influx of both US rehabilitation funds and reparations payments by Japan (Mc Coy 2007, p. 12ff.). This "paradoxical pairing of wealth and weakness" (ibid., p. 13) allowed well-entrenched political dynasties to use their access to the spoils of the state to further increase their ability to bestow patronage and, thereby, further enhance their potential for social control. Moreover, the influence of local landed elites with control over private security forces was also strengthened further by the massive availability of firearms in the early post-independence period. Notably, the state's monopoly on the use of force had broken down almost entirely during World War II, when weapons had been distributed widely to anti-Japanese guerrillas (ibid., pp. 12ff.).

Since independence, landed political dynasties have competed with each other for social and political influence in the weak state, leading to the categorization of the Philippines as a "cacique democracy" (Anderson 1998), or "an anarchy of families" (Mc Coy 2007), among others. From 1946 to 1972, the country formally had a two-party system made up by the *Nationalista Party* (NP) and the *Liberalista Party* (LP). Both parties lacked clear programmes, however, being dominated by elite families (Abinales and Amoroso 2005; pp. 168ff.; Gealogo 2007, pp. 11ff.; Ufen 2008, pp. 338f.). Starting from the middle of the twentieth century, some landed political families managed to expand their economic activities into industrial manufacturing, leading to the emergence of national industrial conglomerates and capitalist enterprises. While the latter often remained dominated by elite families, the corporate business sector nevertheless developed into a national power player in its own right (Hedman 2006a, pp. 34–41; Rivera 1994, pp. 23–33).

The constitution, which was passed after independence, separated the Church from the state. However, the interests of the Catholic hierarchy have remained "profoundly intertwined" with those of the country's political and economic elite (Hedman 2006a, p. 33), and, as a consequence, the Catholic Church has continued to yield considerable social and political influence in the post-colonial era. For instance, to this day, it continues to play an important role in shaping the opinions and attitudes of the traditional political elite and the capitalist class through its role in elite schooling (ibid., pp. 25–34).

In 1968, the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) established itself as a breakaway group of the PKP. More radical than its predecessor, it launched an armed Maoist insurgency to overthrow the Philippine state, and, what it called, the country's "semi-feudal" economic system. Owing to its considerable ability to mobilize support from among the peasantry, the working class and university students, the CPP-NPA quickly grew in size and organizational strength. In 1972, President Ferdinand Marcos used the growing influence of the CPP-NPA as a pretext to declare martial law and launched an all-out war against the insurgency. Ultimately, however, authoritarian repression only increased popular support for the Communist party (e.g. Abinales 1985; Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 198ff.; Hewison and Rodan 1996; Santos 2005).

The authoritarian Marcos regime (1972–1986) weakened the country's landed political dynasties and broke the two-party system by destroying the NP's and the LP's ability to act as political machines at the national level (Abinales and Amoroso 2005, p. 39). During his tenure, Marcos

bolstered the size and strength of the military, while, at the same time, filling high-ranking positions in the armed forces with his own loyalists (Anderson 1998, pp. 213f.). In 1986, the coinciding of a mutiny by disgruntled military officers and massive popular demonstrations, which came to be known as People Power, led to the fall of Marcos. Following the transition, restiveness within the armed forces continued, with rebellious officers staging various coup attempts against both the post-transition government of Corazon Aquino (1986–1992) and, later on, the government of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (Arroyo) (2001–2010) (e.g. Miranda and Ciron 1987, pp. 163f.; Selochan 1991, pp. 97f.; Yabes 2009).

The post-Marcos period was marked by a restoration of the power of traditional politicians (trapos) with access to land and economic wealth (e.g. Eaton 2003). Since the 1998 elections, which brought former movie star Joseph Estrada to power, the political dominance of the traditional political elite has, at times, been contested by populists. However, the latter have also sought to concentrate political power in their own hands (e.g. Abinales 2001; see also Thompson 2010). An important feature of the post-Marcos era has been the rise of highly fluid political coalitions, in which trapos, populists, the Catholic Church, the military and even organizations linked to the CPP-NPA have banded together temporarily for the purpose of capturing office, a pattern that Abinales (2001) has called "coalition politics". Both Arroyo, who was in power from 2001 to 2010, and Benigno (Noynoy) Aquino, who was elected president in 2010, are members of the established traditional political elite.

From 2005 to 2015, the FSI (2015) continuously categorized the Philippines as a weak state.[1] *Central state agencies have frequently been unable or unwilling to provide important social services and have also often failed to establish sustainable and impartial democratic institutions.* Between 2003 and 2012, the percentage of the national population living below the poverty line remained largely unchanged, amounting to an estimated 25.2 per cent in 2012 (WB Philippines 2016). In 2006, the FHI changed its categorization of the Philippines from "free" to only "partly free", and the country remained in this category throughout the period from 2006 to 2015 (FHI 2015).[2]

Central state institutions have lacked autonomy from a large variety of alternative power centres, including traditional political families, the capitalist business sector, the Catholic Church, military fractions, political populists and, to a lesser extent, the CPP-NPA. On the whole, the structure of power centre competition has been rather fragmented and different types of alternative power centres have repeatedly entered into

heterogeneous and highly fluid political coalitions with each other, a trend that has increased in the post-Marcos era (Abinales 2001; Hedman 2006a; Yabes 2009; Thompson 2008).

Patronage and corruption are widespread in the country (e.g. Kasuya 2005; Parreno 1998; Rüland et al. 2005, p. 185). Since the early post-colonial period, trapos with access to land and economic wealth have used patronage as a strategy to establish social control and gain political influence (e.g. Rüland et al. 2005, p. 185; Sidel 1999), a practice that has been replicated by the political populists (e.g. Abinales 2001; Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 239f.) and, to a lesser extent, also by the CPP-NPA. Between 2005 and 2011, the TI-CPI gave the Philippines scores from 2.3 to 2.6, thereby ranking the country as one of the most corrupt in the world. Under the government of Benigno (Noynoy) Aquino (2010 to present), corruption declined to a certain extent, and the index gave the country scores between 34 and 38 in the years from 2012 to 2015 (TI-CPI 2015).[3]

The political context of the Philippines is also *characterized by high levels of violence and insecurity.* Specifically, many traditional political families command their own private armies, security forces or militia troops (e.g. Kraft 2010; Kreuzer 2007, pp. 3ff.). Human rights violations by the military and paramilitary forces have continued in the democratic period, with leftist activists in particular remaining subject to *extra-judicial killings* (e.g. Alston 2008). The CPP-NPA, which has been leading a guerrilla war against the state since the late 1960s, had an estimated 5000 fighters as of 2011 (e.g. ICG 2011).

From the late 1980s until the early 1990s, the Philippines received large amounts of international aid intended to eliminate poverty and support the country's democratic transition. Oftentimes, such foreign donor support also benefitted NGOs and other civil society groups. Starting from the mid-1990s, however, donor attention shifted to other, still less developed countries in the region (e.g. Bryant 2008, p. 118; EU 2014, p. 3; Jones 2013, p. 99).

Philippine civil society has been shaped by the structure and the weakness of the post-colonial state, which had already been quite firmly established when civil society began to grow. As Siliman and Noble (1998a, p. 13) have noted,

> [c]ivil society in the Philippines only emerged after the state and its political instruments were firmly established. The modern Filipino state arose out of the late Spanish and American colonial periods to become formally independent in 1946, when the United States transferred sovereignty to it.

Against this backdrop, the present chapter focuses on how the five categories of influences on civil society in the context of a weak state, which have been defined by the study's theoretical analytical framework (Chap. 2) and outlined in the previous sections, have shaped the ability of Philippine civil society to emerge, exert political influence and contribute to democratization. Accordingly, the following sections investigate how Philippine civil society has been influenced, first, by the inability/unwillingness of the state to perform certain functions and the existence of an environment in which non-state actors perform functions that are usually ascribed to the state (Sub-chap. 4.1); second, by the lack of state autonomy and the existence of a competition between different alternative power centres (Sub-chap. 4.2); third, by the context of the patronage and corruption (Sub-chap. 4.3); fourth, by the environment of violence and insecurity (Sub-chap. 4.4); and, fifth, by the influence of international donors, which is viewed as an intervening impact that influences the relationship between civil society and the state across the four other categories.

4.1 Civil Society in a Context Where Non-State Actors Perform Functions Normally Ascribed to the State

At the time of independence in 1946, the Philippines were ravaged by World War II and the accompanying Japanese occupation, and large sections of the population lived below the poverty line. The existing literature is largely unanimous that the inability or unwillingness of the post-colonial state to address these problems led to the growth of a large number of civil society groups that have catered to fundamental social and economic needs (e.g. Croissant 2003, p. 245; EU 2014; Franco 2004, p. 110; Magadia 1999, p. 258; Siliman and Noble 1998a, p. 12; Racelis 2000; Würfel 2006, p. 215). Siliman and Noble (1998b, p. 283) have noted, for instance, that "[c]itizen activism in the Philippines has been caused by deteriorating socio-economic conditions and the failure of the state […] to address them". Similarly, a local academic stated that "because of the weakness of the state, self-help becomes a necessity. […] State weakness has given civil society a reason to exist".[4] Even the authoritarian Marcos regime tolerated and, to a certain degree, encouraged the growth of welfare-oriented civil society groups, because they catered to basic social needs that bureaucratic state institutions were unable or unwilling to provide for (e.g. Croissant 2003, pp. 245f.).[5] Given that central state agencies

have so far failed to lift an estimated 25.2 per cent of the population out of poverty (WB Philippines 2016), NGOs and other civil society groups continue to perform an important role in social service delivery to this day (e.g. EU 2014).

Furthermore, the growth of Philippine civil society has also been enabled by the lack of effective state regulation. While registration is not obligatory, NGOs and other civil society groups who want to obtain legal personality have been required to register with the SEC under the Corporation Code (CC) since 1980 (ADB 1999, p. 24; CODE-NGO 2009, pp. 37f.). In principle, the CC enables the SEC to monitor the development activities carried out by the civil society groups operating under its auspices. Moreover, it also contains several provisions to ensure that the organizations registered with the agency are accountable and transparent with regard to their internal structures. In practice, however, these and other regulations have mostly gone unimplemented due to a severe lack of administrative capacity both on the part of the SEC and the country's civil courts.[6] On the whole, the state's "largely non-regulatory relationship with NGOs" and other voluntary associations has been highly conducive to the emergence and persistence of civil society (Abella and Dimalanta 2003, p. 238).

However, the lack of bureaucratic capacity has also prevented the proper implementation of various enabling laws, which have been passed since the 1990s in order to facilitate the participation of civil society in the political process. For instance, the Local Government Code (LGC), which was approved in 1991, provides for the involvement of NGOs and Communist-Based Organizations (CBOs) in the local government system (e.g., EU 2014, p. 2). In reality, however, the NGOs that have participated in the country's Local Development Councils (LDCs) have often been tightly co-opted organizations set up by the wives or sisters of local governors (Eaton 2003).[7] In 1995, the *Party-list Law* was passed in order to ensure the representation of marginalized social groups in the Philippine Congress, enabling NGOs and other civil society groups to run for seats in the House of Representatives. However, the law has often been abused by traditional political families for the purpose of increasing their own parliamentary representation (Eaton 2003; NDI 2004, p. 36).

On the local level, leftist farmer groups have often provided their members with basic social services, such as healthcare, education or agrarian inputs. During the Marcos regime, many welfare-oriented NGOs and CBOs, which catered to the needs of the peasantry, aligned themselves with

the CPP-NPA. Moreover, the sectoral mass organizations of the Communist party, such as the *Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas* (KMP) or the *Kilusang Mayo Uno* (KMU), the party's peasant and labour fronts respectively, have also been involved in the provision of social services since the early 1980s (e.g. Putzel 1995; Quimpo 2008, p. 58)[8]. During the authoritarian period (1972–1986), various international donors avoided direct cooperation with the state, financing NGOs and other civil society groups instead (e.g. Constantino-David 1998, p. 35)[9]. Sometimes, such donor support also benefitted leftist organizations sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, such as the Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Development (PEACE) Foundation or the Task Force for Political Detainees (TFPD), both of which also had long-standing connections with the Catholic Church (e.g. Clarke 1998b, pp. 158ff.; Putzel 1995; pp. 653f.; 660).

Since the 1950s, foundations and NGOs established and financed both by wealthy families and corporate enterprises have likewise played an important role in providing charity and fulfilling basic welfare needs not met by the state (Clarke 1998a, pp. 102ff.; Sabio and Jaegal 2010, pp. 41ff.). For instance, the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) was founded by elite families in 1952 for the purpose of aiding in post-war reconstruction. Until the mid-1980s, it mainly focused on promoting rural development through self-help (Clarke 1998a, pp. 140ff.; Franco 2004, p. 105). In 1970, the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) was founded as a corporate social responsibility imitative of the local business community, focusing on poverty alleviation. To this day, it remains the largest NGO in the Philippines (Constantino-David 1998, p. 33f.; Racelis 2000; Sabio and Jaegal 2010, pp. 41ff.).

Since independence, charity groups and lay organizations affiliated with the Catholic Church have likewise performed important social welfare functions in areas as diverse as education, poverty alleviation and development, a trend that increased in the 1960s, after the Second Vatican Council (Hedman 2006a, p. 53f.; Moreno 2006; Youngblood 1990, pp. 67f.). Until the early 1970s, most civil society groups linked to the Catholic Church followed a "self-help and community development approach" (Youngblood 1990, p. 78), focusing on social service delivery, the establishment of credit unions, skills training and other largely apolitical activities. Starting from the mid-1970s, however, many of them also incorporated *Freirean* notions of *conscientization* and "community organising" methods into their development programmes (Coumans 1993, pp. 83, 88ff.; Moreno 2006, pp. 55ff.; Youngblood 1990, pp. 83ff.).

After the ousting of Marcos in 1986, the Philippines experienced a large-scale influx of foreign funding, which led to a massive expansion of the local NGO sector (Abella and Dimalanta 2003, pp. 233ff.; ADB 1999, pp. 1ff.; Soledad 2002). As early as in 1995, approximately 60,000 NGOs and other non-profit organizations were registered with the SEC (ADB 1999, p. 1). The growth of the foreign-funded NGO sector has depoliticized national civil society to a certain extent. Specifically, many social leaders who had been radicalized and aligned themselves with the CPP-NPA during the Marcos era joined more apolitical, foreign-funded development NGOs in the 1980s and the 1990s, reducing the number of ideologically oriented forces in civil society. Similarly, many international donors stopped financing leftist civil society groups linked to the CPP-NPA after the fall of Marcos, shifting their support to more moderate NGOs instead (e.g. Constantino-David 1998, pp. 35ff.; Putzel 1995, p. 660; Racelis 2000)[10].

The massive availability of foreign funding strengthened the ability of NGOs to deliver important social services that the state failed to provide. At the same time, donor priorities of alleviating poverty and achieving measurable results also led various NGOs to become increasingly welfare-oriented and to cut down on their political advocacy programmes to a certain extent (e.g. Constantino-David 1998, pp. 35ff.; Siliman and Noble 1998a, p. 19; 1998b, pp. 288ff.; Racelis 2000). By the late 1990s, most foreign-funded NGOs engaged in welfare activities, such as livelihood programmes, healthcare, the provision of micro-credit or income-generating activities (Abella and Dimalanta 2003; ADB 1999, pp. 1–20; DED 2003, pp. 268ff.). While today most Philippine NGOs are rather small, some welfare-oriented BINGOs existed in the country from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s when donor funding was readily available. The PRRM, for instance, had an estimated 600 employees and a nationwide structure of field offices at that time, performing functions normally ascribed to the state, such as the implementation of an integrated rural development programme, which included the provision of agricultural loans and the deployment of health workers.[11] The PBSP and some other BINGOs likewise employed several hundred staff during the period (ADB 1999, p. 5). To this day, many local NGOs focus on bridging specific gaps left by the state in the field of social service provision. One NGO health worker explained, for instance, that as a first step her organization always assessed both the state of public service delivery and the needs of local communities and then developed its own programme, based on the discrepancy between the two.[12]

Another factor that contributed to a certain depoliticization of the local NGO sector was growing professionalization. Specifically, as the reporting requirements of foreign donors became more and more formalized, their local NGO partners increasingly had to rely on technical skills, such as planning, accounting and record-keeping. As a result, many Philippine NGOs transformed themselves from more voluntary associations into professional organizations run by salaried staff and developed corporate structures (ADB 1999, pp. 1–13; CODE-NGO 2009).[13] As a local NGO expert put it, "In NGOs we do not have mass members. We have staff."[14] Consequently, the foreign-funded NGO sector also turned into an important area of employment for the educated middle class, which, by the late 1990s, accounted for an estimated 100,000 jobs (e.g. ADB 1999, p. 1).

Nevertheless, most Philippine NGOs continued to combine their welfare activities with political advocacy (Constantino-David 1998, pp. 29ff.; Magadia 1999, p. 256; Siliman and Noble 1998a, pp. 10ff.). This tendency was encouraged both by the fact that many local NGOs were aligned with the CPP-NPA during the Marcos years and the dominant donor paradigm. Notably, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, many international aid agencies active in the Philippines promoted the establishment of a complementary welfare system in which social services were to be delivered jointly by NGOs and the state. Accordingly, many international donor programmes also supported NGO advocacy initiatives aimed at pressuring the state to enhance public service provision. For instance, in the framework of the Agrarian Reform Communities Programme, several major donors supported NGOs and CBOs, which trained local peasant groups to engage with the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and access land under the agrarian reform programme of the state. Oftentimes, however, the funding for such capacity-building initiatives was not channelled directly to the civil society organizations, which implemented them, but rather through the DAR (ADB 1999, pp. 52ff.; DED 2003, p. 270)[15].

In the late 1990s, foreign funding to the Philippines dropped and many local development NGOs had to scale down both their staff and activities (Constantino-David 1998, pp. 30f.; DED 2003, pp. 270, 268ff.; EU 2014, p. 3). By 2009, the PRRM, for instance, had been forced to reduce its staff from approximately 600 employees down to a mere 40. Similarly, it had been compelled to scale down the direct delivery of social services, as well as to abandon its earlier approach of developing whole provinces, and focussed on small-scale capacity-building and skills-training measures instead.[16]

4.2 Civil Society in the Context of Power Centre Competition

Civil society groups in the Philippines lack autonomy, being aligned to alternative power centres as diverse as radical leftist parties, traditional politicians, the corporate business community, the Catholic Church and political populists. As a consequence, the national civil society is deeply divided, reflecting the struggle for social control that prevails between different power centres both inside and outside the state apparatus. As Franco (2004, p. 97) has aptly stated, Philippine civil society has been highly "fractious", owing to the fact that it has been characterized by a high degree of "porosity vis-à-vis an elite-dominated political society".

4.2.1 Communist Parties Struggling for Social Control, and the Growth and Development of Leftist Civil Society Groups

After the defeat of the Huk rebellion in the early 1950s, the military strength of the PKP declined significantly, causing it to adopt a more moderate stance and to search for ways to enhance its engagement in parliament. Nevertheless, the old Communist party retained considerable influence in the countryside, where it continued to establish mass organizations among the peasantry in order to strengthen its potential for social control (Quimpo 2008, p. 57). Starting from the early 1960s, the PKP also managed to establish a strong foothold within the country's nascent student movement. In 1964, leftist-nationalist students close to José Maria (Joma) Sison formed the *Kabataang Makabayan* (KM, Nationalist Youth) as the PKP's student front, which quickly managed to expand its size and influence. In 1968, the KM transformed itself into the CPP-NPA led by Sison. The new Communist party distinguished itself from its predecessor, the pro-Soviet PKP, through its more militant, Maoist orientation and its explicit pro-China stance. Right after its formation, the CPP-NPA resorted to an armed struggle in order to destroy what is saw as the Philippines' "semi-feudal" system and to gain full control over the state by means of force (e.g. Abinales 1985, pp. 42f.; Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 198ff.; Hewison and Rodan 1996, p. 55).

Since its formation in 1968, the CPP-NPA has relied on a "collective action frame", constituting itself as an ensemble of three separate, yet closely interrelated, organizational entities: first, the vanguard party (the CPP); second, the guerrilla army (the NPA); and, third, the civil

society-based mass movement (Santos 2005, pp. 4f.; see also EC 2007, p. 53). Within this organizational framework, the CPP-NPA's military strategy of "protracted people's war" has facilitated the growth of prototype civil society groups in rural areas, given that, in its early stages, it focuses predominantly on extensive organizing and mass base-building among the peasants. Moreover, as a result of the focus on the peasantry as the "main force" of the revolutionary movement (Putzel 1995), the Maoist CPP-NPA has also undertaken considerable efforts to provide local farming communities with basic social services, which the state has failed to deliver, such as healthcare or basic education (e.g. Kerkvliet 2010: 3–6). Oftentimes, such welfare services have not been delivered to local communities directly by the CPP-NPA but by the mass organizations and community-based groups affiliated with it (Franco and Borras 2009, pp. 213–18; Hawes 1990, pp. 282ff.; Putzel 1995, pp. 646ff., 652ff.).[17]

During the authoritarian Marcos era (1972–1986), state repression forced many formerly moderate civil society groups to go underground and, as a consequence, the number of civil society groups affiliated with the CPP-NPA grew tremendously (e.g. Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 219ff.; Hawes 1990, pp. 280–298; Hewison and Rodan 1996, pp. 54ff.; ICG 2011, pp. 4f.; Quimpo 2008, pp. 58f.). At the same time, the Communist party also actively enhanced its own involvement in the sphere of civil society in order to enhance and extend its social control. In the mid-1970s, the CPP-NPA revived its urban mass movement (Hedman 2006a, p. 90; Quimpo 2008, p. 58; Thompson 1995, p. 96). Starting in the early 1980s, it also set up various *sectoral groups*, which operated aboveground, organized on the basis of occupational status, gender or age. In particular, this included the League of Filipino Students (LFS), whose educational activities played an instrumental role in enabling the CPP-NPA to establish ideological control over many national campuses and important education institutions (Abinales and Amoroso 2005, p. 230), as well as the KMP and the KMU, the Communist party's peasant and labour fronts, respectively (Hedman 2006a, p. 90; Putzel 1995; Quimpo 2008, p. 58). In rural areas, the Communist party and its front organizations often provided peasant communities not only with welfare services but also with an (ideological interpretation) of the root causes of their poverty (Kerkvliet 2010, pp. 3-6; see also Hawes 1990). In addition to acting as transmission belts for the CPP-NPA's Communist ideology, the KMP and other peasant organizations also sometimes served as social support structures for the Communist party and its army, the NPA, in the context of guerilla zone preparation

(Franco and Borras 2009, p. 111–18; Putzel 1995, pp. 650-55).[18] On the whole, the CPP-NPA's approach towards its front organizations was thus characterized by a high degree of *instrumentalism* (Franco and Borras 2009; Putzel 1995, pp. 652ff.; Quimpo 2008, pp. 81ff.), which was also an expression of the party's primary focus on armed struggle. As Honculada (1985, p. 19) has noted,

> Armed struggle in the countryside is the basic form of struggle to which other forms are auxiliary. Mass organizations such as unions, peasant groups, and community organizations are greatly subordinated to the imperatives of armed struggle.

Up to this day, the LFS, the KMP, the KMU and other sectoral organizations, which were originally set up by the CPP-NPA, remain active in the civil society sphere. The Communist party's struggle for social control thus contributed considerably to the growth of Philippine civil society. This is furthered by the fact that many of the CPP-NPA's front organizations developed into more independent civil society groups after the fall of Marcos (e.g. Quimpo 2008, pp. 58, 74f., 81).[19] As Quimpo (2008, pp. 74f.) notes,

> The legal mass organizations, legal programs and cause-oriented groups were among the precursors of what are now known as POs [people's organizations] and NGOs, which have proliferated all over the country and are involved in a wide range of concerns—development work, sectoral issues, health, human rights, environment etc. Although many of today's POs and NGOs are not aligned with the left, a good part of the credit for their flourishing belongs to the left.

From the early 1980s onwards, the CPP-NPA and its front organizations cooperated with the traditional political elite, the business community and the Catholic Church for the purpose of toppling the Marcos regime (Thompson 1995, pp. 115–137). In February 1986, however, the CPP-NPA boycotted Marcos' snap elections, in which the traditional political opposition participated and which the Catholic Church and the business community supported leading to a split in the opposition movement. Some of the Communist party's affiliated civil society groups criticized the decision to boycott, but the CPP-NPA's Central Committee forced them to toe the party line, invoking Marxist-Leninist, Maoist discipline and the principle of *democratic centralism* (Chapman, 1988;

pp. 248f.; Franco 2004, p. 109; Quimpo 2008, p. 82). Consequently, the CPP-NPA and its front organizations barely played any role in the 'People Power' uprising that followed Marcos' attempt to rig the elections, and the Communist movement was marginalized after the fall of his authoritarian regime (ICG 2011, pp. 5ff.; Quimpo 2008, pp. 54–83; Thompson 1995, pp. 125–147). In the early 1990s, the CPP-NPA was weakened further both by the "total war" launched against it by the government of Corazon Aquino (1986–1992) and by the collapse of the Soviet Union (e.g. Hernandez 2005, pp. 11ff.; ICG 2011, pp. 5f.; Santos 2005, p. 6).

In 1993, the CPP-NPA split into *reaffirmist* and *rejectionist* fractions. While the former followed Sison in reaffirming the party's orthodox Maoist ideology with its focus on armed struggle, the latter advocated for less ideological rigidity and more openness towards other forms of political struggle, such as electoral participation. Other conflicts within the CPP-NPA included ideological controversies over whether the Philippines should still be classified as "semi-feudal" or rather as increasingly capitalist in nature, as well as disagreements over the principle of democratic centralism and the role of the party's front organizations (e.g. Chapman 1988, pp. 248f.; ICG 2011, pp. 6ff.; Putzel 1995, pp. 661–664). After the CPP-NPA's break-up into *reaffirmist* and *rejectionist* camps, the party's affiliated civil society groups split along the same lines (ICG 2011, pp. 7f.; Quimpo 2008, pp. 59ff.; Putzel 1995, pp. 661ff.). In the course of this process, *reaffirmist* and *rejectionist* cadres struggled for control over the KMP, the PEACE Foundation and other "key peasant organising NGOs", a conflict which was reflective of a broader struggle for social control over rural constituencies and which a well-known *rejectionist* activist referred to as a quarrel over "conjugal property and the custody of children"[20].

Many *rejectionist* civil society activists joined the NGO sector (ICG 2011, pp. 7f.; Quimpo 2008, pp. 59ff.), which was in the process of expanding in the early 1990s due to both the massive influx of foreign funding and the readiness of successive post-Marcos governments to accommodate more moderate and reformist civil society actors. Most notably, the first post-transition government of Corazon Aquino (1986–1992) actively promoted the growth of foreign-funded NGOs after peace talks with the CPP-NPA had collapsed, leading the above-cited leftist activist to conclude that "NGO creation under the Aquino government might have been a strategy to counter the Communists"[21]. Foreign funding in this sense also appears to have contributed to the moderation of many leftist

civil society groups by providing them with an autonomous resource base, which has enabled them to continue their social activities independently from the CPP-NPA.

Following the split, the CPP-NPA re-established firm control over its remaining front organizations and NGOs, and the *reaffirmist* fraction of leftist civil society has remained largely united since then. Contrary to this, the *rejectionist* civil society camp underwent further splits, as exemplified by the Democratic KMP (DKMP), which broke away from the KMP and later disintegrated into the peasant federation *Ugnayan ng mga Nagsasariling Lokal na Organisasyon sa Kanayunan* (*UNORKA*) and several other smallish peasant groups (ICG 2011, p. 7; Putzel 1995, pp. 661ff.; Quimpo 2008, pp. 62ff.)[22]. The Institute for Popular Democracy (IPD) meanwhile became a major think tank of the *rejectionist* left (Clarke 1998a, p. 149). After the introduction of the *Party-List* law in 1995, both *rejectionist* and *reaffirmist* civil society organizations participated in the electoral process, with both *rejectionist* party-list groups, such as *Akbayan!*, and *reaffirmist* party-list groups, such as BAYAN MUNA or GABRIELA, winning seats in both the 2001 and 2004 elections (ICG 2011, pp. 7ff.; Quimpo 2008, pp. 56–93).

4.2.2 The Communist Challenge, and the Growth and Development of Civil Society Groups Aligned with Traditional Politicians and Corporate Business

As early as in the 1950s, traditional political families and the local business community established civil society-based welfare associations, such as peasant groups, in order to stem the influence of the PKP and its affiliated civil society organizations (Constantino-David 1998, pp. 31f.; Hedman 2006a, pp. 46–69; Siliman and Noble 1998a, pp. 14ff.; see also Franco 2004, pp. 105ff.; Racelis 2000). For instance, the PRRM, which engaged in rural development, was established by representatives of the national landowning, commercial and banking elite for the purpose of countering Communist influence and social pressures for structural reforms more generally. Following its foundation in 1952, the PRRM also received funding from US-based donors and supported various counter-insurgency campaigns, which the USA, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and individual landowning families conducted against the Huk and other leftist movements (Clarke 1998a, pp. 140ff.; Franco 2004, p. 105). In the early 1960s, the PRRM provided training for

US Peace Corps Volunteers. During the Marcos regime, it implemented various development programmes commissioned by state agencies, working closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Social Services and Development. In addition, the PRRM also supported the Marcos' counter-insurgency campaign against the CPP-NPA by training the AFP's civic action teams (Clarke 1998a, pp. 144ff.). Similarly, the PBSP was founded in 1970 by around 50 leading local businessmen who regarded their donations to the NGO as "private investments in social peace" in a context where Communist mobilization by the CPP-NPA was on the rise (Hedman 2006a, p. 97; see also pp. 100–05). Well-known corporate donors to the PBSP included the Soriano Group, Shell Oil and MERALCO (Clarke 1998a, p. 146). Since its establishment, the PBSP has focused primarily on apolitical measures, such as skills training and the distribution of micro-credit, and has refrained from challenging existing power structures (Racelis 2000).

In many rural areas, *haciendero*s and landowning families also set up their own welfare-oriented civil society groups in the 1980s when the CPP-NPA and its front organizations were gaining influence among the peasantry. On the island of Negros, for instance, local sugar planters established apolitical civil society organizations that provided for the basic needs of their tenants (Angeles 2003). An illustrative example for such an organization is the *Kabalaka* (Concern) Development Foundation (KDF), which was founded by the *Asociación de Agricultores*, a big sugar planters' association. To this day, the KDF trains "human development officers", who then set up *sectoral organizations*, such as women's and youth groups, on the *haciendas* of the landowning families who donate to the foundation. After their establishment, such *sectoral hacienda groups* are usually run by tenants from the respective *haciendas* who are loyal to their landlords and whom the KDF's "human development officers" train to become "community organizers".[23] As one such former "community organizer" explained, in the 1980s and 1990s, the KDF had established *sectoral organizations* on many of the *haciendas* on Negros in order to prevent them from being infiltrated by the CPP-NPA. To do so, he elaborated, the KDF had used the same organizing techniques as the CPP-NPA and its front organizations used in setting up local sectoral groups. During his time as a KDF "community organizer", the interviewee had acted as the president of a *hacienda* youth group, working under the direct supervision of one of the foundation's "human development officers". In this function, he had undertaken various income generation projects for the youth organization's members,

most of which had been financed directly by the proprietor of the *hacienda*. He elaborated that oftentimes the *sectoral* groups established by *Kabalaka* had also organized festivals for the landlord.[24]

Since the late 1980s, many local sugar planters also relied on the KDF in order to advocate against agrarian reform and prevent their tenants from accessing land under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) of the state (e.g. Wurfel 1992, p. 76). During the 1990s, the KDF's board included Esteban (Sonny) Conscuella, who was one of the main leaders of the anti-agrarian reform and anti-communist Movement for an Independent Negros (MIN) and the founder of the Negros Foundation for Peace and Democracy (NFPD), a vigilante group that assisted the Philippine military in various counter-insurgency operations (Angeles 2003). The MIN also established the Sugar Development Foundation (SDF), which reportedly raised funds for several Citizen Armed Force Geographical Units (CAFGUs), militia groups that were sometimes used by landlords for the purpose of fighting the Communist insurgency and attacking leftist farmer associations (Clarke 1998a, p. 106).

4.2.3 The Communist Challenge, and the Growth and Development of Church-Based Civil Society

Starting from the early post-independence period, the Catholic Church likewise set up welfare-oriented civil society groups in order to counter the influence of the PKP and its affiliated front organizations in rural areas and to stem the spread of Communism more generally (Hedman 2006a, pp. 46–67; Quimpo 2008, pp. 53ff., 73ff.; Youngblood 1990, pp. 3ff.). In 1952, the Catholic hierarchy established the Catholic Action of the Philippines as the Catholic Church's national lay organization. Around the same time, the Jesuit Institute of Social Order set up various *sectoral organizations*, such as the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) and the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF), which were explicitly anti-communist in orientation (Franco 2004, p. 105f.; Hedman 2006a, pp. 50ff.; Youngblood 1990, pp. 3ff.). The Jesuits also assisted in the foundation of the Philippine Ecumenical Council for Community Organising (PECCO), a development NGO that originally subscribed to a non-political stance and was made up of church leaders and Catholic lay workers. In the beginning, the PECCO pursued a "community organising" approach patterned after Saul Alinsky, which focused on "demand-oriented people mobilisation" (Racelis 2000; see also Coumans 1993, p. 142; Honculada 1985).

Starting in the mid-1960s, the Catholic Church further expanded its lay structures. In 1966, the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA) was created under the authority of the Episcopal Commission on Social Action (Youngblood 1990, p. 76). With the support of NASSA, dioceses around the country established *social action centres* (Constantino-David 1998, pp. 32ff; Moreno 2006, pp. 37ff.), and as early as 1969 an estimated 90 per cent of all national dioceses had social action directors (Youngblood 1990, p. 77).

After the foundation of the CPP-NPA in 1968, the Philippine Catholic Church further increased its involvement in the civil society sphere, a tendency that was encouraged by the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), which advocated for greater lay participation in the church in order to stem the global rise of Communism (Hedman 2006a, pp. 53, 67–87, 99; Youngblood 1990, pp. 67f.). Starting in the early 1970s, most of the social action centres operating under NASSA formed Basic Christian Communities (BCCs), small Church-based communities that provided charity and were organized at the parish level (Hedman 2006a, p. 99; Moreno 2006, pp. 55ff.; Coumans 1993, p. 2). Until the mid-1970s, most of the social action activities conducted under the auspices of the Catholic Church remained confined to a "self-help and community development approach", which focused on the apolitical delivery of welfare services (Youngblood 1990, p. 78).

In 1977, however, the Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) began to implement the Basic Christian Communities—Community Organising (BCC-CO) approach, which integrated both "community organising" methods and *Freirean* notions of *conscientization* into the BCC framework. The adoption of the BCC-CO model spurred the growth of civil society, while, at the same time, strengthening the presence of the Catholic Church and its BCCs in rural areas (Coumans 1993, pp. 88ff.; Moreno 2006, pp. 55ff.; Youngblood 1990, pp. 83ff.). Under this approach, various social action centres used "community organising" for the purpose of establishing *sectoral organizations* (e.g. Coumans 1993, pp. 143f.),[25] such as worker, peasant or youth groups, thereby replicating an organizational technique that had been pioneered by the CPP-NPA and its front organizations. During the Marcos regime, several BCCs became susceptible to Marxist theories and were infiltrated by the CPP-NPA (Coumans 1993, pp. 88, 103–121; Moreno 2006, p. 201; Youngblood 1990, pp. 98ff., 186).

In addition, the Catholic Church also established various prominent NGOs, some of which ran huge development and human rights projects and received large amounts of foreign funding during and in the immediate aftermath of the Marcos period. A prominent example of such an NGO is the TFPD, an arm of the Catholic Association of Major Religious Superiors, which was once one of the biggest human rights organizations in the Philippines and the broader developing world (Clarke 1998b). Towards the end of the Marcos period, however, several Church-based NGOs, including the TFPD, aligned themselves with the CPP-NPA. During the same period, various socially engaged priests also joined the Communist movement, leading to massive tensions within the Catholic Church (Clarke 1998b, pp. 161ff.). Ultimately, even the Catholic hierarchy changed its stance from one of "critical collaboration" with the Marcos regime to resistance against it, a development that was encouraged by the continuing growth of the Communist movement and the increasing number of defections of Church-based activists to the CPP-NPA (Hedman 2006a, pp. 88–115; Youngblood 1990, pp. 118f., 191–203).

4.2.4 The Political Influence of Co-Opted Civil Society Groups

Alignment with alternative power centres has often allowed Philippine civil society groups to exercise considerable political influence in the weak state. Towards the end of the Marcos regime, for instance, the front organizations of the CPP-NPA controlled significant parts of the peasantry, providing rural communities with services that the state was unable to deliver (e.g. Franco and Borras 2009; Putzel 1995).[26] As Quimpo (2008, pp. 58f.) has argued, in the early 1980s, social activists aligned with the Communist party "operating both underground and above ground, proved to be the biggest, best organized, and most militant force within the broad anti-Marcos movement" and played a key role in helping "set the stage for the Marcos regime's eventual ouster through people power" (ibid, p. 75). Similarly, Santos (2005, p. 5) has noted that, in the beginning of the 1980s, the CPP-NPA and its affiliated civil society groups had "hegemony in the anti-dictatorship struggle".

In February 1986, Marcos was forced to step down following massive popular demonstrations that came to be known as People Power. This has led much of the existing literature to view the Philippine transition as a textbook example of a democratic transformation that was accomplished by civil society mobilization (e.g. Constantino-David 1998, p. 36; Croissant

2003, p. 246; Eaton 2003, pp. 469f; Kotte 1987; Siliman and Noble 1998b, p. 280). However, most of the civil society groups that participated in the People Power uprising were not independent but, instead, closely aligned to alternative power centres, such as the corporate business community or the Catholic Church (for a similar argument see Hedman 2006a). Similarly, a closer examination also shows that the overthrow of Marcos ultimately resulted from a complex process of political coalition-building, in which both the traditional political opposition and the military played a vital role (Thompson 1995).

From the early 1980s onwards, the traditional political elite, the business community, the Catholic Church and the CPP-NPA's legal front organizations established various opposition alliances. Concurrently, civil society groups affiliated with the CPP-NPA, the traditional opposition, the Catholic Church and the business community repeatedly organized joint demonstrations. In particular, these also included the large-scale popular protests following the 1983 assassination of the prominent opposition politician Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino, which came to be known as the "Parliament of the Streets". Ultimately, however, all of these alliances were short-lived, owing both to the CPP-NPA's ideological rigidity and to the reluctance of the Catholic Church, the business community and the traditional opposition to facilitate the establishment of a political system with Communist credentials (Thompson 1995, pp. 101; 115–137; see also Franco 2004, p. 108f.; Kotte 1987).

In late 1985, Marcos called for snap elections to be held in February 1986, and Corazon Aquino, the widow of Ninoy Aquino and a member of the traditional political elite, announced her candidature. Sensing the opportunity to oust Marcos through the ballot rather than through an uprising that might give power to the CPP-NPA, the business community and the Catholic Church rallied their support behind the election monitoring activities of the National (Citizens') Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL). Specifically, the CBCP, the Philippine-Businessmen's Bishop Conference (PBBC), the Makati Business Club (MBC) and the PBSP all provided staff, resources and organizational infrastructure to the election watchdog (e.g. Hedman 2006a, pp. 88–115; Thompson 1995, pp. 8, 72ff., 147–161).

When Marcos tried to rig the 1986 elections, which were won by Aquino, the parallel vote count conducted by NAMFREL revealed the election fraud, leading to massive popular demonstrations. However, it was not until the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM), a group

of self-proclaimed reformist officers inside the AFP, staged a mutiny that the Marcos regime finally fell. In order to prevent the troops of the RAM and those loyal to Marcos from clashing, Cardinal Sin, the Archbishop of Manila, called upon the population to assemble on the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) in Metro Manila. Unwilling to shoot at peaceful protestors, the military withdrew its support from Marcos, forcing him into exile (Selochan 1991, pp. 9ff.; Thompson 1995, pp. 157ff.; Yabes 2009). Given its crucial role in making People Power succeed, military intervention can be seen as the "the dark side of EDSA", as Yabes (2009, 10) has aptly put it. Following the democratic transition, unrest continued within the armed forces, and since the late 1980s rebellious military fractions have repeatedly invoked the idea of a military-coup-cum-People-Power in order to legitimize their attempted military coups (Yabes 2009; see also Miranda and Ciron 1987; Selochan 1991).

In January 2001, civil society influence again played an important role in effecting governmental change when elected populist President Joseph Estrada was forced to step down, following massive demonstrations that became known as EDSA II, or People Power II. Starting from late 2000, Estrada faced impeachment proceedings in Congress on grounds of corruption, which were accompanied by public protests involving civil society organizations as diverse as Church-based groups and liberal democratic associations close to the business community, as well as NGOs and CBOs belonging to both the *rejectionist* and the *reaffirmist* left (Hedman 2006a, pp. 169ff.; Franco 2004, pp. 123ff.; Landé 2001; Reid 2001). The Caucus of Development NGOs (CODE-NGO), the country's main alliance of development NGOs, played a particularly important role in organizing the demonstrations (Polestico 2006, p. 12)[27].

On 17 January 2001, the impeachment proceedings collapsed, allegedly because Senators loyal to Estrada prevented the revelation of incriminating evidence against the president. As a consequence, popular demonstrations in Metro Manila intensified, with both former President Corazon Aquino and the Archbishop of Manila, Cardinal Sin, calling for mass mobilization to force Estrada into resignation (Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 275f.; Landé 2001). On the fifth day of the protests, the Supreme Court swore in the incumbent Vice President Arroyo, a member of the traditional political elite, as the new president. However, it was not until the Chief of the Army Staff, General Angelo Reyes, withdrew his support that Estrada finally had to step down (Reid 2001, p. 783; Thompson 2008, p. 385). This led to the labelling of People Power II as a "civilian-military upris-

ing" (Franco 2004, p. 126) or as an upheaval that had "equal ingredients of civilian and military participation" (Yabes 2009, p. 248). Furthermore, the EDSA II uprising was widely criticized because it was mainly led by urban-based, elitist civil society groups and because Estrada had secured broad-based electoral support, particularly from the rural and the urban poor, in the 1998 polls (e.g. Hedman 2006a, pp. 167–186; Franco 2004; Landé 2001, pp. 97ff.). Accordingly, People Power II was also interpreted as a clear sign of an emerging crisis of middle-class belief in the electoral process (Thompson 2008, p. 384)[28].

Since the democratic transition in 1986, civil society has also played a key role in the recruitment of political elites. Specifically, the post-Marcos electoral landscape has been characterized by the existence of ideologically broad-based and highly fluid electoral coalitions, a pattern that Abinales (2001) has called "coalition politics". This has allowed civil society actors as diverse as development NGOs, Church-based organizations, liberal democratic groups with links to corporate business and leftist groups to gain access to the highest echelons of political decision-making by supporting the electoral campaigns of either traditional politicians or populists (Abinales 2001; Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 239f.). As Abinales and Amoroso (2005, p. 240) explain,

> The birth of election driven coalitions—including 'right-wing' politicians, 'left-wing' NGOs, and influential personalities from national leaders to movie stars—has become a notable feature of post-Marcos politics. The objective of the coalitions is to capture the two top executive posts, and as many legislative seats as possible. If successful, coalition members are apportioned state agencies and positions commensurate with their strength and contribution to the electoral campaign.

More precisely, where such electoral coalitions have been successful in bringing a political aspirant to power, the civil society leaders who have contributed to organizing the latter's campaign have frequently been rewarded with high-ranking executive posts, such as ministerial positions (Abinales 2001; Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 239f.), a phenomenon that has been referred to as cross-over leadership (Lewis 2008, pp. 128ff.; see also Lewis 2013).[29] In fact, to this day, all post-authoritarian Philippine governments have had civil society representatives in their cabinets (Franco 2004; Magadia 1999, pp. 261ff.; Siliman and Noble 1998b, pp. 297; Polestico 2006). Where the strategy of 'cross-over politics' has enabled civil society leaders to preside over important state agencies, such

as the DAR, the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), the Department of Health (DoH), or the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), they have often been able to exert considerable influence with regard to law-making and administrative policy-making (Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 240f.; Lewis 2008, pp. 128ff.). The DoH and the Urban Development Coordinating Council, for instance, have been able to pass or broker reformist laws, owing to civil society leadership (Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 240f.). Cross-over leadership has also been facilitated by the lack of specialized, technical expertise on the part of the Philippine state, which has made successive post-authoritarian governments reach out to development experts from civil society for the purpose of enhancing state performance in the welfare sector (Lewis 2008, p. 130).[30] Once in office, such civil society leaders have often been able to exert strong influence within the bureaucracy, precisely because the state has been "malleable" and weak.[31]

However, coalition politics and cross-over leadership have also led to the emergence of new tensions within Philippine civil society and reinforced existing ones (e.g. Lewis 2013). More precisely, civil society actors have often quarrelled over access to high-ranking political posts, a development that has limited their ability to contribute to sustainable democratic change (Franco 2004; Lewis 2008, pp. 128ff.)[32]. As a *rejectionist* activist put it,

> Political opportunity [for civil society; J.L.], […], derived from the fact that the Philippine ruling groups are not consolidated. It is possible to look for divisions in the elite. It is possible to push certain things, taking advantage of the divisions within the elite. But this [chance; J.L: …] could not be maximised because of divisions within civil society itself.[33]

In February 2006, a highly diverse coalition of civil society actors aligned itself with rebellious military fractions inside the AFP for the purpose of toppling the government of Arroyo, which was implicated in electoral fraud and serious corruption charges (Go et al. 2006; Melencio 2006; Vitug and Gloria 2006).[34] In July 2005, the "Hello Garci" tapes, wiretapped records of a telephone conversation between Arroyo and Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano (Garci), revealed that the president had massively rigged the 2004 polls in order to secure her re-election. Opposition lawmakers and civil society representatives subsequently tried to get Arroyo impeached, but the impeachment trial in Congress col-

lapsed, reportedly because the president had bribed a number of the members of Congress (Hedman 2006b, pp. 187ff.).

On 24 February 2006, several civil society activists and rebellious AFP officers belonging to the Young Officers New Generation (YOUNG) and the *Magdalo* group reportedly tried to stage a military-coup-cum-People-Power (Go et al. 2006, p. 19; Melencio 2006).[35] More precisely, renegade officers from the Scout Rangers, the Marines and the Special Action Force of the Police were supposed to march from their military barracks in Camp Aquinaldo to downtown Metro Manila and join public demonstrations organized by civil society activists on EDSA. In front of the EDSA shrine, the main memorial of the People Power I uprising, General Danilo (Danny) Lim of the Scout Rangers, the suspected mastermind of the coup, was meant to declare that the military was withdrawing its support from Arroyo.[36] As a General Lim stated,

> The plan was […] for the military and the members of the police, the Special Action Forces, some Marines, […] the [Scout; J.L.] Rangers […] to go out and join the people in […] mass rallies and demonstrations. A […] scenario where your military is […] echoing the same sentiments, the same calls for reforms, the same calls for the resignation of the incumbent leadership. […] So, basically, the plan was […] for the men in uniform to join the 24th February [rallies; J.L. …]. 24th February 2006 would have been […] the 20th anniversary of […] the EDSA revolution.[37]

The plan failed, however, both because the Chief of Staff, General Generoso Senga, did not support the endeavour and because the popular demonstrations, which were organized by groups belonging to the *rejectionist* left as well as civil society leaders from liberal democratic groups close to the business community and some Church-based activists, failed to draw huge crowds (Gonzales 2006; Vitug and Gloria 2006; on the lack of popular participation in the 2006 demonstrations see also Coronel 2007).[38]

Some civil society activists believed that if the coup attempt had succeeded, they would have been invited to form part of an interim government that would have reformed the electoral process, limited the power of the traditional political elite and strengthened the independent, bureaucratic institutions of the state (Go et al. 2006; Melencio 2006).[39] For instance, a well-known *rejectionist* leader who supported the attempted coup elaborated that the electoral process in the Philippines was domi-

nated by traditional politicians and populists. The electoral system was "kaput", he said, and not "capable of selecting national leadership". In the event of a successful coup, he stated, civil society activists would have been included in a transition government that would have implemented comprehensive constitutional and electoral reforms, before allowing elected political leaders to take over the reins of the state again.[40]

In the years prior to the February 2006 coup attempt, some renegade military officers, civil society leaders and public intellectuals had also reportedly discussed a blueprint for a "transition revolutionary government" (Go et al. 2006, p. 19).[41] Most notably, a local academic and high-ranking leader of the *rejectionist* alliance *Laban ng Masa* (LM), which mobilized protestors for the 2006 demonstrations, stated that young renegade officers had asked him as early as 2003 whether he could help them formulate a political agenda, building on their "National Recovery Program". The latter was basically a rudimentary programme for a future government, which Gregorio (Gringo) Honasan, who was a prominent member of the RAM and had been involved in several previous coup attempts, had given to the young military rebels. The above-cited academic recalled that following his encounter with the rebel soldiers, he had organized several public meetings involving civil society leaders and public intellectuals at the University of the Philippines (UP) in order to develop a programme, which different anti-Arroyo groups could draw on for input.[42] The outcome of these gatherings was a reform agenda entitled "Blueprint for a Viable Philippines", which tackled a large variety of issues, including bureaucratic reforms, labour, education and agricultural development. Most notably, however, it advocated for the establishment of a "strong developmental state". The document was co-authored by a number of prominent public intellectuals and civil society leaders (Blueprint for a Viable Philippines 2005; Fajardo III 2005; Datinguinoo 2005). One of these authors denied that the blueprint had ever been intended to be used by a government installed through extra-constitutional means.[43] However, the document's publication in the summer of 2005 coincided exactly with calls by LM for Arroyo to relinquish her post and make room for a "transitional revolutionary government" (Datinguinoo 2005; Rimban 2005).

Staring from the late 2000s, most civil society groups returned to coalition politics and cross-over strategies as the main ways of influencing political decision-making. Specifically, following the death of Corazon Aquino in August 2009, various civil society organizations began to support the electoral campaign of her son, Benigno S. (Noynoy) Aquino,

who campaigned on an anti-poverty and anti-corruption agenda (e.g. EU 2014). Following Aquino's election to the presidency, several well-known civil society leaders were appointed to government positions. For instance, Corazon (Dinky) Soliman, the former head of CODE-NGO, which had played a crucial role during the controversial EDSA II demonstrations, became the Secretary of the DSW, a post she had also held under the Arroyo government. Similarly, Florencio (Butch) Abad, a former leading member of the agrarian reform NGO KAISAHAN, was appointed as the Secretary of Budget and Management (Dressel 2013). Joel Rocamora, a leader of the IPD who had actively supported Aquino's campaign,[44] became the Secretary of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (OPP 2015).

The Aquino government also embarked on a number of reform projects that were welcomed by various civil society groups. In late 2012, for instance, the president pushed through the Reproductive Health Bill against the resistance of the Catholic Church (Sidel 2014), thereby fulfilling a long-standing demand of many liberal and leftist civil society groups. In addition, civil society participation in the budget planning process of several state departments was enhanced, a measure that had been pushed by an "advocacy coalition" consisting of highly specialized NGOs as well as representatives from the civil service and the private sector (Dressel 2013).

4.2.5 The Internal Organizational Structures of Co-Opted Civil Society Groups

In order to spread its Communist ideology, recruit followers for its guerrilla army, deliver social services to local constituencies and enhance its social control, the CPP-NPA has established *sectoral* front organizations, such as peasant, labour, student, women and youth groups, a strategy that is perfectly in line with the party's Marxist-Leninist and Maoist ideological orientation (e.g. Quimpo 2008; Putzel 1995; Santos 2005). However, since the 1950s, the Catholic Church and landed, traditional political families have established the same type of *sectoral groups* in order to counter the influence of the CPP-NPA, and previously of its predecessor, the PKP, as well as to strengthen their own potential for social control. This suggests that they have *copied* this form of organizing from the Communist left.[45]

Since its formation, the CPP-NPA has been organized around the Marxist-Leninist principle of *democratic centralism*, with its three core

tenets of subordinating the minority to the majority, the individual to the collective and the lower organizational units to the higher ones (CPP 1972). Consequently, decision-making within the party has generally been rather top-down in nature (e.g. Chapman 1988, pp. 248f.; Quimpo 2008, pp. 75ff.). More precisely, policy directives have usually been developed by the CPP-NPA's Central Committee and then been passed down to the party's numerous territorial and thematic commissions, both of which have been in charge of controlling the CPP-NPA's regional committees. These committees have generally been responsible for overseeing the party's section, district and front committees, which, in turn, have controlled the CPP-NPA's local party branches and *barrio* (ward) revolutionary committees. While the lower-ranking party units have sometimes been consulted by the higher-ranking ones during the deliberation phase, they have generally been forced to implement central policy decisions, once made, without contradiction (LoC 1991; Quimpo 2008, pp. 75ff.).[46]

In addition, the CPP-NPA has also used *democratic centralism* as a means to control the civil society groups aligned with it, a practice that is reflective of the party's overarching aim of using these organizations for the purpose of establishing social control. Similarly, the CPP-NPA has also established "party cells" within its affiliated sectoral groups, severely curtailing their autonomy (Quimpo 2008, p. 81f.).[47] Moreover, "advanced elements", that is, front organization members whom the CPP-NPA has considered as candidates for recruitment into the party, have also frequently exercised strong influence within the CPP-NPA's above-ground civil society groups, operating under the direct guidance of local party cadres (Putzel 1995, p. 652).[48] As Putzel (1995, p. 653) has noted,

> Often, on the local level, some members of legal 'people's organisations' (peasant associations, trade unions, teachers' associations, and so on) owed more allegiance to local party leadership than the national leadership of their organisation.

In most cases, the civil society groups affiliated with the CPP-NPA have also practiced *democratic centralism* themselves, abiding by the principles of subordinating the minority to the majority, the lower organs to the higher ones and the individual to the collective. As a consequence, their internal set-up has often mirrored that of the CPP-NPA itself. More specifically, just like the Communist party itself, the CPP-NPA's front organizations have generally been made up of various tiers of committees, with

higher-ranking committees interfering in the decision-making processes of lower-ranking ones. In particular, candidates for leadership positions in lower-ranking committees have often been "pre-selected" by central or executive committee members, based on the instructions of party cadres or "advanced elements".[49] As a member of a *rejectionist* civil society organization explained,

> It's democratic centralism; there's just one command. […] No matter what […] how we say it's 'democratic', […] there's still one that […] gives the directions and sets […] the pace of the movement. A revolution is not democracy, right? It's a one mind, one culture setup.[50]

This is also exemplified by the internal organizational structures of the LFS, a leading *reaffirmist* student organization. On the one hand, the constitution of the LFS, which explicitly enshrines the principle of *democratic centralism*, states that all decisions must be taken "after collective discussion". However, on the other hand, it also establishes that "the individual is under the organisation […] the minority is under the majority […and the; J.L. …] lower organ is under the higher organ". Similarly, while the members of the organization's higher-ranking bodies are obliged to "study reports, news, information and communications from lower bodies and individual members", the latter are generally required to "seek guidance" from the LFS' higher-ranking organs and leaders (LFS 2007, p. 6).

During the split of the CPP-NPA in the early 1990s, several party cadres and front organization members criticized the principle of *democratic centralism* and advocated for greater autonomy for the civil society groups affiliated with the party (ICG 2011, p. 6; Quimpo 2008, pp. 59ff.; 78–93). According to Quimpo (2008, pp. 78–93), the *rejectionist* groups that emerged from the split have often attributed greater value to democratic procedures and political pluralism and have also been more willing to respect "the integrity and autonomy of POs [people's organizations; J.L.]/NGOs vis-à-vis political parties" (ibid., p. 87). Similarly, a leading parliamentarian of the *rejectionist party-list* group *Akbayan!*, also stressed the autonomy of the "mass movement" and defined her party's relationship with it as one of "partnership", rather than cadre discipline. *Akbayan!* was not like the Maoist groups, she said, adding that all of the party's affiliated civil society groups were allowed to have their own legal set-up, membership, and organizational structure.[51]

In theory, the vast majority of *rejectionist* civil society organizations have abandoned *democratic centralism* (Quimpo 2008, pp. 78–93).[52] In practice, however, the mechanism of *democratic centralism*—or at least elements of it—still appears to be in place in many such groups. Specifically, just like *reaffirmist* organizations, many *rejectionist* civil society groups rely on a committee system, in which higher-ranking committees interfere in the decision-making processes of lower-ranking ones. Most notably, while the representatives of all higher-level committees are generally meant to be elected by, and from among, the members of the next lower-level ones, the eligible candidates are often "pre-selected" by the central or the executive committees, respectively. This also means that, while it is possible for rank-and-file activists with charisma and skills to be elected into leadership positions in principle, this generally does not happen without the endorsement of the central or executive committee. In fact, some *rejectionist* civil society groups appear to have explicitly adopted a modified version of *democratic centralism*, according to which the mechanism is supposed to work in a more "bottom-up", rather than a purely "top-down" fashion.[53] In practice, however, top-down forms of internal decision-making remain seemingly dominant in such organizations, leading one *rejectionist* activist to conclude that "[t]he main problem is that the democratic movement is not democratic internally".[54]

4.2.6 The Limited Ability of Co-Opted Civil Society Groups to Perform Democratic Functions

As noted earlier, the CPP-NPA has taken a largely *instrumentalist* approach towards its front organizations, using them for the purposes of spreading its Communist ideology, enhancing its social control and, at times, strengthening its capacity for armed struggle in the countryside (Franco and Borras 2009, pp. 213–18; Putzel 1995, pp. 652ff.; Quimpo 2008, pp. 81ff.). Consequently, the ability of the CPP-NPA's affiliated NGOs and *sectoral groups* to perform a representative function for their members and social constituencies has often been limited. The party's peasant and workers' unions, for instance, have often, at least to a certain extent, advocated the genuine interests of their members, such as demands for land and higher wages [55] At the same time, however, these sectoral interests have generally been subordinated to the CPP-NPA's overarching political goal of capturing state power (Quimpo 2008, p. 83). Accordingly, these interests have often been re-interpreted to fit into the ideological framework of the CPP-

NPA. By the same token, the CPP-NPA's affiliated civil society groups have often been characterized by high levels of ideological coherence, thereby generating *bonding social capital*. Owing to their frequent refusal to cooperate with civil society actors that have different political visions, however, their ability to generate bridging social capital has usually been limited. Unsurprisingly, this tendency has been especially strong in the party's sectoral groups, which, by definition, run along rather than cut across existing professional, age and gender lines. As exemplified by the KDF, however, instrumentalism and the strategy of sectoral organizing have been far from unique to the Communist party. Instead, other, more socially conservative power centres, such as landed families, have also often treated their dependent constituencies in an instrumentalist fashion, encouraging the formation of *sectoral* groups for the purpose of consolidating their own power bases (for a similar argument see Putzel 1995, p. 665).

During the Marcos era, the CPP-NPA's front organizations and affiliated NGOs have often played an important role in denouncing the human rights violations committed by the Philippine military and other state security forces (ICG 2011, pp. 11, 22; Quimpo 2008, pp. 79ff.). Similarly, the *reaffirmist* human rights group *Karapatan* continues to monitor assaults by the state security forces on ethnic minorities and is vocal in criticizing the human rights abuses of the AFP and the politically motivated arrests of civil society activists (Karapatan WS 2016). However, the *watchdog function* performed by *reaffirmist* human rights organizations has often been selective in nature in that they have generally refrained from criticizing abuses committed by the Communist party's armed wing, the NPA (ICG 2011, p. 7; Quimpo 2008, pp. 79ff.). For instance, Karapatan's mandate covers only the monitoring of human rights abuses by agencies of the state (ICG 2011, p. 7). According to Quimpo (2008, pp. 79ff.), this selective monitoring and criticism is because the CPP-NPA and the civil society organizations that sympathize with it have generally assumed an *instrumentalist* approach to human rights, using them primarily as "a political tool" to "expose and oppose" the 'reactionary' character" of the Philippine state and the deficits of the country's semi-feudal political order, rather than recognizing their intrinsic value.

The limited ability of co-opted civil society groups to perform a watchdog function is also exemplified by NAMFREL, whose parallel vote count played a crucial role in the breakdown of the Marcos regime. After the 1986 democratic transition, the organization continued its election monitoring activities, operating under the leadership of the Catholic Church

and the corporate business community. Specifically, on the local level, election observation volunteers have generally been recruited by the CBCP's NASSA and the social action centres of the Church. For the tabulation of the election returns, however, the organization has mostly relied on middle-class volunteers from its national partner companies for support. These companies have also usually donated to NAMFREL and have often been represented on the organization's board. Accordingly, leading members of both the MBC and the PBBC have held chief executive positions within NAMFREL throughout the democratic period (Datinguinoo 2006)[56].

In the run-up to the 2004 elections, the MBC largely supported the candidacy of Arroyo, a member of the traditional political elite, calling NAMFREL's impartiality into question. Most notably, the executive director of the MBC, Guillermo (Bill) Luz, who also acted as the Secretary General of NAMFREL at that time, strongly denounced the candidacy of Fernando Po Jr., a former movie star and Arroyo's main rival, who called on the masses through direct populist appeals (Cavinti and Manila 2004; Dizon 2003; Toms 2004). For instance, Luz stated publicly that the business community was "tired of" populist contenders and that "election is not a beauty contest" (cited after Dizon 2003).

Immediately after the 2004 polls, when the counting of the votes was still going on, both NAMFREL's Secretary General, Bill Luz, and the organization's co-chairman, Bishop Gutierrez, declared publicly that cheating was isolated and was not going to affect the overall election results (Rufo 2009)[57]. The statements were contested by Abdullah Dalidig, NAMFREL's provincial chairman for Lanao del Sur, one of the main areas in which vote rigging committed on behalf of Arroyo was later found to have occurred. However, Dalidig was disowned by NAMFREL's national leadership, leading to massive public criticism (Chua 2005; PCIJ 2006). As a high-ranking NAMFREL representative admitted,

> They [i.e. our critics; J.L. …] were saying that […] we already had the evidence of Lanao del Sur and Cebu and the Visayas [areas in which rigging occurred; J.L.], and we kept silent. That was true actually. There's also this issue about our Secretary General […] issuing a statement that […] there might be some fraud happening, but it's isolated and […] it would not affect […] the outcome of the […] elections. I think that was an irresponsible statement also, because it […] cost us our credibility […]. We are supposed to uphold non-partisanship. You cannot come out with that statement, if you are still in the counting process. […] […] The Secretary General of NAMFREL before, Bill Luz, was the spokesperson of MBC […] which was […] initially supportive of GMA [Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo; J.L.]. […] So, he was coming up with statements that made the public confused.[58]

In the summer of 2004, Roberto Verzola, a learned statistician and university lecturer who had directly observed NAMFREL's parallel count in 2004, accused the election watchdog of hiding Arroyo's electoral fraud through various means, including the selective tabulation of election tallies, the misreporting of precinct counts and the withholding of precinct breakdowns (PCIJ 2006; Verzola 2006)[59]. Finally, in July 2005, the "Garci Tapes" revealed a phone conversation in which Election Commissioner Garcillano told Arroyo that NAMFREL was "now sympathetic to us" (PCIJ 2006; see also Lorenzo 2007). As a result, NAMFREL lost much of its public credibility.[60]

4.3 Civil Society in the Context of Patronage and Corruption

Patronage and corruption are endemic in the Philippines, with state elites and alternative power centres as diverse as traditional politicians, populists and even the Maoist CPP-NPA engaging in clientelist and corrupt practices for the purpose of establishing social control and enhancing their political influence (Kasuya 2005; Parreno 1998; Rüland et al. 2005, p. 185; on the CPP-NPA see e.g. Hernandez 2005, p. 17). Moreover, it has been recognized that patronage and corruption often characterize civil society as well (e.g. EU 2014, esp. p. 4, 9; Lewis and Hossain 2008, pp. 68ff., Loewen 2005).[61] In rural areas, for instance, charitable initiatives and welfare-oriented civil society groups have often been part of patron-client relations formed around landed elite families (Siliman and Noble 1998a, pp. 15f.; Lewis and Hossain 2008, p. 68). Starting in the late 1980s, civil society groups, such as development NGOs, leftist organizations and liberal democratic associations linked to corporate business, became involved in highly fluid patron-client relations in the context of electoral politics (Abinales 2001).

4.3.1 The Use of Patronage and Corruption by the CPP-NPA and Its Affiliated Civil Society Groups

In principle, the CPP-NPA has vowed to abolish the *hacienda* system and to dismantle the "semi-feudal" structure of Philippine state. In practice, however, the Communist party has frequently engaged in different types of clientelistic and corrupt practices in order to gain influence and establish or maintain social control over rural constituencies (Anderson 1998, p. 224; Kerkvliet 2010, esp. p. 6). As early as 1972, for instance, the

CPP-NPA published its "Revolutionary Guide to Land Reform", which outlined both a "maximum agrarian reform programme", which aimed at the expropriation of the *haciendero*s and the distribution of their landed estates to landless farmers, and a more moderate "minimum agrarian reform programme". From the late 1970s to the early 1990s, when the CPP-NPA was quite strong militarily, it sought to implement its "maximum agrarian reform programme" in some "red areas", where its guerrilla forces exerted territorial control (Putzel 1995, pp. 646–50).[62] By contrast, in "white areas", where the party has exercised some influence but been unable to establish territorial control, it has usually attempted to implement its "minimum land reform programme", which leaves the *hacienda* system largely intact. Specifically, under this programme, the CPP-NPA has at times forced large landowners to improve the living conditions of their tenants, to change existing sharecropping systems in the tenants' favour or to pay higher wages to their salaried *hacienda* workers (Franco and Borras 2009, p. 213; Hawes 1990, p. 282; Putzel 1995, pp. 646–50). The following quotation from a journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA illustrates how the Communist party and its civil society supporters have justified this entanglement with the *hacienda* system in ideological terms:

> [I]t [the cooperation with the *haciendero*s; J.L.], is … part of their [the CPP-NPA's; J.L.] stages of revolution […]. In some cases, in fact, it is part of their strategy to look for so-called enlightened landlords and come to some sort of accommodation, which is basically a […] tactical thing […]. Where the rebels actually are strong, they do manage […] to give the tenants more share [of the crop, etc.; J.L.].[63]

Reaffirmist civil society groups sympathetic to the CPP-NPA have also used clientelist practices and have strategically engaged with the *hacienda* system at times in order to access resources and realize their goals. For instance, the Philippine Hacienda Workers Federation (PHWF)[64], a militant labour union for *hacienda* workers, forges Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) and signs Memoranda of Understanding (MOAs) with *hacienda* owners, so that it can deliver tangible benefits to its members.[65] On *haciendas* of 24 hectares or less, the PHWF generally attempts to make the landowners sign MOAs, which typically obligate the latter to pay the minimum wage. On *haciendas* of 30 hectares or more, by contrast, the labour union usually seeks to conclude CBAs with the *hacienda* management. Generally, such CBAs obligate the *hacienda* owners to pay

their farm workers salaries above the minimum wage as well as to provide them with certain additional benefits, such as retirement pensions. Unlike MOAs, CBAs are typically registered with the Department of Labour (DoL), which monitors their implementation.[66]

The PHWF is thus deeply entrenched in the *hacienda* system,[67] using traditional patron-client relations strategically in order to cater to the welfare needs of its members. Interviews suggest that this clientelistic approach forms an integral part of the PHWF's broader strategy of spreading its Communist ideology and recruiting new followers from among the *hacienda* workers in a context where various alternative power centres, including other leftist forces, as well as large landowners, struggle for social control over rural constituencies. Two high-ranking representatives of the PHWF explained, for instance, that the organization's local leaders had to "tactically" struggle within the existing legal and political framework in order to be able to sustain their organizational activities among the *hacienda* workers, adding that, if they took a "hands-off" stance, these workers would certainly be organized by other groups.[68] As one of the interviewees further explained, they would take advantage of "any condition that makes it possible for us to organize the workers" and do "anything that can mobilize and educate" the latter.[69]

4.3.2 The Use of Patronage and Corruption by (Formerly) Foreign-Funded NGOs and CBOs

From the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, the Philippines received large amounts of donor funding, much of which went to programmes that supported the establishment of "mixed" or "complementary" welfare systems. Accordingly, many international donors also promoted the contracting-out of state welfare services to NGOs and CBOs. At the same time, however, foreign funding to local civil society groups was often channelled through state agencies, such as the DSW or the DAR, or, following the passage of the LGC in 1991, through units of the local government. This donor approach forced many local NGOs and CBOs into close collaboration with the state, with many civil society activists developing close personal relationships with members of the bureaucracy (ADB 1999, pp. 32; 52ff.; DED 2003, p. 270)[70].

The increasingly prominent role of civil society groups in social service delivery notwithstanding, the institutional capacity of the SEC as the main regulatory agency for NGOs remained extremely limited, a condition that

persists today. Most notably, owing to its capacity constraints, the SEC has usually refrained from conducting any kind of field-level monitoring of the local NGO activities that are carried out under its auspices. By the same token, it has rarely enforced compliance with its reporting and accounting requirements. Consequently, adherence to the SEC's rules and regulations has remained weak, and many NGOs have suffered from a lack of financial accountability or even corruption.[71] Specifically, concerns have been raised about the existence of "pseudo" or "fly-by-night" NGOs created exclusively for the purpose of acquiring foreign funding. Similarly, several local NGO leaders have been accused of misappropriating donor funds for private benefit, while some local NGOs have reportedly also been used to dodge taxes (ADB 1999, p. 16; Abella and Dimalanta 2003, pp. 239ff.; Constantino-David 1998; EU 2014, pp. 4, 9; Soledad 2002). As one local NGO expert lamented, "Here, we have had NGOs that have figured in scams and scandals".[72] International donors, for their part, have been criticized for frequently turning a blind eye to the financial irregularities committed by their local partner NGOs and for showing little interest in strengthening the regulatory agencies of the state (Abella and Dimalanta 2003, p. 244)[73].

Starting in the mid-1990s, foreign assistance to the Philippines declined overall, and donor support to NGOs and other civil society groups likewise dwindled (Abella and Dimalanta 2003, pp. 235ff.; EU 2014, p. 3), while the Philippine state, despite the weakness of its bureaucratic institutions, retained a considerable resource base. In this context, many civil society activists began to increasingly use their existing personal networks inside the bureaucracy for the purpose of gaining access to state resources. Specifically, many civil society groups have since attempted to obtain state contracts for development projects or to gain access to public resources and services, which they could then channel to their beneficiaries. At the same time, the ways in which many civil society organizations used "coalition" and "cross-over politics" also began to change. As noted earlier, from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, many civil society activists had used the forging of electoral coalitions with trapos and populists primarily as a means of influencing political decision-making. After the decline in foreign funding, however, various civil society leaders became dependent on "cross-over politics" in order to continue their development projects and make a living. Most notably, many civil society groups belonging to the *rejectionist* left have since struggled to obtain leading positions inside the DAR, not only in order to be able to contribute to the formulation

of progressive agrarian reform laws but also to access state resources, which they could then channel to development projects benefitting their rural constituencies[74]. Similarly, Lewis (2013, p. 42) writes that, during the government of Arroyo (2001–2010), "the lines of patronage that existed within the civil society and NGO communities were becoming more apparent", as many representatives of civil society expected their fellow activists, who had crossed over into the state, to deliver "insider favours—in the form of providing preferential treatment, information and even contracts".

Moreover, an increasing number of civil society groups also began to engage in *pork barrel* politics. Since the late 1980s, successive Philippine presidents have secured their parliamentary majorities and enforced political discipline by rewarding loyal members of Congress through the selective allocation of 'pork barrel fund', which are discretionary development funds for development and infrastructure projects in individual electoral districts (Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 235, 258; Parreno 1998). Following the drop in donor funding in the mid-1990s, several civil society-based *party-list* groups began to strategically align themselves with the presidential majority in Congress in order to avail of such *pork barrel* funds as well.[75]

These tendencies are exemplified by the Alliance for Rural Concerns (ARC), a coalition of agrarian reform and peasant groups belonging to the *rejectionist* left. In order to contribute to the formulation of the CARP—Extension with Reforms (CARPER) bill in Congress and avail of both pork barrel funds and DAR resources, the ARC deliberately allowed itself to become co-opted by a highly controversial traditional political family. In 2007, the ARC applied for registration under the *party-list* law, but the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) rejected its application, arguing that the group did not have a clear constituency. Soon afterwards, however, the leaders of the ARC were approached by a representative of the presidential camp in Congress, who asked them whether they could nominate Narcisco (Archie) Santiago, the son of Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago, who was one of the main allies of incumbent President Arroyo at that time, as their first *party-list* representative.[76] Obviously, these attempts to co-opt the ARC formed part of a larger strategy employed by the government at that time in order to secure the political survival of Arroyo, which continued to be under threat because of the Hello Garci scandal and numerous corruption charges. As an agrarian reform activist explained,

> During the [2007; J.L.] elections, the administration was moving heaven and earth to enlist more dummy party-lists into the party-list elections and they had a game plan to cripple if not eliminate altogether those party-list organisation[s] which were [...] allied with the opposition or who were by themselves opposed to the Arroyo administration. So what appeared was: They [the ARC; J.L.] became part of the Malacagnang [the Philippine presidential palace; J.L.] scheme.[77]

In what one of its leading representatives described as giving the Arroyo government and the traditional political elite "a dose of their own medicine", the ARC accepted the presidential camp's offer to adopt Narcisco (Archie) Santiago as their first representative and was granted registration immediately afterwards.[78]

Once in Congress, the ARC's second representative, peasant leader Oscar (Oca) Francisco, joined the presidential majority camp in order to be able to benefit from the lucrative *pork barrel* funds allocated by Arroyo to her followers.[79] In an interview, Francisco defended this decision, stating that it had been "tactical and practical" rather than ideological in nature. It was the "power of the purse" that reigned in Congress, he said, and it was his responsibility to take care of the material well-being of his constituency. Both his *pork barrel* funds and his allowances as Congressman went to a wide range of local peasant groups, Francisco explained, adding that members of the parliamentary minority usually did not get their *pork barrel* funds.[80] Moreover, Miriam Defensor-Santiago had served as the Secretary of the DAR from 1989 to 1991, and the conveners of the ARC were hoping that by adopting her son as their *party-list* representative they would also be able to rely on her personal connections inside the department to push the DAR bureaucracy to support the CARPER bill.[81] At the same time, they also appear to have been hoping to use these networks for the purpose of availing themselves of development projects contracted out by the agency.

In spite of their Communist ideology, *reaffirmist* civil society groups have reportedly often relied on the same kinds of clientelistic tactics. Notably, both after the 2001 and the 2004 elections, the *reaffirmist party-list* groups *Bayan Muna*, *Anakpawis* and *Gabriela* likewise aligned with the presidential camp in Congress, allegedly to avail themselves of *pork barrel* funds (Hernandez 2005, p. 17).[82] Furthermore, some leftist civil society groups have also allowed themselves to be used

by traditional politicians for the purpose of vote-buying. As a *rejectionist* leftist NGO leader explained,

> The standard organising of a traditional politician is [based on; J.L.] a village unity with maybe 400, 500 families. […] They will identify two or three leaders. What these leaders do is, they talk to the heads of families and then say: 'Election time, you have four voters in your family, I will give you 2000 pesos'. […] But, as the […] contest among traditional politicians becomes more intense, that kind of ad hoc organisation […] is not enough anymore. So, if there is a federation of farmers organisations in a district with […] 100 000 voters [… or; J.L.] a peasant organisation with 3000 members, then it is better to go through those types of organisations. … […] All you have to do [is; J.L.]: there is an NGO [… and; J.L.] you just have to give a certain amount of money to that NGO.[83]

Oftentimes, the activist explained, leftist civil society groups used the money acquired in this manner to deliver social services to marginalized constituencies or to organize assemblies and conduct political advocacy activities. Therefore, he said, leftist civil society leaders frequently thought of their involvement in vote-buying as a way of "taking the money of the bourgeoisie and using it for the[ir] organising work".[84]

Starting from late 2001, CODE-NGO, the main umbrella organization for national development NGOs, drew sharp public criticism for an initiative to raise money from the capital market. Given that it had played a key role in mobilizing the EDSA II demonstrations that had brought Arroyo to power, CODE-NGO initially had considerable influence on the Arroyo government, and both current and former representatives of the NGO coalition formed part of the president's first cabinet. From March to October 2001, CODE-NGO cooperated closely with the Department of Finance (DoF), the Philippine Treasury, the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Philippine Development Bank (PDB) to create the Poverty Eradication and Alleviation Certificates (PEACe) Bonds, a special type of tax-free, zero-coupon bonds. During this period, the former Executive Director of CODE-NGO, Danilo Songco, sat on the board of the PDB, while at the same time also being part of the NGO core team that lobbied the Arroyo government to issue the PEACe bonds (Abonuevo et al. 2002; FDC 2002, 2011; Polestico 2006; Rimban and Chua 2011). Moreover, Marissa Camacho-Reyes, the acting chairwoman of CODE-NGO, and the main mastermind behind the PEACe Bonds initiative, allegedly used family connections to convince the government to create these bonds. Most notably, the negotiations between the Arroyo government and CODE-NGO

coincided with the appointment of Camacho-Reyes' brother, Isidro Camacho, as the Secretary of Finance (e.g. Rimban and Chua 2011).[85]

On 16 October 2001, CODE-NGO purchased the PEACe Bonds from the Philippine Treasury at the discounted rate of 10.17 billion Philippine pesos. One day later, the NGO coalition resold the bonds for a price of nearly 12 billion pesos, thereby making 1.83 billion pesos in profit. Out of this amount, 340 million pesos went to CODE-NGO's financial advisers. The largest portion of the money, however, went to the Peace and Equity Foundation (PEF), which financed local development projects. It was headed by Hector Soliman, the husband of former CODE-NGO chairwoman Corazon (Dinky) Soliman, who acted as the Secretary of the DSW at that time (CODE-NGO 2010; Esguerra 2002; FDC 2002, 2011; Polestico 2006; Rimban and Chua 2011). After the PEACe Bonds initiative, CODE-NGO faced serious allegations of tax evasion, the plunder of public funds, corruption and "influence peddling in the name of the poor" (FDC 2011). Most notably, the bonds were tax exempt and the Philippine government was obliged to buy them back at a rate of approximately 35 billion pesos in 2011, depriving the state of around 4.68 billion pesos in tax earnings. Moreover, while the PEACe Bonds were sold in a public auction, CODE-NGO benefitted from "information asymmetry", as it had contributed to their development (Abonuevo et al. 2002; Esguerra 2002; FDC 2002, 2011; Rimban and Chua 2011).

During the government of Benigno S. (Noynoy) Aquino III (2010–2016), corruption allegations tarnishing the public image of civil society also surfaced. In July 2013, the media revealed a major Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) scam, or, in short, "pork barrel" scam involving businesswoman Janet Lim-Naplones, who had allegedly established a dense web of fake NGOs, foundations and businesses in order to misuse public funds. Several leading politicians, including representatives of the opposition, were implicated in the scam (e.g. Sidel 2014, p. 66f.). Even though the scandal does not serve as evidence for the involvement of existing NGOs in corruption, it nevertheless damaged the public credibility of the NGO sector (EU 2014, p. 4). In 2014, the Philippine Trust Index suggested that only 22 per cent of all Philippine citizens believed that local NGOs were not corrupt.[86] In July 2014, the Supreme Court ruled that parts of the Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP) created by the Aquino government to disburse unspent budget funds were unconstitutional. Following the ruling, the Secretary of Budget and Management, Florencio (Butch) Abad, a cross-over leader with close connections to civil society who had been involved in the

development of the DAP, faced fierce public criticism and calls for his resignation (Sidel 2015, p. 224).

The use of clientelistic and corrupt strategies has caused serious divisions in Philippine civil society. Specifically, the involvement of civil society organizations in 'coalition' and 'cross-over politics' has often led to severe conflicts over the "division of political spoils" awarded by incoming state leaders to their loyal civil society supporters (Franco 2004, pp. 17f.). Since the 1990s, for instance, struggles over access to DAR resources and development projects contracted out by the agency have repeatedly caused serious frictions within the *rejectionist* civil society camp.[87] Similarly, the PEACe Bonds initiative of CODE-NGO also led to fierce conflicts within national civil society, given that its most vehement critics, such as the IPD and the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC), were themselves also part of the NGO community (Esguerra 2002; FDC 2002, 2011).

On the micro-level, these tendencies are exemplified by the ARC, which originally established itself as a sister party of *Akbayan!*. In fact, in the beginning, one of the main purposes the ARC's foundation appears to have been to gain more seats for *Akbayan!* activists in Congress, where, according to existing law, *party-list* groups cannot hold more than three seats. The decision of the ARC's conveners to align themselves both with the Santiago family and with the Congressional majority, however, was fiercely rejected by many *Akbayan!* members. Finally, *Akbayan!* split, and a heated political quarrel erupted between the two *party-list* groups. Following this break-up, all of *Akbayan!*'s affiliated NGOs and farmer federations also split, aligning themselves either with *Akbayan!* or the ARC. Most notably, these included the PEACE Foundation, the Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services (PARRDS), and UNORKA, formerly one of the country's largest alliances of peasant groups.[88] In addition, the Reform CARP Movement, a broad-based civil society coalition that had been forged in 2006 for the purpose of advocating for an extension and reform of the CARP, also split as a result of the conflict between *Akbayan!* and the ARC.[89]

4.3.3 Patronage and Corruption, the Internal Organizational Structures of Civil Society Groups and the Role of Foreign Funding

Since the late 1980s, many local NGOs have been led by representatives of the educated, upper-middle class who have dominated internal decision-making, installed friends and relatives in key executive positions and

handled relations with the state and the donor community almost entirely on their own. Accordingly, most Philippine NGOs have been unelected organizations, in which lower-ranking staff members and beneficiaries have usually been excluded from policy decision-making (Abella and Dimalanta 2003, pp. 245f.).[90] In many cases, the emergence of internal hierarchies and clientelistic practices has been encouraged by foreign donor engagement. Most notably, international aid agencies have frequently reinforced the position of local NGO leaders by failing to make their financial support and the conduct of joint projects conditional on collective decisions by the NGO boards and by "closing contracts with the ED [Executive Director; J.L.] as sole signatory for the NGO" (Abella and Dimalanta 2003, p. 246). Furthermore, most foreign donors have provided their local NGO partners with project rather than budget support, and, as a consequence, many NGOs have hired significant portions of their staff only on a project basis, a pattern that has strengthened the position of the NGO leadership vis-à-vis the general staff (Abella and Dimalanta 2003; DED 2003, p. 270). In turn, such internal hierarchies have often led to a serious lack of transparency and accountability in foreign-funded NGOs, thereby increasing their susceptibility to patronage and corruption. Most notably, management and oversight functions have been blurred in many cases, a condition that has lent itself readily to different forms of financial abuse. For instance, NGO board members have sometimes acted as paid consultants for foreign-funded developments project, which they themselves had approved (Abella and Dimalanta 2003, pp. 239–246).[91]

On the micro-level, the vicious cycle of the use of patronage and the development of strong intra-organizational hierarchies is exemplified by the ARC. Specifically, after entering Congress, the ARC's second representative, Oca Francisco, unilaterally decided to join the presidential majority of Arroyo in order to avail of *pork barrel* funds. As Francisco frankly admitted, the ARC's members and beneficiaries were not involved in this decision and, in fact, initially rejected it outright. "It was my call", Francisco stated, "I said, I want to align with the majority", conceding that the ARC's rank-and-file activists and rural peasant constituencies would have preferred to join the parliamentary minority and support the political opposition.[92]

Once the ARC had become aligned with the majority camp in Congress, the dependence of the *party-list* group's members and beneficiaries on their main leader, Congressman Francisco, increased. Specifically, given that the group received hardly any foreign funding at that time, the ARC and its affiliated peasant groups came to rely on Francisco's *pork barrel*

funds and congressional allowances to conduct their development projects. Until the mid-1990s, the PEACE Foundation, PARRDS and other NGOs, which later became affiliated with the ARC, received considerable amounts of foreign funding, a condition that also allowed them to hire a large number of staff. Starting from the late 1990s, however, much of this support dwindled and, as of 2009, the PEACE Foundation, for instance, did not even have an office anymore.[93] In this context, some staff members of the ARC's aligned NGOs apparently also came to depend on Francisco's financial support for their livelihood. A local ARC activist from Negros explained, for instance, that most foreign funding for the ARC's affiliated NGOs and CBOs had been withdrawn, "so, sometimes we use the salary of Ka [comrade; J.L.] Oca from Congress".[94]

A community organizer for NOFA, a farmer federation from Negros linked to the ARC, explained how leaders at different levels in the ARC network promised their subordinates material benefits in order to make them accept Francisco's decision to align himself with the Congressional majority. When he and other local leaders heard about this decision, the interviewee said, their first feeling had been one of "objection". He elaborated further,

> We are a progressive party. So why join the corrupt government? Then they [the ARC leaders; J.L.] explained to us that it was only for the purpose of development, to avail of funds for our organisation. […] It is very hard to access funds. NOFA wants to undergo development programs, but we do not have funds. So it [joining the majority; J.L.] is a way to get funds. So we could explain the decision to our members on the ground.[95]

Nevertheless, the ARC's alliance with the Congressional majority of Arroyo remained strongly disputed among the *party-list* group's rural activists and beneficiaries.[96]

4.4 Civil Society in the Context of Violence and Insecurity

Violence and insecurity are widespread in the Philippines, where state elites and alternative power centres as diverse as local warlords, semi-feudal elites and the CPP-NPA use violence strategically to establish social control and expand their influence in the weak state (on the use of violence by traditional politicans and landed elites see e.g. Kreuzer 2007; Mc Coy 2007; Rüland et al. 2005, pp. 116f.; on the CPP-NPA see e.g. Santos 2005).

Specifically, on the local level, traditional political families often command their own security forces or private armies for the purpose of maintaining territorial control over big *haciendas* and other types of landed estates (e.g. Franco and Borras 2009, p. 208; Kreuzer 2007). During the Marcos era (1962–1986), significant parts of the countryside were militarized (e.g. Hawes 1990, pp. 280–298). To this day, militia groups loyal to local elites and members of the state security forces engage in extra-judicial killings, which often target journalists or leftist civil society leaders in particular (e.g. Alston 2008). In this context, civil society actors have often aligned themselves with violent power centres for purposes of protection and have sometimes even endorsed the use of violence themselves.

4.4.1 The Use and Endorsement of Violence by Leftist Civil Society Groups

As noted earlier, during the authoritarian period (1972–1986), when political opposition was largely banned, many formerly more moderate civil society groups aligned themselves with the CPP-NPA, which engaged in guerrilla warfare to topple the Marcos regime. More specifically, in many militarized rural areas, the army, paramilitary units and other state security forces committed massive human rights abuses against peasant leaders and other social activists. In this context, many rural civil society groups aligned themselves with the CPP-NPA for the purpose of protection and in order to be able to continue their engagement in a context where legal channels of resistance were largely blocked. State repression thus played an important role in radicalizing many civil society organizations and driving them into the arms of the CPP-NPA (Hawes 1990, pp. 280–294; ICG 2011, pp. 2ff., 17ff.; Kotte 1987, p. 197). Oftentimes, the underground Communist party also protected local peasant communities against abuses by the traditional landed elite. Hawes (1990, p. 279) thus concludes that "outside organisation and arms" played a crucial role in enabling marginalized rural groups to "overcome the repression, the competitive pressures and their own suspicions, and to join in confronting their problems as well as the powerful political elite".

In addition, the CPP-NPA's specific, Maoist military strategy of the "protracted people's war", with its emphasis on building a peasant army and capturing state power by encircling the cities from the countryside, was also quite conducive to the emergence of prototype civil society organizations in rural areas. This is predominantly because in its early stages, the strategy focuses primarily on extensive organizing (Franco and

Borras 2009, pp. 211ff.; ICG 2011, p. 3; Santos 2005, pp. 7ff.; see also Putzel 1995, pp. 646–54.). As Santos (2005, p. 8) has said,

> While armed struggle […] is the principal form of struggle in PPW [protracted people's war; J.L.], the key requirement for this is mass base-building […]. This mass base-building involves more political and organizational, rather than, military work. In the earlier stages of mass base-building, the NPA […] plays more the role of a shield, rather than a sword or spear, to enable the CPP to […] construct a political infrastructure of mass organizations and local organs of political power.

During the Marcos era, the legal front organizations established by the CPP-NPA within the framework of its protracted people's war strategy occationally contributed to directly strengthening the party's armed potential. Most notably, the establishment of these organizations formed part of the party's efforts to establish guerilla zones and create a support structure for its guerilla army, the NPA (e.g. Franco and Borras 2009, pp. 211ff.; Putzel 1995; pp. 650–54). In addition, the party has sometimes attempted to use these groups as recruiting grounds for the NPA (Boudreau 2004, p. 146; GMA News 14.03.2012; Mallg 2010).[97] According to a journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, for instance, during the Marcos era, "organizers" of one of the party's peasant groups contributed to building up the CPP-NPA's "farmers' army".[98] In addition, the party's legal mass organizations sometimes raised funds from international donors, and the CPP-NPA made sure that a certain percentage of this money was channelled to it and its guerrilla army (Putzel 1995, pp. 653f.; 660).

At the same time, however, many of the CPP-NPA's front organizations also applied other, more democratic organizational tactics. Most notably, within the larger framework of the protracted people's war, many party cadres experimented with the "community organizing" approach of Saul Alinsky, which focused on organizing local communities around concrete social needs, such as food, healthcare or education. In its original form, the "community organizing" method emphasized nonviolent, gradual social change (e.g. Honculada 1985). As such, it differed considerably from the CPP-NPA's conventional organizational strategies, which were geared towards guerrilla zone preparation, that is, the establishment of social support structures for the purpose of military base-building by the NPA. The CPP-NPA and its legal mass organizations resorted to "community organizing" techniques especially in "white areas", where the party was unable to establish territorial control (Franco and Borras 2009,

pp. 213–18).[99] The emergence of this and other, more moderate forms of organizing within the Communist left was facilitated by the fact that during the Marcos period, the CPP-NPA practised the strategy of "centralised leadership and decentralised operations" (ICG 2011, p. 3) in order to avoid collapse in the event of the elimination of its leadership. This gave individual party cadres considerable autonomy and organizational leeway (Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 219ff.; ICG 2011, pp. 3, 7).

After the fall of Marcos, the CPP-NPA's National Peasant Secretariat (NPS) and the PEACE Foundation further enhanced their focus on "community organizing". In addition, they also began to implement the "fast-track, issue-based, sweeping organizing" (FISO) approach, which centred on empowering local communities to demand "tangible services" from the state and, thus, constituted a "radical departure" from the CPP-NPA's traditional strategies of "solid" military organizing and long-term ideological indoctrination. During the split of the CPP-NPA, the NPS, the PEACE Foundation and most of their affiliated peasant organizations broke away from the Communist party (Franco and Borras 2009, pp. 213–218).[100]

Similarly, starting in the early 1980s, a group of party organizers around Edicio (Ed) de la Torre and Horacio (Boy) Morales developed the "united frontline approach", which was geared towards the establishment of a broad-based coalition of opposition forces for the purpose of overthrowing the Marcos regime through aboveground mobilization and "unarmed people's resistance". Just like the community organizing method, the "united frontline approach" differed markedly from the CPP-NPA's traditional Maoist tactic of accepting aboveground forms of civil society mobilization only insofar as they contributed to "guerrilla zone preparation" in the countryside.[101] Following the ousting of Marcos through People Power, Morales and other party cadres launched the *popular democratic* movement, which advocated for open mass mobilization and "critical collaboration" with the state. The popular democrats were soon expelled from the CPP-NPA and joined the *rejectionist* camp after the party's split.[102]

To this day, several civil society groups and activists sympathetic to the CPP-NPA justify the party's involvement in armed struggle (ICG 2011, p. 10) or even view it as a necessary means for changing the Philippine political system[103]. For instance, as one journalist and former community organizer close to the CPP-NPA explained, "[w]hether you like it or not, this legal movement is somehow linked to the armed struggle, but these are different components". Similarly, he also stated, "[i]n a system like the Philippines we need a guiding ideology, and I cannot see any change without armed struggle."[104] Accordingly, it has also been alleged that the CPP-NPA

has continued the practice of using its affiliated civil society groups for the purpose of enhancing its armed potential. For instance, *party-list* groups affiliated with the CPP-NPA have reportedly been obliged to allocate a certain share of their congressional *pork barrel* funds to the NPA (Hernandez 2005, p. 17; see also Cayabyab 2012; Inquirer, 27.10.12).

4.4.2 The Endorsement of Violence by Civil Society Groups Linked to the Catholic Church

Among the civil society organizations that interacted or aligned themselves with the CPP-NPA during the Marcos era were various church-based groups (Coumans 1993, p. 88–104, 120f.; Franco 2004, pp. 106ff.; Moreno 2006, pp. 203ff.; see also Hedman p. 99), and several civil society groups that form part of the lay structure of the Catholic Church continue to sympathize with the Communist party today, especially in areas where the latter retains significant influence, such as on the island of Negros.[105] More specifically, various BCCs came under the influence of the CPP-NPA and its front organizations during the Marcos years, drawing inspiration from Marxist theories (Coumans 1993, pp. 88–104, 120f.; Hedman 2006a, p. 99). Similarly, several foreign-funded NGOs, which had initially been set up by the Church for the purpose of countering Communist influence, such as the TFPD, also became affiliated with the CPP-NPA during the authoritarian period (Clarke 1998b). At the same time, several socially engaged priests and members of the Catholic Church's lay structure, who had joined the Communist party, established NGOs. This included, for instance, Ed de la Torre and Victor Gerardo (Gerry) Bulatao, both former leading members of the TFPD, and Edgar Jopson, the founder of the Church Labour Centre (Clarke 1998a, p. 114). As Clarke (1998a, p. 114) concludes, "NGOs were thus […] an idea that the CPP borrowed from the church". Moreover, by the mid-1970s, activists sympathetic to the Communist ideology had also gained significant influence inside the PECCO, which was the country's leading organization in the field of "community organizing", and which had once been founded by the Jesuits (Franco 2004, pp. 107f.; Honculada 1985, pp. 18ff.). Finally, the PECCO split into different NGOs, one of them being the PEACE Foundation (e.g. Honculada 1985, pp. 19f.), which sympathized with the CPP-NPA and played an important role in strengthening the organizational capacity of the KMP.[106]

Various *sectoral* organizations, such as peasant or labour groups, set up by the Church also aligned themselves with the CPP-NPA during the years

of martial law (Franco 2004, pp. 106ff.). According to Franco (2004, p. 106), for instance, the formerly anti-communist peasant federation FFF joined the Communist movement, which "it had once sought to displace", after finding "all channels for real political participation blocked". The organization of the Christians for National Liberation (CNL) constituted the largest *sectoral* group of the CPP-NPA during the Marcos era (Clarke 1998b, pp. 161ff.). Many trade unions established by the Catholic Church were also infiltrated by the CPP-NPA during the authoritarian period, and some of them continue to sympathize with the Communist party today. As one former leader of such a trade union stated, "If you look at the Philippines, the trade union movement was primarily borne out of the church, but then, after martial law, it was radicalised, it was infiltrated by the Communist party."[107] A specific example of such a union will be described in the following sections.

4.4.3 The Internal Organizational Structures of Civil Society Groups in the Context of Violence and Insecurity

The internal organizational structures of Philippine civil society groups operating in the context of violence and insecurity have generally been highly hierarchical, especially if these groups have endorsed the use of violence themselves. Specifically, in order to protect themselves from state repression or violent onslaughts by the private armed forces of traditional political elites, civil society organizations have, at times, aligned themselves with the CPP-NPA. However, as a result of this increasing closeness to the Communist party, other, more moderate power centres have often distanced themselves from such civil society groups, and state repression has then often increased, leading to a vicious cycle of insecurity, the endorsement of violence and co-optation by the CPP-NPA. On the whole, increased co-optation by the Communist party has generally led to the strengthening of intra-organizational hierarchies within civil society groups, both because the CPP-NPA has controlled its affiliated front organizations through democratic centralism and because it has sometimes used them for the purpose of recruiting party cadres.

These tendencies are exemplified by the PHWF, a *hacienda* workers union, which was founded in the early 1970s. According to a former leading member, the PHWF started out as "a major church initiative".[108] Among its founding members were well-known local priests. Moreover, the labour union initially received considerable support from the local

Bishop and the social action centre of the diocese in which it was established. In the beginning, the PHWF mainly pursued a self-help approach, educating farm workers about their rights.[109]

During the period of martial law (1972–1981), the region in which the PHWF operated was militarized, and many of its local peasant activists faced repression and harassment at the hands of the state security forces, local *hacienda* owners or both. Specifically, local activists of the PHWF were subject to forced evictions, abductions and extra-judicial killings.[110] In this context, the trade union aligned itself with the CPP-NPA for the purpose of protection, eventually becoming "a door [gateway; J.L.] for the full time rebels", as a local church representative put it.[111] Similarly, a former leading member of the trade union stated that the PHWF "was a moderate organisation. […] But after martial law was declared, it was radicalised".[112]

The ties between the CPP-NPA and the PHWF were strengthened further as the moderate section of the organization's leadership, which mainly came from the Catholic Church, was weakened by state repression, Communist recruitment and other factors. In the late 1970s, one of the group's most influential founding members had to emigrate from the Philippines, as local *hacienda* owners accused him of being a member of the CPP-NPA. The local Bishop, who had assisted in the foundation and the development of the organization, was likewise suspected of being aligned with the CPP-NPA. This forced many local priests close to him to go underground. Around the same time, the head of the local social action centre, which had also provided considerable support to the PHWF, did, in fact, join the CPP-NPA and became one of its leading members. In addition, the PHWF's main founder died.[113] As a consequence of these developments, the PHWF "was left without the guidance of the Church now", as one local church representative opined, rendering the organization even more vulnerable to Communist influence and, finally, turning it into a "gateway" or "stepping stone" to the underground. In return, the Church also distanced itself from the PHWF.[114]

To this day, members of the PHWF continue to be subject to arbitrary arrests, intimidation and extra-judicial killings, both by state security forces and private armed militia groups,[115] while the group's alliance with the CPP-NPA also persists. At the same time, some representatives of the Catholic Church in the diocese where the PHWF is active also continue to maintain contacts with the PHWF. These local church leaders try to strike a difficult balance between "orienting" ordinary members of the trade

union away from armed struggle and maintaining a distance from those members of the organization's leadership who have "another agenda", as one of the church leaders put it.[116]

As of 2009, the regional PHWF chapter, which the author visited in the context of her research, was formally run by a regional council that comprised various officers, including a chairman, a vice-chairman, a secretary general and a treasurer. Officially, this regional council was meant to be elected every three years by, and from among, the members of the PHWF's general assembly, which, in turn, was supposed to be made up by the chairmen and the vice chairmen of all the trade union's *hacienda* chapters, along with various PHWF organizers.[117] In reality, however, the CPP-NPA appeared to exercise considerable influence over the trade union, both during the years of martial law and at the time this research was conducted.[118] Specifically, during the Marcos years, the leadership of the PHWF's regional council was often pre-selected by the CPP-NPA. As a former leading member of the trade union explained,

> [It is; J.L.] just like any election. […] If you want your programme to be implemented, you make sure your people win. […] In the end it is the party who determines who will be elected. […] There will be a top-to-bottom command whom to vote for [and there will be; J.L. …] a line-up. […] The individual is subordinate to the collective and the lower organs are subordinate to the higher organs.[119]

Communist party control over internal decision-making and leadership selection processes continued in the democratic period. Specifically, until the early 2000s, both the regional and the local *hacienda* chapters of the PHWF were reportedly controlled by the Regional Trade Union Bureau (RTUB), a party cell located within the trade union's regional structure.[120] The arrangement was abandoned during the Arroyo government (2001–2010), however, when state repression against the PHWF increased and more and more of its leaders were assassinated in extrajudicial killings. According to two leading members of the PHWF, 14 leaders of the trade union were killed between 2005 and 2009 alone, among them both the organization's former chairman and vice president.[121] As the security situation worsened, most full-fledged CPP-NPA cadres were withdrawn from the PHWF's regional structure and, thus, ceased to occupy formal positions within the trade union.[122]

However, the Communist party soon developed new ways to control this front organization. Specifically, a temporary "ad hoc form working secretariat" was put in charge of organizing the elections of the PHWF's regional council officers, its members acting as the "conveners" of the trade union's general assembly.[123] A journalist close to the CPP-NPA suggested that this ad hoc secretariat was controlled by the CPP-NPA's city-based regional party committee, stating that "It is the urban-based party which directs the cells".[124]

In addition, the internal organizational hierarchies within the PHWF were also apparently strengthened by the fact that during the tenure of Arroyo, the trade union's civilian leadership was considerably weakened by extra-judicial killings. For instance, the ad hoc secretariat, which was put in charge of organizing the elections to the PHWF's regional council, was, at least in theory, meant to be composed of various sub-committees, including preparatory committees. As of late 2009, however, only three of the PHWF's main civilian leaders were still alive, including both the trade union's president and its secretary general. Consequently, the "ad hoc working secretariat" was formed mainly by these three leaders, following discussions with select PHWF organizers.[125]

On the local level, the PHWF's *hacienda* chapters have generally been established and overseen by professional organizers, who have also conducted "educational seminars" for the purpose of identifying new trade union members.[126] During the Marcos period, some of these organizers reportedly came directly from the CPP-NPA. Similarly, local "party cells" were responsible for "directing" the trade union's *hacienda* chapters regarding decisions that were of strategic importance to the party.[127] Accordingly, the PHWF's local member base was made up by three main categories of activists: first, the "party elements", active party cadres who controlled the activities of the various local trade union chapters through "party cells"; second, the "mobilizable elements", regular members and rank-and-file activists of the trade union who were not members of the CPP-NPA; and, third, the "advanced elements", trade union leaders whom the party considered as potential candidates for recruitment into its armed struggle.[128]

As of 2009, the local organizers of the PHWF's *hacienda* chapters continued to be subject to the "centralized leadership" of the trade union's regional chapter,[129] where the organizational overlap between the PHWF and the CPP-NPA was largest. Similarly, while the leaders of the PHWF's *hacienda* chapters were officially elected by, and from among, the trade union's rank-and-file members,[130] the eligible candidates were often

pre-selected by the PHWF's regional chapter, which, in turn, was controlled by the regional party structure of the CPP-NPA.[131] As a journalist close to the Communist party stated, the election of local PHWF officers was often more akin to an "acclamation" than to a proper election.[132] In addition, the elections of the PHWF's *hacienda* officers were often organized by "ad hoc committees", consisting of between three to five "advanced individuals", operating under the guidance of local organizers. Owing to their prominent role during the preparation phase, such "advanced elements" were also frequently voted into leadership positions once the elections of the *hacienda* officers were held.[133]

Nevertheless, trade union activists who are not members of the CPP-NPA have on occasion been able to occupy leading positions within the PHWF, as long as they have been "sympathetic to the party".[134] More importantly, however, the vast majority of the PHWF's rank-and-file members are not members of the Communist party and thus not involved in armed struggle but rather support the trade union primarily due to its commitment to peasant and workers' rights.[135] A local church representative suggested that for many ordinary workers "membership in PHWF[136] is very confined to the particular, especially […] getting more salary," adding that the PHWF was thus a "legitimate" trade union for many.[137]

Notes

1. Throughout this period, the FSI described the stability status of the Philippines as "warning"; see webpage of the FSI (2015).
2. The scores for the earlier years are also available on the webpage of the FHI (2015).
3. The scores for the earlier years are also available on the webpage of the TI-CPI (2015). The index changed its scale in 2011. From 1995 to 2010, it ranked countries on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (very clean). Since 2011, the scale goes from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).
4. Interview with a local academic, Manila, 14.09.07.
5. Interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09.
6. Interview with an SEC official, Manila, 03.12.09; interview with a University of the Philippines (UP) professor, Manila, 04.12.09.
7. Interview with a UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09.
8. On the role played by leftist organizations aligned with the CPP-NPA in the field of social service delivery see also interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09.

9. Interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09; interview with a member of the Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Development (PEACE) Foundation, Manila, 16.10.09; interview with a UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09.
10. Interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09; interview with a UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09.
11. Interview with a leading representative of the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), Manila, October 2009.
12. Interview with an NGO health worker, Manila, 12.09.07.
13. Interview with a UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09.
14. Interview with a UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09.
15. Interview with a Department for Agrarian Reform (DAR) official, Manila, 13.10.09; interview with a former DAR official, 28.09.09.
16. Interview with a leading representative of the PRRM, Manila, October 2009.
17. Interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09.
18. See also interview with a senior journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, Baccolod, 25.10.09.
19. See also interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Focus group discussion with leaders of the Alliance for Rural Concerns (ARC), Manila, 16.10.09; extended conversations with an IPD member working on peasant rights, Manila, September to December 2009.
23. Interviews with a community organizer trained by the KDF near Baccolod, 19.09.07 and 20.01.09. See also Angeles (2003).
24. Interviews with a community organizer trained by the KDF near Baccolod, 19.09.07 and 20.01.09. In order to refer to the CPP-NPA, the interviewee used circumscriptions, such as “our friends from the mountains”.
25. See e.g. Moreno (2006, p. 57) on the case of Mindanao.
26. Interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09.
27. Interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.12.09.
28. See also interview with the representative of an international donor organization, Manila, 28.09.09.
29. See also interview with the representative of an international donor organization, Manila, 28.09.09; interview with an academic from the Ateneo School of Government, Manila, 14.10.09.
30. Interview with the representative of an international donor organization, Manila, 28.09.09.
31. Ibid.
32. Interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09.

33. Ibid.
34. Interview with a member of Laban ng Masa (LM), Manila, 21.09.09; interview with an executive committee member of LM, 05.11.09; interview with a Catholic scholar, Manila, 12.10.09; interview with a LM leader and former UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09; interview with Brigadier General Danilo (Danny) Lim Delapuz, Scout Rangers, AFP, Manila, 14.12.09; interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09; interview with Marites Vitug, military expert and editor of the *Newsbreak* magazine, Manila, 07.12.09.
35. Interview with a Navy General who contributed to foiling the 2006 coup attempt, Manila, 11.11.09; interview with Brigadier General Danilo (Danny) Lim Delapuz, Scout Rangers, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Manila, 14.12.09; interview with Marites Vitug, military expert and editor of the *Newsbreak* magazine, Manila, 07.12.09.
36. Interview with Brigadier General Danilo (Danny) Lim Delapuz, Scout Rangers, AFP, Manila, 14.12.09; interview with an LM leader and former UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09; interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09.
37. Interview with Brigadier General Danilo (Danny) Lim Delapuz, Scout Rangers, AFP, Manila, 14.12.09.
38. See also interview with Marites Vitug, military expert and editor of the *Newsbreak* magazine, Manila, 07.12.09.
39. Interview with an LM leader and former UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09.; interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09; interview with an executive committee member of LM, 05.11.09.
40. Interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09.
41. Interview with a public intellectual, 07.12.09; Interview with an LM leader and former UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09; interview with Marites Vitug, military expert and editor of the *Newsbreak* magazine, Manila, 07.12.09; conversation with a member of LM, Manila, December 2009.
42. Interview with an LM leader and former UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09. Information confirmed in conversations with other LM members, Manila, September to December 2007.
43. Interview with an author of the "Blueprint for a Viable Philippines," Manila, 07.12.09.
44. Conversations with Joel Rocamora, September to December 2009.
45. Interviews with a community organizer trained by the KDF near Baccolod, 19.09.07 and 20.01.09.
46. Interview with the former member of a CPP-NPA front organization, Baccolod, 03.11.09; interview with a leading member of NGO KAISAHAN, Manila, 13.10.09.
47. Interview with a former member of a CPP-NPA front organization, Baccolod, 03.11.09.

48. See also ibid. Putzel (1995, p. 652) uses the term "most advanced activists".
49. Interview with a senior journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, Baccolod, 25.10.09; conversation with two *rejectionist* activists, Manila, 02.10.09; interview with the former member of a CPP-NPA front organization, Baccolod, 03.11.09; interview with a leading member of KAISAHAN, Manila, 13.10.09.
50. Interview with a leading member of KAISAHAN, Manila, 13.10.09.
51. Interview with a leading *Akbayan!* Representative, Manila, 10.09.08.
52. Interview with a leading member of KAISAHAN, Manila, 13 October 2009.
53. Conversation with two *rejectionist* activists, Manila, 02.10.09.
54. Conversation with a *rejectionist* activist, Manila, 02.10.09.
55. Personal opinion of a local church representative with contacts to the PHWF, 27.10.09.
56. Interview with a leading member of CBCP-NASSA, 05.11.09; focus group discussion with leading NAMFREL members, 24.11.09; interview with a NAMFREL chief executive, Manila, 05.12.2009. See also Datinguinoo (2006).
57. Interview with a NAMFREL chief executive, Manila, 05.12.2009.
58. Ibid.
59. Information confirmed in conversation with Verzola, Manila, 16.12.09.
60. See also interview with the representative of an international donor organization, Manila, 28.09.09.
61. Interview with a leading member of the Philippine Council for NGO Certification (PCNOC), Manila, 09.12.09.
62. Interview with a journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, Baccolod, 24.10.09.
63. Ibid.
64. Name changed for safety reasons.
65. Interview with two high-ranking members of the PHWF, October 2009; interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009; see also published article about the organization, on file with the author.
66. Interview with two high-ranking members of the PHWF, October 2009.
67. See endnote 66.
68. Interview with two high-ranking members of the PHWF, October 2009.
69. Interview with a high-ranking member of the PHWF, October 2009.
70. Interview with a DAR official, Manila, 13.10.09; interview with a former DAR official, 28.09.09; focus groups discussion with members of the ARC, Manila, 16.10.09; interview with a UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09.

71. Interview with an SEC official, Manila, 03.12.09; interview with a leading member of the PCNOC, 09.12.09; interview with a UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09.
72. Interview with a leading member of the PCNOC, 09.12.09.
73. Ibid.
74. Focus groups discussion with members of the ARC, Manila, 16.10.09; interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09. On the relationship between civil society activists and the DAR, see also Lewis (2008, p. 130).
75. Focus groups discussion with members of the ARC, Manila, 16.10.09; interview with a former representative of a leftist party-list group, Manila, 10.10.09.
76. Focus groups discussion with members of the ARC, Manila, 16.10.09. See also Burgonio et al. (2007).
77. Interview with an *Akbayan!* member, Manila., 03.12.09.
78. Focus groups discussion with members of the ARC, Manila, 16.10.09. See also Burgonio et al. (2007).
79. Focus groups discussion with members of the ARC, Manila, 16.10.09.
80. Interview with Oscar D. (Oca) Francisco, ARC joint convener, Manila, 16.10.09.
81. Interview with a leading ARC member, Manila, 03.12.2009.
82. Interview with a former representative of a leftist party-list group, Manila, 10.10.09; on the alliance between the *reaffirmist* party-list groups and the Arroyo government, and the CPP-NPA's strategy of using electoral politics as a means to raise funds see also ICG (2011, p. 8f).
83. Interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.12.09.
84. Ibid.
85. Interview with the representative of an international donor organization, Manila, 28.09.09.
86. Cited after EU (2014, p.4).
87. Interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09.
88. Focus groups discussion with members of the ARC, Manila, 16.10.09; interviews with NOFA organizers, Hacienda Margarita, Baccolod, 27.10.09; interview with a leading ARC member, Manila, 03.12.2009; interview with an *Akbayan!* member, Manila., 03.12.09. Information confirmed in conversations with peasant leaders close of *Akbayan!*
89. Interview with an *Akbayan!* member, Manila., 03.12.09; interview with a leading member of KAISAHAN, Manila, 13.10.09.
90. See also interview with a UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09
91. See also interview with a leading member of the PCNOC, Manila, 09.12.09.
92. Interview with Oscar D. (Oca) Francisco, ARC joint convener, Manila, 16.10.09.

93. Focus groups discussion with members of the ARC, Manila, 16.10.09; interviews with NOFA organizers, Hacienda Margarita, Baccolod, 27.10.09; interview with a local ARC leader, Baccolod, 26.10.09. On the history and the former size of PEACE see also interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09.
94. Interview with a local ARC leader, Baccolod, 26.10.09.
95. Interviews with a NOFA organizer, Hacienda Margarita, Baccolod, 27.10.09.
96. Interviews with NOFA organizers, Hacienda Margarita, Baccolod, 27.10.09.
97. See also interview with a senior journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, Baccolod, 25.10.09; interview with the former member of a CPP-NPA front organization, Baccolod, 03.11.09.
98. Interview with a senior journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, Baccolod, 25.10.09.
99. Interview with an LM leader and former UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09; interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09.
100. See also interview with an LM leader and former UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09; interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09.
101. See endnote 100.
102. See also interview with a member of LM, Manila, 21.09.09. On the emergence of the *popular democratic* movement see also Clarke (1998a, p. 149).
103. Interview with the former member of a CPP-NPA front organization, Baccolod, 03.11.09. Interview with a senior journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, Baccolod, 25.10.09.
104. Interview with a senior journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, Baccolod, 25.10.09.
105. Interview with a local development expert, Baccolod, 21.09.07; interview with a local church representative, Baccolod, 27.10.09; interviews with a Catholic scholar, Manila, 09.10.09 and 12.10.09.
106. Focus groups discussion with members of the ARC, Manila, 16.10.09; interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09. On the practice of "community organizing" by the PECCO, the PEACE Foundation and the KMP, see also Franco and Borras (2009, pp. 211–218).
107. Interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009.
108. Interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009.
109. Personal opinion of a local church representative with contacts to the PHWF, October 2009; interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009; See also press reports about the organization, on file with the author.
110. Published article about the organization, on file with the author.

111. Personal opinion of a local church representative with contacts to the PHWF, October 2009.
112. Interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009.
113. Interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009; personal opinion of a local church representative with contacts to the PHWF, October 2009. See also press reports about the organization, on file with the author.
114. Personal opinion of a local church representative with contacts to the PHWF, October 2009.
115. Reports by other trade unions and press reports about the organization, on file with the author.
116. Personal opinion of a local church representative with contacts to the PHWF, October 2009.
117. Interview with two high-ranking members of the PHWF, October 2009.
118. Interview with a journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, October 2009; interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009.
119. Interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009.
120. Interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009; interview with a journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, October 2009.
121. Interview with two high-ranking members of the PHWF, October 2009; see also reports by other trade unions and press reports about the organization, on file with the author.
122. Interview with a journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, October 2009.
123. Interview with two high-ranking members of the PHWF, October 2009.
124. Interview with a journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, October 2009.
125. Interview with two high-ranking members of the PHWF, October 2009.
126. Interview with two high-ranking members of the PHWF, October 2009; see also interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009.
127. Interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009.
128. Interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009; On the role of "advanced elements" in the CPP-NPA's front organizations see also Putzel (1995) and Quimpo (2008).
129. Interview with a journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, October 2009.
130. Interview with two high-ranking members of the PHWF, October 2009.
131. Interview with a journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, October 2009; interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009.
132. Interview with a journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, October 2009.
133. Interview with two high-ranking members of the PHWF, October 2009; interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009.
134. Interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009.

135. Interview with a former PHWF member, November 2009; personal opinion of a local church representative with contacts to the PHWF, October 2009.
136. Name changed for safety reasons.
137. Personal opinion of a local church representative with contacts to the PHWF, October 2009.

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CHAPTER 5

Mirror Images of Weak States: Civil Societies in Bangladesh and the Philippines

Both in Bangladesh and the Philippines, the *weakness of the state* has been *conducive to the emergence and the growth of civil society* (on Bangladesh see Chap. 3; on the Philippines see Chap. 4). Most notably, in both countries, the post-colonial state has often been unable or unwilling to deliver basic social services, leading to the *proliferation of civil society organizations*, as diverse as leftist peasant groups, religious charities, trade unions, political student groups and foreign-funded NGOs, *that have catered to many of the fundamental welfare needs not met by the state*. In addition, the *expansion of civil society* in Bangladesh and the Philippines has *also been facilitated by the lack of effective state regulation*, which has allowed a large variety of civil society organizations to emerge and operate without much interference by central state authorities (on the Philippines see also e.g. Abella and Dimalanta, 2003, p. 238; on Bangladesh see also e.g. WB 2005).

Accordingly, in both countries, the specific laws and regulations pertaining to NGOs and other civil society organizations have mostly played only a minor role in shaping the organizational structures and activities of civil society groups, a finding that is true for both enabling and restrictive laws. More specifically, in Bangladesh, the legal framework governing NGOs and other civil society groups is generally outdated and inadequate, with many contradictory, overlapping and restrictive laws. However, given that the DSS, the NGOAB and other regulatory agencies in charge of registering and monitoring civil society groups have remained notoriously weak, many obstructive laws and regulations have gone unimplemented. In the Philippines,

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by contrast, the legal framework is largely adequate and enabling and contains several provisions to ensure that civil society groups are accountable with regard to their organizational structures. Due to the weakness of the SEC as the main state agency in charge of regulating civil society organizations, however, many of these provisions are not implemented. Similarly, formal channels for the participation of civil society in the political process have often been blocked by powerful interests (Eaton 2003).

While in both Bangladesh and the Philippines the weakness of central state institutions has been conducive to the emergence of civil society, both countries are missing the link between civil society growth and democratic consolidation. More specifically, while civil society has expanded, and NGOs and other civil society groups continue to exist in abundance, democracy has remained weak in both cases. In fact, in the mid-2000s, both Bangladesh and the Philippines experienced authoritarian backsliding in the form of actual or attempted military coups. In the late 2000s, both countries returned to oligarchic elections as the main means of transferring power, but major democratic deficits, such as widespread human rights violations, and fierce confrontation between the major elite groups, have persisted (e.g. FHI 2015; on Bangladesh see also Lorch 2014; Feldman 2015; on the Philippines see also Sidel 2014, 2015). In both Bangladesh and the Philippines, the existence of a large and vibrant civil society has thus been insufficient to stabilize and deepen democracy.

This is mainly because, *in both countries, national civil society has generally mirrored the deficits of the weak state*. In both the Philippines and in Bangladesh, civil society mobilization played an important role in bringing about democratic regime change in 1986 and 1990, respectively (e.g. Lewis 2008), and civil society actors have advocated for important political reforms, such as agrarian reforms, at various points in time. In both cases, *civil society groups have exercised significant political influence* during both democratic and authoritarian periods. In the Philippines, for instance, civil society leaders have occupied high-ranking political posts in the democratic era, including positions in the cabinet, a phenomenon that has been described as "cross-over leadership" (e.g. Lewis 2008, pp. 128–132). Similarly, in Bangladesh, NGO leaders and other elite civil society representatives have repeatedly been able to influence government decisions through family and other types of personal connections (see also ibid., pp. 134f.). Moreover, in both countries, civil society actors have

also contributed to national law- and policy-making processes, although this tendency has been stronger in the Philippines than in Bangladesh. In both cases, however, civil society groups have not always used their political influence for the purpose of strengthening democracy but at times also for highly undemocratic purposes. Specifically, in Bangladesh various development NGOs worked with the military government of Ershad (1983–1990) (e.g. Devine 2002), and several prominent civil society figures cooperated with the military-backed CTG, which ruled the country from 2007 to 2008 (e.g. Bakht 2008; ICG 2008). Similarly, leading Philippine civil society activists supported an attempted coup against the Arroyo government in 2006 (e.g. Go et al. 2006; Melencio 2006).

By the same token, both in Bangladesh and in the Philippines the national civil society includes groups that have *advocated explicitly undemocratic agendas* at different points in their countries' history. In the case of Bangladesh, examples include Islamist student or welfare organizations. Similarly, in the Philippines, leftist groups with links to the CPP-NPA have advocated important democratic reforms at different points in time, but their ultimate goal has generally been to establish a Communist system based on Marxist-Leninist and Maoist thought, rather than a liberal democratic order. Moreover, in both countries, the internal organizational structures of civil society groups have also frequently mirrored the deficits of the weak state in that they have often been undemocratic, hierarchical and leader-centred in nature. Finally, just like the institutions of the state, civil society organizations have frequently been tainted with clientelistic or corrupt practices and, at times, even with violence.

Why is this the case? Both in Bangladesh and in the Philippines, the structures of the post-colonial state had already been quite firmly established when civil society began to grow (on the Philippines see e.g. Silliman and Noble 1998, p. 13).[1] Moreover, while in both cases undemocratic modes of action, such as clientelistic practices or the endorsement of violence, have also characterized civil society groups, they have generally been more widespread among state elites and alternative power centres. Consequently, it is more reasonable to assume that, in both cases, it was actually the weak state, along with the influence of foreign donors, that shaped the structure and prevailing modes of action of the national civil society, rather than vice versa. Against this backdrop, the present chapter systematically compares the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines along

the lines of the book's theoretical analytical framework (see Chap. 2), drawing on the findings of the empirical chapters (on Bangladesh see Chap. 3; on the Philippines see Chap. 4). Following this framework, the characteristics of the national civil societies in both countries are analysed and compared across the analytical framework's five categories of influences on civil society in the context of a weak state. With regard to the national level, these are: first, the existence of an environment in which non-state actors perform functions normally ascribed to the state; second, the lack of state autonomy and the existence of a conflict for social control between different alternative *power centres*; third, the existence of a context of *patronage and corruption*; and, fourth, the existence of a context of *violence and insecurity. International donor influence* as the fifth category is treated as a cross-cutting impact, which affects the relationship between civil society and the weak state across the analytical framework's other four categories.

As noted earlier, while both countries are weak states, Bangladesh and the Philippines differ tremendously with regard to other conditions that the literature has identified as having a potential impact on national civil societies, such as a country's historical legacy, political system, ethnic composition, majority religion or level of economic growth. Where the empirical case studies show that any of these other factors also have notable impacts on civil society in Bangladesh and the Philippines, these impacts will be assessed in relation to those influences identified in the analytical framework's five categories.

5.1 Civil Society in a Context Where Non-State Actors Perform Functions Normally Ascribed to the State

Since the early post-independence period, citizens in Bangladesh and the Philippines have formed or supported different kinds of voluntary associations in order to provide local communities with basic social services that the state has been unable or unwilling to deliver. More specifically, to this day, both countries are home to a huge number of NGOs, which fulfil fundamental welfare tasks in fields such as health, education and local development (on the Philippines see also Croissant 2003, p. 245; Racelis 2000; on Bangladesh see also Haque 2002, p. 417; Banks et al., 2015, p. 711; Lewis 2008, p. 132). Similarly, in both cases, religious and politically oriented civil society groups also play an extremely important role in social service delivery. In the Philippines, for instance, community-based groups established

and run by the Catholic Church have catered to the welfare needs of local constituencies since the early 1950s (e.g. Hedman 2006, pp. 46–66, 68f.; Youngblood 1990, pp. 3ff.), while in Bangladesh Islamic *madrassahs* have frequently provided basic education to children unable to access the formal schooling system (e.g. Ellis 2007). Moreover, in Bangladesh, labour, peasant, student and youth organizations with direct connections to the country's powerful political parties have also often delivered basic welfare services to the loyal constituencies of their respective parties (e.g. Lorch 2014), while in the Philippines leftist groups linked to the underground Communist Party have likewise provided social services to local peasant communities since the Marcos era (e.g. Hawes 1990; Quimpo 2008). Both in Bangladesh and the Philippines, *civil society organizations have thus performed a stopgap function*, fulfilling many tasks normally ascribed to the state, and in both cases this has also constituted one of the main reasons for the growth of civil society.

However, *this stopgap function of civil society has been much stronger in some sectors than in others*. More precisely, in both countries, NGOs and other civil society actors have often provided relatively effective makeshift solutions in the field of social service delivery. At the same time, however, they have frequently failed with regard to other tasks that are also normally the responsibility of the state. Especially, given their character as predominantly civilian organizations, civil society groups in Bangladesh and the Philippines have mostly been unable to autonomously provide for their own security and perform a security function for their constituencies. Consequently, where they have faced massive security threats, civil society actors in both countries have often aligned themselves with violent power centres for the purpose of protection. Most notably, in the Philippines several civil society groups have aligned themselves with the CPP-NPA (see also Quimpo 2008), while in Bangladesh most politically oriented civil society groups have been affiliated with one of the country's violent political parties (see also Quadir 2003; Stiles 2002, pp. 839–42). In both cases, the ability of civil society actors to contribute to democratic institution-building has been rather limited as well. For instance, local election watchdogs, which were studied in depth in this book, have often failed to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process in recent years, because they have been perceived as lacking political neutrality themselves (on Bangladesh see also PROBE 2008; on the Philippines see also Verzola 2006).

In both countries, the intervening influence of 'Western' donor funding has strengthened the stopgap function of civil society in the field of social service provision, while, at the same time, depoliticizing some sections of the national civil society. Specifically, both in Bangladesh and the Philippines,

'Western' donors have primarily funded NGOs, while neglecting other, more politically and religiously oriented civil society groups. When the foreign-funded NGO sector grew, it absorbed many dedicated political activists, and the social space available for civil society groups with more radical reform agendas, such as leftist movements, shrank. Moreover, 'Western' aid organizations have encouraged and, at times, pressured their local partner NGOs to deliver standardized social services to local communities, a focus that has often lead these NGOs to cut down on their political advocacy activities. In addition, donor requirements for standardized service delivery and reporting practices have also enhanced the professionalization and bureaucratization of many local NGOs. To this day, the vast majority of NGOs in Bangladesh and the Philippines are not voluntary member organizations, but are set up like corporations and run by salaried staff (on the Philippines see also ADB 1999, pp. 1–11; CODE-NGO 2009; on Bangladesh see also Feldman 1997, 2003; Haque 2002; White 1999). As a consequence, their internal structures are often hierarchical.[2]

At the same time, however, the *extent of these depoliticizing tendencies has been highly dependent on the specific donor paradigms* dominant in the two countries. More precisely, these depoliticizing impacts have been much stronger in Bangladesh, where foreign funding to NGOs has remained at constantly high levels since the early 1970s and where leading international aid agencies have promoted the complete outsourcing of social services to local NGOs. By the early 2000s, the size of some large, donor-supported NGOs rivalled that of entire state departments (White 1999, p. 312; see also Haque 2002) and the foreign-funded NGO sector was the second largest employment sector after the civil service (e.g. Offenheiser 1999, p. 12). While many Bangladeshi NGOs had originally come from a *Freirean* tradition and focused on social mobilization, by the late 1990s, most of them had become largely apolitical and service delivery-oriented (e.g. Feldman 2003; Rahman 2006).

The situation was somewhat different in the Philippines, where, during the Marcos era (1965–1986), international aid sometimes benefitted leftist groups with ties to the CPP-NPA (e.g. Putzel 1995, pp. 653f., 660), while massive amounts of foreign funding to more apolitical, welfare-oriented NGOs poured into the country only after the fall of the authoritarian regime. By the late 1990s, donor attention had already begun to shift elsewhere. Moreover, from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s when foreign funding was at its peak, many international aid agencies supported the establishment of mixed or complementary welfare systems, in which social services were to be provided jointly by the state and the NGO

sector (e.g. ADB, 1999). Accordingly, many donors also financed NGO advocacy programmes aimed at pressuring the state to implement policy reforms, such as agrarian reforms. This led many Philippine NGOs to combine the delivery of welfare services with advocacy initiatives seeking to promote an expansion of service delivery by the state. From the late 1980s until the mid-1990s, several large development NGOs, such as the PRRM, existed in the Philippines, performing welfare functions that were formally the responsibility of the state. When foreign funding dwindled, however, local NGOs declined in numbers and size (see also Abella and Dimalanta 2003).

In addition, the above-mentioned differences in the structures of the Philippine and the Bangladesh NGO sector can also be attributed to the intervening impact of the countries' differing levels of economic growth as well as to differences in the structures of their national economies. In both cases, the foreign-funded NGO sector has offered lucrative employment opportunities for members of the educated middle class who have regarded NGO work primarily as a career path (on the Philippines see e.g. ADB 1999, pp. 19f.; on Bangladesh see e.g. Feldman 1997, 2003; White 1999). However, this tendency has been much stronger in Bangladesh, where the level of economic development has been extremely low, and where most commercial businesses have been co-opted by one of the country's powerful political parties. In this context, the NGO sector has become not only highly professionalized but also highly commercialized, with many foreign-funded NGOs turning into "vehicles for corporate interests" (Feldman 1997, p. 64). In the Philippines, where the level of economic development has been higher, and where a relatively strong and more independent capitalist sector has existed since the 1960s (Hedman 2006), donor-supported NGOs have played a more limited role in strengthening the socio-economic status of the middle class, and, as a consequence, tendencies of bureaucratization and commercialization in the local NGO sector have also been much weaker.

In both Bangladesh and the Philippines, the lack of bureaucratic state regulation has been conducive to civil society growth. However, where independent state institutions have failed to regulate the civil society sphere, civil society groups have often been controlled and regulated informally by powerful elites both inside and outside the state apparatus. Specifically, in both countries, different types of *alternative power centres have (ab) used the stopgap function of civil society in the welfare sector for the purpose of enhancing their social control.* Accordingly, essential welfare services have not only been delivered by apolitical NGOs but also by more ideologically oriented civil society groups linked to powerful political parties, religious

forces or communist insurgencies. Such partisan civil society groups have usually combined the delivery of social services with the propagation of certain ideologies offering a political and/or religious interpretation of the prevailing root causes of poverty and underdevelopment. In addition, in both countries, even foreign-funded NGOs that have pursued a primarily technical and apolitical approach to development have also frequently aligned themselves with alternative power centres.

5.2 Civil Society in the Context of Power Centre Competition

In both Bangladesh and the Philippines, alternative power centres inside and outside the state apparatus have set up loyal civil society groups and co-opted existing ones in order to spread their political ideologies, deliver welfare services to their followers and thereby strengthen their social control over local constituencies and enhance their political influence in the weak state. Consequently, *civil society groups have lacked autonomy, being affiliated with different types of alternative power centres*, including traditional political elites, political parties, powerful religious forces, military units, or Communist insurgencies. Correspondingly, *the national civil society has been fragmented and has mirrored the ongoing conflict among different power centres in the weak state* (on the Philippines see also Franco 2004, esp. p. 97; on Bangladesh see also Stiles 2002, p. 839–42).

More specifically, Philippine civil society is fragmented into groups that are aligned with traditional political families, populists, the CPP-NPA, or one of its break-away fractions, the business community, the Catholic Church (see also Franco 2004; for a similar argument see Hedman 2006) and certain military factions. Since the late 1980s, the national power structure has been highly fragmented and different types of alternative power centres have continuously entered into ever-changing coalitions with one another. As a consequence, the alliances that have existed between alternative power centres and civil society groups have also tended to be highly flexible and fluid, and many civil society groups have aligned themselves with several different power centres at the same time. Notably, since the return to democracy in 1986, civil society groups as diverse as development NGOs, leftist groups and business-based welfare associations have aligned themselves with traditional politicians and populists in the context of broad-based and highly fluid electoral coalitions (Abinales 2001; Abinales and Amoroso 2005, 239f.).

In the case of Bangladesh, the pattern of power centre alignments predominantly manifests itself in a national civil society that is divided into groups that are aligned with one of the country's two major political parties, the AL or the BNP, and to a lesser extent, groups with ties to smaller leftist parties, Islamist parties or terrorist organizations, and the military. Owing to their considerable ability to penetrate the social sphere through a combination of programmatic appeals, patronage and violence, the AL and the BNP have played a preeminent role in shaping the national civil society landscape. Consequently, alignments between civil society actors and alternative power centres have generally been more stable than in the Philippine case. The *pattern of power centre alignments thus lies at the root of both the main similarities and the main differences between the national civil societies of Bangladesh and the Philippines.* More precisely, in both countries, the structure of civil society mirrors the structure of the conflict that exists between different power centres in the weak state. However, the specific power centres involved in this conflict differ across the two cases and, as a consequence, the lines of conflict prevailing in the two countries' national civil societies differ accordingly.

In both countries, power centre politics has played a much more important role in shaping the structures and the activities of civil society organizations than formal laws and regulations have. In Bangladesh, for instance, the legal framework governing NGOs prohibits their involvement in partisan politics. Owing to the weakness of independent bureaucratic state institutions, however, this provision has not prevented welfare-oriented NGOs from becoming co-opted by either the AL or the BNP.[3] However, whenever they have been in power, both of the parties have used this provision to hamper the activities of NGOs loyal to the opposition, as exemplified by the BNP-led four-party government's restrictions against the ADAB and Proshika (for an account of the events see Lewis 2010). In the Philippines, by contrast, several laws, such as the Party-list Law, formally enable the participation of civil society in political decision-making. Oftentimes, however, such enabling laws have been distorted by alternative power centres, such as traditional political families (e.g. Eaton 2003; NDI 2004, p. 36), forcing civil society actors to resort to informal practices in order to exert political influence.

Both in Bangladesh and the Philippines the existing *struggle for social control between different power centres has been highly conducive to the growth of civil society.* Specifically, when the AL came to power after the Bangladesh War of Independence, it established and strengthened loyal peasant, worker, women's, student and youth groups, so as to be able

to control the country's population and territory in a context where the formal institutions of the state were extremely weak. Starting in the late 1970s, the BNP also established such front organizations in order to enhance its social control and to counter the influence of the AL as its main political rival. Following a similar logic, the military regimes of both General Zia (1977–1981) and General Ershad (1983–1990) tolerated and encouraged both the growth of service delivery-oriented, foreign-funded NGOs (Haque 2002, pp. 413f.) and the expansion of Islamic civil society initiatives, so as to gain public legitimacy and counter the political influence of leftist political parties and movements (see also Sikand 2001). Peasant and landless groups affiliated with leftist parties continue to exist in Bangladesh until today, but their number has declined since the 1970s, owing to state repression, the growth of the foreign-funded NGO sector and the weakening of the communist left since the end of the Cold War. The BNP-led coalition government (2001–2006), which was dependent on the Islamist JI for its parliamentary majority, also encouraged the proliferation of Islamic and Islamist civil society groups by allowing an unprecedented number of Islamic NGOs to register with the NGOAB and receive foreign funding from the Gulf, for instance.[4]

In the Philippines, traditional political elites, the Catholic Church and the business community established welfare-oriented civil society groups after independence in order to respond to the challenge posed by increasing communist mobilization in the countryside (see also Hedman 2006). Since the late 1960s, the Catholic Church significantly expanded its lay structure, as exemplified by the establishment of both the CBCP-NASSA and numerous social action centres in local parishes (Moreno 2006; Youngblood 1990, pp. 76ff.). Since its formation in 1968, the Maoist CPP-NPA has relied on a "collective action frame", which portrays the communist movement as having three main pillars: the vanguard party (the CPP), the guerrilla army (the NPA) and the "mass movement" (e.g. Santos 2005, pp. 4f.). During the Marcos era in particular, the underground Communist party set up numerous legal front organizations, which acted as conduits for the CPP-NPA's Maoist ideology, delivered services to loyal followers and served as support structures for the party's guerrilla army (see also Franco and Borras 2009, pp. 211–18; Putzel 1995, pp. 650–55; Quimpo 2008). Seeking to counter the social and political influence of the CPP-NPA, traditional political dynasties, the Catholic Church and the business community also enhanced their involvement in the civil society sphere (Hedman 2006). The Catholic Church, for instance, launched its BCC-CO programme (Coumans 1993). Similarly, local business elites and private corporations established the

PRRM and the PBSP, both of which focused on the promotion of local entrepreneurship and self-help (Hedman 2006, pp. 100ff.). After the return to democracy, many of the front organizations of the CPP-NPA transformed themselves into more independent civil society groups. When the Communist party split into more orthodox (*reaffirmist*) and more moderate (*rejectionist*) fractions in the early 1990s, the leftist strand of the national civil society split along the same lines (see also Franco and Borras 2009; Quimpo 2008). The CPP-NPA, the *rejectionist* left, the Catholic Church, traditional political families and the business community have all continued their organizing activities in the democratic period to maintain a social base of loyal constituencies and affiliated civil society groups.

In both countries, the convergence of the inability (or unwillingness) of central state institutions to provide social services and the existence of a struggle for social control among different alternative power centres has also been the most significant condition spurring the growth of religious civil society organizations. In fact, in both cases, the growth of religious civil society appears to have been largely unrelated to a rise in religiosity among the wider population. More specifically, in Bangladesh, successive military governments encouraged the growth of Islamic welfare groups in the 1970s and 1980s in order to gain popular legitimacy. Furthermore, during democratic periods, both the AL and the BNP have granted Islamic civil society organizations considerable room to manoeuvre so as to please Islamist parties, which have acted as kingmakers in parliament (ICG 2006; Karim and Fair 2007; Riaz 2007a). Since the early 1990s, the number of Islamic civil society groups has continued to grow, while the vote share of Islamist political parties has declined (e.g. Riaz 2007a). Similarly, in the Philippines, the growth of Christian civil society groups can be traced directly to attempts by the Catholic hierarchy to counter the influence of the CPP-NPA.

In both countries, *'Western' donor funding has provided welfare-oriented civil society groups with an autonomous resource base and, therefore, often weakened the ties that these associations have maintained with ideological power centres.* Most notably, in Bangladesh, many foreign-funded NGOs have been equipped with a substantial budget, and as a consequence of this financial independence, they have generally been characterized by a higher level of organizational autonomy from the AL and the BNP than have other domestic civil society groups (see also Haque 2002; Stiles 2002). Moreover, Western donors and diplomats have also intervened on various occasions in order to safeguard their local partner NGOs from party inference and state regulation.[5] Similarly, in the Philippines, the large-scale influx of foreign funding to development NGOs after the fall of

Marcos also appears to have encouraged some leftist civil society groups to cut their ties with the CPP-NPA.

Both in Bangladesh and the Philippines, *alignments with alternative power centres have often allowed civil society groups to exercise considerable political influence in the weak state*, at least in the short term. In fact, in some cases, civil society groups in both countries have aligned themselves strategically with alternative power centres, including highly controversial ones, in order to gain political influence and realize their own goals. In Bangladesh, both the AL and the BNP bolstered the strength of their student wings in the 1970s and 1980s in order to strengthen their social control and weaken their respective rival. Towards the late 1980s, however, the CL and the CD autonomously decided to work together to launch joint protests against the military regime of Ershad. When they finally managed to utilize their connections to their mother parties in order to "shame" the AL and the BNP into cooperation,[6] Ershad fell quickly. Furthermore, the AL's and the BNP's front organizations have served as important recruiting grounds for their parties. Most notably, in order to qualify for leading positions within the AL or the BNP, party members have generally needed to have a background as activists in the parties' student wings (on the relationship between student and party politics see also Alam et al. 2011). Similarly, alignment with the ruling party has also often allowed foreign-funded NGOs to enhance their political influence in specific policy fields, as exemplified by the BWLA, which maintained connections with the BNP-led four-party government.

In the Philippines, the CPP-NPA's front organizations contributed to preparing the ground for the ousting of Marcos and exerted strong influence in politics until the mid-1990s (e.g. Quimpo 2008). Similarly, civil society actors linked to the Catholic Church and the business community played a leading role in both the first "People Power" demonstrations, which brought down the Marcos regime, and the second "People Power" protests, which toppled elected President Joseph Estrada (e.g. Hedman 2006; Landé 2001). Since the late 1980s, different types of civil society groups have resorted to the strategy of supporting the electoral campaigns of traditional political elites and populists in exchange for being granted access to political decision-making. Where such coalitions have been successful in bringing a political aspirant to power, civil society leaders have often been rewarded with positions in the cabinet or other high-ranking political posts, a phenomenon that is commonly referred to as "coalition politics" (Abinales 2001; see also Abinales and Amoroso 2005, pp. 240f.), or "cross over leadership" (e.g. Lewis 2008).

In both countries, however, civil society actors have sometimes used their political influence for undemocratic purposes. In Bangladesh, several NGOs deliberately allowed themselves to become co-opted by General Ershad, who sought to gain legitimacy for this military regime through the implementation of redistributive land reforms. Some NGO leaders who participated in Ershad's agrarian reform programme were able to make significant contributions to the formulation of a new land reform policy (e.g. Devine 2002). Similarly, several prominent civil society figures also joined the cabinet of the military-backed CTG (e.g. DS 10.01.08; FE 11.01.08; on the relationship between civil society and the CTG see also ICG 2008). In addition, several NGOs and individual civil society leaders also acted as advisers to the CTG and contributed to the formulation of various reform ordinances, such as the amended RPO.[7] In the Philippines, well-known civil society actors cooperated with renegade fractions inside the military conspiring to topple Gloria Arroyo in 2006, as they were hoping to be included in a future, post-coup government that would implement radical political reforms (e.g. Go et al. 2006; Melencio 2006).[8]

In both countries, civil society groups that have either been established or permanently co-opted by alternative power centres have mostly been organized along sectoral lines, that is to say, on the basis of occupational or socio-economic status, gender or age (Hawes 1990, p. 281). It is especially noteworthy that in both cases the pattern of sectoral organization has not only characterized civil society groups affiliated with communist parties but also many civil society associations that have been established or co-opted by power centres with very different political ideologies. Similarly, both in Bangladesh and the Philippines, the prevalence of sectoral forms of civil society organization has also been largely unrelated to the precise nature of the political system, as, in both cases, *sectoral civil society groups* have existed under both authoritarian and democratic systems, whether presidential or parliamentary in character, while neither of the two countries has had a Communist political system at any point in its post-independence history.

In Bangladesh, the AL set up loyal women's, youth, labour and peasant organizations after the War of Independence, while also strengthening its control over existing sectoral groups that supported the party's political ideology, such as the CL. When Zia founded the BNP in 1978, he established the exact same types of party front organizations, which suggests that he *copied* this system of co-opted *sectoral groups* from the AL. In the Philippines, the CPP-NPA organized numerous sectoral civil society groups during the Marcos era, many of which still exist today

(e.g. Hawes 1990, p. 281; Quimpo 2008). In order to counter the influence of the Communist party, traditional political elites, *hacienda* owners and the Catholic Church formed their own loyal sectoral organizations as well. These are exemplified both by the sectoral *hacienda* groups that were established by the KDF, a conservative foundation run by sugar planters on Negros, and by the peasant and workers' unions that were founded by the Catholic Church in the framework of its BCC-CO programme.

In both countries, civil society groups that have been tightly co-opted by alternative power centres have generally been characterized by strong internal hierarchies and their organizational set-up has often mirrored the structure of their respective power centres. The Philippine CPP-NPA, for instance, has controlled its front organizations through the application of the Marxist-Leninist principle of *democratic centralism*, with its focus on concentrating decision-making power in the hands of the party leadership. Correspondingly, the party's affiliated civil society groups have also relied on democratic centralism for the purpose of organizing their internal decision-making processes. Despite claims to the contrary, *rejectionist* civil society groups, which broke away from the CPP-NPA in the early 1990s, have often maintained the practice of democratic centralism as well. Not surprisingly, in the case of Bangladesh, the NCBD, a combination of leftist groups aligned with the Maoist fraction of the BCP, also appeared to abide by the principle of democratic centralism. More astonishingly, however, the strategy through which Bangladesh's major parliamentary parties, the AL and the BNP, have controlled their civil society-based front organizations has also largely followed the logic of democratic centralism, although the term is not generally used by local party activists. As a consequence, the CL and the CD, the AL's and the BNP's most powerful sectoral wings, for instance, have replicated the structures of their mother parties almost one-to-one, and the leadership of the two student groups has generally been constituted and/or chosen by senior national party leaders.

Both in Bangladesh and the Philippines, *power centre alignments have limited the ability of civil society groups to perform several democratic functions.* More specifically, such alliances have generally *curtailed the capability of civil society groups to perform a watchdog function* vis-à-vis both the state and alternative power centres. In Bangladesh, for instance, civil society groups affiliated with either the AL or the BNP have generally confined their criticism to the governance failures and the rights abuses of their respective rival party. Given that since 1991 state power has for the most

part been held by one of the two parties, this has also limited the oversight function that civil society groups have performed vis-à-vis the state.[9] Similarly, civil society groups aligned with the Philippine Communist party have generally been very vocal in criticizing the human rights violations perpetrated by the state security forces, while, at the same time, turning a blind eye to the abuses committed by the NPA (Quimpo 2008, pp. 81f.). In fact, in both countries, even civil society-based election watchdogs have faced serious allegations of partisanship. In Bangladesh, many election monitoring NGOs have been acknowledged to be sympathetic to either the AL or the BNP, while some have even been implicated in electoral fraud themselves (PROBE 2008)[10]. Similarly, in the case of the Philippines, the NAMFREL, a prominent election watchdog that had played a crucial role in the fall of Marcos, was accused of covering the electoral fraud committed by Arroyo in the 2004 presidential elections (e.g. PCIJ 2006; Verzola 2006). In both cases, the partisanship of civil society-based election watchdogs can be traced primarily to the personal connections that individual leaders within these groups maintained with influential political elites.[11]

Moreover, alignments with alternative power centres have also generally *limited the ability of civil society groups to perform a representative function* for their constituencies. Specifically, the student, youth, peasant and worker fronts of the AL and the BNP have often given greater attention to the promotion of their parties' political programmes than to the representation of the independent, sectoral demands of their members and constituencies (see also Stiles 2002). Similarly, while the CPP-NPA's legal front organizations have sometimes advocated for the genuine interests of their social constituencies, most leading party activists have considered all sectoral demands as subordinate to the CPP-NPA's overarching objective of capturing state power. In the framework of this *instrumentalist approach*, the CPP-NPA's front organizations have mainly acted as conduits for the propagation of the party's Maoist ideology (Franco and Borras 2009; Quimpo 2008, pp. 81ff.).

Furthermore, both in Bangladesh and the Philippines, *power centre alignments have limited the ability of civil society organizations to generate bridging social capital.* More precisely, civil society groups that have been controlled by alternative power centres with strong political ideologies, such as the front organizations of the Philippine CPP-NPA or the sectoral wings of Bangladesh's political parties, have generally displayed high levels of ideological coherence and *generated bonding social capital.* At the

same time, they have most often failed to create, or have even weakened, bridging forms of social capital that cut across existing political and social cleavages. Unsurprisingly, in both countries, this tendency has generally been most pronounced in *sectoral* civil society organizations, which, by definition, run along, rather than cut across, existing social cleavages, and thus generate particularistic forms of social capital confined to specific socio-economic, gender or age groups.

5.3 Civil Society in the Context of Patronage and Corruption

Both in Bangladesh and the Philippines, *civil society actors often form part of existing patronage and corruption networks* (on the Philippines see also EU 2014, pp. 4, 9; Loewen 2005, p. 15; on Bangladesh see also Norad, pp. 14; 121; TIB 2008). Specifically, in both countries, civil society groups in rural areas have often been embedded in traditional patron-client relations between landed elites and local communities (Lewis and Hossain 2008, pp. 67ff.). In Bangladesh, the CL and the CD, the student wings of the country's two major political parties, have taken turns in forcibly occupying campus dormitories and then distributing dormitory beds selectively to loyal followers. In addition, both student organizations have also engaged in criminal corruption through the manipulation of public tenders (e.g. Alam et al. 2011, pp. 6054ff). Similarly, *reaffirmist* civil society groups sympathetic to the CPP-NPA have entered the Philippine Congress to get access to 'pork barrel funds', which are priority development funds distributed by the President in exchange for political loyalty (see also e.g. Hernandez 2005, p. 17). Some Bangladeshi NGOs have supported the electoral campaigns of either the AL or the BNP by advising their beneficiaries to vote for this or that party (e.g. Quadir 2003, p. 435), while in the Philippines leftist civil society groups have sometimes allowed themselves to be used by traditional politicians for the purpose of vote buying.[12] In addition, development NGOs, leftist civil society organizations and church-based groups in the Philippines have also entered into patron-client relations with state agencies in order to gain access to state contracts or funding for development projects.[13] In both countries, local NGOs have faced serious allegations of corruption. Most notably, in Bangladesh, several development NGOs have been accused of misappropriating donor funds and bribing the NGOAB, the main regulatory agency for foreign-funded NGOs (e.g. TIB 2008), while in the Philippines CODE-NGO

faced allegations of plundering public funds following an initiative to raise money from the stock market (e.g. FDC 2011; Rimban and Chua 2011).

Both in Bangladesh and the Philippines, *state leaders and bureaucratic elites have used patronage and corruption as deliberate strategies* to achieve various goals, including not only enriching themselves but also keeping up an appearance of state regulation in a context where formal state institutions have lacked the capacity to effectively regulate citizens' behaviour. Similarly, alternative power centres as diverse as traditional landed elites, parliamentary parties and communist insurgencies have also employed patronage and corruption strategically in order to strengthen their control over their local constituencies and affiliated civil society groups and thereby enhance their influence in the weak state. In reaction to this strategic use of patronage and corruption on the part of the political elite, many civil society organizations have also employed patronage and corruption strategically, rather than passively accepting their role as clients in the patron-client networks established by state leaders and powerful non-state actors. More precisely, both in Bangladesh and the Philippines *civil society groups have used patronage and corruption as deliberate strategies to gain access to material resources, channel welfare services to their beneficiaries, recruit loyal followers and exert political influence* in contexts where formal channels for civil society participation in the political process have been blocked.

In the case of Bangladesh, for instance, the NGOAB has lacked the staff and the logistical support necessary to effectively fulfil its function of monitoring and regulating foreign-funded NGOs. Against this backdrop, NGOAB officials have frequently required NGOs to modify flawed development projects and pay a "fine" in the form of a bribe instead of stopping such projects outright. Rather than openly criticizing the corrupt practices of the NGOAB, Bangladeshi NGOs have frequently accepted the payment of bribes as the easiest way to work unobstructed.[14] Similarly, state leaders in the Philippines have distributed pork barrel funds to loyal followers in Congress in order to protect their parliamentary majority and push through certain legislative projects. Several civil society groups, including leftist organizations sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, have adapted to this corrupt practice on the part of the political elite by entering Congress through *party-list* organizations and then aligning themselves with the Congressional majority to get their share of these funds (on the use of pork barrel funds by reaffirmist partylist groups see also Hernandez 2005, p. 17; Inquirer 27.10.12; see also ICG 2011)[15].

In-depth studies of individual civil society organizations also illustrate the strategic use of patronage and corruption by Bangladeshi and Philippine civil society actors. In order to be able to provide arable land to its rural beneficiaries, the NGO *Uttaran* in Bangladesh established a land distribution mechanism that ran in parallel to and interlocked with the land administration system of the local government, a massive undertaking which was accomplished with the help of large amounts of donor funding. Local government officials, influential landed elites and powerful local party leaders, many of whom were deeply entrenched in the patron-client relations that existed in their respective areas, were involved in this parallel structure in order to enhance the NGO's political clout. In terms of project output, the strategy was highly successful, as *Uttaran* reportedly managed to distribute an estimated 8,147.26 acres of agricultural land to 11,589 families by late 2007 (Uttaran 2010). At the same time, however, it also reinforced existing local patron-client networks. Similarly, in the Philippines, the agrarian reform group ARC deliberately allowed itself to become co-opted by a highly controversial political dynasty so as to gain access to Congress and be able to contribute to the ongoing law-making process on the extension and reform of the country's agrarian reform law. Once in Congress, the ARC's representative Oscar Francisco aligned himself with the parliamentary majority in order to benefit from the lucrative pork barrel funds allocated by President Arroyo to her followers.[16]

In both countries, the ability to bestow patronage has played an important role in enabling alternative power centres to control their affiliated civil society groups on a long-term basis. Most notably, both the Philippine CPP-NPA and Bangladesh's two main political parties, the AL and the BNP, have used their affiliated front organizations for the purpose of delivering clientelistic benefits to loyal constituencies. In cases where sufficient patronage resources have been available, the function of middlemen in the clientelistic chains emanating from their mother parties has enabled the front organizations in question to enhance their control over their members and to recruit new followers. This has created an enormous incentive for the leaders of these civil society groups to maintain and strengthen the ties with their respective parties. Conversely, where patronage resources have been scarce, the alliances between civil society groups and alternative power centres have often broken down.

More specifically, whenever the AL and the BNP have been in office, they have allowed their affiliated student front organizations to establish control over the student dormitories on public university campuses,

thereby enabling them to recruit new followers through the selective allocation of dormitory beds. Moreover, both parties have also co-opted and controlled criminal student leaders by permitting them to make large sums of money through the manipulation of public tenders. In turn, the ability to extend material benefits to loyal followers has considerably strengthened the control that leading student activists have been able to exert over their rank-and-file members. Similarly, the Philippine CPP-NPA has sometimes entered into negotiated settlements with powerful landowners so as to be able to reward loyal peasant communities with "tangible benefits", such as a lowering of crop shares, higher wages or basic welfare services (see e.g. Franco and Borras 2009; Putzel 1995 on the party's 'minimum land reform programme'). Given the CPP-NPA's character as an armed, underground organization, however, the material benefits acquired through such settlements have often had to be delivered to rural communities through the party's affiliated civil society groups. When the power of the CPP-NPA declined after the collapse of the Marcos regime, and foreign donors provided many welfare-oriented leftist groups with an independent resource base, many of its former front organizations broke away.

Both in Bangladesh and the Philippines, *the use of patronage and corruption has had a highly divisive impact on the national civil society*. In the case of Bangladesh, for instance, quarrels over the spoils of corruption and the control of campus dormitories have repeatedly led to violent clashes between the CL and the CD. Similarly, the public revelation of several cases of NGO corruption created conflicts within the Bangladeshi NGO community during the BNP-led four-party government (2001–2006), with some anti-corruption NGOs publicly criticizing the corrupt practices of other local NGOs (e.g. Iftekaruzzaman 2003; TIB 2008). Correspondingly, in the Philippines, CODE-NGO used its political and personal connections to the Arroyo government (2001 to 2010) in order to convince it to issue the PEACe Bonds, tax-free, zero-coupon bonds whose purchase allowed the NGO umbrella organization to raise an enormous amount of money from the stock market. The initiative left the national civil society deeply divided, as CODE-NGO's loudest critics, such as the FDC, also came from the NGO community (Esguerra 2002; FDC 2011). Furthermore, since the early 1990s, Philippine civil society groups belonging to the *rejectionist* left have competed with each other over the access to state spoils, such as development projects contracted out by the DAR. In both countries, the use of patronage and corruption has also led to fierce conflicts within individual civil society groups. In Bangladesh, for

example, struggles over the control of campus dormitories and public tenders have not only led to clashes between the CL and the CD but also to violent infighting within these two student groups (e.g. DS 26.08.2009). Similarly, in the Philippines, the ARC split away from its parent organization *Akbayan!* following heated quarrels over its patronage-based strategy.

Both in Bangladesh and the Philippines, *the internal organizational structures of civil society groups that have formed part of patronage and/or corruption networks have generally reflected the hierarchical logic of patronage*. More precisely, where civil society leaders have been able to raise material resources for their organizations by entering into patron-client relations with state elites, alternative power centres or foreign donors, their control over rank-and-file members has usually increased, leading to a strengthening of intra-organizational hierarchies. At the same time, however, top-down organizational structures have also led to a lack of accountability and transparency in civil society groups, enhancing the latter's vulnerability to patronage and corruption even further. Most notably, this research did not find a single case in which the rank-and-file members or local constituencies of civil society organizations were actively involved in the decision to engage in patronage or corruption. In the Philippines, for instance, the controversial PEACe Bonds deal was initiated by some individual NGO leaders with close personal connections to the Arroyo government.[17] Similarly, several local peasant leaders in the ARC network strongly rejected the decision of their leader Oscar Francisco to align himself with the Congressional majority in order to avail of pork barrel funds. However, many of the ARC's rank-and-file activists depended on Francisco's pork barrel funds and congressional allowances, both for the realization of their development projects and for their livelihoods, eventually leading them to accept his clientelistic strategy.[18] Similarly, in the case of Bangladesh, several reported cases of NGO corruption can be traced to individual NGO leaders, while some regular NGO staff members have tried and failed to prevent such malpractice from taking place.[19]

Interestingly, such *clientelistic hierarchies have often been reinforced by foreign funding*. More specifically, both in Bangladesh and the Philippines, international donors have often engaged with individual NGO leaders in a highly exclusive manner, giving them huge discretionary power over considerable financial resources, which they have then been able to allocate selectively to loyal staff members. Accordingly, those NGO leaders that have been most successful in fundraising and have dealt with the donors directly, have generally dominated decision-making within their organizations. Furthermore, donor requirements for standardized service delivery

and reporting practices have often led to the emergence of bureaucratic hierarchies (e.g. Feldman 1997, 2003; White 1999), which have further strengthened the position of well-connected NGO leaders.

In addition, *foreign funding has also affected the patterns of patronage and corruption in the two countries' national civil societies in another way.* Specifically, while Bangladesh and the Philippines are highly similar in that, in both countries, both political elites and civil society actors have used patronage and corruption strategically in order to achieve their goals, *the direction of patronage and corruption has often differed in the two cases.* Since the late 1990s, Philippine civil society actors have frequently employed patronage as a means to gain access to state resources or raise money from the capital market. In Bangladesh, by contrast, several foreign-funded NGOs have bribed regulatory state agencies, such as the NGOAB, while some NGO leaders have also been implicated in the corrupt use of donor money. This variation in the direction of patronage and corruption can primarily be attributed to the differences in the resource base of the state and the patterns of foreign funding in the two countries. In the Philippines, international donors promoted the establishment of mixed-welfare systems from the late 1980s onwards. When foreign funding dwindled, the Philippine state still retained a considerable resource base. In this context, the way in which many civil society actors used "coalition politics" (Abinales 2001), that is, the forging of tactical alliances with political and bureaucratic elites, changed: it was no longer merely a means to influence policy-making but increasingly became a strategy to get access to state funding. Moreover, in order to avail of development projects contracted out by state agencies, many civil society activists have drawn on personal connections, which had been established with individual officials within these agencies in the framework of donor programmes geared towards complementary welfare provision. In Bangladesh, by contrast, the state has often lacked both the financial and administrative capacity to contract out welfare services to civil society on a significant scale, while foreign donors have poured massive amounts of money into NGOs that have substituted, rather than complemented, social service delivery by the state. Since the early 2000s, the resource base of some foreign-funded NGOs was comparable to that of certain state departments (e.g. White 1999), and the salaries of NGO chief executives have often been much higher than those of leading state officials (Lewis 2008). This has allowed several foreign-funded NGOs to use clientelistic practices and bribery in order to extract concessions from the state.

5.4 Civil Society in the Context of Violence and Insecurity

Several civil society actors in Bangladesh and the Philippines have advocated, or even engaged in, the use of violence. Interestingly, both in Bangladesh and the Philippines this also includes groups that played an important role in their countries' democratic transitions. In Bangladesh, for instance, the CL and the CD, which were instrumental in toppling the Ershad regime, have a long history of violent street agitation and remain involved in acts of both political and criminal violence to this day (e.g. Alam et al. 2011). Similarly, many leftist civil society groups in the Philippines, which contributed to preparing the ground for the ousting of Marcos, sympathized or were aligned with the CPP-NPA, the country's armed underground Communist party (e.g. Quimpo 2008; see also Putzel 1995).

Both in Bangladesh and the Philippines, *the endorsement or use of violence by civil society actors can largely be seen as a civil society strategy caused by power centre alignments.* In both countries, power centres inside and outside the state apparatus, such as large landowners, political parties, or insurgent groups, have employed violence as a strategy to establish social control over local constituencies and enhance their political influence in the weak state. Correspondingly, several civil society groups in Bangladesh and the Philippines have endorsed violence, both as a means of self-defence and as a strategy to exert political influence in contexts where other channels for social and political participation have been blocked. Most notably, the research conducted did not find a single case in which violent civil society actors were forced, physically or otherwise, to advocate or engage in violence. Instead, the endorsement or use of violence could, for the most part, be traced to the decisions made by individual civil society leaders. Nevertheless, in both Bangladesh and the Philippines civil society actors have rarely employed violence in a fully autonomous fashion. Instead, the occurrence of violent forms of behaviour in the sphere of civil society has generally been very closely related to the alliances that the civil society actors in question have maintained with violent power centres in the weak state, such as criminalized political parties or communist insurgent groups. More specifically, such alternative power centres have sometimes propagated the use of violence, motivated civil society actors to engage in violent actions, given individual civil society leaders access to arms or other means of violence, or provided violent civil society activists with legal impunity. Furthermore, in both countries the endorsement of violence by civil society actors can also be traced to the high levels of state repression and the overall context of insecurity in which these groups operated.

In Bangladesh, for instance, the CL, the CD and various leftist student organizations started to arm themselves during Ershad's military regime (1983–1990) in order to counter attacks by the JCS, a violent student group formed by Ershad for the purpose of suppressing opposition activities on national university campuses. Since the return to democracy, both the AL and the BNP have relied on their student wings in order to establish physical control over the country's university campuses and to fight political rivals in street battles. While in both the CL and the CD the decision of whether or not to hold a gun has generally been up to each individual student leader, both the AL and the BNP have provided loyal student activists with money and weapons and have also protected violent student leaders from criminal prosecution whenever they were in power.[20]

In the Philippines, the endorsement of violence by some sections of the national civil society also started during the authoritarian period (1972–1986). After the declaration of martial law, many peasant organizations, labour unions and other civil society groups, including several groups that belonged to the Catholic Church, entered into an alliance with the armed Communist party in order to protect themselves from violent onslaughts by military and paramilitary forces and to continue their political activities in a context where legal channels for popular participation were largely blocked. Since then, there has been a certain overlap between the CPP-NPA's legal front organizations and its armed underground movement (e.g. Hawes 1990; ICG 2011; Quimpo 2008; Santos 2005). Moreover, to this day, several leftist civil society activists argue that in a country like the Philippines, where the power structure is dominated by strong landed elites, armed struggle constitutes a necessary means for achieving political change.

Interestingly, both in Bangladesh and the Philippines *violence has, in fact, sometimes constituted an enabling condition for civil society to emerge and exist*. During the Marcos era (1965–1986), for instance, the CPP-NPA provided many rural civil society groups in the Philippines with physical protection against the military, a function that corresponded to the NPA's ideologically defined role as a "shield" (Santos 2005, p. 8). Similarly, in Bangladesh, the AL and the BNP have sometimes provided their affiliated student organizations with arms, thereby enabling them to fend off attacks by rival student activists and establish physical control over campus dormitories. Both the CL and the CD have then used this control over the dormitories for the purpose of creating safe spaces for their own activists, while, at the same time, curtailing the political activities of other student groups.

More specifically, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines also suggest that *some forms of violence are more conducive to the emergence and existence of civil society than others.* The CPP-NPA's Maoist military strategy of the *Protracted People's War*, for instance, was particularly conducive to the growth of civil society in the Philippines, because in its early stages, it focuses on extensive social "base-building" (ibid.). During the Marcos era, the outlawed Communist party set up welfare-oriented peasant organizations that operated aboveground and sometimes served as social support structures for the NPA (e.g. Franco and Borras 2009, pp. 11–18; Putzel 1995, pp. 650–55). However, "solid organizing" strategies aimed at "guerrilla zone preparation" soon became intermingled with more democratic forms of organizing, such as the "community organizing" technique developed by Saul Alinsky. Engagement in the civil society sphere thus appears to have contributed to the moderation of many leftist civil society groups, which were also pressured by their local constituencies to provide them with "tangible services" (e.g. Franco and Borras 2009, pp. 11–18). Following the ousting of Marcos through the non-violent "People Power" movement, many leftist civil society activists began to favour the mobilization of an aboveground mass movement over clandestine forms of military organizing. In the early 1990s, many prototype civil society organizations originally set up by the CPP-NPA split away from the party and transformed themselves into non-violent NGOs, advocacy and welfare groups (Franco 2004; ICG 2011; Quimpo 2008). Given that the Bangladesh War of Independence was essentially a "people's war" that was fought primarily by irregular guerrilla forces, which were often drawn from the AL and its student wing, the CL, (e.g. Jamal 2008), very similar tendencies might have been at work in Bangladesh as well.

While in both countries violence has thus acted as an enabling condition for civil society under certain circumstances, the reverse has also been true. More precisely, in both Bangladesh and the Philippines, *power centres inside and outside the state apparatus have sometimes relied on civil society-based strategies for the purpose of enhancing their potential for organized violence*. The Philippine CPP-NPA, for instance, has sometimes used its front organisations as social support structures in the context of guerilla zone preparation (e.g. Franco and Borras 2009, pp. 11–18; Putzel 1995, pp. 650–55). In addition, the party has occationally sought to recruit followers for its underground army from its affiliated sectoral organizations, at least during the Marcos era (e.g. Boudreau 146, p. 146; see also GMA News 14.03.2012; Mallg 2010). Moreover, during this period, some front organizations of the CPP-NPA also received money from foreign

donors, and the Communist party made sure that a certain percentage of this funding also benefitted its underground army (e.g. Putzel 1995, pp. 653f.; 660). Similarly, since the early 2000s, the CPP-NPA's affiliated *party-list* groups have reportedly had to allocate a share of their pork barrel funds to the NPA as well (Hernandez 2005, p. 17; Inquirer 27.10.12). Similarly, in Bangladesh, Islamist terrorist organizations have at times recruited followers from orthodox *Qwami madrassahs* belonging to the *Ahle Hadith* movement (e.g. Riaz 2007b).

In both countries, *the internal organizational structures of civil society groups that have operated in a context of violence and insecurity have been highly hierarchical*, especially where these civil society groups have engaged in the use of violence themselves. The Fulbari resistance movement, which organized protests against an open-pit coal mining project in northern Bangladesh, for instance, faced massive repression by paramilitary forces in 2005, and continued to be kept under tight surveillance by state security agencies at the time this research was conducted. As a consequence, a high level of mutual distrust prevailed among the movement's members, and its internal structures were very exclusive and leader-centred. Trying to maintain utmost "secrecy" regarding the movement's activities and plans, its main leaders refused to involve ordinary members in policy decision-making and tightly controlled their rank-and-file activists.[21]

An in-depth case study of the PHWF,[22] a *hacienda* workers' union sympathetic to the Philippine CPP-NPA, which was subject to substantial repression by military and paramilitary forces at the time this research was conducted, revealed a similar picture. The group displayed strong internal hierarchies, owing to the fact that extra-judicial killings had weakened its civilian leadership. In addition, the prevalence of highly hierarchical internal structures in this and other front organizations of the CPP-NPA can also be traced to the fact that these organizations have at times been integrated into the centralized command and recruitment structure of the Communist party. For example, in some of the CPP-NPA's affiliated sectoral groups, party cadres and "advanced elements", that is, activists identified as potential candidates for recruitment into armed struggle, exercised substantial control over internal processes of leadership selection during the Marcos era.[23] Similarly, in Bangladesh, the internal organizational structures of the CL and the CD have generally been characterized by the existence of a strong "chain of command" between student leaders and rank-and-file activists because they have been used by their mother parties for the purpose of establishing physical control over national university campuses.[24]

Both in Bangladesh and the Philippines *the endorsement of violence by civil society actors has been largely unrelated to religious factors.* First and foremost, in both cases some religious civil society groups have supported the use of violence, but many others have strongly denounced it. In Bangladesh, for instance, the ICS, the student organization of the Islamist JI, has been involved in large-scale campus violence (Upadhyay 2007), and several Islamic terrorist organizations have recruited followers from conservative *Qwami madrassahs* (Riaz 2007b, p. 37.). Most of the country's mosques and Islamic civil society institutions, however, have publicly condemned violence on various occasions. Similarly, in the Philippines, several civil society groups belonging to the lay structure of the Catholic Church aligned themselves with the Communist insurgency during the Marcos era, while the Catholic Church as an institution has condemned the use of violence (Moreno 2006, p. 203ff.; Youngblood 1990, pp. 98ff.). Furthermore, in the case of Bangladesh, even the rise of violent religious groups in civil society can often be traced more accurately to the interplay of power centre politics and international influences than to tendencies of religious radicalization in society as a whole. Most notably, both successive military regimes and the BNP-led four-party government (2001–2006) allowed fundamentalist *madrassahs* to receive foreign funding from the Gulf in order to weaken secular opposition groups and to maintain good relations with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, which Bangladesh depends on for the admission of its migrant workers (e.g. Karim and Fair 2007; ICG 2006).[25]

In sum, in both Bangladesh and the Philippines, civil society has thus played a *highly ambiguous role in the national democratization process* because civil society actors have lacked autonomy from alternative power centres, been tainted with patronage and corruption and have sometimes endorsed the use of violence. In other words, rather than acting as a strong corrective to the manifold social and political problems brought about by state weakness, *the national civil society* in the two countries *has mirrored the deficits of the weak state*. The comparative empirical findings presented in these sections have important implications both for theory and for development practice, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Notes

1. On Bangladesh see e.g. interview with a well-known local scholar, Dhaka, 28.11.2007.
2. On Bangladesh see also interview with a DU professor, Dhaka, 03.01.09; on the Philippines see also interview with a UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09.

3. Interview with a local NGO expert and INGO representative, Dhaka 16.02.09.
4. Interview with a terrorism expert of the BEI, Dhaka, 24.02.09; interview with a professor of the IUB; Dhaka 18.03.09.
5. Interview with a professor of the IUB; Dhaka 18.03.09; see also Hashemi (1996).
6. Quote from *The Economist*, cited after Khan and Husein (1996: 324).
7. Interview with an election commissioner of the CTG, Dhaka, 12.02.09; interview with a high-ranking representative of the TIB, Dhaka, 25.01.09.
8. Interview with Brigadier General Danilo (Danny) Lim Delapuz, Scout Rangers, AFP, Manila, 14.12.09; interview with a LM leader and former UP professor, Manila, 04.12.09; interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09.
9. Interview with the representative of a local think tank, Dhaka, November 2007.
10. Interview with an election commissioner of the CTG, Dhaka, 12.02.09; interview with the election program officer of a big INGO, Dhaka, 24.11.2007.
11. On Bangladesh see also interview with a local NGO expert and INGO representative, Dhaka 16.02.09; on the Philippines see also interview with a NAMFREL chief executive, Manila, 05.12.2009.
12. Interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 01.12.09
13. On the case of the DAR see e.g. interview with an IPD leader, Manila, 09.10.09.
14. Interview with a local NGO expert and INGO representative, Dhaka 16.02.09; interview with an NGOAB official, Dhaka, 09.03.09. Information confirmed in confidential conversations with international development practitioners.
15. Interview with a former representative of a leftist party-list group, Manila, 10.10.09.
16. E.g. interview with Oscar D. (Oca) Francisco, ARC joint convener, Manila, 16.10.09.
17. Interview with the representative of an international donor organization, Manila, 28.09.09.
18. Interview with NOFA organizers, Hacienda Margarita, Baccolod, 27.10.09.
19. Interview with a local NGO expert and INGO representative, Dhaka 16.02.09; interview with a formers *Samata* member, Dhaka, 11.02.2009.
20. Interview with a CD activist and a DU campus correspondent, Dhaka, 26.02.09; interview with a senior journalist and former CL leader, Berlin, 24.11.09.
21. Extended discussions with a high-ranking representative of the NCBD's Fulbari Unit Fulbari, 13.03.09–15.03.29.
22. Name changed for safety reasons.

23. Interview with a senior journalist sympathetic to the CPP-NPA, 25.10.09; interview with the former member of a CPP-NPA front organization, 03.11.09.
24. Interview with a CD activist and a DU campus correspondent, Dhaka, 26.02.09.
25. Interview with a terrorism expert of the BEI, Dhaka, 24.02.09.

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CHAPTER 6

Conclusion and Debate

While both civil society and state weakness remain highly prominent subjects in the academic as well as in the international policy discourse, research on these two issues has thus far remained largely unconnected. In order to bridge this gap, this study set out to investigate whether, and if so, how state weakness influences the ability of national civil societies to emerge and persist, exert political influence and contribute to democratization. The study's comparative findings from Bangladesh and the Philippines clearly show that *state weakness can, in fact, constitute an enabling condition for civil society to emerge and persist*, confirming similar observations made by the sparse existing literature on civil society in weak states (e.g. Götze 2004, pp. 201ff.; Lorch 2006, 2008; Ottaway 2004). However, both countries have also been characterized by the existence of an *ambiguous civil society*, whose contributions to the national democratization process have been extremely ambivalent. More specifically, *while in both countries civil society actors have exercised significant political influence, they have not always used this influence in order to promote democracy but at times also for highly undemocratic purposes.* The cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines thus contradict the normative assumption that a strong civil society necessarily strengthens democracy (e.g. Ashton 2013; Cohen and Arato 1992; EC 2012; Putnam 2000; UNDP 2012; USAID 2014). Instead, both cases confirm the arguments advanced by the more empirically analytical literature on civil society that a vibrant civil society is not

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always good for democracy and that real, existing civil societies usually display certain dark sides, which are generally reflective of the context in which they operate (e.g. Alexander 1998; Croissant 2000; Croissant et al. 2000; Lauth 2003; Monga 2009).

At the same time, however, the comparative findings of this study clearly go beyond this literature by showing more specifically *that in contexts of state weakness, national civil societies mirror the deficits of their respective states.* Most notably, in both Bangladesh and the Philippines the state lacks autonomy from alternative power centres and the national power structure is highly fragmented. As a consequence, national civil society actors also lack autonomy, being affiliated to different types of power centres in the weak state, including traditional political elites, political parties, religious forces or insurgent groups. Moreover, in both countries alternative power centres inside and outside the state apparatus employ patronage, corruption and violence in order to enhance their social control and exert political influence. Consequently, national civil society actors often form part of patronage and corruption networks and are sometimes also tainted with violence.

The overall academic, and practical, contribution of this book is to show that state weakness leads to the emergence of an ambiguous civil society that can be both boon *and* bane for democracy. This broader finding can be broken down into four sets of insights on the concrete mechanisms by which state weakness leads to the emergence of ambiguous national civil societies that mirror the deficits of their respective states. The present sub-chapter will show that these comparative empirical findings serve to systematically connect civil society theory, the research on governance in areas of limited statehood and the literature on weak states and that they also have important implications for research on patronage and/or corruption, on violent non-state actors and on international development cooperation.

6.1 Implications for the Theoretical Debate

The theoretical analytical framework developed in this book identifies five analytical categories of influences on civil society in weak states. At the national level, these are: first, the existence of an environment in which non-state actors fulfil functions normally ascribed to the state; second, the lack of state autonomy and the existence of different alternative power centres that compete with each other for social control; third, a context

of patronage and corruption; and, fourth, a context of violence and insecurity. International donor influences act as the fifth category and are defined as an important intervening variable, which can have an impact on both civil society and the state across the four above-mentioned categories (Chap. 2). The framework thus allows for a truly detailed analysis of how different aspects of state weakness, along with the intervening impact of foreign aid, influence the ability of national civil societies to constitute themselves. Thereby, it also readily lends itself to an investigation into the complex relations that can exist between state weakness, international donor influences and the internal organizational structures of civil society groups. A comparative analysis of Bangladesh and the Philippines along the lines of this theoretical analytical framework shows that in contexts of state weakness *civil society mirrors the deficits of the state* and also suggests *concrete causal mechanisms* that explain this outcome. These causal mechanisms also provide additional evidence that a causal relationship does, in fact, exist between state weakness and the presence of a civil society that has an ambiguous impact on democratization.[1] Thus, on a more general theoretical level, the comparative findings of this study also confirm the value of the study's *relational approach* to civil society, which suggests that real, existing civil societies will always display both democratic features and dark sides and that the relationship between these two sets of characteristics will depend on the nature and, in particular, on the strength or weakness of the state.[2]

6.1.1 Causal Mechanisms Relating the Stopgap Function of Ambiguous Civil Societies to State Weakness and Foreign Aid

The comparison of Bangladesh and the Philippines shows, first of all, that *civil society can serve a stopgap function in areas where the state is unable or unwilling to deliver basic services.* This finding is fully in line with the literature on governance in areas of limited statehood, which shows that where central state institutions lack capacity, essential public goods are often provided by non-state actors, such as civil society groups, public-private partnerships or private businesses (e.g. Beisheim et al. 2014; Risse 2012, pp. 5ff.). However, the comparative empirical findings of this study also illustrate that *the ability of civil society to perform a stopgap function varies considerably across different sectors* and that civil society actors clearly cannot perform all the functions normally ascribed to the state. More specifically, they support the observation of existing research on

civil society in weak states that civil society groups can provide relatively effective makeshift solutions in the field of social service provision (e.g. Dowst 2009; Lorch 2006; Ottaway 2004, esp. p. 129; Rombouts 2006, p. 32; Weijer and Kilnes 2012, pp. 12ff.), a finding that is also consistent with the existing literature on development NGOs (e.g. Banks and Hulme 2012, pp. 3–5; Beer et al. 2012).

Contrary to this, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines also suggest, however, that the ability of NGOs and other civil society actors to contribute to democratic institution-building is often much more limited, a finding that contradicts both the normative theoretical and the dominant donor approaches to civil society (Edwards 2004, pp. 72ff.; Carothers and Ottaway 2000; for examples see Cohen and Arato 1992; EC 2012; ICAI 2013, p. 2; World Bank 2013; UNDP 2012; USAID 2014). Similarly, both cases also show that civil society actors are mostly unable to independently perform a stopgap function in the field of security provision, contradicting existing, isolated assumptions to the contrary (Andersen 2006; Ottaway 2004).

In addition, the empirical findings of this study also provide evidence that the *stopgap function of civil society in the welfare sector can be strengthened significantly by foreign funding*, a finding that is in line with the expectations of foreign donors seeking to work with civil society in weak states (e.g. Rombouts 2006, p. 32; Weijer and Kilnes 2012, pp. 12ff.). At the same time, however, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines also show that *foreign funding can depoliticize civil society in aid-recipient countries*, thereby limiting its potential to promote democratization. This finding is largely in line with critical works on development NGOs, which point to the depoliticizing impact that foreign aid can have on these organizations and on civil societies in developing countries more generally (e.g. Banks et al. 2015, p. 709; Harriss 2002; Zaidi 2006, p. 3557). However, this study also provides starting points for further refining the assumption that foreign aid depoliticizes civil society. More specifically, the comparison of Bangladesh and the Philippines shows that *donor paradigms which promote a complete outsourcing of welfare services to NGOs are more conducive to depoliticizing civil society* than donor approaches which focus on the establishment of mixed welfare systems, or seek to combine their support for service delivery by NGOs with specific measures to strengthen the capacity of civil society actors to engage in political advocacy. Moreover, the cases also show that the depoliticizing impacts of foreign aid on civil society tend to be especially strong in settings where the level of economic

development is low and an independent capitalist sector is lacking, as these conditions are highly conducive to the emergence of an NGO sector that acts as a vehicle for the career and profit-making interests of the educated middle class (see Feldman 1997, 2003 on the case of Bangladesh). In addition, this book also confirms the findings of the critical literature on NGOs that civil society can become depoliticized by donor interventions that promote technocratic and apolitical visions of development and/or encourage the growth of service-oriented NGOs, while marginalizing more politically vocal civil society actors, such as social movements (e.g. Banks et al. 2015, p. 709ff.; Harriss 2002; Ottaway and Carothers 2000, pp. 295f.; Rahman 2006).

Furthermore, the comparative findings of this study also go beyond the existing literature by showing that in weak states very few of the civil society groups that perform a stopgap function in the welfare sector are fully independent and that this lack of autonomy can, in part, be traced to the limited ability of civil society to perform other functions normally ascribed to the state. Most notably, given that the ability of civil society groups to provide for their own security is highly circumscribed, civil society actors operating in weak states must often align themselves with alternative power centres for the purpose of protection, while these power centres also actively seek to co-opt civil society in order to extend their social and political influence. These patterns will be discussed in the following sections.

6.1.2 Causal Mechanisms Relating Ambiguous Civil Societies to Power Centre Competition in Weak States

While normative approaches view civil society as highly autonomous from the state, political society and the market and as being characterized by a high degree of self-organization (Dekker 2004; Edwards 2004; for examples see Cohen and Arato 1992, pp. 201–255, pp. 345–421; Schade 2002, pp. 29ff.; Schmalz-Bruns 1994), the comparative empirical findings of this study show that the *autonomy of civil society is relational to the autonomy of the state*. More specifically, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines confirm the finding of Migdal that in weak states the authority and the autonomy of central state institutions are usually circumscribed by alternative power centres inside and outside the state apparatus (Migdal 1988)[3], including traditional political elites, violent political parties, Communist insurgent groups or powerful religious

forces. In such a context, independent, bureaucratic institutions are largely unable to protect the autonomy of the civil society sphere, and alternative power centres independently exercise a considerable measure of social control. As a result, *civil society groups also lack autonomy, being affiliated to different types of power centres in the weak state*. This *pattern of power centre alignments* is in line with existing studies on civil society in weak states, which likewise suggest that civil society groups operating in such contexts often lack autonomy from powerful social forces (e.g. Götze 2004, pp. 207–211; Ottaway 2004; Shah 2008).

However, the comparative empirical findings of this study also further specify this finding by providing detailed insights into both the reasons for the emergence and the nature of the alliances that can exist between alternative power centres and civil society actors in the context of a weak state. Overall, this study shows that *alternative power centres link up with civil society groups predominantly in order to enhance their social control*, a finding which is in line with the more general assumption of Migdal (1988) that the struggle for social control among powerful social forces plays a crucial role in structuring social and political relations in weak states. More specifically, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines demonstrate that alternative power centres as diverse as traditional political elites, political parties, Communist insurgencies and religious forces may exercise social control by establishing or co-opting civil society groups in order *to spread their social or political ideologies*. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, such alternative power centres may also use their affiliated civil society groups *as channels for delivering social services to loyal constituencies*, thereby *taking advantage of the stopgap function of civil society in the welfare sector*. Furthermore, what has been largely neglected by the existing literature is that *struggles for social control between different power centres can be highly conducive to the growth of civil society in weak states*. This is primarily because alternative power centres as diverse as communist insurgent groups, parliamentary parties, conservative religious actors and big landowners may seek to trump each other in setting up loyal civil society groups.

While the sparse existing literature on civil society in weak states is largely silent on the motives that may drive civil society actors to link up with alternative power centres, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines clearly suggest that *the forging of alliances with alternative power centres inside and outside the state apparatus often constitutes a deliberate strategy that can be employed by civil society actors in order to gain political influence*.

Interestingly, this finding corresponds with research on civil society in authoritarian regimes, which has observed that civil society groups operating in such contexts may deliberately allow themselves to become co-opted by the ruling elite in order to achieve their goals (Perinova 2005, esp. p. 8; Rodan 1996; see also Yang 2004, pp. 3–14). What is more, this study also demonstrates that this strategy can indeed be highly successful and that *alliances with alternative power centres can, in fact, enable civil society actors to exercise considerable political influence in weak states*, where formal channels for political participation are blocked.

The cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines further show that where civil society groups lack autonomy, being affiliated with alternative power centres that compete with each other for social control, the *structure of the national civil society is fragmented and mirrors the structure of the power centre competition that prevails in the weak state*. This finding corresponds with the more general observation made by some of the few existing studies on civil society in weak states that, in contexts of state weakness, civil society is often divided along the same lines of conflict as the state and the society at large (e.g., Götze 2004, pp. 207–211; Rombouts 2006, pp. 35–38; Weijer and Kilnes 2012, pp. vf., 5f.) It also resonates generally with existing research on state weakness, which holds that weak states are usually fragmented polities and home to oligarchical social orders (e.g. Migdal 1988; Ruud 1996).

At the same time, the comparative findings of this study also show that, by providing them with an independent financial resource base, *foreign aid can enhance the autonomy of civil society groups from domestic power centres with strong political ideologies*,[4] such as Communist insurgent groups or political parties. Thereby, the study also identifies an additional causal mechanism that explains how donor support can depoliticize civil society in developing countries. In doing so, it contributes to the above-cited research on the depoliticizing impact of development aid in general and of donor support to NGOs in particular (e.g. Banks et al. 2015, p. 709; Harriss 2002; Rahman 2006).

Furthermore, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines also provide evidence that power centre alignments can have a significant influence on the internal organizational structures of civil society groups, and that the degree of this impact varies according to the closeness of the alliance in question. More specifically, they show that *where civil society groups are aligned very closely with alternative power centres, they tend to be organized along sectoral lines.* Moreover, *their internal organizational structures tend to be hierarchical and mirror the structures of their respective power centres.*

In both cases, this was true for civil society groups aligned with Communist and other leftist parties, which controlled their affiliated civil society groups through *democratic centralism*, confirming existing findings on civil society in communist or socialist systems, such as Vietnam (e.g. Wischermann et al. 2015). Similarly, in Bangladesh, sectoral structures and organizational practices similar to democratic centralism characterized civil society groups affiliated with the AL, the party that led the national independence struggle. This finding is in line with both Migdal's (1988, 232ff.) research on (post-) revolutionary Mexico, and Linz's (2000, pp.175ff.) work on mobilizational authoritarian regimes, both of which show that liberation parties frequently establish dependent sectoral groups and other mass organizations in order to establish or secure social and political control. However, the comparative empirical findings of this study also go beyond the existing research by showing that in weak states other, more traditionalist power centres, such as conservative political parties, semi-feudal landlords, Islamist parties or the Catholic Church, may also engage in the formation of sectoral civil society groups and control them through organizational practices similar to democratic centralism. This suggests that, in contexts of state weakness, the existence of such organizational practices within the civil society sphere may often stem primarily from the shared objective of a diverse range of alternative power centres to enhance their social control, rather than from the influence of communist, socialist or other types of revolutionary ideologies.

In addition, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines also show that *alliances with alternative power centres can limit the ability of civil society organizations to perform several democratic functions* which are often ascribed to them, such as *watchdog* and *representative functions* or the generation of *social capital* (e.g. Anheier et al. 2000; Diamond 1999, pp. 228–250; Kramer 2000; Putnam 1993, 2000).[5] Most notably, both cases demonstrate that where civil society groups lack autonomy from alternative power centres competing for social control, *their watchdog function becomes highly selective*. Similarly, where civil society groups are controlled by alternative power centres through democratic centralism or similar organizational practices, their *ability to represent the independent sectoral interests of their constituencies becomes circumscribed*, and these interests become subordinated to the promotion of the respective power centres' overarching political goals. Similarly, where civil society groups draw their membership only from the loyal constituencies of certain alternative power centres, the *social capital* they generate is bound be particularistic and *bonding* rather than *bridging* in nature.[6]

6.1.3 Causal Mechanisms Relating Ambiguous Civil Societies to Patronage and/or Corruption, and to Donor Influences in Weak States

Normative approaches tend to view civil society as a strong bulwark against patronage and corruption, assuming that civil society organizations, such as NGOs, can act as watchdogs that promote transparency and accountability, both in the state and the broader society (e.g. Roniger 1994a, pp. 8f.; for a prominent example see Mungiu-Pippidi 2013). Contrary to this, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines support the finding of the more empirically analytical literature on civil society that in developing world settings and in countries undergoing political transformations *civil society groups often form part of patron-client and corruption networks* (e.g. Croissant 2000; Holloway 1997; Lauth 2003; Ottaway 2004, p. 132).

However, this study also specifies this finding further, both by suggesting that clientelistic or corrupt practices characterize civil society especially in weak states and by identifying concrete causal mechanisms that show why this is the case: where state elites, bureaucrats and alternative power centres employ patronage and corruption as strategies to enhance their social control, civil society actors may react by employing patronage and corruption strategically as well. This finding is in line with the literatures on the relationship between patronage and civil society and on the demand side of clientelism, which generally holds that *clientelism can constitute a deliberate strategy of civil society groups* and other, dependent social actors (e.g. Günes-Ayata 1994; Roniger, 1994a, b, 2004; see also Piattoni 2001a, b). More specifically, in weak states civil society actors may intentionally enter into patron-client and corrupt relations with state elites and alternative power centres to gain preferential access to resources and services, which can then be channelled to their members and beneficiaries. The *use of patronage and corruption can thus strengthen the capability of civil society groups to perform a stopgap function in the welfare sector*. Yet, this study further shows that civil society actors can also *use clientelism and corruption as strategies to exert political influence* in contexts where formal channels for the participation of civil society in policy-making are blocked (see also Lorch 2014a).

This study further demonstrates that *the ability to bestow patronage plays an important role in enabling alternative power centres to control their affiliated civil society groups on a long-term basis*. This observation corresponds with the broader finding of the literature on patronage that the stability of patron-client ties usually depends on the degree to which the clients' expectations are met (e.g. Scott and Kerkvliet 1977). More specifically, the

comparative findings of this book show that *civil society actors can act as middlemen in clientelistic chains linking alternative power centres to their social constituencies*, an observation that is in line with the more general finding of the research on patronage that, in post-feudal settings, the role of the clientelistic intermediary can be performed by a large variety of social actors (e.g. Landé 1977, pp. xxxvi; Piattoni 2001b, p. 203; Powell 1977; pp. 149f.). However, the findings of this study also go beyond the existing literature by showing that there is usually *a strong trade-off between the clientelistic and the democratic intermediary functions that can be performed by civil society* in weak states. More specifically, rank-and-file activists may often reject the decision of individual civil society leaders to engage in clientelistic or corrupt practices, even if they benefit from them materially. To a certain extent, this contradicts the assumptions, advanced by some works on patronage, that clientelism can sometimes serve a relatively strong representative function because in contexts of scarcity dependent sections of the population may often be interested primarily in gaining access to resources (e.g. Clapham 1982; Landé 1977; xxif.).

Similarly, this study also finds that *the use of clientelistic practices usually reinforces internal organizational hierarchies within civil society groups*, an observation that has also been made by the limited existing literature on civil society and patronage (Alexander 1998; Roniger 1994a, b, 1998; Günes-Ayata 1994). However, it also shows that *international donor engagement can reinforce the interplay between clientelistic practices and internal organizational hierarchies within civil society groups* if it strengthens the position of individual civil society leaders and/or leads to the bureaucratization of civil society organizations. This study thus identifies two concrete causal mechanisms that explain why foreign-funded civil society organizations often exhibit highly hierarchical internal structures, a finding that has also been made by the critical research on NGOs (Lyons and Nivison-Smith 2008; Ottaway and Carothers 2000; Uphoff 1996; Tandon 1996).

Furthermore, the comparative empirical findings of this book also serve to explain *how different donor paradigms, in combination with differences in the resource base of the state, impact the forms of patronage and corruption that are employed by civil society actors.* In particular, they show that where the material resource base of the state is relatively strong and the availability of foreign funding is rather low, material benefits will usually flow from the state to civil society groups. Conversely, where the material resource base of the state is weak, and that of civil society organizations is relatively

strong due to foreign funding, corrupt money and other clientelistic benefits tend to be channelled from civil society groups to the state, rather than vice versa. These findings go beyond the existing literature, which largely limits itself to the observation that the availability of large-scale foreign funding may encourage abuse and lead to the misappropriation of donor money by NGOs (e.g. Beer et al. 2012, p. 329; Holloway 1997).

At the same time, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines also provide evidence that *the strategic use of patronage and corruption can have a highly divisive impact on civil society*. On a general level, this finding is in line with the broader literature on patronage, which maintains that clientelism sets standards for inclusion and exclusion and, thus, promotes social and political fragmentation (e.g. Landé 1977, pp. xxixf.). More specifically, however, the comparative findings of this study also show that conflicts related to the involvement of civil society groups in patronage or corruption do not only evolve out of quarrels over the distribution of particularistic spoils, as the existing literature on patronage seems to suggest. Instead, such conflicts may also result from disputes among civil society actors over whether or not patronage and corruption are to be regarded as legitimate civil society strategies.

6.1.4 Causal Mechanisms Relating Ambiguous Civil Societies to Violence and Insecurity in Weak States

While normative approaches usually take the non-violent character of civil society for granted, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines provide significant support for sociological and historical studies, which hold that *in contexts where the state's monopoly on force is weak, national civil societies are often tainted with varying degrees of violence* (e.g. Englehardt 2011; Knöbl 2006; Leonhard 2004; Mitra 2003; Reichardt 2004). However, the comparative empirical findings of this study also go beyond this existing literature by specifying how exactly state weakness may lead to the emergence of violent practices within the sphere of civil society. Specifically, the findings confirm the argument of Stacey and Meyer (2005, p. 184) that civil society is capable of "deliberate violence", or, in other words, that *violence can constitute a deliberate strategy of civil society actors*, an argument which has largely been lacking in empirical testing. In this regard, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines further suggest that the motives that may prompt civil society groups to endorse or even use violence include, in particular, the desire to protect themselves or their

constituencies, resistance against violent state repression, and the quest to realize certain political goals, such as democracy, in a context where legal channels for expression are blocked. The study thus confirms similar findings advanced by the sparse existing literature on civil society and violence (e.g. Henry 2011; Reichardt 2004).

At the same time, however, the comparative findings of this study also show that the endorsement or use of violence on the part of civil society is usually very closely related to the strategic use of violence on the part of state elites and non-state power centres, which has been described both by the literature on weak states and the literature on violent non-state actors (e.g. Biró 2007; Migdal 1988; Schneckener 2006, 2009). More precisely, the findings suggest that in weak states *the endorsement or use of violence by civil society actors often constitutes a strategy that is caused by power centre alignments*, because, for instance, violent power centres may encourage civil society actors to engage in violence or provide them with access to guns and other means of violence.

Furthermore, the study also provides empirical evidence for the assumption of some sociological and historical studies that, under certain circumstances, *violence may, in fact, constitute an enabling condition for civil society to emerge* (e.g. Gosewinkel 2003, p. 19; Leonhard 2004; Mitra 2003; Reichardt 2004, pp. 69f.). However, it also specifies this assumption further by *linking it to the different forms of violence that can exist in weak states*. Most notably, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines show that non-state power centres with a capacity for organized violence may sometimes protect civil society groups from violent onslaughts by state security forces or other, rival non-state power centres. This finding largely corresponds with the literature on violent non-state actors, which shows in general terms that non-state armed groups, such as warlords or insurgent groups, often seek to enhance their social influence by granting local communities a minimal amount of protection (e.g. Biró 2007; Schneckener 2009; see also Migdal 1988). In this regard, the empirical findings of this book also demonstrate that *violence is particularly conducive to the emergence of civil society when it is successful in establishing physical control over territorial spaces in which civil society groups are then allowed to operate*. More specifically, the military strategy of the *Protracted People's War and other, similar military strategies* tend to be particularly conducive to the growth of prototype civil society organizations, because, in their early stages, they focus primarily on social base-building (see also Santos 2005). Conversely, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines also

show that *when civil society groups are aligned with violent power centres they can further strengthen the latter's capacity for organized violence*. For instance, civil society groups may serve as recruiting grounds for insurgents, party goons or religious militants or access foreign funding, which violent power centres can use in order to increase their armed potential.

Finally, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines also provide evidence for the tentative finding of existing studies that the internal organizational structures of civil society groups that operate in a context of insecurity tend to be rather hierarchical (e.g. Krok-Paszkowska 2003, p. 120)[7]. The cases also suggest some concrete causal mechanisms that explain why this is the case. Most notably, they show that civil society groups faced with state repression tend towards hierarchy because their leaders fear infiltration, mistrust their fellow members and, therefore, concentrate decision-making power in their own hands. Moreover, the cases suggest that the internal organizational structures of civil society groups that actively engage in violence themselves are especially hierarchical because such organizations usually rely on a chain of command.

6.2 Avenues for Future Research

In investigating how civil society constitutes itself in weak states, this book has linked civil society theory, the research on governance in areas of limited statehood, the theoretical research on state weakness, the research on patronage and on violent non-state actors and the literature on foreign-funded NGOs. More specifically, its theoretical analytical framework has identified five analytical categories of influences on civil society in weak states, which allow for a thorough investigation into the complex relations and interrelations that exist between state weakness, international donor influences and civil society in specific empirical settings. As such, the framework provides a sound analytical tool for both single case studies and qualitative in-depth comparisons of national civil society developments across different weak states. In the context of this study, the theoretical analytical framework proved to be a highly useful heuristic tool for analysing the impact of state weakness on civil society in the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines, which, in turn, provided empirical starting points for testing this framework and refining it further. Most notably, the two cases *show that in contexts of state weakness civil society mirrors the deficits of the state* and also suggest concrete *causal mechanisms* that explain this outcome. As noted earlier, these causal mechanisms also provide additional evidence for the existence of a causal relationship between

state weakness and the presence of an ambiguous civil society that plays a highly ambivalent role for democratization.[8]

Similarly, at the outset of this study, a comparison of Bangladesh and the Philippines along the lines of the *most dissimilar cases design* suggested that the strength or weakness of the state plays a more important role in shaping civil society than other possible independent variables, such as historical legacies, the specific nature of the political system, the prevailing ethnic composition or majority religion or the level of economic growth. As shown in Chap. 5, this preliminary empirical finding is supported by a structured, focused comparison of Bangladeshi and Philippine civil society along the lines of the study's theoretical analytical framework. More specifically, this structured focused comparison shows that in both cases these other possible independent variables influenced national civil society less than the five categories of influences identified by the study's theoretical framework, and where they did have an impact it was usually mediated by the structure of the weak state across these five categories.

For instance, the comparative finding that in both cases the growth of civil society can be traced to the convergence of the inability of the state to deliver social services, the efforts of rivalling power centres to establish loyal civil society groups for the purpose of social control and the lack of effective state regulation clearly contradicts explanations that attribute the flourishing of civil society to a particular kind of religion, ethnic composition or historical legacy. By the same token, this finding also refutes approaches based on modernization theory which link the size and strength of civil society primarily to the level of economic development (Bailer et al. 2007, p. 238). Similarly, the observation that in weak states civil society actors often employ patronage and corruption strategically in order to exert political influence stands in contrast with approaches that perceive patronage and corruption primarily as cultural phenomena.[9] Correspondingly, the finding that the endorsement of violence often constitutes a *strategy* on the part of civil society that is caused by power centre alignments also runs counter to culturalist interpretations that attribute the occurrence of violence in society predominantly to cultural, ethnic or religious factors.[10]

Against the backdrop of the study's comparative empirical findings, five major avenues for future research would be particularly productive. First, *future research should further test and refine the theoretical analytical framework for analysing the impact of state weakness on civil society* developed in this book. Although Bangladesh and the Philippines differ considerably with regard to their historical legacies, political systems, ethnic compositions, majority religions and levels of economic growth, this framework

has proven to be a highly useful tool for analysing state-civil society relations in both countries. Consequently, it can, in principle, be assumed that the framework can also be fruitfully applied to a wide range of other countries in which central state institutions are weak. Nevertheless, the framework *should be tested in inter-regional comparisons* in order to verify that its usefulness is not limited to countries in Asia.

Second, given its character as a focused theory frame (Rueschemeyer 2009, pp. 12–17), the theoretical analytical framework developed in this study currently falls short of establishing coherent theoretical linkages between its different analytical categories. However, the comparative findings of this study clearly suggest that *the framework's five categories of influences often have convergent impacts* on the growth, political influence and democratic potential of civil society. Against this backdrop, future research should further investigate the possible interrelations between the analytical framework's five categories of influences and the convergent impacts which these might have on national civil societies.

Third, the empirical findings of this study provide evidence that the strength or weakness of the state and the structure of foreign aid play a more important role in shaping national civil societies than other possible independent variables, such as a country's historical legacy, political system, ethnic composition, majority religion or its level of economic growth. Nevertheless, this study also shows that some of these factors *interact* with the five categories of influences on civil society in weak states identified by the study's theoretical analytical framework. For instance, the study demonstrates that a country's level of economic development and—even more so—the structure of its capitalist sector can have an impact on how the inability of the state to deliver social services and foreign aid shape the structure of the foreign-funded NGO sector as one important component of the national civil society. In other words, *some other possible independent variables may also have an influence on national civil societies, although this impact is bound to be mediated by the weak state* and the social and political power constellations in which it is embedded. Consequently, the study's theoretical analytical framework should be linked to such other possible independent variables in a more theoretically grounded fashion.

Fourth, there is a considerable need for a better theoretical conceptualization of the relationship between the strategies that can be employed by civil society actors for the purpose of exerting political influence in weak states on the one hand, and the democratic potential of civil society on the other. Most notably, one important *cross-cutting empirical finding* of this study is that civil society actors do, in fact, engage with the context of state

weakness in its various dimensions strategically in order to gain political influence. More specifically, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines clearly suggest that civil society actors may use the forging of alliances with highly controversial power centres, patronage *and/or corruption* and even violence as deliberate strategies in order to realize their own objectives. In other words, *civil society actors may choose to deliberately forfeit their democratic potential in order to achieve what they perceive as more pressing social and political goals.* Only if we understand these motivations and choices will international policy decision-makers and development agencies be able to identify the right strategies and select the right local partners for social service delivery and democracy-building in weak states.

Fifth, this also implies more specifically that the nascent literature on civil society in weak states should be linked to the limited, but important, literature on civil society coups which emerged in the early 2000s, drawing on the case of Venezuela (Encarnación 2002), and has also recently been applied to countries in Asia and the Middle East (e.g. Arguay 2012; Dorman 2013; Encarnación 2013; Lorch 2015). Briefly, this literature argues that civil society may come to support military intervention in contexts of institutional weakness and political turmoil (see especially Encarnación 2002, 2013). Up to now, however, it has largely limited itself to describing in fairly general terms how public demonstrations and other forms of civil society mobilization can facilitate military intervention. The cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines likewise show that civil society can support military involvement in politics. What is more, *however*, they also suggest that *civil society actors may, in fact, strategically align themselves with rebellious military factions or post-coup governments* in order to realize certain political objectives, such as land reforms or anti-corruption measures, in a context where legal channels for the participation of civil society in policy-making are blocked. Against this backdrop, future research should explore how civil society actors view the relationship between state weakness, democracy and other pressing social and political needs. Similarly, it should also investigate the motives and conditions that may lead civil society actors to support military intervention.

6.3 Practical Implications for International Development Cooperation

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, many development experts and international aid agencies have re-emphasized the need to build strong and capable states as an important prerequisite for poverty alleviation, development

and security in the developing world (e.g. Carothers and de Gramont 2013, pp. 95ff.; Harman and Williams 2014, esp. p. 926). Nevertheless, civil society promotion has remained a key objective for the international donor community, which has also increasingly begun to view civil society as an important contributor to state-building. The "Busan Partnership Agreement for Effective Development Cooperation" passed in 2011, for instance, entails a "New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States", which centres on five "Peace and State Building Goals" (OECD-DAC 2011). At the same time, however, the agreement also stresses the role of civil society as both an independent development actor and a partner in state-building (OECD 2012, pp. 5ff.; see also Mawdsley et al. 2013, pp. 6ff.).

Since the late 2000s, most of the large international aid agencies have launched reassessments of their civil society strategies, often as part of their preparations for the post-2015 agenda (INTRAC 2013, p. 2). From 2010 to 2011, the European Commission (EC) conducted an assessment that resulted in the formulation of a new civil society policy, which advocates for a more strategic engagement of the EU with civil society (EC 2012; CoEU 2012). Similarly, in 2011, the OECD-DAC conducted peer reviews, assessing how its members worked with civil society. The results were summarized in the form of 12 lessons for "Partnering with Civil Society" (OECD 2012). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2012) also published a new "Strategy on Civil Society and Civic Engagement" in late 2012. In reaction to the passage of highly restrictive NGO laws by Russia and other non-democratic states, the USA in 2013 announced its "Stand with Civil Society Initiative", with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) subsequently developing "best practices" to support its implementation (USAID 2014). Finally, the DFID launched a "Civil Society Partnership Review" in 2015, the results of which are currently pending publication (DFID 2016; Jackson 2015).

In this political context, the findings of this study have important implications for international development practitioners. Most notably, they show that donors must acknowledge that in weak states the contributions that civil society actors are able and/or willing to make to processes of national democratization will greatly depend on the specific local power constellations. On a more general level, this corresponds with what has been described as a 'political turn' in development aid, or, in other words, the growing recognition on the part of the donor community that development is always a political process and that the delivery of aid always has

political implications (Carothers and de Gramont 2013; Mawdsley et al. 2013, p. 3). Carothers and de Gramont (2013, p. 97) note that this is especially true for weak states[11] where "politics is—essentially by definition—a central element of the overall developmental challenge". So far, however, the aid industry has largely failed to acknowledge that civil society often contributes significantly to the political challenges facing weak states, rather than remedying them. In particular, this study shows that in contexts of state weakness, rather than being independent, civil society actors are often closely aligned with state elites or powerful non-state actors. Consequently, "there is an inherent political risk in engaging with civil society" in such contexts (Weijer and Kilnes 2012, p. 26).[12] Many international donor organizations have recently adopted an understanding of civil society which is somewhat more nuanced than the one that prevailed in the 1990s. For instance, several of the above-cited reports and assessments point to the lack of transparency and representativeness that may characterize real, existing civil society groups. However, none of the reports *question* the democratic potential of civil society per se (EC 2012; CoEU 2012; OECD 2012; USAID 2014; UNDP 2012).

Contrary to this, the findings of this study clearly show that civil society organizations do not always promote democracy, but rather, at times, contribute to undermining it. What is more, the exact same civil society groups may support democratization at one point in time, but hamper it at another. In order to understand these complexities and select the right local partners for democracy-building in weak states, international donors must first strengthen their own capacity for political analysis, which involves both the training of staff and the development of adequate analytical tools. Moreover, given that the political power constellations in weak states are generally highly fluid in nature, they must constantly assess and re-assess the political conditions in their *target* countries and be flexible enough to quickly adjust their programmes once the situation changes. While many donor agencies have meanwhile acknowledged the need for enhanced policy analysis and programme flexibility in principle (Carothers and de Gramont 2013, esp. pp. 160ff., 171; INTRAC 2013), most of them have yet to mainstream these practices into their civil society strategies.

Various international aid agencies have recently adopted the strategy of working with local 'change agents' both in civil and political society.

In so doing, several major donors have also recognized that civil society is more than formally registered NGOs, leading them to search for ways to support other, more informally-organized civil society actors as well (EC 2012; CoEU 2012).[13] Similarly, the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) has recently called on international donors to explore the possibilities of working with non-violent social movements (USIP 2015). Moreover, some development experts have argued that, oftentimes, donor-funded NGOs may most specifically *not* be important agents for democratic change, owing to their lack of representativeness and their frequently apolitical posture (e.g. Burnell 2005, p. 14; Carothers and de Gramont 2013, pp. 136–143, 171–177). The findings of this study clearly support this view. However, they also indicate that international development agencies must still go much further in acknowledging how multifaceted and complex the civil society landscape can be in weak states and the kinds of dilemmas this can involve for foreign donors. For instance, the cases of Bangladesh and the Philippines demonstrate that civil society groups that sympathize with violence may well contribute to democratic change at particular historical junctures and that civil society organizations that engage in clientelistic practices may nevertheless, or precisely because of this, play an important role in delivering social services to marginalized constituencies.

So far, the funding mechanisms of most of the major international donor organizations are rather rigid and thus largely unsuitable for supporting unregistered civil society initiatives, such as social movements or informal CBOs. Enhancing the flexibility of funding schemes would be a necessary requirement in order to realize such support. However, this might often collide with the responsibility of international donors to be accountable to the taxpayers in their home countries (Carothers and de Gramont 2013, pp. 136–143, 171–177; USIP 2015). Moreover, this study shows that, depending on the amount of funding and the specific donor paradigm, foreign support can sometimes have highly detrimental effects on local civil societies. For instance, financial support to welfare-oriented civil society groups can depoliticize civil society and contribute to marginalizing existing social movements, such as movements for land reform. Similarly, donor funding can often render the internal organizational structures of local civil society groups increasingly hierarchical. As a consequence, international donors seeking to engage with civil society

in weak states should always respect the principle to first do no harm (see also Weijer and Kilnes 2012, p. 21). More specifically, they must recognize that supporting local civil society groups financially always comes with a "strong danger […] that outside funding will distort the incentives and local accountability of these organizations" (Carothers and de Gramont 2013, p. 176). In fact, in some cases, international donors may be able to support democratization more effectively by establishing venues for dialogue and exchange, where different local civil society actors can engage and negotiate with each other. Moreover, in some cases, foreign donors may also be able to effectively support local civil society actors by providing them with the information and analytical capacity necessary to understand the transnational dimensions of their local development problems.[14] Such non-monetary forms of support may sometimes also be applicable to civil society groups that sympathize with violence.

This study shows that international donor engagement can influence state-civil society relations across four major, national dimensions of state weakness: first, the existence of an environment in which non-state actors perform functions normally ascribed to the state; second, the prevalence of a struggle for social control between different power centres; third, the existence of a context of patronage and corruption; and fourth, the existence of a context of violence and insecurity. Consequently, international donors must critically reflect upon their own impact both in and on each of these dimensions. With regard to the first dimension, international aid agencies must make sure that their support to welfare-oriented NGOs does not marginalize other civil society actors, such as peasant groups or religious charities, which likewise play an important role in social service delivery but are unable, or unwilling, to access "Western" funding. Similarly, foreign donors should also ensure that their support to civil society groups does not undermine social service delivery by the state or the capacity of state institutions more generally. Specifically, the relatively high salaries offered by foreign-funded NGOs frequently lure qualified personnel away from the state bureaucracy, leading to a brain drain (see also Abuzeid 2009, pp. 18f.). In order to avoid this, international donors should refrain from overfunding NGOs and explore ways to harmonize the financial remuneration schemes of their local NGO partners with those of the public sector.

In addition, international aid agencies must also recognize that while civil society groups may often provide social services that the state fails to deliver, they are usually unable to act as substitutes for functioning

democratic state institutions. Consequently, donor programmes aimed at promoting civil society in weak states should always go hand in hand with measures to strengthen the capacity and the autonomy of the judiciary, the parliament and other democratic state institutions that can act as a counterpart to civil society.

Furthermore, this study also shows that the well-known trade-off between the service delivery and advocacy functions of NGOs (e.g. Beer et al. 2012; Edwards and Hulme 1996a, pp. 5ff.) is often reinforced, if not caused, by donor requirements for standardized service delivery and financial reporting practices. In order to address this problem, the OECD's (2012) latest assessment of its civil society strategy proposes providing more long-term support and increasing core funding for NGOs and other civil society groups (see also INTRAC 2013). While these are valuable suggestions, they still remain far from a structural change in donor funding mechanisms (see also Carothers and de Gramont 2013, p. 177). In fact, in order to actually preserve the reformative potential of the civil society organizations they fund, international donor agencies would first need to acknowledge that their own requirements for quick and measurable results and their demands that their local civil society partners show "value for money" (Jackson 2015) often clash with the objective of promoting long-term, structural political change. Ultimately, this also implies that international donors must fundamentally rethink their own conceptualizations of aid effectiveness and develop truly long-term visions for social and political change in their recipient countries.[15]

Regarding the second dimension of state weakness, the prevalence of a struggle for social control between different power centres, international donors must bear in mind that weak states are contexts of conflict (e.g. Migdal 1988), and that, rather than being independent, civil society groups operating in such contexts are normally aligned with alternative power centres as diverse as political parties, military units and insurgent groups. While many international aid agencies have begun to conduct conflict assessments in their target countries (Carothers and de Gramont 2013, p. 98), they have yet to ensure that civil society is consistently included.

Similarly, donor approaches aimed at supporting coalitions for democratic change clearly constitute an improvement over earlier, more simplistic strategies that conceived of democratization primarily as a struggle between a progressive civil society and an entrenched political elite (ibid, pp. 139ff.; see also USAID 2014). So far, however, international donors

have rarely moved beyond emphasizing the need for a close collaboration between civil society and reform-oriented state elites. But, in order to be able to facilitate the emergence of truly effective coalitions for change, international donors must explore the multifaceted ways in which civil society actors are linked to state elites and alternative power centres in specific local settings. Ultimately, this also means that international aid agencies must rethink their own definitions of civil society, which usually consider the latter as highly autonomous from political society and the state (e.g. EC 2012, p. 3; OECD 2012, pp. 5–8).

Furthermore, international donors must also bear in mind that their engagement can aggravate existing conflicts in weak states, particularly when they have conflicting objectives themselves (Grimm and Leininger 2012, p. 401). More specifically, the aims of empowering agents of change and strengthening civil society can coalesce with state-building efforts and the goal of promoting stability (Burnell 2005, p. 369; Grimm and Leininger 2012; esp. pp. 393, 398, 409). Consequently, international donors operating in weak states must pay special attention to ensuring coherence and consistency in their development programmes, taking the potentially destabilizing impact of civil society promotion into account.

In the case of the third dimension of state weakness, the prevalence of an environment of patronage and corruption, international donors must be aware that once they engage with civil society organizations in weak states, they inevitably run the risk of becoming part of the clientelistic networks in which these groups may be embedded. Moreover, due to the structural inequality which characterizes both the political landscape in weak states and the international system, international aid agencies often play an active role both in reinforcing existing patron-client relations in their target countries and in promoting the emergence of new ones (see also De Wit and Berner 2009, e.g. p. 927; Leonhard et al. 2010). Leonhard et al. (2010, esp. p. 475) link this phenomenon to an ongoing process of transnationalization of patronage, which stems primarily from an increase in the interpenetration of local and international markets. They conclude, "patronage chains today often have a global reach, through trade, bilateral donor governments and international NGOs". Both the findings of Leonhard et al. and those of this study strongly suggest that international donors must address the ambivalent role of such transnational patron-client relationships in a much more analytical and systematic way. For instance, while clientelistic chains between international donors and local civil society groups may sometimes facilitate the delivery of social

services to marginalized constituencies, they can also reinforce existing patterns of social exclusion, thereby perpetuating poverty.

Moreover, in order to break, rather than reinforce, the vicious cycle of the internal organizational hierarchies and the clientelistic practices that sometimes characterize civil society groups in weak states, international donors must strengthen, rather than undermine, mechanisms that make these groups accountable to their local constituencies (Carothers and de Gramont 2013, p. 174). The OECD (2012, pp. 39–49), in particular, has recently become aware of the need to enhance the local accountability of NGOs and other civil society groups (see also INTRAC 2013, p. 6), but concrete recommendations on how to address this have so far remained scarce. The findings of this book may provide some guidance in this regard. Most notably, they suggest that international donors should discontinue the practice of entering into cooperation contracts exclusively with individual NGO chief executives, and, instead, explore ways to make their support to local civil society groups conditional on collective decision-making by the members of these organizations, even though this will undoubtedly be highly complex and time-consuming in practice.

In addition, this study also shows that enhanced donor support can spur corruption within local civil society groups (see also Beer et al. 2012, p. 329) and enable them to engage in clientelistic and/or corrupt exchanges with local state agencies. In order to address this problem, international donors not only have to improve their monitoring mechanisms but also need to explore possibilities for reducing the discrepancies between the budgets of their local partner NGOs and the salaries of leading NGO officials on the one hand and the wages paid in the public sector on the other. Moreover, on a general level, international aid agencies must constantly assess and re-assess how programmes aimed at encouraging the outsourcing of social services to civil society organizations interact with existing patterns of patronage and corruption in their target countries.

When it comes to the fourth dimension of state weakness, the prevalence of a context of violence and insecurity, international donors may sometimes find themselves in a dilemma. All major international donor organizations are obliged, and rightly so, to refrain from materially supporting groups that endorse or even engage in the use of violence. However, the examples of Bangladesh's student organizations during the Ershad period and the leftist civil society groups linked to the Philippine CPP-NPA during the Marcos era illustrate that civil society organizations that sympathize with violence may very well contribute to democratic

change at certain historical junctures, and may also, at times, command more popular support than apolitical, foreign-funded NGOs. Moreover, while civil society groups linked to violent power centres, such as violent political parties or insurgent groups, may sometimes justify or even endorse the latter's recourse to violence, they generally tend to be more moderate than these power centres themselves. Against this backdrop, it might sometimes be useful to consider involving civil society groups which sympathize with violence and/or are affiliated with violent power centres in political dialogue. More specifically, it may at times be fruitful for international donors and diplomats to explore ways of involving such civil society organizations in peace talks and other types of political negotiations, an assumption that is very much in line with the current local turn in international peacebuilding (e.g. Paffenholz 2014). In addition, the examples of some *Qwami madrassahs* and Islamist charities in Bangladesh show that civil society groups which act as breeding grounds for violent ideologies may sometimes be supported by so-called new or emerging donors, such as donors from the Gulf. The established international aid agencies should seek to include this issue into their ongoing dialogues and negotiations with these and other new donors.[16]

When selecting local partners from among civil society organizations, international donors should thus not only focus on the ability of these groups to deliver social services. Instead, aid agencies must also analyse how these local civil society actors relate to both state elites and alternative power centres and the specific strategies they employ in order to exercise political influence in the weak state. More importantly, international donors seeking to promote democracy by strengthening civil society in weak states must also self-critically assess how the different dimensions of state weakness and the ways in which local civil society actors relate to them are shaped by their involvement.

6.4 Current Challenges for Donors in Bangladesh and the Philippines

International donors continue to struggle with tackling the challenges relating to civil society promotion in Bangladesh and the Philippines. More precisely, in Bangladesh, the AL government, which assumed office in early 2009, has gradually monopolized political power, while marginalizing both the political opposition and critical civil society groups. Since mid-2011, the BNP and other political opposition parties have increasingly resorted to street violence, restarting the vicious cycle of state weakness

and violent party conflict (Lorch 2014b). The decision of the BNP-led opposition alliance to boycott the 2014 elections lead to the establishment of de facto one-party rule by the AL (e.g. Ahmad 2014; Feldman 2015). Since its coming to power, the AL government has gone after various prominent civil society representatives, whom it believes to have cooperated with the military-backed CTG, which ruled the country from 2007 to 2008 (ICG 2012, p. 5). As noted earlier, it has also instrumentalized the trials of accused Islamist war criminals, which are currently conducted by the ICT, as a means of dividing civil society and silencing dissent (e.g. Chopra 2015; PEN 2015).[17]Please spell out ICT at first mention.First mention is in Chap. 3 (on Bangladesh).ICT should also be added to the list of abbreviations. - see my addition there; thank you

In this context of polarization and increasing political dominance by the AL, international donors in general and the EU in particular have begun to search for ways to enhance their engagement with Bangladeshi civil society as a strategic partner in the framework of their good governance programmes. Specifically, this strategy also includes the aim of strengthening Bangladeshi civil society in its dialogue with the government.[18] As for the EU, this approach is fully in line with its new, broader policy of engaging with civil society in a more strategic fashion (EC 2012; CoEU 2012). However, in the case of Bangladesh, the viability of this strategy appears questionable, given that Bangladeshi civil society is itself divided along party lines. Moreover, the ability of 'Western' donors to pressure the AL government to grant critical civil society groups more room to manoeuvre also seems to be rather limited at present, owing to both a significant decline in the country's overall dependence on foreign aid and the rising influence of new donors, such as China and India.[19] Testifying to the declining willingness of the AL government to accept outside criticism, the INGO Human Rights Watch (HRW) was charged with contempt of court for criticizing the ICT in 2013 (Reuters 20.08.2013).

While there is growing consensus in the academic literature that the local NGO sector has largely lost its potential to contribute to democratic change, owing to its lack of grassroots orientation and its turn away from strategies of social empowerment,[20] NGOs nevertheless remain the prime beneficiaries of donor attempts to strengthen civil society in Bangladesh. Moreover, while many donors appear to be aware of the fact that clientelistic and corrupt practices often also characterize the foreign-funded NGO sector (e.g. Norad 2011, pp. 14, 141; TIB 2008)[21], concrete proposals on how to address the nexus between the use of clientelistic or corrupt practices by NGOs and corruption in the NGOAB and/or other

regulatory state agencies have so far remained scarce. In 2014, the government introduced the draft Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act, 2014, which, if passed, would enhance the control that the NGOAB would be able to exert over foreign-funded NGOs. Several provisions of the draft law could be abused for the purpose of restricting the activities of NGOs critical of the government (e.g. HRW 2014). Moreover, unless the NGOAB and other regulatory agencies are reformed and the problem of the current discrepancy between the salaries of public servants and those of NGO chief executives is addressed, enhanced bureaucratic control will likely increase the risk of corruption.

In the case of the Philippines, international donors currently face fewer dilemmas than in the case of Bangladesh. Up to now, the government of Benigno (Noynoy) Aquino III, which was elected in 2010, has performed relatively well in comparison to the government of Arroyo (2001 to 2010), under which both corruption scandals and political instability had reached a peak. Several civil society groups have worked with the Aquino government, contributing to the formulation of some reformist laws and policies (e.g. Dressel 2013; EU 2014, pp. 2–5). However, the recent PDAF, or pork barrel, scam involving businesswoman Janet Lim-Naplones, who allegedly set up fictitious NGOs in order to misappropriate public funds (e.g. Sidel 2014, p.66f.), has tarnished the image of civil society in the eyes of the Philippine public (EU 2014, p. 4). Moreover, even though the so-called NGOs involved seem to have been shell organizations, the scandal nevertheless appears to have enhanced the attentiveness of the international donor community to the possible involvement of local civil society actors in corrupt and clientelistic practices. In its recent "Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society", the EU, for instance, notes that "[s]ome CSOs [civil society organizations; J.L.] have been tainted by their involvement in political and corruption scandals over time" (ibid., p. 9). Similarly, the report also notes that the government sometimes prefers to work with "allied" or "friendly"—rather than truly independent—civil society organizations as far as the monitoring of state policies is concerned (ibid., p.2). However, concrete suggestions relating to how international donors could contribute to reducing the vulnerability of local civil society actors to patronage and corruption, and how they should deal with the highly diverse political alignments which often exist between local civil society actors and the Philippine political elite, have so far remained scarce. Moreover, despite the existence of a vibrant civil society, just like in Bangladesh, political power in the Philippines has largely

remained concentrated in the hands of the established political elite and severe human rights violations have also continued.

Both in Bangladesh and the Philippines, civil society has thus fallen short of fulfilling the high expectations that international donors have placed on it. As this book has shown, a great deal of this failure is due to the fact that, both in these two countries and beyond, the donors themselves have often been oblivious of the complex power constellations that characterize weak states and how these are shaped by their own involvement.

Notes

1. For a similar methodological argument see George and Bennett (2005).
2. For a similar argument see Gosewinkel (2003, pp. 1, 9ff.); Gosewinkel and Rucht (2004); Gosewinkel et al. (2004, p. 14f., 18–21).
3. Note, however, that Migdal's (1988) definition of "power centre" differs slightly from the one employed in this study (see Chap. 2, esp. Note 3).
4. See also Shah (2008) on this point.
5. On these and other positive assumptions about civil society, see also Edwards and Hulme (1996a, b), Ottaway (2004), and Seckinelgin (2002).
6. On state weakness and bonding social capital, see also Weijer and Kilnes (2012, p. 5).
7. On the relationship between the existence of a restrictive environment and the emergence of organizational hierarchies in different types of organizations, see also Rueschemeyer (1998, p. 13f.; 16).
8. For a similar methodological argument see George and Bennett (2005).
9. For an overview and critique of such culturalist approaches to patronage, see Piattoni (2001a, pp. 1ff.).
10. For a critique of substantive conceptions of culture, religion and religious violence, see for instance Thomas (2014).
11. Carothers and de Gramont use the term "fragile states".
12. While Weijer and Kilnes point to this risk, they nevertheless advocate strengthening civil society in weak states.
13. See also the understandings of civil society advanced by the OECD (2012, p. 7) and the UNDP (2012, p. 7).
14. Similar recommendations have also been made by the USIP (2015) with regard to the support of non-violent social movements.
15. For a similar argument see INTRAC (2013); on the need for long-term visions, see also Abuzeid (2009, pp. 22f.).
16. On the emergence of "new" donors and the attempts of established aid agencies to engage with them, see for instance Harman and Williams (2014, pp. 935–939) and Mawdsley et al. (2013, pp. 5f., 9).

17. Interview with a country expert and representative of an INGO active in Bangladesh, Berlin, 30.04.2015.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.; On the decline in Bangladesh's dependence on foreign aid, see also Hossain (2004).
20. For a recent overview over this debate see Banks et al. (2015, pp. 708–712).
21. Information confirmed in confidential conversations with representatives of international donor organizations active in Bangladesh.

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