

CHANGE FROM BELOW?

*Gambia's Civil
Society after
22 years of
Dictatorship*



Master Thesis
Hannah Gutjahr (s4782488)
Political Science: Conflict Power and Politics
Supervisor: Mathijs van Leeuwen
Nijmegen School of Management
Radboud University Nijmegen
April 2018

Cover photo was taken by the author in Banjul, the Gambia.

Change from Below?

Gambia's Civil Society after 22 years of Dictatorship



**Radboud
Universiteit**

April 2018

Master: Political Science

Specialization: Conflict Power and Politics

Nijmegen School of Management

Radboud University

Author: Hannah Gutjahr (s4782488)

Supervisor: Mathijs van Leeuwen

Second Reader: Jutta Joachim

Wordcount: 34453

Abstract

This thesis engages in the debate on civil society and its role in democratization. It does so by analyzing its role in Gambia's political transition in December 2016, where president Yahya Jammeh was defeated by the ballot box after 22 years of autocratic rule. The approach to Gambian civil society is twofold. On the one hand it deductively assesses the role of civil society in Gambia's transition guided by theory on democratization and the role of civil society herein. On the other hand, this thesis will inductively explore the manifestations of civil society during the first stage of democratic consolidation. Thereby exploring the discrepancies between theoretical expectations and empirical realities as well as the vast impact of donor interventions and their aim to promote democracy abroad. This thesis shows that while the role of civil society during transition is relatively clear, the undefined process of democratic consolidation results in insecurity and scattered civil society manifestations.

Keywords: Civil Society, The Gambia, Transition, Consolidation, Democratization

Table of Content

List of Acronyms	10
Preface	12
Chapter 1: Introduction	14
1.1 An Historic Defeat	14
1.2 Democratization in Sub Saharan Africa	16
1.3 The role of Civil Society in Democratic Transitions	18
1.4 Scientific and Societal Relevance	20
1.5 Thesis Outline	22
Chapter 2: Civil Society and Regime Change	24
2.1 Introduction	24
2.2 Theorizing on the Process of Regime Change	25
2.2.1 <i>Democratization – a definition</i>	25
2.2.2 <i>The Process of regime change: Transition and Consolidation</i>	26
2.2.3 <i>Challenging the transition paradigm</i>	28
2.2.4 <i>Structural Factors</i>	29
2.2.5 <i>Elite-led versus Bottom up transitions and their effect on democratization</i>	31
2.3 Civil Society	34
2.3.1 <i>Definition</i>	35
2.3.2 <i>Civil Society Social Capital and Nurturing Democratic Norms</i>	36
2.4 Normative Expectations versus Empirical Realities	38
2.4.1 <i>Wester Concept in African Societies</i>	38
2.4.2 <i>Presumed Civil Character of Civil Society</i>	39
2.4.3 <i>Civil Society in Authoritarian Regimes</i>	40
2.4.4 <i>Challenging the Transnational Apparatus</i>	41
2.5 Civil Society Strengthening and International Democracy Promotion	42
2.5.1 <i>The Contested Position of NGOs</i>	43
2.6 Conclusion	45
Chapter 3: Methods	48
3.1 Introduction	48
3.2 Research Format: Case Study	48
3.3 Operationalization of Concepts	50
3.3.1 <i>Transition versus Consolidation</i>	50
3.3.2 <i>Civil Society and Related Terms</i>	51

3.4 Methods and Justification	52
3.4.1 <i>Sample size, Access and Approach</i>	52
3.4.2 <i>Interviewing and its Bias</i>	55
3.4.3 <i>Semi Structured Interviews and Unstructured Interviews</i>	57
3.5 Process of Analyzing	58
 Chapter 4: Gambia's Transition and the Contribution of Civil Society	 60
4.1 Introduction	60
4.2 Electoral Authoritarianism under Yahya Jammeh	60
4.3 Presidential Elections 2016	65
4.3.1 <i>Structural Factors</i>	66
4.4 Top Down or Bottom Up?	68
4.4.1 <i>The formation of Coalition 2016</i>	68
4.4.2 <i>Changes in the Electoral laws and Campaign</i>	69
4.4.3 <i>Election day</i>	72
4.4.4 <i>Elite Negotiations during the Political Impasse</i>	73
4.4.5 <i>Civil Society Mobilization during Gambia's Transition</i>	74
4.4.6 <i>Top Down or Bottom up?</i>	77
 Chapter 5: Civil Society and Democratic Consolidation	 80
5.1 Introduction	80
5.2 Institutional Reforms under Adama Barrow	80
5.3 Civil Society in the Gambia	82
5.3.1 <i>Imagined roles: Watchdog</i>	82
5.3.2 <i>Imagined roles: Collaboration</i>	83
5.3.3 <i>Imagined roles: Partners to Government</i>	84
5.4 Nurturing Democracy	85
5.5 Challenges of Civil Society	87
5.6 Civil Society Strengthening?	89
5.7 Civil Society and Democratic Consolidation in the Gambia	92
 Chapter 6: Conclusion	 96
6.1 Conclusion	96
6.2 Discussion and Interpretation	98
6.3 Strengths and Weaknesses	101
6.4 Future Research	102
Bibliography	104
Appendix A	114

List of Acronyms

AFPRC	Armed forces Provisional Ruling Council
AGJ	Association of Gambian Journalists
APRC	Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction
AU	African Union
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
GBA	Gambian Bar Association
GDC	Gambia Democratic Congress
GHD	Gambia Has Decided
GMC	Gambian Moral Congress
GNA	Gambian National Army
GPU	Gambian Press Union
GRTS	Gambia Radio and Television Services
GWU	Gambia Workers Union
ICC	International Criminal Court
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IHRDA	Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa
KFC	Kanifing Central Municipality
MMD	Movement for Multiparty Democracy
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCP	National Convention Party
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRP	National Reconciliation Party
NIA	National Intelligence Agency
PDOIS	People's Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism
PIU	Police Intervention Unit
PPP	People's Progressive Party
SIS	State Intelligence Services
TANGO	The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Gambia
UN	United Nations
UDP	United Democratic Party
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTG	University of the Gambia

Preface

With this thesis I finalize the last component of my master in Conflict Power and Politics at the Radboud University Nijmegen. Within this master my fieldwork in the Gambia stands out as a definite highlight. I did enjoy the subsequent process of writing this thesis and I learned an incredible lot of it, although it was not always easy. I would like to express my gratitude to several people who supported me during this process. First and foremost to my supervisor Mathijs van Leeuwen for helping me organize my thoughts, inspiring me and guiding me through this process. Secondly I would like to thank Lotje de Vries as she initiated the research project into Gambia's political transition, and helped setting things up in the Gambia.

This research would not have been possible without my respondents who took the time for an interview and were very open about their work, experiences and vision about the 'old' and the 'new' Gambia. I want to thank all my colleagues, Mr Yabo, Aunti Tabu, the three Fatou's, Salimatu, Musu, Jainaba, Bakari, and Ibrah at TANGO for welcoming me, showing me around and helping me wherever needed. Special gratitude to 'little' Fatou for hosting us in the beginning and guiding us through the first days. Furthermore, I want to thank all the wonderful and kind people I met in the Gambia who made me feel at home in their country.

I would like to thank my friends and family for their support, encouraging words and believing in my capacities, and finally, I would like to thank Remco and Martijn who joined me in my adventure in the Gambia as without their company and ever inspiring discussions my time in the Gambia would not have been the same.

Hannah Gutjahr
Leiden, 2018

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 An Historic Electoral Defeat

The presidential elections of 2 December 2016 in the Gambia, a small West African country stretching from the Atlantic Ocean about three-hundred kilometers inland on both sides of the Gambia River, have surprised both the Gambian population as well as the international community. After 22 years of autocratic rule, President Yahya Jammeh was defeated by the leader of the coalition of opposition parties Adama Barrow (Maclean and Graham-Harrison, 2016). Initially, Jammeh accepted the defeat congratulating the new president with his victory. However, only a week after the elections, Jammeh amended this decision, demanding for new ‘fresh and transparent’ elections monitored by an independent electoral commission. Moreover, he declared to remain in office until new elections were held in the Gambia, putting the country in a political crisis (Burke, 2016; BBC 2017a).

The Gambian population was fed up with Yahya Jammeh who had developed into a classical African ‘Strongmen’ with a patriarchal, paternalistic and strong Islamic identity (Hultin et al. 2017, 1). Right after Jammeh amended his decision, a movement spread through the Gambia declaring that ‘Gambia Has Decided’ and numerous groups from the Gambia Bar Association, to the National Youth Council, to the Association of Market Women came out with statements condemning Jammeh’s decision. Gambians were backed up by the international community and several presidents of other West African countries came to the capital city Banjul persuading Jammeh to reassess his decision to stay in power (Maclean, 2017). Furthermore, troops of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) were sent to be stationed at the Gambian border to back the will of the Gambian voters (Kora and Darboe, 2017, 148). Adama Barrow was inaugurated as the new president of the Gambia in Dakar, Senegal on the 19th of January 2017. Two days later, pressured by the ECOWAS troops entering the country, Jammeh negotiated an exit agreeing to step down after two decades of autocratic rule (ibid). Even though the transition was not particularly smooth, and an approximate 76.000 Gambians fled into Senegal during the political impasse (Caux 2017), no shots were fired marking this the first time that an incumbent leader was defeated by the ballot box since the country became independent in 1965 (Kora and Darboe 2017, 147).

The political system of the Gambia has not always been brutal and repressive. The first president of the Gambia, Dawda Kairaba Jawara, who came to power in 1970 was cherished for his respect for human rights shown with the permanent establishment of the headquarters of the African Commission on Human and Peoples rights in Banjul in 1989. Furthermore, The Gambia was listed as a multi-party polyarchy with enabling conditions for an electoral change of government in the beginning of the 1990s (Bratton and van de Walle 1994, 474). Although Jawara tolerated political opposition, a free and often critical press and maintained due legal processes, he was also culpable of widespread corruption. The latter caused increasing frustrations in the Gambia, especially in the light of the enduring developmental challenges of the country and was one of the motivations for the military coup in 1994 (Perfect, 2008, 429-431).

The 1994 military coup was led by Yahya Jammeh and three other lieutenants of the Gambia National Army (GNA) (Kandeh, 1996, 391). The coup was popular among the Gambian population at first, excited about a change of government after two and a half decades, thereby providing new hope for development and an end to corruption (Perfect 2008, 431). Thus, after his new constitution was endorsed Yahya Jammeh was officially elected president in 1996 with his party the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC). However, only three months after he took power, Jammeh started to expel and prosecute journalists who wrote negatively about the new regime (Saine 2003, 184). Furthermore, those organizations that were outspoken about the regime's behavior, such as the Gambia Bar Association (GBA) and the Association of Gambian Journalists (AGJ) were repeatedly harassed by the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) through which Jammeh gradually created a 'culture of silence' suspicion and insecurity among the Gambian population (Idem, 185). From 1997 onwards, the Gambian government was led by the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC), replacing the AFPRC, which was by many observers conceived as a change of name rather than a change of subject (Saine 2003, 189). With the APRC, the human rights situation in the Gambia degenerated even further as journalists continued to be harassed, the regime tortured and beat dissidents and ex politicians were arrested on a large scale (Idem 185-190). Furthermore, academic freedom was limited, NGO's operating in the country faced a constant threat of detention and judicial reprisals and although freedom of assembly and association were legally protected in the Gambia, in practice they were constraint by the intimidation of the state. The repressive environment created by Yahya Jammeh allowed little

to no space for political opposition or civil society (CS)¹. Hence the defeat of Yahya Jammeh by the ballot box, and the subsequent transition of power without the outbreak of violence came as a surprise. With the election of President Adama Barrow, there is hope for democratic reform and the opening up of civil space in the Gambia. Barrow and Coalition 2016 focused on change during their campaign, calling for constitutional reforms, restoration of an independent judiciary, the recovery of civil society, economic recovery, free media and an end to corruption (Perfect 2017, 326).

1.2 Democratization in Sub Saharan Africa

Democracy and democratization are among the most debated topics in the social sciences. Enthusiasm about the prospects for democratization started in the 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the expansion of democracy in Eastern Europe. This ‘third wave of democratization’, also set foot in Sub Saharan Africa (Huntington, 1993, 16), where single party regimes throughout the region felt pressured by these global trends as well as by domestic criticism, to allow opposition parties, implement multi-party elections, and strive for press freedom (van de Walle, 2002, 66). Democratization in Sub Saharan Africa, however, turned out to be rather challenging and the third wave soon came to a standstill on the African continent. Especially the implementation of multiparty elections in the majority of African countries proved troublesome (Cheeseman, 2012, 1; Diamond, 2008, 12). The resumption of the civil war in Angola in 1993, the Rwanda genocide in 1994, and the civil war in Cote D’ Ivoire in 2002, which was considered as one of the most stable systems under one party rule, are only a few examples of failed experiences with multiparty politics on the continent (Ibid).

Until the political transition in the Gambia, only Zambia and Benin successfully defeated their autocratic, incumbent leader by the ballot box. These two transitions took place at the start of the third wave, and both presidents were pressured by civil groups, following periods of economic downfall. In Benin, president Kérékou agreed on a new administration including a new prime minister in 1989. But as unions, cultural bodies, student groups, local development associations and religious movements kept pushing for their own demands of the regime, Kérékou eventually

¹ Civil Society and CS are used interchangeably throughout this thesis

decided to pursue reform rather than to repress his population. He introduced multiparty elections in 1991, in which he was defeated during the run-off by his prime minister Nicéphore Soglo, representing one of Africa's first constitutional changes of power (Idem, 101, 110). Likewise, in Zambia President Kaunda was pressured by the opposition alliance of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) that erupted out of an organized union movement of Zambia's powerful mining industry (Cheeseman, 2015, 73). Like Kérékou, Kaunda chose to reform the system rather than repressing the opposition movement and agreed to a constitutional amendment introducing multiparty elections in August 1991 (Idem, 101). During these elections, he only managed to win 20 percent of the votes, and handed over power to the leader of the MMD Frederick Chibula (Idem, 102).

Why was it possible to successfully implement multiparty elections and defeat incumbent leaders in Zambia and Benin and why were there no other African countries that followed a similar path? Firstly because both President Kérékou and President Kaunda had fewer reasons to fear losing power compared to other African autocrats. The rule of both presidents had been relatively peaceful and although Kaunda had detained opponents, there were no cases of assassination or other brutalities that could trigger a revenge attack or prosecution by the next regime (Cheeseman, 2015, 100-101). The costs of reform as opposed to repression were therefore lower for these presidents. Likewise, scholars have pointed out that the decision of these presidents to reform the political system might have been underpinned by a certain form of naivety regarding their ability to win the elections (Idem, 100). At the same time, as these transitions took place during the beginning of the third wave, other incumbent leaders in Sub Saharan Africa, hesitant to let go of power, learned from these experiences and became much more cautious about implementing multiparty elections (Cheeseman, 2015, 102). Rather, if elections were to be implemented, they often became utilized as a political tool by autocratic leaders to stay in power resulting in various types of hybrid regimes (Levitsky and Way, 2002, 53). As a result, democratization in other African countries became more laborious.

Despite best efforts, the troubled results of democratic implementation continue to be a feature of multi-party politics on the continent today. Nevertheless, more than twenty years after the third wave set foot in Sub Saharan Africa, suddenly one of the more repressive autocratic leaders on the continent is defeated by the ballot box. Moreover, as opposed to president Kérékou

and president Kaunda, Jammeh has a record of disappearances, torture and assassination of members of the opposition, hence his costs of handing over power were much higher. Therefore, it is of interest to explore Gambia's remarkable transition in further detail.

1.3 The Role of Civil Society in Democratic Transitions

Academic literature on transitions to democracy proliferated in the first years of the third wave and the debate has taken different routes since then. Especially during the beginning of the third wave civil society was ascribed a key role in democratization, and became presented as the antonym of authoritarianism (Mamdani, 1996, 4; Chandhoke, 2010, 176). Broadly defined, civil society entails the sphere of formal and informal social organization and collective activity between the state and the basic units of society such as firms and the family in which actors present a counterweight against state penetration and/or can mobilize to challenge the existing order (White, 1994, 377; Orvis 2001, 20). With the turn of the century however, scholarship became more critical of civil society and its inherent role in democratization (Encarnacion 2011, Obadare 2012, Chandhoke 2007, Chandhoke 2010). The democratization debate likewise took a more critical turn influenced by various setbacks on a global scale, thereby shifting its focus from the question how authoritarian rule collapses to what makes democratic rule stable (Haggard and Kaufman 2016b, 127-128). Contemporary democratization scholars debate about the effect of transitions paths on the prospects of consolidating a newly found democracy, thereby studying transitions that are elite led versus those that were initiated from below (Haggard and Kaufman 2016a; Kadivar, Usmani and Bradlow 2017; Kadivar 2018; Bayer, Bethke and Lambach 2016). When a transition is elite led, an autocrat can be ousted due to a military coup, international pressure or due to an intra-elite power shift in favor of democratization. Furthermore regimes can become more democratic when semi competitive regimes are forced towards increased openness due to cumulative changes or when an incumbent leader considers himself to have enough popular support and introduces multiparty elections (Haggard and Kaufman, 2016a, 142). When a transition is pushed from below this depends on the organizational strength of the masses and the level of repressiveness of the authoritarian regime (Idem, 14). The organizational strength of the masses can be found in unions, NGO's, ethnic and religious groups as well as other civil society organizations (Idem, 16). Hence, recent scholarship points again at civil society in these bottom up transitions. Moreover,

democratization scholars concur that if democracy is to be consolidated this does not only depend on building stable institutions, but democracy likewise needs to be built within society itself. Thus assuming a second role for civil society in the consolidation of democracy even when the transition itself was elite-led (Haggard and Kaufman 2016a, 357; Mercer, 2002, 8). However, this latter role of civil society remains largely understudied (Haggard and Kaufman 2016b, 135). Considering the renewed interest in civil society and its role in democratization it is of interest if, and by which manifestations civil society contributed to Gambia's transition of power. Moreover, Gambia's transition presents an opportunity to study how civil society contributes to the first fragile months of democratic consolidation thereby adding to this gap in the literature. This thesis thus has two ambitions, it will both assess the role of civil society in Gambia's transition, as well as it will analyze the various manifestations of CS during the first months of democratic consolidation. Hence, this thesis will assess the following research question: *What was the role of civil society in Gambia's political transition in December 2016 and how does it contribute to the first stages of democratic consolidation?*

This thesis will approach civil society and its role in democratization from two different angles. On the one hand it will study the role of civil society in Gambia's transition deductively, guided by theory of the democratization debate on the role of civil society in transitions. It will critically analyze what was possible for Gambian civil society under Yahya Jammeh and to what extent their efforts have contributed to the transition, engaging in the debate on elite-led and bottom up transitions. On the other hand, the second part of this thesis will inductively explore the manifestations of civil society during the first stage of democratic consolidation. Thereby, exploring the discrepancies between theoretical expectations and empirical realities as well as the vast impact of donor interventions and their aim to promote democracy abroad by funding civil society. While the first part of this thesis assesses CS as one unit of analysis analyzing how it contributed to the transition. The second part of this thesis will unravel this unit of analysis studying what civil society entails in this particular context, and what the different manifestations are.

It should be noted that in order to embed this thesis in the in the larger theoretical debate of regime change and to study civil society in the first months after the transition, this thesis assumes that the Gambia is entering process of democratic consolidation. However, while the prospects of

the Barrow administration are promising, it remains to be seen how Gambia's political system will develop in the long run.

In order to answer the research question, several sub questions will be considered: Firstly, in order to place Gambia in the debate on democratic transitions, it is important to determine:

- What kind of regime was operating in the Gambia?
- Which factors led to the defeat of Yahya Jammeh?
- Was Gambia's transition elite-led, or bottom up?

Secondly, in order to analyze the different manifestations of civil society during democratic consolidation this thesis will assess the following sub-questions:

- What kind of reforms took place during the first months of Adama Barrow?
- What does civil society look like in the Gambia?
- What are the imagined roles of CS?
- What are the different manifestations of CS?
- What are the challenges of CS?
- What is the impact of international donors on CS?
- What is the position of NGO's in Gambian civil society?

1.4 Scientific and Societal relevance

This thesis is scientifically relevant in two ways. Firstly, as the debate on democratization is (again) focused on civil society, and considers the development of civil society as a crucial step towards democratization, it begs to question how civil society has played a role in the Gambia. Secondly, given the fact that the role of civil society in democratic consolidation remains largely understudied, this thesis can add to the debate on the potential role of civil society in the first phases of democratic consolidation in a relatively peaceful environment. Likewise, this thesis will add to

the democratization debate by exploring the practical realities of civil society in the Gambia in the first months of democratic consolidation.

Besides being scientifically relevant this thesis is also of societal relevance. The problems with democratization in Sub Saharan Africa as described above have encouraged Western donors to interfere with democracy promotion in various African countries. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) increased their expenditure on democracy promotion from \$103 million in 1990 to \$1 billion in 2005, and in 2010 democracy promotion had become the third largest activity of USAID (Cheeseman, 2015, 114-115). Likewise, European member states collectively increased their expenditure on democracy promotion over time. As a result, by 2009 Western donors were spending \$2 billion a year on elections, deepening institutions and strengthening civil society abroad (ibid). Where democracy promotion in the 1990s was very much focused on the organization of multi-party elections, failed experiences encouraged Western donors to expand the width and depth of their democracy promotion efforts (Idem, 116). Frustrated by lack of results when collaborating with ruling parties or the state, donors started to divert their aid to civil society groups (Idem, 128). As a result, African civil society responded to the new available funding by developing NGOs in line with Western donor policy. Even though many NGOs had strong domestic roots, international funders soon came to take ownership of these institutions (ibid).

By diverting their attention to civil society, donors aim to nurture social capital and to teach democratic norms to the citizenry where the state is weak. Social capital is a term coined by Robert Putman and can be defined as horizontal bonds of trust, which contribute to democratic stability (2003, 326). The focus of the donors on NGOs has been subject of various critiques revolving around the observation that partly due to this donor support NGOs are disconnected from the deeper roots of society. To this regard, the civil society literature is rather critical of aspirations of the international community to strengthen civil society abroad through NGOs, conflicting with the potential of an organized civil society providing abilities for citizens to shape their own state as described by democratization scholars. Thus besides that this case study on Gambia's democratic transition contributes to the academic debate on democratization, it will also study the various manifestations of civil society during democratic consolidation, thereby providing possible new insights for international donors on how to strengthen civil society and democracy more effectively.

1.5 Thesis Outline

In order to answer the posed research question this thesis will start by exploring and juxtaposing the theoretical debates of democratization and civil society. It will trace its origins and show how the two debates complement each other. The third chapter will provide an outline of the methodologies used. In order to collect data, three months of fieldwork have been conducted in the Gambia. By interning at The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations of the Gambia (TANGO), and by conducting interviews, data about Gambian civil society and its transition have been acquired. Chapter four will conceptualize the theoretical debate in the context of the Gambia. It will first analyze the political regime of Yahya Jammeh, subsequently it will assess the various causes and conditions that led to his defeat engaging in the debate on elite led versus bottom up transitions. The fifth chapter will critically analyze Gambian civil society its imagined roles and practical manifestations as well as the impact of international donors. Finally, chapter six will draw conclusions and discuss the results.

Chapter 2: Civil Society and Regime Change

2.1 Introduction

As stated in the introduction, this thesis seeks to analyze the role of Gambia's civil society during its political transition in December 2016, as well as during the first steps towards democratic consolidation. In order to do so, two theoretical debates will be explored; on the one hand a political science debate on democratic transitions and the role that this debate ascribes to civil society. On the other hand, it will explore the debate on civil society and how it contributes to development and democratization. The latter is much more practice oriented and normative in character emphasizing that while democratic theory ascribes an ambitious role to civil society, the implementation on ground is facing many challenges. Furthermore, it will show that while the political science debate is predominantly focused on transitions, the second debate explores how civil society can nurture democratic norms in society; hence, it can contribute to the fuzzy debate on democratic consolidation.

This chapter will review and juxtapose the literature of the democratization and the civil society debate in relation to political transitions in Sub Saharan Africa. It will start by shortly discussing what a democracy entails. Then it will elaborate on the process of regime change, discussing the concepts transition and consolidation. Subsequently, it will give an overview of the evolvement of the democratization debate. It will show how setbacks in democratization, especially on the African continent, influenced theorizing and led to critiques of the transition paradigm. These critiques shifted focus to the question what makes democracy stable and encouraged a debate on how structural factors affect democratization. Most recent scholarship is concerned with the effect of the transition path on the stability of a newly formed democratic regime. Arguing that civil society can play a mobilizing role in bottom up transitions. Moreover, one can observe how democratization scholars increasingly shift their focus from transition to the process of consolidation. While the debate is still ongoing, scholars do point at the potential contribution of civil society in developing democratic capacity in the latter phase.

Next, this chapter will explore the civil society debate and how it can contribute to democratic consolidation, from a conceptual discussion of what the term actually entails and how it is expected to act, to how civil society became overshadowed by NGOs, especially in the global

south. It will show that the theoretical expectations prove rather challenging when applied in the empirical world. The chapter concludes that, actually, one could regard both discussions as being part of a larger debate on civil society and democratization both with a different focus. The first debate emphasizes the role in democratic transitions, while the second debate is mostly concerned with nurturing democracy, and focusses more on the role that civil society could play in democratic consolidation. In this sense, these two debates provide the backbone in order to understand Gambia's political transition.

2.2 Theorizing on the Process of Regime Change

2.2.1 Democracy – a Definition

What are we talking about when we discuss the term democracy? Definitions and concepts have changed over time. Early work on the third wave used a rather procedural conception of democracy, defining it as a system of contestation open to participation organized by rules, in which elections were perceived as a decisive feature (Prezeworski, 1991, 11). Others, focusing on liberal democracies in particular put special emphasis on the liberal character of a regime. Arguing that a liberal democracy only exists when the state as a whole initiates liberal ideas and a given country enjoys a visible liberal presence of freedom of speech and regular competitive elections (Owen, 1994, 89). Generally it is agreed that a democracy must meet four minimum criteria: Executives and legislatures are chosen through elections, all adults have the right to vote, political and civil rights are protected including freedom of press, freedom of association and the ability to criticize the government without reprisal, and finally the elected authorities possess the real authority to govern (Levitsky and Way 2002, 53). Today, democratic theorist expanded on this definition by defining democracies according to the “all affected principle” (Goodin, 2007, 51). Which principally means that a democracy requires that *‘all those potentially affected by collective decisions have opportunities to affect these decisions in ways proportional to the potential effects’* (Warren, 2011, 378). Following this definition, the practices and institutions that comprise democracy should enable those who are potentially affected, to influence collective decisions (ibid). The move towards this more normative conception of democracy is for two reasons. Firstly, moving away from a merely institutional definition of democracy allows to judge particular institutions to be more or less democratic (idem, 379.). Secondly, because collective decision

making in today's societies has become so complex and diverse, that traditional channels of democracy present only one form of influence among many others (Saward 2006, 298). Although elections will remain a fundamental aspect of a democracy, it is commonly argued that we should move beyond the mere importance of elections, and also consider other formats such as referenda and direct democracy as well as the nature of democratic institutions.

2.2.2 The Process of Regime Change: Transition and Consolidation

When discussing regime change one usually distinguishes between two phases: transition and consolidation. These processes are widely perceived to succeed each other by which transition is followed by consolidation. Nevertheless, a successful democratic transition does not serve as an intrinsic pre-condition for successful democratic consolidation. Schedler describes the process of regime change as a process of uncertainty. In which the start of the transition is when the rules of authoritarianism are broken and an uncertain period of change commences, followed by a process of consolidation which ends once democratic rule is stable and certain (2001, 4). A transition may be most clearly distinguishable when it starts with a focal point, providing a clear temporal marker for the regime change. Such focal points can be liberalizing reforms by the authoritarian leader, acts of liberalizing reformers either inside the regime or in the form of a coup, due to pressure from below, or finally due to external shocks (Schedler 2001, 13-14). Sometimes however it is hard to distinguish such a focal point.

Consolidation on the other hand is even less clearly defined and scholars largely disagree on the causes and right way to measure democratic consolidation. They do concur that once a democracy is consolidated, there is essentially no risk that a country will relapse into authoritarianism (Prezeworski, 1991, 26; Svolik, 2008, 153). Generally, scholarship on democratic consolidation can be divided between those who take a substantive approach to consolidation, versus those who take a prospective approach (Svolik, 2014, 715). To start with, the prospective approach defines consolidation according to democratic durability. Scholars who measure democratic consolidation according to durability may use the 'two election test' or the 'transfer of power test' which entails that a democracy is consolidated when a government is elected in a free and fair way, subsequently defeated through free and fair elections and hands over power (Beetham, 1994, 160). Another test to this regard is the longevity or the generation test, which

considers a democracy consolidated when a country enjoys 20 years of regular competitive elections (ibid). The main critique of such measurements is that it does not say anything about the quality of democracy (ibid).

The substantive approach on the other hand judges consolidation based on a set of parameters. These parameters include a vibrant civil society, robust political competition and widespread acceptance of democratic norms and practices (Svolik, 2014, 715), as well as adherence to and the effective enforcement of the rule of law, a relatively autonomous political society, a functioning state bureaucracy and a non-monist economy (Linz and Stepan 1996, 1-4). Finally, a democracy is consolidated within a society once its citizens believe that democratic governance is legitimate and the best form of governance (ibid). Even though these parameters present some guidance in terms of what the process of consolidation should aim for, it remains difficult to measure whether a democracy is consolidated or not.

Beetham (1994) aims to determine some the enabling conditions but concludes that consolidation is a product of many factors or conditions operating together, in which these conditions are not deterministic but rather facilitate or hinder the process of consolidation. Beetham inter alia discusses the possible effects of the process of transition, the economic system, political culture, political institutions and proportional electoral systems (1994). Likewise, Haggard and Kaufman argue that democratic consolidation is affected by long run structural factors that do not necessarily operate through the transition process itself (2016a, 214).

Whether judged according to a substantive or a prospective approach the term consolidated democracy is widely used as some sort of abstract end-goal of regime change, however measurements and enabling conditions remain disputed. Likewise, it remains hard to distinguish a clear boundary between transition and consolidation. Schedler argues to this regard, that clear focal events of the processes of regime change are often hard to define. Hence, one should accept the structural fuzziness of these concepts, recognize the contested boundaries and base research on empirical records and hard facts (2001, 18). In this sense the start of a transition as well as the boundary between transition and consolidation could differ for each case. Furthermore, the structural fuzziness, especially during democratic consolidation requires increased case study research in order to unravel the various mechanisms, challenges and conditions.

2.2.3 Challenging the Transition Paradigm

The process of regime change has been widely discussed by academics. However, after the great enthusiasm regarding the prospects for democratization during the third wave, scholars became more critical. The troubled implementation of multi-party elections *inter alia* in Sub Saharan Africa, and the realization that the processes of transition and consolidation are not as straight forward as theorized led scholars to challenge the five core assumptions on which the transition paradigm is built. The first assumption, serving as an umbrella for all other assumptions, holds that a move away from dictatorship is a move towards democracy (Carothers 2002, 6-7). Empirics have shown that in several countries political transition has led to the military seizing power like in Mali and in Egypt, or, democratic tools have been utilized by autocrats to stay in power (Adejumobi, 2015, 3-5). Secondly, the transition paradigm assumes that democratization follows a set sequence of stages, from opening to breakthrough to consolidation. Even if democracy activists concur that some countries go backward or stagnate along this path, these deviations are measured in terms of the path itself. Carothers argues to move away from this assumed ‘natural way’ of democratization (Carothers 2002, 7). Thirdly, the decisive importance of elections is criticized, stating that many elections are fault from the beginning resulting in political impunity for incumbent leaders as well as challenging the assumption that electoral turnover would encourage the consolidation of democracy (Carothers 2002, 8; Adejumobi 2015, 5-6). Fourthly, scholars criticize the idea that underlying structural factors such as sociocultural traditions and ethnic profiling are not influencing the transition process (Carothers 2002, 8). The final critique is regarding a deficit of institutional capacity of democratic institutions, which greatly limits the process of democratization. These democratic institutions *inter alia* entail the judiciary, public service, human rights and anti-corruption institutions, and an electoral commission (2015, 6-7).

Carothers continues by stating how most of these transitions are stalled in a ‘gray zone’, usually at the start of the consolidation phase. He distinguishes between ‘feckless pluralism’ and ‘dominant power politics’. The former is mostly seen in Latin America, where countries enjoy a significant amount of freedom but while democratic institutions are in place, their performance remains poor. The latter entails that while there is some real political space, the system is dominated by one group hesitant to let go of power (Idem, 10-11). Likewise, Levitsky & Way criticize the perception that transitions necessarily lead to democratization by coining the term ‘competitive

authoritarian regimes' (2002, 52). Other hybrids along the road to democracy are 'semi authoritarianism' (Ottaway 2013), 'electoral authoritarianism' (Schedler 2015), and illiberal democracies (Zakaria 1997).

2.2.4 Structural Factors

Critiques regarding the transition paradigm generated a shift of focus from the causes of the collapse of authoritarian rule, characterized by incumbents handing over power, to the question of what affects the process of democratization. (Haggard and Kaufman, 2016b, 127-128). This coincided with a renewed interest in structural factors and their effect on both democratic transition and consolidation. The most important structural factors discussed are the level of development, ethnic heterogeneity, inequality and natural endowments (Idem, 129-132). These factors shifted focus towards conditions that are beyond the immediate control of political agents, both domestic and foreign and their effect on regime change.

The discussion regarding the level of development and its effect on democratization already started in 1959 when Lipset found a strong correlation between level of development and democracy (1959, 76-77). Przeworski et al. (2000) on the other hand argue that a countries' level of development does not influence democratic transition but that this is caused by other factors. These assessments were in turn challenged by Boix and Stokes (2003), drawing on cases of the early transitions in Europe. Case studies, however have shown that a considerable number of poor countries did experience democratic success stories; such as Benin (since 1991), Ghana (since 1993) and Moldova (since 1993), but at the same time countries such as Bolivia (1980), Sri Lanka (2003) and Ukraine (1993) experienced reversions (Haggard and Kaufman 2016b, 129-130). It is therefore argued that a basic structural restriction such as the level of development and its effect on democratization only proves to be conditional (ibid).

The second (socio) structural factor considered is whether ethnically heterogeneous countries, or countries that experience conflicts over national identity face increased difficulties in the process of democratization. The overarching discourse in the 1990s was that democratic governance is indeed more difficult to sustain in ethnically heterogeneous societies (Welsh, 1993, 65). The underlying argument was that incumbents would exploit ethnic cleavages in order to win elections (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 41). Fish and Kroenig (2006) and Fish and Brooks (2004)

challenge this notion, arguing that democracy is not necessarily more difficult to sustain in ethnically heterogeneous countries and that the effects disappear with economic development. Adejumobi on the other hand observes how in many African countries democratic functioning is greatly affected by ethnic fragmentation and by little consensus on the idea of the nation state (2015, 6-7). Haggard and Kaufman however conclude, analyzing various research on the topic, that it is not about the prevalence of ethnic heterogeneity per se, but rather how and whether this is utilized by electoral institutions, by mobilizing or repressing ethnic groups. Hence these effects are likewise conditional (2016b, 131).

Thirdly, inequality is often perceived as obstructing the process of democratization. Some have argued that in countries where income and assets are highly concentrated, it is more likely that political leaders become more repressive in order to defend their privileged position, as well as the likelihood increases for democracies to be overthrown by autocrats when inequality is high (Acemoglu & Robinson 2006, Boix 2003). Houle on the other hand shows that inequality does harm the process of consolidation but does not affect democratization in itself (2009, 590). Haggard and Kaufman (2016a) and Ahlquist and Wibbels (2012) however empirically challenge Houle's statement, and find that there is no significant relation between inequality and democratic transitions (449).

Fourthly, the so-called resource curse has often been mentioned as an impediment to the process of regime change. Argument being that countries with a lot of oil or mineral wealth offer incumbent leaders wealth and a source of revenue that does not depend on the consent of the population (Ross 2001). Again, this argument has been highly debated and contested and the consensus holds that the effects are dependent on other institutional, political and social factors (Haggard and Kaufman 2016b, 131).

Finally, Bratton and van de Walle argue that particularly in the African context the nature of the political institutions that create a regime are much more influential on transitions than the much more deeply rooted structural factors. They thereby specifically aim at the neo-patrimonial nature of regimes in Sub Saharan Africa rather than the corporatist regimes known in other parts of the world (1994, 457). Neopatrimonialism may be defined as a set of political systems that has an outward appearance of a modern state, including a judiciary, legislature and extensive bureaucratic institutions, but which functions according to internal dynamics of personal rule

(Cheeseman, 2015, 3). A neo-patrimonial system thereby has a different relation between the state and society which affects transitions (ibid).

Thus, although structural factors are not dismissed all together, it is argued that they do not provide a full explanation for (the lack of) democratic transitions. The problem is how enduring structural factors connect with incidental and short run dynamics of transition, as most of these factors fail to specify necessary or sufficient conditions for regime change (Haggard and Kaufman 2016b, 132). Furthermore, these structural factors can differently affect the process of democratic consolidation, in the sense that enabling factors for democratic transition may later impede the process of democratic consolidation (Haggard and Kaufman 2016a, 214). In all cases, if influential, these structural factors either increase or decrease the likelihood of regime change and prospects to build a democracy. However, in order for a change of regime to occur, those profiting from, or being disadvantaged by these structural factors, must strategically operate and interact with elites, masses, rising classes as well as incumbents and oppositions (2016a, 13). Then, whether structural factors lead to mobilization and transition can either be elite-led or bottom-up. Haggard and Kaufman have labeled the latter as ‘distributive conflict transitions’, however, for increased clarity and to embed this thesis in the larger debate of democratic transitions, this thesis will use the terms elite-led and bottom-up transitions

2.2.5 Elite led versus Bottom up Transitions and their Effect on Democratization

The distinction between elite led and bottom up transitions caused recent scholarship on transitions to focus on the effect of the transition path on the success of these newly found democracies. When a transition is elite-led an autocrat can be ousted due to a military coup or through international pressure. Likewise, a regime can become more democratic due to an intra-elite power shift in favor of democratization, when cumulative changes force semi competitive regimes towards increased openness and democratization or when incumbent leaders consider themselves to have enough popular support to compete in multi-party elections (Haggard and Kaufman 2016a, 142). Bottom up transitions on the other hand are pushed from below and depend on three interrelated political factors: the level of repressiveness of the authoritarian regime, the performance of the regime

measured in terms of short run economic conditions, and finally the capacities for collective action (Idem, 14).

Research has shown that the majority of the elite-led transitions caused by a coup between 1950 and 2012 put a new autocrat in power (Kendall-Taylor and Frantz 2014, 37; Celestino & Gleditsch, 2013, 287). Some years ago, scholars argued that democracies resulting from elite pacts proved more durable (Higley and Bruton 1989; Munck and Leff 1997; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). Accordingly, stable democracies erupt out of elite negotiations between the regime and opposition resulting in agreements on the parameters of the transition. A successful elite-led transition in this sense is dependent on the negotiation skills of the political elites (Kadivar, 2018, 391). These scholars in favor of elite-led transitions argue that transitions out of mass mobilization pose significant risks to further destabilize the political order (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986).

Nowadays, scholars increasingly argue that democracies that emerge from mass mobilization are more durable, especially when mobilization was non-violent, because the campaign itself and its inherent organization has spill-over effects on the newly erupting democratic regime, greatly enhancing conditions for democratic survival (Bayer, Bethke and Lambach 2016; Kendall-Taylor and Frantz 2014, 44; Stephan and Chenoweth 2008). Within these bottom-up transitions organizational resources as well as the capacities to mobilize can be found in various actors of civil society such as unions, CSO's, NGO's as well as ethnic or religious groups (Haggard and Kaufman 2016a, 16). While the conceptualization of CS remains contested as will be shown in the second part of this chapter, broadly defined civil society entails the public sphere between the state and the family in which actors can both mobilize to challenge the existing order as well as presenting a counterweight against state penetration (Mercer 2002, Orvis 2001, Verkooren and van Leeuwen 2013). While the role of mass mobilization in transition seems obvious, before the Arab spring only a few studies focused on the role of the masses, particularly on "prairie-fire" models of protest (Kuran, 1989; Haggard and Kaufman 2016b, 135).

Haggard and Kaufman find in their most recent study that when comparing elite led transitions with bottom up transitions that neither their qualitative nor their quantitative analysis indicates a clear distinction between both transition paths and their prospects for the consolidation of a stable democracy, especially in the long run (2016a, 214). They explain this fact by stating that the process of consolidation is influenced by long-run structural factors (ibid). They do

however find that countries that experienced a bottom up transition have higher Freedom House scores on political rights in the first ten years after the transition. Therefore, they state that bottom up transitions do have greater prospects for open and competitive electoral politics, stronger horizontal checks on government activity and stronger protection of civil liberties and political rights (ibid). Moreover, they argue that a mobilized civil society is of importance in the process of democratic consolidation which can also be established in the wake of an elite-led transition, where political opposition is often able to mobilize support through links with civil society (Haggard and Kaufman 2016a, 357). Finally, Kadivar et al. find that prospects for successful democratization do not depend on whether a transition was initiated from below, but that successful democratization is dependent on the *period* of mass mobilization. They argue that, long periods of mass mobilization are likely to result in more stable democracies (2017, 4). Because accordingly, long periods of mass mobilization lead to a better-organized, multilayered and autonomous civil society in which ordinary people can defend their interests after the transition (Idem, 8).

The events of the Arab spring did not only return the transition-debate back to the attention of scholars in the social sciences it also encouraged research regarding the effect of social media on political mobilization (Diamond et al. 2014, 86) Reuter and Szakonyi argue how the new media could undermine authoritarianism by lowering the costs of information sharing and reducing barriers for collective action as well as it can increase political awareness (2015,29). Breuer and Landman state that the democratization literature is still unsure about the exact relation between new media and political participation and social mobilization in authoritarian regimes (2015, 766). During the Arab spring, social media enabled the mobilization and coordination of thousands of people, by providing a platform for communication and symbols fostering protest participation (Bellin 2012, 138). At the same time, Bellin points out that authoritarian leaders can also utilize the new media to divide, monitor or detect opposition forces (Idem, 139). Furthermore, the anonymity, spontaneity and lack of hierarchy of the new media that make it effective in social mobilization in authoritarian regimes, at the same time undermine the ability to build the institutions for a stable democracy in the subsequent process of democratic consolidation. Lynch points out to this regard that the internet as a means of social mobilization may prove to be rather disappointing when it comes to building warm social networks based on trust, which are at the heart of an effective social society (2011, 305). In the end, Lynch concludes that the strongest effect

of the new media on transitions might be that it eliminates the monopoly of information and argument of the state, that it can push for transparency and possibly accountability and can facilitate new networks within and across societies (Idem, 307).

What stands out about the democratization debate is that the literature clearly experiences a movement from great optimism about democratization in the 1990s to the realization that transitions from authoritarian regimes to democratic ones are not as straightforward as they may seem. First, scholars came to realize that many transitions are stalled in a ‘gray zone’ and that elections are utilized by autocrats to stay in power. Next, we see a move to explanations that highlight more structural factors and how they could impede the process of regime change, such as the effects of development, ethnic heterogeneity inequality and natural endowments on democratic transitions. At the same time in the African context, scholars point at regime type as an important factor influencing political transitions. The fact that many regimes in Sub Saharan Africa are neo-patrimonial in character influences state-society relations and thus influences transitions. More recently, rather than in terms of structural factors, authors highlight how transition paths – elite led versus bottom up – could be an important explanatory factor for the success of transitions. While both transition paths can be empirically observed, recent scholarship argues that transitions pushed from below have a positive impact on political rights and democratic procedures as mass mobilization fosters a better organized and multilayered civil society. Moreover, various scholars suggest that in order for a stable democracy to consolidate this depends on the organizational strength of civil society, which can likewise be established in the wake of an elite-led transition. However, the process of consolidation and how civil society is expected to contribute as well as a discussion on what the concept of civil society entails receives little attention from democratization scholars, often treating civil society as an exogenous variable. As we will see in the following discussion of literature on civil society, the concept as well as its manifestations are not that straightforward.

2.3 Civil Society

Civil society is widely perceived to be a precondition for democracy, as ‘it’ monitors, engages with and holds governments accountable by means of citizen action (Chandhoke, 2010, 176). However,

the term is often employed as an exogenous variable, without questioning what this unit of analysis actually entails. Especially in the empirical world, civil society is often perceived as normative rather than analytical, generally seen as a source of good opposite to the bad, aimed at the state and the market (Bebbington et al. 2008, 6). The debate on civil society is practice-oriented, shaped by different strategies of interveners who try to support civil society with the ambition of promoting democracy abroad. Generally, the civil society debate questions civic engagement, the role of organizations in the public sphere as well as how associations function and position themselves in modern society and by which policies they are governed (Foley and Hodgkinson 2003, vii). The next section will first discuss the definition of civil society and its theoretical origins, subsequently it will consider its theorized contribution to democratization. The chapter will then evolve and discuss how these normative expectations of CS likewise can show a different empirical reality. Finally, it will discuss the ambiguous position of NGOs in civil society and question the practical manifestations of civil society strengthening.

2.3.1 Definition

Contemporary scholars describe various characteristics when discussing and conceptualizing civil society; it entails the public sphere that is autonomous from, and in between the state and the family (Fatton 1995, 67; Mercer 2002, 7; Orvis 2001, 18). Furthermore, civil society is described as being voluntary (Mercer 2002, 7; White 1994, 375), as presenting a counterweight against state penetration as well as it forms the sociological counterpart of democracy and the market (Fatton 1995, 67; White 1994, 375). Non-governmental development organizations, labor unions, the media, traditional and religious institutions, political parties, sports and welfare organizations can all be considered as part of civil society, depending on the working definition (Verkoren and van Leeuwen 2013, 160).

The concept of civil society tends to be defined in various ways partly because the concept derives from two different traditions, which have become intertwined in the empirical world. These two traditions are the American and the European tradition. The former stems from the classical works of Tocqueville emphasizing the importance of organized groups and the ability of associational life to maintain social relations, create horizontal structures and to promote patterns of civility, while simultaneously working as a check on government activity (Verkoren and van

Leeuwen 2013, Foley and Edwards 1996). For Tocqueville the strength of American democracy is because of its vibrant associational life in which people advance shared interests and ideas by cooperating on a voluntary basis (LeVan 2011, 137). Drawing on Tocqueville, Putman explains that this vibrant associational life creates ‘social capital’ which are horizontal bonds of trust contributing to democratic stability because of its ‘internal’ effect on individual members and its ‘external’ effect on society and government at large (2003, 326). Kaldor labeled this idea of civil society as the ‘neoliberal version’, described as a market in politics or ‘laissez-faire politics’. This ‘neoliberal version’ views civil society as a voluntary, third sector, not only restraining state power but also providing a substitute for state activities (2003, 9). Kaldor transposes this idea to a global level where in the absence of a ‘global state’ NGOs have stood up to perform necessary tasks. Nevertheless, this could likewise be transported to countries where the state is weak and where NGO’s aim to promote democracy and help to establish a rule of law and respect for human rights (2003, 9).

In Europe, a different conceptualization of civil society emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. Gramsci, Habermas and Hegel, eminent scholars of this school of thought ascribe a more transformative role to civil society. For Gramsci the potential oppositional role civil society can play separate from the state is of importance, furthermore a large spectrum of organizations that belong to civil society can function to either uphold or challenge the existing order (Paffenholtz and Spurk 2006, 4). Thus, the European tradition ascribes a more activist role to civil society and the ability for citizens to shape their own practices of governance, rather than providing a balance to government as stressed by the American tradition (Verkooren and van Leeuwen 2013, 161). In this sense, it almost seems like the European tradition theorizes the role of civil society during transition, while the American tradition mostly theorizes the role of civil society in consolidation.

2.3.2 Civil Society, Social Capital and Nurturing Democratic Norms

Because of its participatory character a strong and vibrant civil society is often perceived to be a crucial counterweight for a functioning democracy (Cheeseman, 2015, 4). Especially as a public sphere civil society creates a sphere in which ideas are discussed and formulated and can later be translated into political action (Verkoren and van Leeuwen, 2013, 160). Besides a transformative role in the form of mass mobilization as described in the democratization debate, civil society can

play a role in the consolidation of democracy including a check on the abuse of state power, preventing the relapse into authoritarian rule and to encourage a wider citizen participation (Mercer, 2002, 8). Warren ascribes a special democratic role to voluntary associations. Warren argues that, drawing on liberal contract theory from Locke through Rawls, that chosen social relationships will encourage self-government because associations that are formed on a voluntary basis will have an increased legitimacy of collective choice (2011, 382). The legitimacy of collective choice follows from solidarity among its members augmented by the voluntary basis of association, therefore these associations are more likely to oppose external sources of domination (Idem, 383). In this sense, these voluntary associations create social capital. Associations involving involuntary elements are more likely to be dominated or exploited. Hence, in societies where the majority of the associations has involuntary elements, these institutions are likely to reproduce cleavages and social power relations in society, undermining the democratic effects of electoral institutions (ibid). That being said, Warren does not entirely neglect the democratic function of the latter institutions. Because of the involuntary elements, they should function according to democratic forms of decision making, as without these it is difficult to externalize conflict. In this sense, these organizations serve as teachers of democratic norms (ibid). The democratic potential of civil society is thus based on a legitimacy of collective choice within voluntary organizations, and maybe more importantly in the developing world, by nurturing democratic norms. In addition, civil society can contribute to democratization through direct programs of democracy promotion and civic education. Studies in countries such as Bolivia highlight the role of CSOs in promoting democracy through different programs including the promotion of social capital, influencing voting behavior and increased community-level interactions (Boulding & Gibson 2009). Moreover, Finkel finds in a comparative study in Poland, The Dominican Republic and South Africa that civic education training definitely has an effect on political participation in these countries (2003, 140). Being most effective when formal programs bring individuals directly in contact with local authorities, and the study therefore supports the idea of having politically oriented NGO's (Idem, 149). Intervention by western parties aimed at democracy promotion is based on these ideas, and especially Tocqueville's concept of civil society proved rather influential in democracy promotion abroad, stressing the importance of civil society being separate from the state (LeVan, 2011, 136).

2.4 Normative Expectations and Diverse Empirical Realities

Literature concurs that civil society can play an important role in democratization. Civil society can push for a bottom up transition by organizing for collective action, as well as it can contribute to democratic consolidation through the implementation of various programs, by nurturing democratic norms and by creating social capital within voluntary associations. Furthermore, with its position in society as an alternative third sphere CS can check the abuse of state power and prevent the relapse of authoritarian rule. These mostly normative expectations and the assumed position of civil society as an alternative third sphere are however challenged based on the assessment of various empirical realities. It will be shown that the theorized role of civil society in democratization is less forthcoming in democratically challenging environments. The following section will discuss civil society in the African context, challenging the Western notion of the concept. Subsequently it will challenge the presumed ‘civil’ character of civil society, it will discuss the position of CS in authoritarian regimes and finally it will discuss the changing dynamics of civil society in a world where ideas and movements have become increasingly transnational.

2.4.1 A Western concept in African societies

The very Western conceptualization of civil society and what it ought to do has been largely criticized when applied in African countries. Much of the literature about African politics or about the continent in general going as far back as Negritude and Pan- Africanism has had a strong perception of what makes the continent different (Chabal 2013, 5). Especially when it comes to theorizing, there have been numerous critiques about how theories are constructed in historically bounded contexts which cannot be simply transported and applied elsewhere (Idem, 3). Civil society has been critiqued on similar grounds. Arguing that the concept of civil society is so closely identified with the West, deriving from Western periods of transformation most notably the enlightenment, industrialization and modernization, that it cannot be simply exported elsewhere and that it does not fit in the African context (Encarnacion 2011, 486; Ekeh 1992, 194, Mamdani, 1996, 14; LeVan, 2011, 136). But what makes African societies so particular? As previously mentioned, some point at neo-patrimonialism where patron-client networks vested in the regime imply certain duties for both patron and client, these networks provided support for government while being exposed to a degree of pressure from below. In this sense civil society is embedded in

the authoritarian regime and even helps sustaining it (Cheeseman 2015, 59). Moreover, a substantial part of the African middle-class gained vested interest in sustaining this authoritarian rule because of the expansion of state employment by which those with jobs in the public sector became steadily wealthier benefitting from the status quo (Idem, 61). The poorest members of society on the other hand lacked knowledge due to media censorship and poor education to effectively challenge the existing order as well as these patron-client relations are embedded in moral and political norms and often perceived as legitimate (Idem, 62). Others have pointed at the emergence of the state and civil society, especially for Tocqueville the state and civil society exist in a dichotomy in which civil society precedes the state and thereby facilitates a binding social contract. However, in most African countries civil society only emerged after the creation of the state, which was intertwined with colonialism (LeVan, 2011, 138). Hence, this social contract is different in African societies. A third point of discussion is when defining civil society as associational life in between the state and the family, whether the traditional sphere such as ‘traditional authorities’ and ethnic organizations are to be included in African civil society (Orvis, 2001, 18). Those in favor argue that the traditional sphere holds some important participatory spaces, which cannot be ignored (Hutchful, 1996, 68). However, this also entails that Islamic fundamentalist movements, opposing pluralism and democracy should be considered as part of civil society, which receives abundant criticism.

2.4.2 The presumed ‘civil’ character of civil society

Elaborating in the inclusion of ‘traditional authorities’ in African societies, is the discussion on the presumed civil character of civil society. As the concept of civil society gained ground during the expansion of democracy in Europe the concept became largely perceived as inherently good. However, especially in fragile states or post conflict situations the supposed civil character of civil society is often challenged. The generally Western definition of the concept describes a sphere striving for equality, tolerance, peace and democracy, in practice however many of the local actors and organizations do not necessarily perform this role. Often, when the state is weak people rely much more on patronage networks, family structures but also the protection of warlords. Prominent examples of these are Hezbollah, Hamas and Boko Haram, organizations that do provide social services and strive for their own ideals, but are also very military in character (Verkoren and Van

Leeuwen, 2013,163). To this regard, Obadare challenges the notion that civil society is something that is inherently good (2012, 1).

2.4.3 CS in authoritarian regimes

While the position and the role of civil society in authoritarian regimes remains relatively understudied (Lewis, 2013, 326), those scholars that have written about the topic are rather skeptical about the presumed linkage between the prevalence of a civil society and prospects for democratization (Idem, 327). Moreover, it stands out that the majority of these scholars presumes a neo-Tocquevillian role of civil society which ascribes a complex relationship between NGOs and the state connected through material transactions and personal links (Idem, 326). Spires argues that one cannot assume that NGOs or grassroots organizations present in an authoritarian state are working towards democratization (2011, 35). Moreover, one strand of researchers is largely critical of international support for these organizations, arguing that by providing support for NGOs in authoritarian regimes international donors legitimize these regimes rather than supporting democracy (Durac and Cavatorta, 2009, 19). Along this line of argument, Froissart argues that it is because authoritarian regimes co-exist with some elements of democracy, and allow some form of political participation that these regimes last (2014). Lewis has identified three sets of explanations within the literature indicating why many authoritarian regimes experience an enduring coexistence with CSOs. The first explanation states that NGO's come to reflect a similar political culture with the authoritarian state. In this sense one can observe continuities of the regime in civil society derived from a patterns of economic, political and social interactions as well as shared cultural and social norms rather than to instill democratic norms (2013, 328). Secondly, he states that the reason why these civic associations survive is because their work partly overlaps with the state. Especially in developing countries, NGOs see the state as a rich partner providing resources, while carrying out functions beneficial for the state (ibid). Finally, Lewis distinguishes explanations that approach civil society as a type of social action defined by its particular behavior. By viewing civil society as a set of local actors these scholars observe a cooperation between authoritarian states and their civil society by viewing the latter as a type of social interaction (2013, 329). By viewing civil society as a social interaction based on norms and attitudes there is likely to be an overlap in behavior between civil society and the authoritarian regime (ibid).

Another trend especially observed in countries facing strong political oppression and where civil society organizations only have very limited space to maneuver is that most of the political opposition is vested in civil society. Inter alia in countries such as South Sudan and the DRC important leaders of NGOs, churches and traditional authorities have taken over government positions after the incumbent leader was defeated (Verkoren and van Leeuwen, 2013, 169). This begs the question, when a transition occurs, but civil society has been embedded in the authoritarian state apparatus for years, largely dependent on the state in terms of resources, and has come to show overlapping behavior with the authoritarian regime, how this same civil society is expected to play a role in democratic consolidation. Likewise, in the latter case where opposition was vested in civil society and takes over many of the government positions after a transition has occurred, what type of civil society remains, and if, will it be critical of the new regime.

2.4.4 Challenging the Transnational Apparatus

Ferguson takes the discussion one step further and challenges the vertical topography of power which is deeply embedded in state-civil society relations. Accordingly, defining civil society as the associational sphere between the state and the family (Fatton 1995, 67; Mercer 2002, 7; Orvis 2001, 18) invokes the idea that the state is 'above' civil society, and the family 'below' this imaginary space (Ferguson, 2014, 47). He questions what it would mean to rethink this vertical relationship, thinking about the state and civil society in more spatial terms. Without amplifying in too much detail on his argument, which is beyond the scope of this thesis, there are two important points to be taken. Firstly, according to Ferguson, to rethink the vertical relationship would mean to rethink the state and to focus on a 'transnational apparatuses of governmentality' which are especially important in many parts of Sub Saharan Africa, where the state often fails to exercise its sovereignty or fails to function at all (Idem, 48). According to Ferguson, these 'transnational apparatuses of governmentality' include first world governments, the IMF and the World Bank imposing all kinds of policies on African states, it is therefore unlikely that a change of leadership will result in new policies, since these policies are imposed by actors outside the state (Idem, 56). Secondly, this new transnational focus has also implications for the 'local' or 'the grassroots' which can now effectively challenge the national level by embedding themselves in broader movements such as 'a

universal struggle for human rights' (Idem, 66). Similarly, many civil society organizations, especially NGOs are linked to other transnational entities (Idem, 57).

In sum, different empirical realities coincide with different manifestations of civil society, while civil society can embody different groups and associations. Furthermore, Ferguson shows that nowadays these civil society groups may no longer be restrained by national boundaries, but local initiatives can embed themselves in broader international movements. This analysis therefore shows the importance to assess the meaning as well as the manifestations of civil society in a particular context. Moreover, considering the aforementioned discussion regarding the different theoretical origins it is important to assess civil society both in terms of concrete manifestations by established CSOs, but also approach civil society as a much broader sphere of public participation and contestation. The next section will show that, the practical meaning of the concept by the international community became rather focused on NGOs. However, the central position of NGOs as members of civil society and how they are utilized as tools to strengthen democracy abroad remains contested.

2.5 Civil Society Strengthening and International Democracy Promotion

The idea that civil society is key to democracy promotion throughout the world led to numerous actions by the international community to 'strengthen civil society'. Resembled in for example the 'United Nations Democracy Fund which was formed in 2005 with the aim to 'strengthen the voice of civil society' as well as Article 12 of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance which calls on its members to promote democratic principles and to create an enabling environment for civil society organizations (LeVan, 2011, 137). However, what is problematic about this is that in many actions to promote democracy, the meaning of the concept of civil society has been emptied out and narrowed down to solely NGOs (Chandhoke, 2010, 176). Carothers noted that while Putman's definition of civil society focused on a healthy civic life captured in voluntary leisure associations has been rather influential in academics, US aid providers are not very much inclined to support such organizations. Instead, it became widely perceived that the NGO world perfectly captured the ideals and imaginations of democracy promotion (1999, 213). Where did this idea originate? Chandhoke explains how based on experiences in Eastern Europe civil society was perceived as the recipe for democracy (2007, 608). However, discontent with the bureaucratic

structures of political parties and trade unions as well as their pursuit for power led academics and activists to search elsewhere. It is within this process that NGO's became perceived as an alternative third sphere (ibid). When attention shifted back to the state in the period following the Washington consensus, it was expected that the state would share some of its duties with civil society. However simultaneously in many areas of the developing world NGOs emerged to perform these duties (ibid). Moreover, the very idea that civil society presents an alternative to the state, helps donor agencies to bypass the state in the Third World, and donate directly to these organizations (ibid). Hence, especially in the global south NGOs became perceived as the key players in civil society, and the source through which the international community could strengthen democracy.

Since the proliferation of NGOs in the beginning of the 1990s their landscape and scale have changed dramatically. Today, NGOs receive the largest slice of foreign aid and other development finance and are bigger and more numerous than ever before (Banks, Hulme and Edwards, 2015, 707). However, while the literature on NGOs and civil society has greatly increased, NGOs are still *not* performing the expected transformative role as drivers of social change (Idem, 708). NGO's and their role as civil society actors are criticized on several grounds.

2.5.1 The contested position of NGO's

The main, overarching critique regarding NGOs as civil society members is that most organizations are disconnected from the grassroots, which manifests itself in different ways (Bebbington et al. 2008. 15). First, the strong influence of neoliberalism has constrained NGO work in several ways as the dominant discourse of liberal democracy and the free trade agenda have become increasingly consolidated. This together with the new security agenda started to dominate development ideas and finance coming from the West and created an NGO terminology about poverty and livelihood, participation, human rights, empowerment and democratic rights (Bebbington et al. 2008, 15). Furthermore, this language positioned NGOs as proxies for processes of citizen engagement, enabling them to be a check on local and national government activity (Banks et al. 2015, 708). To this regard, neoliberal ideals greatly started to shape NGO activities rather than local needs. Due to NGOs heavy reliance on donor funding, and because of the competitive environment NGOs find themselves in, NGOs often start aligning their programs according to the funding that is available

(Banks et al. 710). Thereby shifting their accountability from the grassroots to their donors. Furthermore, while donors prioritize tangible structures and professionalized organizations, local communities judge these organizations based on their work, their causes and their leadership (Banks et al. 709). NGOs link with the grassroots and as civil society actors thus becomes weakened because of an upward accountability to the donors and because donors prefer large professionalized NGOs over grassroots organizations, thereby further diminishing NGOs possibilities to be transformative (Idem, 710).

Secondly, scholars have critiqued the position and the generalization of NGOs in civil society. Mercer states that the diversity of NGOs both in terms of geographical allocation as well as with regards to subject area and activity is often ignored (2002, 13). Likewise, Banks et al. state that it is problematic to generalize NGOs as a 'sector'. Mercer continues by stating that NGOs pluralize particular spaces but neglect others (2002, 13). Then, NGOs as actors of civil society are more likely to replicate the economic, political and cultural cleavages in society rather than to challenge them (ibid), complying with Warren's argument regarding involuntary associations. Likewise, Banks et al. argue that because of the narrow focus on NGOs by the donor community, the transformative role of NGOs remains limited. Aid has enabled NGOs to provide marginalized groups with access to services, however the channels through which this is done are disconnected from deeper processes of political and economic change. Which detains NGOs from being civil society actors looking for alternative ways of organizing the economy and social relations (2015, 708). Likewise, with regards to performing this transformative role, Bebbington et al. state that NGOs are relatively young in their organizational form, especially when compared to other social arrangements such as religious institutions which have much deeper roots in society (2008, 6). Finally, experience over the last three decades has shown that NGOs remain hesitant to establish connections with social movements aiming at social change (Bebbington et al. 2008). Reasons for this hesitancy are in some cases because donor requirements prevent them from establishing equal relationships, or in others, especially for larger NGOs because they feel little incentive to handover their powerful position (Banks et al. 2015, 714).

These critiques indicate the various problems that occur mainly because intervention by international donors is mostly focused at NGOs. It thus remains questionable if we can support

civil society by supporting NGOs, or if we can strengthen civil society at all without breaking the connection with its local grassroots. Banks et al. therefore argue that instead of viewing NGO's as a 'sector' one should perceive them as being part of a larger 'ecosystem' of civil society organizations (2015, 714). This 'ecosystem' comprises different elements of bottom up activity linking engagement and advocacy to enhance social change. Like in a real ecosystem civil society becomes more powerful when it is well-connected and comprises a great variety of actors, from street protests to service delivery. Because of their intermediate position in society NGOs would function as connectors in this ecosystem sitting between different types of social action (ibid). The key challenge for NGOs and donors alike is to reflect on their role in this ecosystem and to analyze what their actions mean for the wider terrain of political, economic and social dynamics (ibid). The very idea of treating civil society as an ecosystem comprising of a great variety of actors, already positions NGOs into broader framework of actors. Moreover, it begs to question organizations, both NGOs and other associations in society, how their actions are manifested as civil society. In other words, are these organizations deeply rooted in society, are they aimed at social change, does their action encourage citizen participation, are they checking state activity and are they presenting a counterweight to the state where needed? However, considering the aforementioned analysis, and the intrinsic influencing power of a donating party, it should really be questioned if civil society in its ideal conceptualization can originate and strengthen in any other way than within society itself.

2.6 Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter has discussed the evolvement of the democratization debate and the role that it ascribes to civil society, as well as the more practice oriented debate on civil society itself and how it can contribute to democratization. The democratization debate has taken different routes and now focusses on the effect of transition path on the stability of a newly formed democratic regime. The role of civil society in democratization is twofold; it can play a role in bottom-up transitions by mobilizing popular support, and it can play a role in democratic consolidation by nurturing democratic norms and presenting a balance to the state. Regardless, whether a transition is elite-led or bottom up democratization scholars concur that democracy is to be built within society itself.

Then this chapter discussed civil society, its fluid conceptualization and how it can contribute to democratization. However, this chapter also showed that the normative expectations of civil society deviate from empirical realities, questioning its 'civil' character and the effect of transnational networks. Furthermore, this chapter indicates the misfit between a concept deeply rooted in Western political thought in the African sphere and finally explores civil society in authoritarian regimes, questioning to what extent this civil society will actually counter balance the state while CS often proves to be embedded in the authoritarian regime.

Finally, this chapter questions the effectiveness of the Western initiatives to strengthen civil society abroad. Showing that while theory ascribes an ambitious role to civil society in democratization and utilizes a broad conceptualization including voluntary associations, in practical terms the concept has been narrowed down to solely NGO's. However, the focus on NGOs to strengthen civil society and to promote democracy is at odds, since the international finance opportunities have only further disconnected NGOs from the grassroots, preventing them from actually facilitating social change. It is therefore argued that instead of focusing on solely NGOs, one should consider civil society as an ecosystem which NGOs are part of. Such an ecosystem is strongest when it is diverse and well-connected, and NGOs should play a connecting role in this ecosystem based on their intermediary position in society. Within this ecosystem it begs to question how actions are manifested as civil society.

The literature on democratization and civil society thus shows that transitions are caused by an interplay of a myriad of actors both state and non-state. Analyzing the two debates, they could be viewed as complementary part of one larger debate on civil society and democratization. The first debate focusses on the transition, ascribing a transformative role to civil society as mobilizer and pointing at the important role that civil society could play in the period after transition. The second debate on the other hand explores the practical manifestations of civil society, showing that the practical reality proves rather challenging.

Based on the political science literature on democratic transitions, various aspects will be assessed in the Gambia. Firstly, in order to study Gambia's transition an assessment of Jammeh's political rule is of importance, analyzing what type of ruler he was and what kind of system was in place.

Then the structural factors affecting the regime change will have to be investigated, as these structural factors can both affect the transition and consolidation of democracy. A third aspect is whether Gambia's transition was elite-led or bottom up, identifying the role of civil society during Gambia's transition. Secondly, the literature on civil society encourages to investigate what civil society looks like in the Gambia by analyzing various local perspectives on and imaginations of Gambian civil society. Then the various manifestations of democracy promotion by civil society will be assessed. Subsequently the impact of international donors in terms of funding and the behavior of civil society will be analyzed. Finally, an assessment will be made of civil societies' contribution to democratic consolidation and the challenges that it faces.

Chapter 3: Methods

3.1 Introduction

In order to collect data for this thesis, three months of field research have been conducted in the Gambia. During this period I conducted a total of 35 interviews with various actors of, and people with perspectives on, Gambian civil society. Furthermore, these interviews are backed up with experience of working as an intern at The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Gambia (TANGO). TANGO, being the umbrella body of NGOs in the Gambia could not only provide me with the contacts of all members of the organization, thereby giving access into Gambia's civil society, it also gave access to various meetings and trainings organized in the Gambia both among civil society itself as well as with government officials. The period of research lasted from the start of April 2017, until early July 2017. This chapter will provide a detailed description of the process of research, its methods and justification as well as biases and challenges.

3.2 Research Format: Case Study

This thesis has used a qualitative research design in the form of a case study. The latter is commonly defined as an intensive study of a single unit of analysis, or a small number of analyses, aiming to understand a larger degree of similar units (Gerring, 2006, 37). A case study is interested in the complexity, processes and specific nature of the case under study (Bryman, 2016, 60). Case study research requires deliberate case selection procedures in order to study a sample of cases that are both representative and relevant for a larger population by providing variation in terms of theoretical interest (Gerring, 2008, 645). Nine different methods for case selection have been identified, each with its own research procedures. These nine different types of case studies include: a typical, deviant, diverse, extreme, influential, pathway, crucial, most different and most similar – case (Idem, 646). The political transition in the Gambia represents a deviant case. A deviant case is judged against a general model of causal relations and deviates from the cross-case relationship (Idem, 648). Contrary to a typical case, a deviant case represents a surprising value (Idem, 655). As already noted in the first chapter of this thesis, until December 2016 there were only two cases in Sub Saharan Africa where an incumbent authoritarian leader was defeated by the ballot box. Likewise, Chapter 1 explains how these two transitions took place during the beginning of the third

wave of democratization and how the events in Zambia and Benin have influenced other authoritarian leaders on the African continent (Cheeseman, 2015, 102). These authoritarian leaders learned from these experiences and even though many countries in Sub Saharan Africa generated great progress in terms of democratization, those authoritarian leaders that endured are some of the most obstinate authoritarian leaders in the world today (Mustapha 2015, 22; Van de Walle 2002, 79; Cheeseman, 2015, 2). Likewise, Yahya Jammeh was known as a ‘classical African strongman’ with a track record of torture, disappearances and election rigging and commonly labeled with the title of dictator (Hultin et al. 2017, 1). The fact that the Gambian population defeated Yahya Jammeh by the ballot box and experienced a transition without the outbreak of violence is therefore outstanding and makes the Gambia a deviant case.

As described in the previous chapter, scholars concur that for a democracy to develop within society, civil society has an important role to play, regardless whether the transition itself was elite-led or bottom-up. The transition in the Gambia, occurring without the outbreak of violence, presents an interesting opportunity to study how civil society can contribute to democracy promotion. It presents a case where the population defeated an autocratic leader by democratic means and where voting-turnout is relatively high (Hultin et al, 2017, 7), showing a general commitment of Gambians to the system of democracy. Furthermore, as the tense period during the political impasse did not result in the outbreak of violence, the country is also still fairly stable and unified after a transition from 22 years of dictatorship to a new regime. Finally, there is no significant, or at least no active opposition disturbing the new regime, and in this sense, conditions are fairly enabling to build a democracy. Moreover, as Haggard and Kaufman argue that the role of civil society in democratic consolidation remains largely understudied (2016b, 135), the Gambia presents an opportunity to study how civil society can contribute to democratic consolidation as well as what its main challenges are in a peaceful environment. If one can identify these challenges in a peaceful environment, one can tap into these challenges in a situation that is less peaceful.

3.3 Operationalization of Concepts

In order to answer the research question and provide guidance in the analysis of the case under study the guiding concepts of this thesis will be operationalized. This means that theoretical variables and concepts will be specified in observable manifestations by which the influence on the outcome can be determined by collecting empirical evidence.

3.3.1 Transition versus Consolidation

As described in chapter 2, regime change is usually considered to consist of two phases: transition and consolidation. Transition is most clearly distinguishable when it starts with a focal point, providing a clear temporal marker for regime change (Schedler 2001, 13-14). The focal point for Gambia's transition are the April protests resulting in the arrest and death of important figures of Gambia's opposition. These arrests encouraged the formation of coalition 2016 which could be identified as the start of the transition, as without coalition 2016, Jammeh would not have been defeated. Then, at some point, transition evolves into consolidation, but it remains difficult to indicate a defining point where transition ends and consolidation begins. Cheeseman distinguishes between three different steps starting with the transition to a system of multi partyism followed by the reconstruction of a new political order and finally the process of democratic consolidation (2015, 94). Schedler argues in this regard that the blurred line between transition and consolidation is not so much due to its conceptualization, rather it is a problem of political reality (2001, 1). In order to study the role of civil society in the uncertain time and space of consolidation at least a boundary between transition and consolidation has to be drawn. For this thesis transition ends once the new incumbent leader is in power. Thus, in the Gambia the transition ends when Adama Barrow returns to the Gambia on the 26th of January 2017 (Perfect, 2017, 329). This thesis thus assesses Gambia's transition lasting from April 2016 until the end of January 2017, as well as the first five months of democratic consolidation.

Transition then may be operationalized as the period starting with a focal point where the rules of authoritarian rule are broken starting an uncertain period of change. As argued in chapter 2, this process may be elite led or bottom up. Transition ends once a new incumbent leader is in power.

Consolidation: As argued in chapter 2 the process and the measurement of democratic consolidation remains highly contested and scholarship can be divided between those who take a substantive and those who take a prospective approach. As consolidation is only to be measured in terms of progress towards its theorized end goal the only way to measure the very first phase in this process is to estimate it in terms of progress towards the defined parameters of a consolidated democracy. Hence, consolidation will be measured in terms of progress towards a vibrant civil society, robust political competition, the acceptance of democratic norms and practices, adherence to the effective enforcement of the rule of law, the degree to which political society is autonomous, the functionality of the state democracy and the degree to which the economy is plural (Svolik, 2014, 715; Linz and Stepan 1996, 1-4).

3.3.2. Civil Society and Related Terms

Civil Society: As shown in Chapter 2, the concept of civil society is multifaceted and lacks one standard definition. The operationalization of civil society is twofold, both in terms of what civil society entails as a unit of analysis, and by which actions it manifests itself. Since this thesis aims to study civil society in the Gambia in the broadest sense of the term I tried to approach both Tocqueville's conception of civil society as an alternative third sphere and a balance to the state, as well as the European conceptualization ascribing a more transformative role to civil society and the ability of citizens to shape their own state. In this sense civil society entails the public sphere independent from the state and the family in which actors can both mobilize to challenge the existing order as well as they can function as a counterweight against the state penetration. Civil society encapsulates voluntary, non-profit and non-governmental organizations as well as social movements and networks which serve as vehicles for social participation (White 1994, Fatton 1995, Orvis 2001, Mercer 2002, Verkoren and van Leeuwen 2013,).

In relation to the process of democratic transition and consolidation manifestations of civil society mainly include social mobilization, raising civic awareness, encouraging political participation of the masses, monitoring government activity, holding government accountable, protesting, safeguarding human rights, help to establish the rule of law and nurturing democratic norms (Mercer 2002, 8; Foley and Edwards 1996; Kaldor, 2003, 9). Finally, CS enhances social

capital through a vibrant associational life thereby contributing to democratic stability (Putman, 2003,326).

Social Capital is a term coined by Robert Putman defined as horizontal bonds of trust (2003, 326). It is a subjective phenomenon comprising of a range of values and attitudes that citizens use in order to trust, cooperate, understand and empathize with each other. Put more blatantly, to treat each other as fellow citizens rather than strangers in finding a sense of fraternity (Newton, 1997, 576). As such social capital manifests itself in networks of cooperation, unification by a common goal and longer standing social relations in which relations of trust are built.

Nurturing Democratic Norms: One important manifestation of civil society during democratic consolidation is to nurture democratic norms. But what are these? A democracy must meet four minimum criteria: executives and legislatures are chosen through elections, all adults have the right to vote, political and civil rights are protected and the elected authorities possess the real authority to govern (Levitsky and Way 2002, 53). Moreover, contemporary scholars of democracy have expanded on this definition with the ‘all affected principle’. Norms following from these criteria are first and foremost collective decision making and equality. Democratic equality in the sense that all citizens are equal to the state and have equal influence over decisions of government. Secondly, the protection of civic and political rights such as freedom of press, freedom of association, freedom of expression as well as human rights may be regarded as important normative standards of democracy.

3.4 Methods and justification

3.4.1 Sample size, Access and Approach

In order to study Gambia’s civil society and to understand its organization, motives and operations Gambian civil society presents the sample of this study. As civil society is not a demarcated sample of study, I approached my sample in an explorative way. I searched for those forces in society that fulfilled roles as identified in the literature on civil society and democratization; while also exploring those organizations that explicitly frame themselves as CS. Hence, identifying the sample involved both an inductive and a deductive approach. Inductive research moves from

observations to broader generalizations to theory, while deductive research starts with the theory, develops hypotheses and aims to confirm or reject these hypotheses based on the observations.

The first unit of the sample is deductively identified by interviewing organizations from a specific point of access into Gambian civil society: The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Gambia (TANGO) where I worked as an intern for three months. TANGO was founded in 1983 and presents itself as a non-state, non-profit civil society organization. The organization was set up to serve as a national platform and as a voice of NGOs in the Gambia, aiming to foster better coordination and sharing of information. TANGO is a membership-based organization which members comprise of both national and international NGOs as well as community based organizations, and thus provided access to a wide range of organizations. The TANGO membership thereby provided the first unit of civil society in the Gambia. However, besides the fact that it was not possible to talk to all 70+ TANGO members, this would also be irrelevant. Therefore, as a first round of interviews, and in order to get a better understanding of the country and its dynamics, I visited organizations in all different administrative regions. The Gambia is divided in five administrative regions: Upper River region, Central River Region, Lower River Region, North Bank and West Coast, and two municipalities Kanifing municipal council and Banjul city council (see image 1). I started my research all the way in Upper River Region, moving back to the coastal area. The coastal area is the most populated and urbanized area of the country, hence also the region where the great majority of Gambia's NGO's and other civil society organizations are located. Furthermore, as the rainy season starts at the end of May, those organizations that are located inland could only be visited during the beginning of the research period, as roads become inaccessible once the rain starts.

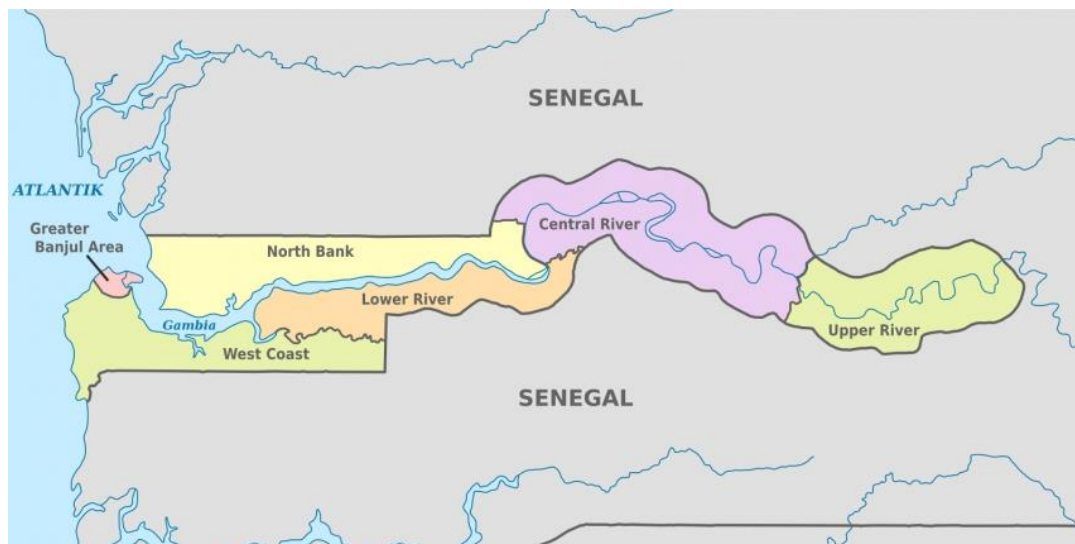


Image 1 - Source: <http://www.best-country.com/africa/gambia/administration>

The first round of interviews comprised of different types of NGOs and community based organizations, and as the interior of the Gambia largely comprises of rural area, most of these organizations focus on agriculture. While visiting the various administrative regions provided great insight into the dynamics of the country as a whole, and the great discrepancies between the urbanized coast and the rural interior, it also encouraged greater selectivity of the sample size. An analysis of spectrum of NGOs present in the Gambia showed that while there are abundant organizations focusing on agriculture, health, education, youth and poverty alleviation, very few organizations are dealing with human rights, civic awareness, or governance. This stood out and encouraged to visit the few organizations that are dealing with such topics. These subsequent interviews as well as the Annual General Meeting with all members of TANGO, indicated which actors were active during the political impasse and started a snowballing effect, providing access to all different actors that collaborated during the preamble of the 2016 elections and during the political impasse that followed. Hence, this part of the research was more inductive in character, guided by observations and information gathered during the interviews.

A third round of interviews aimed to enlarge civil society beyond mere NGOs and consisted of interviews with the student union, religious leaders, religious councils, the youth council, a rapper and youth activist, the Gambia Press Union and local football teams. While dependent on access, the choice to approach such organizations and institutions was again based on theory, hence

deductive. Furthermore, outside perspectives were generated by interviews with the EU delegation and Nyang Njie, private consultant and influential blogger in the Gambia, and researchers and lecturers of the University of the Gambia. Finally, data and information are generated from trainings, international fact finding missions and other work and activities executed by TANGO as well as from conversations with taxi-drivers, shop-owners, neighbors, colleagues and friends in the Gambia. Data generated from such conversations will be referred to as field notes. What would have made my research even stronger and my understanding of Gambian civil society more complete, was to include the traditional sphere by interviewing traditional authorities like the Alkalo's, the traditional village heads in the Gambia. However, as there was no outstanding story of an Alkalo playing a noteworthy role in the transition and because time constrained the search for an access point, an analysis and preselection of such actors this level has not been addressed. Overall, members of civil society were very willing to participate and were open for an interview. Some of the bigger organizations were harder to get access to, but as soon as an appointment was set most people took the time for the interview. Which by itself already exemplifies the importance of the change that took place in the Gambia, as several participants pointed out that if Jammeh was still in power, they would not have done the interview.

3.4.2 Interviewing and its Bias

The data for this thesis were collected using both semi-structured and un-structured interviews. Using interviewing as a research method has various advantages: by conducting interviews one can establish the importance of agency of the interviewee, it allows for the investigation of peoples' thoughts as well as it allows for the study of ideational factors such as culture, ethics, perception, norms and learning (Rathbun, 2008, 690). However, qualitative interviewing as a research technique has also been criticized, as such interview data can be subject to some limitations. Some studies have argued that the characteristics of the interviewer have impact on the replies of respondents, especially the effect of ethnicity has been greatly studied in this regard (Bryman, 2016, 216). Another frequently heard critique concerns that interview data are subject to interpretation of the researcher and in this sense some scholars question the degree of objectivity of interview data especially when they are the source of theory-driven research (Rathbun, 2008, 687). Regardless, interviewing as a research technique is often the best method used when

gathering data about the social world where it is concerned with the effort of humans to transform their environment based on learning, understanding and reflection (ibid). Likewise, interviewing is very useful in establishing structural causes, motivations and preferences (Idem, 691).

Identifying causes, both structural and non-structural, as well as motivations, meaning and perceptions are rather important in order to understand the role of Gambia's civil society in the 2016 political transition, hence the choice to conduct interviews as a way to collect data. However, this research is likewise subject to possible biases. Firstly, the fact that I worked as an intern for TANGO, and got access to various organizations via this institution could have influenced my research in two ways: As I approached my sample in an explorative way and partly worked inductively guided by the answers of my respondents, my conceptualization of civil society is impacted by the fact that TANGO was the starting point and I explored civil society through their network. This unwittingly put TANGO at a center stage of my analysis of Gambian civil society. Furthermore, the fact that I got access via TANGO could have influenced answers of my respondents, as some of them might have felt more inclined to mention this institution in their response, or to be less critical in their opinion about the organization. I have tried to eliminate this bias by asking critical questions myself and explicitly asking their opinion about the functioning of TANGO once they mentioned the institution. Furthermore, I could use my experience working at the organization as a term of reference.

Secondly, being a white European woman might have influenced the replies of respondents, both because I am foreign and because culturally women have a different position in Gambian society. The more time I spent in the Gambia the better I could eliminate some of this bias as I learned a lot about local customs and culture as well as some of the basics of the local language. Especially the latter generated respect by my respondents. Furthermore, by checking stories with my colleagues at TANGO as well as with other respondents and by getting different perspectives on a matter, I tried to validate some of the stories and seek for a better understanding.

Thirdly, the introduction to my research at the start of an interview mattered, especially mentioning the term civil society would generate a certain view on the topic and a specific discourse as to how they believed civil society is ought to act. Although I only realized this half way through the process, from that point onwards I often introduced my research as being about organizations rather than civil society, which kept the interview more open. My research also took

place during the month of Ramadan, which was in May 2017 this year. This both affected the work of most of the organizations which was slowed down during this time, as well as it affected my respondents who were tired and less concentrated due to their fasting. Therefore, I tried to plan all my interviews in the mornings during this month.

3.4.3 Semi structured and Unstructured interviewing

This study has used both semi-structured and unstructured interviews. With a semi structured interview the interviewer has a list of questions that provide a general interview guide, however, the interviewer is flexible in the sequence in which the questions are asked, the interviewer is free to ask further questions and to ask the questions in a more free manner (Bryman, 2016, 201). Moreover, as opposed to structured interviews the questions in a semi structured interview are more general in character. Within this research especially the first round of interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. Questions that were asked were regarding the transition and whether they had experienced any change in their work, in their community or on an individual level, whether they were doing any work in terms of monitoring, regarding ethnic tensions, their expectations of the new government, international support and finally about their experiences under Jammeh. Some of the interviews that were conducted in a later stage are unstructured in character. With unstructured interviews the interviewer is only guided by a list of topics; an *aide-mémoire*. The phrasing and sequence of the questions varies between different interviews (ibid). The topics of the aide-mémoire are partly comparable with the first round of interviews, but were more directed at the various activities during the impasse, new collaborations and projects now, as well as perspectives on civil society and the new government. Furthermore, during these interviews questions were asked whether civil society workers experienced a change in their work on a personal level, or in collaborating with colleagues, government officials or other civil society workers. Although all interviews were prepared for and guided by a research guide, some were more free in character than others, depending on respondents.

For this thesis a total of 35 interviews have been conducted, most of the interviews were held at the offices of the respondents, some interviews took place on the premises of TANGO. Most of the interviews with organizations were conducted with the executive director, in some cases the executive director was accompanied by other staff, some organizations were represented

by program managers. The choice to interview the executive director of an organization is motivated by the fact that the director is ought to be aware of the course its organizations is taking. Furthermore, especially during the impasse the directors were communicating about the required course of action. The great majority of the interviews that have been conducted are recorded with a voice recorder and transcribed afterwards. Sometimes respondents did not allow the interview to be recorded, or there was too much surrounding noise to guarantee good quality of the recording. In such cases notes were taken and later processed into a transcript. Out of the 35 interviews that were conducted, respondents differed from executive directors of large international organizations to small community based organizations to religious leaders. In order to safeguard the privacy of my interviewees their names and the organizations will not be stated explicitly, unless specific manifestations have already been made public by the media. In order to place the answers of these respondents into perspective, they or the organization that they represent will be described. The list of interviews and the dates on which they were conducted can be found in appendix A.

Due to time constraint, responsibilities at my internship and a slowed process during the month of Ramadan only a few follow up interviews were conducted. An intermediate analysis of interview data and the opportunity to conduct follow up interviews would have provided more in depth information and would have made this research even stronger.

3.5 Process of Analyzing

The first step in the process of analyzing was an initial coding, in which the data was analyzed and compared. Coding refers to the process where transcripts and field notes are reviewed and labels are given to parts that are potentially significant for the research (Bryman, 2016, 573). The initial coding was guided by analytical questions like ‘what stands out?’, ‘are there any trends to be observed?’, ‘how do participants talk about the change of regime?’ The second round of coding organized respondents’ answers about the Jammeh regime, regarding what type of ruler he was, and about what *was* possible under his rule. Likewise, this round of coding categorized actors that were active in civic awareness, actors that acted during the political impasse, and organizations that closed during the impasse. Finally, it categorized responses regarding what type of regime is in place now, and how relations of the respondents’ might have changed with the new regime. This provided for a general overview of who acted in the preamble of the December 2016 elections,

during the political impasse as well as it indicated some of the developments during the first months under the Barrow administration. The subsequent round of coding was more detailed and guided by theory. Its focus is on the role that civil society played in the transition, as well as on the comments made about the current situation and the course of action of civil society under Barrow. Furthermore, data was coded according to funding, international influence, and democracy promotion. Finally, reactions to some of the more discussed topics and important happenings such as the unconstitutional appointment of the vice president were collected. The organization of answers in different categories as well as the close analysis of my field notes provided an overview of the important topics and thereby provided the backbone of the analysis in chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 4: Gambia's Transition and the Contribution of Civil Society

4.1 Introduction

Yahya Jammeh ruled the Gambia for more than two decades and was characterized as a classical African strongman (Hultin et al. 2017, 1). In order to study Gambia's transition it is important to understand Jammeh's regime, how he ruled, what he did and did not allow in the Gambia and how he utilized both democratic and non-democratic tools to stay in power. Therefore, this chapter will provide a critical analysis of Jammeh's rule and the various causes and conditions that led to his defeat. It will critically analyze the 2016 elections and its preamble, zooming in on the political impasse that followed, and study how various actors and groups collaborated to push Jammeh out. Finally, it will identify whether Gambia's transition was elite led, bottom up or whether a combination of factors were at play.

4.2 Electoral Authoritarianism under Jammeh

Yahya Jammeh came to power in 1994 via a military coup headed by four junior officers of the Gambia National Army (GNA) (Perfect, 2010, 53). It was a bloodless coup, generally welcomed by the Gambian population at first. In order to win support Jammeh and his party promised the Gambian population governmental reform including commissions of inquiry that would investigate and punish corrupt politicians (Idem, 54). Furthermore, during an initially agreed upon transition period of two years, the Constitutional Review Commission drafted a new constitution for the Gambia which was officially endorsed during a referendum in August 1996 (ibid). In September 1996 Jammeh resigned from the GNA and officially participated in the presidential elections as a candidate for the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC). Yahya Jammeh won these elections with 56% of the vote, followed by 36% of the votes for his biggest opponent Ousainou Darboe of the United Democratic Party (UDP).

Scholars have argued however that ever since he came to power, Jammeh effectively maneuvered between authoritarianism and democracy (Hultin et al. 2017, 6). In this sense the Gambia under Jammeh presents a typical example of a country that was 'stalled in a gray zone' as argued by Carothers (2002) in his critique of the transition paradigm. Following this critique,

various types of hybrid regimes have been coined including ‘illiberal democracies’ (Zakaria 1997), ‘semi-authoritarianism’ (Ottaway 2013), ‘competitive authoritarian regimes’ (Levitsky and Way 2002) and ‘electoral authoritarianism’ (Schedler 2006). See textbox for the various definitions.

Although even these transition scholars point out that it is sometimes hard to draw a line between the various hybrids (Levitsky and Way 2002, 54), Schedler’s analysis of ‘electoral authoritarianism’ seems particularly useful to clarify how Jammeh maneuvered between authoritarianism and democracy. Schedler describes how elections in electoral authoritarian regimes are broadly inclusive as they are held under universal suffrage, but they are minimally open, minimally competitive and minimally pluralistic meaning that while opposition parties are allowed to run and allowed to win votes and seats, they are not allowed to win the elections. Furthermore, while not subject to massive repression, repression is selective but recurring (2006, 3). Additionally, these regimes are culpable of discriminatory electoral rules, excluding parties or candidates from entering the electoral arena, restrict or manipulate the media, manipulate campaign finance, inflict on civic liberties and political rights and are often known to commit electoral fraud

- **Illiberal Democracies** - countries that are 'reasonably democratic', have regimes that were democratically elected but at the same time refuse to adhere to all (liberal) democratic rules. (Zakaria, 1997, 22). Her critique mostly focusses on the lack of 'constitutional liberalism' including the rule of law, separation of powers and protection of basic civic rights such as freedom of speech, assembly and religion (ibid).
- **Semi-Authoritarianism** - regimes that show characteristics of both authoritarianism and democracy have some democratic institutions and respect a limited degree of civil rights. These regimes maintain democratic appearance without being exposed to the 'risks' of free electoral competition (Ottaway, 2013, 3).
- **Competitive Authoritarian Regimes** - regimes in which formal democratic institutions are considered as the principal means to obtain political authority, but rules are often violated and incumbents fail to meet minimum standards of democracy. Democratic rules are violated frequent enough to cause unfair competition, however, incumbents are unable to eliminate these rules or reduce them to a mere façade (Levitsky and Way 2002, 52-54).
- **Electoral Authoritarianism** - regimes that hold regular multiparty elections, both for electing the chief executive and national assembly, yet these elections are systematically flawed and manipulated to such a degree that all liberal-democratic principles of elections being free and fair are violated and elections are used as instruments of authoritarian rule rather than instruments of democracy (Schedler, 2006, 3).

by redistributing votes or seats (*ibid*). In this sense, Schedler's electoral authoritarianism closely resembles a governmental form where democratic rules are reduced to a façade.

When analyzing Jammeh's rule it seems that superficially, the electoral process of the Gambia meets democratic requirements. The Gambia holds multiparty elections every five years, the new constitution was approved during a referendum, voter turnout in the Gambia is high (446,541 registered voters out of a population of 1000,000 in 1993) and all citizens above the age of 18 were entitled to vote (Hughes, 2000, 36-37). However, the terms and conditions of democratic participation are deficient to the rules of democracy, and show typical characteristics of electoral authoritarianism. Firstly, while Jammeh reintroduced multiparty politics during the 1996 elections, Decree No. 89 consciously excluded the Peoples Progressive Party (PPP), the party of former president Jawara as well as the National Convention Party (NCP) and the Gambia's Peoples Party (GPP), two other major opposition parties from participating in the elections (*ibid*). Furthermore, Decree No. 89 excluded any person who had held office (presidential, vice-presidential or ministerial) since 1965 from contesting in the 1996 elections (*Idem*, 38). According to Jammeh, Decree No. 89 was implemented to punish all former corrupt politicians, however in effect this decree excluded all major opposition parties and important figures under Jawara from contesting in the elections (*ibid*). Besides restraining opposition to participate in the elections at all, opposition experienced intimidation by the state sometimes even with violence by para-political organizations during and after the elections (*Idem*, 39). This intimidation towards opposition supporters as well as attacks by the security forces or APRC militants only increased with each subsequent round of elections (Hultin et al. 2017, 6; Ceesay, 2006, 213). To the point that by 2011 international election monitors got frustrated, and many regular observers refused to participate in this observation mission due to the high levels of APRC control of the media as well as continued oppression and intimidation by the state (Hultin et al. 2017, 6). Furthermore, various scholars have pointed out how Jammeh used state resources to its own advantage, using government vehicles for campaigning as well as highly unequal media coverage in favor of the APRC to support his campaign (Perfect, 2010, 55; Hughes 2000; 39; Perfect 2008, 433; Hultin et al. 2017, 6). In the preamble of the 2016 election Jammeh came with another remarkable stunt by raising fees for the registration of the presidential candidates in mid 2015 from 50,000 to 500,000 dalasi which is roughly from (USD1,280 to USD 12,800) (Hultin et al. 2017, 14). This was not the first fee that he

raised, Jammeh also increased bonds for private newspapers, which made it increasingly difficult for opposition to mobilize. The increase of registration fee is one of the reasons why opposition went out to the streets to demonstrate in April 2016, which will be elaborated upon in a later section. The Gambia uses a special voting system which is in itself hard to manipulate and in which very little votes get lost. Upon arrival at the polling station, you show your voter registration card, your name is crossed off the list and your index finger is painted to ensure you can only vote once. Then you get a marble and you enter the voting booth. In the voting booth there are different ballot boxes, each showing a photo of the candidate or the party and painted in the color of the party. In this sense the system is clearly understandable for people that are illiterate, which is about half of the Gambian population. Finally, when you drop your marble in a ballot it rings a bell, so observers outside the voting booth can hear that you have casted your vote, and that the marble cannot be taken to another constituency (Fieldnotes). While the system of voting in itself is fair, various members of civil society stated that Jammeh manipulated the results when the ballot boxes were moved from the polling stations to a central place for counting. Furthermore, the process of voter card registration has been subject to critique. In April 2004, the Gambian newspapers reported that Senegalese nationals from the Casamance region had stormed a temporary office of the IEC in an attempt to obtain voting cards (Hultin 2008, 74). Even though these newspapers only showed a failed attempt, Hultin (2008) argues how the system with the voter cards is questionable. Pointing out that once you obtain your voting card, the rest of the process is assumed to follow automatically and is not questioned. Already in 1990 the PDOIS made a case with the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights a pan-African human rights tribunal based in Banjul, that voter cards did not require a street address, which makes it difficult to trace whether people do not register multiple times (Hultin 2008, 80). While registration requirements were changed when Jammeh came to power, opposition still pointed out that registration could be manipulated (Idem, 81). The story about a group of Senegalese with the Jola ethnicity from the Casamance being allowed to vote in the Gambia is still alive and was pointed out by various members of civil society during my visit. Supposedly though, Senegalese border control had become more strict in the past two years, and Gambian voters cards in possession of Senegalese were obtained. As a response, these cards were held in the political bureau of the APRC in Kanifing not far away from Banjul. However, this building mysteriously burned down in August 2016, destroying all the voter cards of the Senegalese

supporters (Fieldnotes). This story explaining that the voters cards of Senegalese supporters are destroyed, confirms the idea for many Gambians that the 2016 elections were indeed fair and not manipulated by unconstitutional voters. However, while the political bureau was indeed burned down in August (Mbai, 2016), there is no proof that the voters cards were indeed stored here. But maybe more importantly, after crossing the borders between Senegal and Gambia myself multiple times, I observed how these borders are very open to cross for both Gambians and Senegalese by only briefly showing an ID, it is at least questionable whether border control was checking all luggage when Jammeh was still in power for tiny voting cards.

This story, explained by various Gambian civil society members, could be interpreted as a general lack of trust in the voting system. However, despite voter-intimidation and the fact that for every round of election in the Gambia there have been deaths, bribery, and violent confrontations (Hultin et al. 2017, 7), Gambians endure the burning sun and go to the polls in high numbers. Although turn-out has fluctuated, with drops to 58.6% and 59.3% in 2006 and 2016 respectively, compared to 88.35% in 1996, 90.03% in 2001 and 82.6% in 2011, generally turnout is relatively high (Hultin et al. 2017, 7). Voter turn-out is often used as a way to measure confidence of a population in their political system, showing a commitment of Gambians to the system of democracy and elections. Which is outstanding in a country where the commitment to the ideas of democracy, legal rule and governance are so often violated by the incumbent leader. At the same time, some pointed out that the high voter turnout is because Senegalese were able to vote in the Gambia, again referring to the aforementioned story (Fieldnotes).

Besides the electoral process, other concerns regarding Jammeh's rule have been raised. Firstly, in theory government is supposed to be under scrutiny of both parliament and the 1996 constitution with regards to policy making and the execution of those policies (Hughes, 2000, 41). However, holding the Jammeh government accountable has been made more difficult because it enjoys a large majority in the National Assembly. Moreover, various scholars have observed that personal rule rather than parliamentary rule was a defining feature of the Gambian government (Hughes, 2000, 41-42). Likewise, positions of the minister of defense, interior and local government are held by former soldiers, and Jammeh has been known for the frequent dismissal of district chiefs or senior officials, thereby holding tight control over the country (Idem, 42). Secondly, constitutionally Gambians enjoy all traditional civil rights, however with citizens been

put in detention without trial, the persistent disregard for legal processes and the arbitrary use of force show the unwillingness of the government to actually promote or adhere to these constitutional rights (Idem, 44-47). Likewise, Jammeh actively repressed freedom of expression and to a large extent took control of the media, by shutting down newspapers, radio and TV stations as well as being rather restrictive in giving out licenses (Hultin et al. 2017,12). There are a few private newspapers in the Gambia, although circulation and scope are limited as the Gambia has a literacy rate of only 50% (HRW, 2017, 30). Gambia Radio and Television Services (GRTS) own the only broadcast TV operation in the country, which is the media agency of the state. There are private radio stations in the Gambia but as journalists were arrested at night, received death threats and were under surveillance of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) after criticizing the government in any sort of way, the great majority of Gambian journalists refused to write or broadcast anything political or did so with great self-censorship (HRW 2017, 28; Hultin et al. 2017; 12). Furthermore, Jammeh tried to control the internet by blocking access to certain websites of online newspapers like *The Gambia Echo* and *Freedom* written by Gambians in exile and monitor internet and telephone usage by an executive order to register all SIM cards. In short, Jammeh had a tight grip on power by manipulating elections, controlling the state apparatus and avoiding scrutiny of parliament, not adhering to civic rights and monitoring and controlling the media. Jammeh's regime was a typical example of electoral authoritarianism and to this regard, various scholars have predicted that it was most likely that if Jammeh was to be removed from office this had to happen via a military coup (Hughes 2000, 50; Perfect 2010, 62).

4.3 Presidential Elections 2016

We know today, that against all expectations Yahya Jammeh was removed by the ballot box. Considering Jammeh aimed to bypass almost all rules of democratic governance by which he had a tight control over the country, the question remains how this was possible? There are various factors and occurrences that could be designated which together caused the downfall of Yahya Jammeh. The following section will first analyze the structural factors as discussed in the democratization debate in the context of the Gambia. Chapter 2 showed that these structural factors are however not sufficient for regime change to occur as they need to be translated into action. This

action can either be elite-led or bottom up, hence the subsequent section will assess what type of transition took place in the Gambia.

4.3.1 Structural factors

In the preamble of the 2016 elections, various factors and frustrations, some of them deeply rooted in Gambian society accumulated. These factors could be interpreted as the structural factors described in chapter 2. Jammeh angered different religious as well as ethnic groups in the preamble of the 2016 elections. Starting with Jammeh's declaration of the Gambia as an Islamic state in November 2015 in Brufut. The unconstitutional declaration of an Islamic state was arguably as a means to generate more Muslim support for the incumbent party, and, as Jammeh withdrew from the Commonwealth in 2013, to seek alliance with the Gulf states (Hultin et al. 2017, 16). On hindsight however, this declaration was only welcomed by a small minority of Muslims, mostly among some of Jammeh's long known loyalists such as Imam Ratib of Banjul and the president of the Islamic council Modou Lamin Touray (ibid). The great majority of Muslims in the Gambia however were suspicious. For the Christians on the other hand, the decision of the president was rather uncomfortable, and the Christian community felt threatened as a minority. One of the members of the Christian Council explained how Christians were afraid that they were no longer 'first class citizens', and how Christians were afraid to be limited in their rights (personal communication, 28-6-2017). Furthermore, Christians have mentioned how declaring the Gambia as an Islamic state has brought the Christian community closer together and how they started to organize a national day of prayer for all Christians in the Gambia (personal communication 28-6-2017; personal communication, 27-6-2017). The National Day of prayer was organized on November 19, 2016 and serves as an important indicator that Jammeh lost the support of this minority. A priest of one of the churches in the KMC area even states that "...*If you vote for APRC you are not a Christian...*" (Personal communication, 28-6-2017). Even though Christians only represent 5 % of the Gambian population, it is an important group in the Gambia and their unification through organizing a national day of prayer functioned as an important statement against their incumbent leader.

Besides provoking the Christian community, Jammeh singled out the Mandinka's, the largest ethnic group in the Gambia. Even though tensions between Jammeh's ethnic group the

Jola's and the Mandinka's is nothing particularly new, as Jammeh had long tried to undermine the ethnic group of former president Jawara. It has been argued that Jammeh had gone too far on the June 3rd 2016 when talking about Mandinkas as 'enemies', 'foreigners' and threatened to kill them one-by-one and place them 'where even a fly cannot see them' (Hultin et al. 2017, 4). With this statement, he unified yet another group against him, and quite a large group as the Mandinka's represent approximately 40% of the population. Scholars initially questioned whether ethnically heterogeneous countries would face more difficulties in the process of democratization, the underlying argument being that incumbents would utilize ethnic or religious cleavages to win elections (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 41). In the Gambian case, Jammeh mobilized opposition against him by insulting and threatening various groups.

Finally, the high levels of youth unemployment, economic despair, and a general lack of opportunities especially for the youth led to a desire for change. The structural lack of development in the Gambia causes a lot of migration, both from the rural areas to the urban coast but also to take 'the back way' seeking to cross the Mediterranean sea (Hultin et al. 2017, 5). Hard numbers are not available as irregular migration in Western Africa is difficult to trace, but the Gambia as the smallest African country relatively has the largest number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea, trying to get to Europe (Nourhusssen 2017). The high levels of youth unemployment and low salaries in the country caused a lot of frustration in the Gambia. Furthermore, most correspondents mentioned that Jammeh's systematic repression worsened over the past few years and that it had come to affect everyone. As a researcher for the University of the Gambia (UTG) states "...*they [the people] felt like if you are pushed against a wall at some point you can do nothing else than to react.*" (Personal communication, 24-6-2017). Also indicating that while there was still a persistent climate of fear, Gambians mention that they were ready to face the consequences this time. With a median age of 19.9, youth represents a majority in the Gambia and most of them have only lived under Jammeh's rule (Fofana, 2016).

In short, one could delineate structural conditions such as ethnic tensions, religion as well as level of development in the Gambia causing increased frustration in the preamble of the 2016 transition. Furthermore, the increasing levels of harassments pushed Gambians with their back against the wall, and as frustrations accumulated, something had to happen.

4.4 Top down or Bottom up?

As explained in chapter two, structural factors are conceived as conditional by most scholars, and do not provide a sufficient explanation for a regime change. If these structural factors are to be influential, they can either increase or decrease the likelihood of democratic transition or consolidation. While the previous analysis shows that these lingering frustrations could be delineated as leading up to the transition, they were not sufficient to translate into action. Therefore, recent scholarship argues that a transition can either be bottom up or elite led. The next section will analyze Gambia's political transition and its preamble, indicating the different factors that led to the defeat of Yahya Jammeh. It will show that while some of the most important actions were elite-led, elites did not act in a vacuum but their actions were reinforced by bottom-up initiatives, thereby challenging the presumed theoretical distinction between elite-led and bottom up transitions.

4.4.1. The formation of Coalition 2016

Like in previous elections in the Gambia, the Jammeh government maintained his active crackdown on opposition in the preamble of the presidential elections in 2016. On April 14th 2016 Solo Sandeng, an activist of the United Democratic Party (UDP) led a public protest holding banners and marching through Serrekunda with a group of more than 25 activists requesting for electoral reforms (HRW 2016, 9). Gambia's Police Intervention Unit (PIU) interrupted the protest, arresting more than 20 demonstrators and some of the bystanders. Solo Sandeng, together with four other activists were taken to the headquarters of the NIA in Banjul, where Sandeng was heavily beaten and died in custody (ibid). In a response to the death of Solo Sandeng, Ousainou Darboe, the leader of the UDP organized a march from Darboe's house to the headquarters of the PIU. Again PIU officers came to stop the protest and arrested more than 20 protesters including Darboe (Idem, 12). In a response to these actions of the PIU, UDP members organized a rally on the 9th of May to encourage a court appearance of Darboe and other demonstrators. During this rally yet another 45 people were arrested (Idem, 14). In total, the Gambian security forces arrested over 90 people in April and May for protesting peacefully. The arrests were justified by the Jammeh regime by arguing that these demonstrators did not have a permit, hence the protests were illegal (Idem, 16). Furthermore, in July 2016 Darboe together with 18 others were sentenced to three years of imprisonment for taking part in these demonstrations by the High Court in Banjul (Perfect 2017,

324). The detention of Ousainoe Darboe, who used to compete as a presidential candidate against Jammeh for many years served as a warning sign for the opposition and further mobilized support (Hultin et al. 2017, 4). Thereby, the death of Solo Sandeng and the subsequent arrest of Ousainou Darboe served as an impetus for seven opposition parties to unite and form Coalition 2016 (Hultin, 2017, 14). While the opposition failed to unite and come to consensus in all previous years, the National Reconciliation Party (NRP), the PPP, the UDP, the Gambia Moral Congress (GMC), the Gambia Party for Democracy and Progress, the National Convention Party (NCP) and the People's Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS) came together and formed Coalition 2016 (Perfect 2017, 324). By the end of October, the opposition parties elected Adama Barrow, who was chosen as the UDP presidential candidate in September to replace Darboe while in prison, as the leader of Coalition 2016 (Idem, 325). Adama Barrow, a rural born, 51 years of age Gambian and property developer was chosen with 308 out of 490 votes of the delegates defeating Hamat Bah (NRP), Halifa Sallah (PDOIS) and Dr Lamin Bojang (NCP), who unlike Barrow all previously contested in presidential elections (ibid). Mamma Kandeh leader of the GDC boycotted the election of the leader of the Coalition, claiming that there was a lack of democracy and transparency and Kandeh decided to contest individually (ibid). As it was not allowed to represent two different political parties according to Gambia's election rules Barrow resigned from the UDP in November in order to contest as an independent in the 2016 elections (ibid). Thus, due to Jammeh's active crackdown on opposition parties resulting in the death of Solo Sandeng and the arrest of his biggest component, other opposition parties unified. In this sense the formation of Coalition 2016 changed the elections in such a way that instead of voting for your preferred party, you either voted for or against Jammeh.

4.4.2 Changes in the Electoral Laws and Campaign

Besides structural frustration of the Gambian population and the formation of Coalition 2016 some of the changes in the electoral campaign and electoral laws positively contributed to the defeat of Yahya Jammeh. Some aspects remained the same, like the campaign period in which Jammeh like with other aspects of democratic elections skillfully circumvented democratic principles. Jammeh legally mandates for an electoral campaign period in which all parties have access to state media and are allowed to organize an electoral campaign in the country. However, competing parties are

rather restricted as this campaign period only lasts for a period of two weeks from the 16th until the 29th of November (Perfect, 2017, 326). At the same time, Yahya Jammeh organized his nationwide ‘Meet the people’ tour promoting his party and his candidacy before the start of this campaigning period, using government vehicles, buildings and both security forces and civil servants to act on behalf of his party (HRW, 2016, 2). A clear example of how Jammeh tries to portray Gambian elections as being free and fair. Especially, since voter card registration had long closed before the electoral campaign commences (Sallah 2017). Resulting in especially youth being inspired by the campaigning who cannot vote because they did not register in time (registration took place in the beginning of the year 2016) (Field notes).

At the same time, during the 2016 campaign period youth activists groups in collaboration with the NGO umbrella body grabbed the opportunity to do a nationwide campaign providing voters education to encourage people and especially youth that are in the possession of a voters card to go and vote. During this short two week campaign period, all opposition parties are free to spread their message, and so is civil society (Perfect 2017, 326). Due to years of election rigging by Yahya Jammeh many Gambians have misconceptions about the voting process. Many Gambians believe that CCTV cameras are implemented in the voting booth and are afraid that the government knows who they vote for. Likewise, others believe that you could only vote for the party in power, or people are discouraged to vote at all, as they do not believe that their vote could bring about change (Personal Communication 12-6-2017). A women’s rights program specialist of one of the biggest international NGO’s in the Gambia explains: *“so they [Youth Activists] grabbed that opportunity, so the space was there and in fact the president himself said: yes you can say whatever you want to say during the campaign period but when the campaign is over, it is over, you cannot you know say anything political.”* (Personal communication, 20-6-2017). Furthermore, she explains how the campaign period these past elections was totally different from all previous elections in the Gambia. The main difference according to her was the interest of young people in the campaign. Accordingly, if it would have been the adults alone there would have been no change of government (Ibid). The director of a West African peacebuilding organization and head of the CSO Coalition for election observation pointed at some other significant changes. As compared to previous campaigns, this was the first time that the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) was organized, in such a way that during the two weeks of the electoral campaign all

candidates had equal access to the media (Personal communication (29-6-2017)). Furthermore, the IEC had made a schedule both for the campaigning parties throughout the country and the media ensuring that no two parties would meet on the same route. Where in previous years only Jammeh could make use of state television, this time all parties had equal access (ibid). Why this was the first year in which the campaign period was organized? Many Gambians are unsure why Jammeh allowed this, on the level of the IEC they explain that the institution must have learned from the past and is guided by international prospectus. Nonetheless, these changes under the watch of Yahya Jammeh had some serious consequences.

However, the most important change was the change in electoral laws which gave provision to count the ballots on the spot, while previously counting was centralized (Kora and Darboe 2017, 152). This shift to on-the-spot-counting both sped up the process, and made it almost impossible for Jammeh to manipulate the voting as party representatives reported the votes from all polling stations to party offices allowing the coalition to do a parallel vote tabulation (Idem, 151). Like the changes during the electoral campaign, the decision of Yahya Jammeh to implement on the spot counting is a mystery for most Gambians. *'He just did'* is the answer to this question or *'because he himself he is a fool'*, or *'a mad man'*. (Personal communication 6-7-2018). Some correspondents however explained that Jammeh genuinely believed that Gambians loved him, and that nobody could defeat him and therefore allowed these changes in electoral laws. Explaining that he lived distant from realities, he could not even imagine the amount of people that would vote against him because whenever he went around the country with his 'meet the people' tours, people were demanded to come out to the streets and wave to the president. Along this line a Gambian public policy consultant explained that Jammeh *'allowed things that were not clashing with his ideals, or his political interest. Enlightening people about their voters rights for him was not a big deal, because he controlled the electoral process.'* However by allowing on the spot counting he *'miscalculated the Gambian people'* (Personal communication 16-6-2017).

Regardless of rising frustrations of different groups in the Gambia, the formation of Coalition 2016 and the changes in electoral laws, most external observers 'fully expected' that Jammeh together with the APRC would remain in power and would win his fifth round of elections (Hultin et al. 2017, 2; Fagan 2016). Moreover, due to election rigging in the past and Gambia's bad record the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) refused to send election

observers under the assumption that these elections would be flawed. At the same time, the EU was not allowed to send any observers by the Jammeh government (Perfect 2017, 326). Thus, in the end the elections were observed by the African Union and by the domestic observers mainly the CSO coalition consisting of various civil society groups in the Gambia. In hindsight there proved to be less malpractice during the 2016 elections compared to other years, various people point at the on-the-spot-counting as a cause of this (ARB 2017).

4.4.3 Election day

After a two-week period of campaigning mid-November, the presidential elections in the Gambia took place on December 1, 2016. On Election Day, the Gambia experienced a wide internet blackout as the regime put up a firewall blocking all telecommunications (ARB 2017; Kora and Darboe, 2017, 153). However, despite uncertainty it did not cause any harm or other irregularities (ibid). The presidential race during the 2016 elections was between incumbent leader Yahya Jammeh representing his party the APRC, Adama Barrow representing Coalition 2016 and finally Mamma Kandeh of the Gambia Democratic Congress (GDC). The Gambian electorate had increased by almost 90,000 voter compared to the 2011 elections and now constituted of an electorate of 886,578 (Hultin et al. 2017, 7). The day after the elections mr Njie, Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) announced Adama Barrow to be the winner of the presidential elections 2016 with 45.5% of the votes, thereby defeating Jammeh (36.7%) and Mamma Kandeh (17.8%) (Perfect 2017, 326). The election results showed that Barrow had won a good share of the vote in almost all constituencies, except the Foni's, the area where Jammeh comes from and where a great majority of the Jola's live (Kora and Darboe 2017, 153). On that same day, in the afternoon the communication blockade was lifted and Yahya Jammeh accepted his defeat on public television with a statement, congratulating Adama Barrow as well as regional and international bodies (Idem 153; Perfect 2017, 328). A week later however, on the 9th of December Jammeh reversed his position, declaring that there had been 'unacceptable abnormalities' in the elections and demanding for new fresh and transparent elections (ARB 2017).

4.4.4 Elite negotiations during the political impasse

With this announcement, Jammeh put the Gambia into political crisis. The AU directly demanded Jammeh to hand over power, and Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, chair of ECOWAS stated that Jammeh's decision threatened the stability of the entire West African region (Perfect 2017, 328). However as Jammeh refused, President Sirleaf, together with President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria and John Mahama of Ghana, went to the Gambia to negotiate on behalf of ECOWAS with the support of the UN and the wider international community. (Perfect 2017,328; Kora and Darboe 2017, 154). Jammeh was not easily willing to let go of power but within the negotiation room President-elect Barrow and his team restrained from giving in to Jammeh's demands (Kora and Darboe 2017, 154). At the same time the chief of justice turned down Jammeh's request to legally stop Barrow's inauguration. As the negotiations still continued in January Jammeh decided to declare a state of emergency as a last resort less than a week before the inauguration of Adama Barrow (Idem, 155). Fearing the outbreak of violence in these last days an estimated 46,000 Gambians fled across the border into Senegal (Perfect 2017, 328). President-elect Barrow was flown into Dakar and sworn in on the 19th of January 2017 at the Gambian embassy (Kora and Darboe 2017, 155). While Jammeh still tried to use everything in his power to stay in office, some of the more prominent APRC figures started to declare the victory of Adama Barrow, including the head of civil service and most of the Gambian ambassadors (Perfect 2017, 328). Furthermore, the UN Security Council endorsed military intervention by ECOWAS, now the Gambia had a new president, to cross the Gambian borders, while at the same time a Nigerian warship was on its way to the Gambian shore (Idem, 329; Hultin 2017, 3). The next day the president Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz from Mauritania and Alpha Condé president of Guinea flew in for the last negotiation and because Barrow refused to allow Jammeh to stay in the Gambia, he eventually agreed to leave the country, first to Guinea and later to Malabo the capital of Equatorial Guinea (Perfect, 2017, 329). On the 26th of January, President Adama Barrow was ecstatically welcomed back in the Gambia marking the end of an historic transition period in which no blood has been spilled.

Thus, frustrations from different groups in the Gambia accumulated in 2016, secondly, the protests in April and the aggressive response of the APRC regime led to the unification of opposition parties and the formation of coalition 2016. The creation of the coalition presented a

choice for the Gambian electorate to either vote for or against Jammeh. Thirdly, the changes during the electoral campaign and especially the change in electoral laws to count the ballots on the spot made that Jammeh lost his full control of the election process. Furthermore, after Jammeh denounced his decision to hand over power, various West African state leaders came to the Gambia to negotiate on behalf of ECOWAS and other international bodies. Finally, the moment that the UN endorsed military intervention in Africa's smallest state, almost entirely surrounded by Senegal, the GNA could not stand a chance against an army of West African states. Which forced Jammeh to agree with the final negotiations and leave the country. According to this sum of events it seems like the Gambian transition was entirely elite led, but was it? Arguably, the fact that Jammeh overestimated his popularity and decided to count the ballots on the spot and the formation of coalition 2016 were two crucial events that made the transition possible. Nevertheless, the Gambian people came out to the polls on the 2nd of December and voted against Jammeh. Furthermore, considering the tense situation in the Gambia in the preamble of the 2016 elections and especially during the political impasse it is quite remarkable that there was no outbreak of violence. Therefore, the next section will analyze how civil society might have played a role in the transition.

4.4.5 Civil Society mobilization during Gambia's transition

As previously discussed, civil society organizations took the opportunity during the (short) two-week election campaign to embark on voter education. But also before the electoral campaign many messages were spread in wide WhatsApp networks about current affairs, especially aiming to encouraging youth to go vote. A Gambian rapper living in exile in Dakar played an important role in this. He was forced to live in exile after he published a critical song of the Jammeh government in 2015. This song went viral, mostly shared via mobile phones as it was blocked from the radio, encouraging youth that it was time for a change. Furthermore, he channeled news and information, which was blocked by the Gambian government, into the Gambia through his extensive social media network. This rapper had gained trust and credibility among the Gambian youth, unlike many journalists and politicians. Youth trusted him because this rapper, generally known for his songs about social, cultural and economic issues impacting the youth used to organize Open Mic events throughout the Gambia giving disadvantaged youth the opportunity to display rap talents

which created a strong sense of community and solidarity (Personal communication 7-6-2017). Secondly, a bulk SMS was sent by a civil society organization to 250.000 GAMCELL subscribers (one of the local phone companies) to encourage people to go vote and vote in peace (Personal communication 5-7-2017). Others pointed out that diaspora played a critical role threatening friends in family that they would stop sending bags of rice and other monetary support if they would vote for Jammeh (Personal communication 19-6-2017). But also various organizations explained that they were ‘educating the grassroots’, during their normal community outreach in the months prior to the elections, telling people to ‘vote responsibly’ (Personal Communication 19-6-2017; 5-6-2017). However, these respondents also explained how they experienced threats by the Jammeh government. Various staff of particularly NGO’s have been arrested by the NIA, some were even detained, followed to their houses, or the NIA was constantly watching the NGO premises. It thus remains questionable how active and how great the impact of this ‘educating the grassroots’ was.

From the moment Jammeh reversed his position, one can observe a unification of the Gambian population, guided by a civic movement and other civil society initiatives. Jammeh’s announcement only one week after the euphoric moment of his defeat, created momentum for Gambians. The Gambia Bar Association was the first to publicly make a statement, condemning Jammeh’s decision to stay in power and calling his action an act of treason, which is the highest possible crime. When lawyers openly came out denouncing the actions of Yahya Jammeh this gave impetus for all other parties to come out with a statement too. Statements were released across civil society from the student union, to the federation of market women and by all different NGO’s. (Fieldnotes). Moreover, a civic movement spread through the Gambia declaring that ‘Gambia Has Decided’. This movement was initiated by a group of well-educated Gambians who came together right after Jammeh reversed his decision. The leader of this movement a Gambian Lawyer, explained how the increasing security apparatus on the Gambian streets served as a warning sign that Jammeh was not going to let go easily. The initial campaign started with the team of Gambia Has Decided (GHD), consisting of about 20 people, changing their profile pictures on Facebook to the logo of #GambiaHasDecided. As a lot of communication went through social media this hashtag soon went viral and numerous Gambians likewise changed their profile pictures, creating

solidarity among the Gambian population as this single logo became a symbol of hope. Furthermore, this logo was picked up and edited to a better version and in this sense it became a collective effort of Gambians. The chair of the movement explains that they deliberately chose not to come out with their identities because they wanted to focus on the power of the hashtag rather than the people behind it. In that same week, the team started to print out t-shirts with the same logo, the costs payed out of their own pockets, and they started to distribute these t-shirts on the streets, trying to raise the level of consciousness of the Gambian people that they had made a choice and that this choice should be respected. The t-shirts were a success and GHD started to collaborate with an organized youth network who helped in the distribution of the t-shirts. At the same time, they also started to put up billboards throughout the coastal area, with the biggest one in Senegambia stating: 'Gambia Has Decided for Democracy' in front of Kairaba Hotel where negotiations between the opposition and the Jammeh were still taking place. When the government started to take these billboards down, most of them placed on strategic points in the Gambia, this was filmed and posted on social media giving the movement even more attention. After the distribution of another 2000 t-shirts during a concert in the stadium and an official letter to Yahya Jammeh signed by the chair of GHD he was forced to leave the country overnight confronted with an arrest warrant and the NIA guarding his house. However, this did not stop the movement, t-shirts were still sent to the Gambia and distributed by the network of local youth, and while billboards were taken down youth now went out on the streets spray painting the message on walls, trees and the streets. In the meantime, the chair sought international media attention for the situation in the Gambia while in Dakar (Personal Conversations, 8-6-2017). While GHD was the biggest and most public movement during the impasse, they were not the only civil society taking action. Besides all the various statements coming out, the Gambia Bar Association lobbied with the Nigerian Bar and the Pan African Lawyer Union convincing the Nigerian government not to let their lawyers come to the Gambia to defend Jammeh and his statement (Personal Conversations, 4-7-2017). The High Court of the Gambia only sits in May and November and its jurist are traditionally non-Gambians coming from other English-speaking countries providing their legal expertise, since the country is so small in size (Kora and Darboe 2017, 154). Furthermore, various peace-talks with government officials and with the Gambian population were organized by different organizations as well as a photo-action demanding for a peaceful transition of power

(Personal Conversation 6-6-2017; 5-7-2017;12-6-2017). The youth council organized a national youth convergence mobilizing 150 youth where a youth agenda was created. While activists in exile spread information about current events in the Gambia via social media and WhatsApp groups (Personal Communication 7-6-2017). Furthermore, the youth council was able to stop different protests of youth who wanted to mobilize and protest inter alia when Darboe got arrested, when Jammeh rejected the results, and when Jammeh declared the state of emergency on the 17th of January. The youth council being well aware that this would play directly into Jammeh's hands was able to stop the youth from protesting. They explain that they were able to do so because there is a general trust in the leadership and because the youth council works with a consolidated structural set up providing easy communication chains between the grassroots to the leadership (Personal Conversation 12-7-2017).

4.4.6 Top down or Bottom up?

Was the 2016 transition in the Gambia top down or bottom up? When trying to connect the empirical observations to theory the Gambia most closely resembles an elite-led transition. According to theory an elite-led transition can be in the form of a coup, due to international pressure, due to intra-elite competition, due to cumulative changes forcing a semi competitive leader towards more openness and democratization or finally when an incumbent considers himself to have enough power to compete in multiparty elections (Idem, 348). The Gambia 2016 transition best resembles the latter option. The change in the electoral laws by which the ballots are now counted on the spot allowed observers and party representatives to monitor the process and made it more difficult to manipulate these votes (Kora and Darboe 2017, 153). The reason why Jammeh decided to pursue these electoral reforms remain unclear. But as pointed out by some, Jammeh genuinely believed that the Gambian people loved him, so this change would not lead to his defeat. At the same time, the electoral reforms could be regarded as a necessary but not sufficient condition for the presidential change. A second important factor for the 2016 elections was the unification of all opposition parties leading to the formation of Coalition 2016. However, in the end, it was the Gambian electorate who came to the polls and voted against Yahya Jammeh. Furthermore, this chapter has shown that various structural factors and frustrations slowly decreased Jammeh's support, and that both physical and online campaigning and educating encouraged Gambians to

vote against Jammeh on the first of December 2016. Thus although there were some significant elite changes this election, these could neither be delineated as sufficient causes for Gambia's regime change. More remarkably is that there was no outbreak of violence during the political impasse and how this was coordinated by inter alia the National Youth Council, Gambia has Decided and other civil society groups. Hereby, the Gambian transition shows that the distinction between elite led or bottom up is not as black and white as theory presumes. And while the categories top down versus elite led provide easy tools in terms of measurement and classification, an effective transition might need the collaboration of both forces.

In the process of democratic consolidation scholars concur on the important role that civil society can play as democracy needs to be built within society itself, hence the next chapter will assess the various challenges and manifestations of civil society in the Gambia during the first months after the transition.

Chapter 5: Civil Society and Democratic Consolidation

5.1 Introduction

While scholars concur that if democracy is to consolidate, democracy needs to be built within society itself, the process as well as the right way to measure it remain contested. This chapter aims to analyze the different perspectives, discourses and manifestations of Gambian civil society. It will analyze how civil society positions itself under the new dispensation and by which manifestations it contributes to democratic consolidation as well as what its main challenges are. As a vibrant civil society is only one aspect of a consolidated democracy, and the process is only to be analyzed in conjunction with the manifestations of the new regime, the chapter will start by shortly sketching the first months of Adama Barrow to assess the development of Gambia's new political system. Subsequently, it will make an assessment of Gambia's civil society and what the internal discourses of its imagined roles are. Likewise, it will analyze the manifestations of these imagined roles by evaluating how CS responds and/or collaborates with the Barrow administration. Then the chapter will evolve by analyzing the various manifestations of democracy promotion by civil society as well as the challenges that it faces. Finally, it will assess the influence of international donors and the ambiguous position of NGOs.

5.2 Institutional reforms under Adama Barrow

Theory has identified various parameters of a consolidated democracy. These include a vibrant civil society, robust political competition, widespread acceptance of democratic norms and practices, the effective enforcement of the rule of law, a relatively autonomous political society and finally a non-monist economy (Svolik 2014, 715; Beetham, 1994, 160). While the Barrow administration was greatly disadvantaged by the political impasse, and considerably delayed in the preparations of its political term, Adama Barrow eventually appointed his cabinet on the first of February, integrating the various representatives of Coalition 2016 and he was quick to dismiss all Jammeh's regional officers (Perfect, 2017, 329). As mentioned before, Adama Barrow inter alia pledged for constitutional reform, the recovery of civil society, free media, economic recovery, an end to corruption and an independent judiciary (Perfect 2017, 326). Already in the first months of

his presidency, Barrow appointed six Supreme Court judges as well as a new chief of justice. Hassan Jallow, the new chief of justice served as an Attorney General under Jawara after which he worked as prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and his appointment as chief of justice showed great prospects for improvements of Gambia's judicial system (Idem, 330). Furthermore, Barrow announced that he would rejoin the ICC, which Jammeh left in October 2016 based on the accusation that it ignored war crimes by the West (Idem, 330). In order to ease tensions between Christians and Muslims, Barrow reversed the declaration of the Islamic state, as well as he aimed to improve the human rights situation by releasing all political prisoners (Bekele 2017). In terms of foreign policy, Barrow is expected to seek renewed relations with the EU, and especially Britain in order to rejoin the Commonwealth, which Jammeh abruptly left in October 2013. In addition, the poor relations with neighboring country Senegal are expected to improve, Senegalese President Macky Sall happily welcomed Barrow's victory and was present as a guest of honor during Barrow's inauguration (Perfect 2017, 331-332). Furthermore, Yahya Jammeh had moved all organs of the government apparatus under the Office of the President, these were all reversed to their original ministries in the first months after the transition (Field notes). Finally, on the 6th of April 2017 Gambians went to the polls again for the elections of the National Assembly. These elections were won by the UDP with 31 out of 53 seats, followed by five seats for APRC, GDC and NRP, four seats for PDOIS, two for PPP and one independent (EU 2017). With the exception of a few incidents, election day was peaceful and calm and the process was regarded as free and fair by both international and domestic observers (EU 2017).

The most clearly distinguishable steps taken towards democratic consolidation are regarding the rule of law. Furthermore, Barrow seems predominantly occupied with correcting wrongs from Jammeh's past, in order to start establishing more democratic norms in the country. Besides, most Gambians point out that the main difference since the change of regime is that they are now 'free to speak their minds' (Field notes), which is an important enabling condition for a vibrant civil society, and robust political competition. Overall, Gambia's new regime is still very fragile, and it remains to be seen to what extent the government apparatus as an institution will change to become more democratic.

5.3 Civil Society in the Gambia

For civil society the newly gained freedom of expression provides a new space to work in. While theory suggests that we should regard civil society as an ecosystem, in which different elements of bottom up activity link civic engagement and advocacy in order to enhance social change, the Gambian imagination of civil society closely resembles Kaldor's 'neoliberal version' as a third sector which both restrains state power but likewise provides a substitute for state activities (2003, 9). This 'neoliberal version' is derived from the classical works of Tocqueville, which has become rather influential due to his vast impact on democratization theory (LeVan, 2011, 136). Overall, my respondents concurred that civil society consists of professional organizations. The great majority pointed at the umbrella organization of NGO's which should take the lead in moving Gambian civil society forward. Furthermore, hardly any other organizations or associations were really considered as civil society besides NGOs, the Bar Association and the Gambia Press Union (Field notes).

5.3.1 Imagined roles: Watchdog

Besides this quite narrow conceptualization of civil society, members of civil society in the Gambia shared various imaginations about the role of civil society in democratization. Firstly, the leading discourse among CS in the Gambia is that they should hold their government accountable. Various respondents explain that this watchdog role is important to make sure that history does not repeat itself. Emphasizing that Jammeh became the 'monster' that he was because civil society did not speak up during the first years of Jammeh's rule, until it was too late (Field notes). How exactly this watchdog role will be performed is a more dubious question. One union predominantly dealing with legal work points out that it will monitor government activity to be in accordance with the law (Personal communication 4-7-2017). A youth network on the other hand explains its watchdog role as '*... safeguarding the work that the government is doing*' (Personal communication 12-6-2017). Thereby not monitoring the government but rather supporting and safeguarding its work. Some state that until now, performing this watchdog role remains difficult because the new government does not have a blueprint yet, while others point out that while they as civil society want to occupy the space, they do not have a roadmap either.

The practical manifestations of this watchdog however fall short of the imagined role, as civil society failed to respond to some of the mistakes made by the Barrow administration. The appointment of the vice president in the Gambia serves as the prime example to this regard. Barrow appointed Fatoumata Jallow Tambajang as his vice president because of the important role she played in the transition being one of the brains behind the formation of the coalition. However, this appointment was unconstitutional as she exceeded the age limit as stated in the Gambian constitution. As a response, the Gambian government wanted to change the age limit in the Gambian constitution. This caused a lot of frustration by civil society members, firstly because their new president did something unconstitutional, and secondly because there were much more pressing issues to worry about than the age limit of the vice president (Field notes). Similarly, the director of a pan-African human rights organization pointed out that the change of name of the NIA into the SIS by the Barrow administration was not yet legal because by law this needs to be done by the national assembly (Personal Communication 5-7-2018). While these matters were vividly discussed on Facebook and other social media, and openly criticized in the newspapers, indicating a major change as opposed to the past, those organizations that consider themselves as key players in Gambian civil society, who pointed out that they would monitor government activity to hold it accountable only criticized the matter amongst themselves but did not evolve into further action. This showed a friction between the imagined role as a watchdog and its practical manifestations.

5.3.2 Imagined roles: Collaboration

A second imagination among Gambian civil society organizations of their role is that they should increase collaboration and form a unifying force to strive for coordinated action. This imagination manifests itself by the various parties that had started to seek new partnerships since the transition. Firstly, the three biggest international NGO's have come together and just finalized their MOU², in order to lobby for bigger donor support together. The aim of the platform is to collaborate in supporting communities and educate people about their civic rights (Personal communication 20-6-2017). Secondly, a union of lawyers is seeking collaboration with well-established civil society actors such as trade unions, well-established media houses and some NGO's, but while the idea is

² Memorandum of Understanding

there, the context remains unclear (Personal communication 4-7-2017). Thirdly, the executive director of one of the rural NGOs in Gambia's interior explained how he was involved in the formalization of a forum with various civil society members that should serve to negotiate with the government and serve as a watchdog. Likewise, GHD was planning to set up a forum to address current issues and hold the government accountable. Finally, one of the main media houses was busy setting up a commission in order to safeguard the newly obtained freedom of expression.

So far however, these forums are at a 'planning stage', civil society members talk about playing a 'watchdog role' and are willing to seek new partnerships but are not sure what these partnerships will lead to. The executive director of a pan African human rights organization explains "...seeking partners but how, what, what do we need the partnership for, these are conversations we need to have. We have not had them yet" (Personal communication 5-7-2017). Gambian civil society seems to be willing to utilize the new space to reach out to other parties and form partnerships, at the same time however these initiatives are scattered and incomplete. Showing on the one hand a commitment to live up to these expected imaginations, but at the same time the process seems to cease when it comes to the practical realization of this role as most of these organizations are likewise concerned with continuing their day to day business.

5.3.3 Imagined Roles: Partners to Government

The third imagination, especially among NGO's is that they should be 'partners to government', and complement government in the provision of developmental services. This imagination can be linked to Lewis' (2013) argument regarding NGOs in authoritarian regimes, observing that these organizations survive because their work partly overlaps with the state (328). Various directors of NGO's expressed their relation or preferred relation with the state (Field notes). This discourse of NGOs being partners to government is long present in the Gambia and is shown by statements as "... as an organization we complement government's efforts" (Personal communication 25-4-2017) or "...we have to renew this partnership so that we can work with the government, the new government" (Personal communication 26-4-2017). However, not only NGO's themselves had this discourse, the NGO Affairs Agency working under the ministry of lands and regional governance gave exactly the same answer: "... you know government alone cannot do it, they need partners and NGO are one of the partners, they complement government in its aim to nation building."

(Personal communication 28-6-2017). This widely shared idea thus seemed to be deeply embedded in the Gambian system. Furthermore, various meetings were taking place between the different ministries and inter alia the NGO umbrella body to seek new partnerships. In addition, during a training given by one of the international NGO's attended by various members of civil society and local government a vivid discussion erupted as these trainers tried to change the discourse of Gambians thanking the government for building a school or a hospital. Many of the participants however felt that as the government was facing many challenges one should be thankful of the work that they are doing. These kind of statements and discourses of an imagined role of civil society as partners to government thereby being partly embedded in the regime, conflict with the first imagination of being a watchdog. The sought partnership creates a relation of dependency and thereby puts the ability of NGO's to actually serve as a critical watchdog holding government accountable into question. Furthermore, considering the fact that many of these organizations were likewise embedded in the Jammeh regime it should be at least questioned whether these organizations will change their behavior from surviving in authoritarianism to participating in democracy.

5.4 Nurturing Democracy

As frequently mentioned, a strong and vibrant civil society is perceived to be a crucial counterweight for a functioning democracy, hence the development and strengthening of a vibrant civil society is perceived to be rather important for democratic consolidation. Chapter 2 shows that the democratic potential of civil society can be found in nurturing democratic norms, the creation of social capital through voluntary associations or through direct programs of democracy promotion or voter education (Cheeseman 2015,4; Mercer 2002,8; Boulding & Gibson 2009, Warren 2011, 382-383). The next section will assess by which manifestations Gambian civil society has contributed to democratic consolidation. This section will analyze civil society and its manifestations in the broadest sense of the definition, hence it will go beyond the Gambian imagination of CS.

The main change that came with the defeat of Yahya Jammeh, and which is widely felt by all Gambians is that they are now 'free to speak their mind' (Field notes). This change is greatly noticed as people have become more vocal and feel safe to comment or give their opinion,

especially on social media, where Gambians now feel free to openly comment on discussions (Field notes). An important manifestation of civil society to this regard is to preserve this newly gained freedom, and especially the media agencies are taking action to safeguard this freedom of expression. One of the main media agencies is active in trying to push the government to reform the media laws, arguing that ... *until you have all those conditions I cannot say that there is freedom of expression in the Gambia*’ (Personal communication 10-7-2017). One of the steps towards this goal is the formation of a freedom of expression committee involving civil society but also national assembly and government representation. The aim of this committee is to sensitize the different stakeholders and together develop a strategy monitored by the initiating organization (Personal communication 10-7-2017). At the same time, the secretary general of this organization believes that the freedom of expression that Gambians know now is quite irreversible, as it is something that all Gambians have claimed together (ibid).

At the same time however, it is observed that the newly gained freedom in the Gambia is abused as Gambians are unaware about the rules of democracy. One of the local peace building organizations noted how they have seen crime rates go up since the transition, and how some people are afraid to go out at night. Likewise, they mentioned increased robberies which were said to be in ‘the name of democracy’ (Personal communication 6-6-2017). As some perceive the new gained freedom like they can do whatever they like. To this regard various members of civil society stood up and pointed out that a lot of ‘sensitization’ was needed regarding what a democracy entails, and were busy writing project proposals in order to embark on such sensitization programs.

Similarly, Gambian civil society aims to nurture democratic norms through various programs of capacity building directed at local counselors as well as sensitizing the public that they could hold the government to account since they use their tax money. One of the longest vested international NGOs stresses the importance of civic rights for the Gambia to build a stable democracy. This is one of the main reasons why they reach out as a collaborative with two other international NGOs to generate funding for civic education as the people of the Gambia need to be aware of the social contract they have with the government (Personal communication 20-6-2017). Finally, various organizations use a system of voting as a means to make decisions, and in this way contribute to the nurturing of democratic norms.

Besides the manifestations of various organizations, religious institutions play an important role in terms of nurturing democratic norms and creating social capital. With a population that is highly religious, Gambians visit their mosque or church on a weekly basis, creating bonds of trust and solidarity thereby fostering social capital. What stands out, is that religious leaders do not perceive themselves as civil society. One of the Imams talked about civil society as a separate entity, *“they were able to at least survive the oppression”* (Personal communication 6-7-2017). However, the same imam pointed out how he addressed current issues during his Friday prayers, explaining how Gambians should be patient with the new regime as the Barrow administration inherited a highly indebted government without any infrastructure, hence changes will not be shown overnight but change will come gradually (ibid). Especially since newspaper outreach remains limited as only half of the Gambian population are literate, Imams play an important role in terms of raising civic awareness and educating the masses thereby nurturing democratic norms. It could even be argued, that their manifestations in terms of raising civic awareness have a bigger impact in society at large, as religious leaders are deeply rooted in Gambian society and Gambians trust these religious leaders, unlike many of the media agencies.

5.5 Challenges of Civil Society

While the first months after the transition were characterized by euphoria celebrating that Jammeh had gone, when the Barrow administration started to reach six months in office Gambians began to question where they were heading. This resulted in a lot of insecurity and the question of how civil society should position itself. CS found itself in limbo between great expectations from the population, and a lot of ambiguity from the government, as well as between willing to be a watchdog monitoring government activity and a partner to government in the development of the country. Furthermore, the ambitious role ascribed to civil society nurturing democratic norms and encouraging citizen participation suddenly seemed very abstract and far away. Raising questions of where to start and how to achieve such ambitions in practical terms. The outcomes are scattered and lose initiatives as described above. Furthermore, while CS benefitted from the newly gained freedom of speech, this likewise presented a challenge, as a lot of uncontrolled, sometimes fake news was widely communicated especially on social media. As many of the official media houses

were weakened by the Jammeh regime and had to gain new trust by the population controlling this information proved highly challenging.

Another great challenge in the Gambia is how to move the highly indebted country forward. For civil society the insecurity regarding the way forward caused problems in terms of communication both towards the grassroots and among themselves, thereby failing to develop a coherent vision. Yahya Jammeh had left the country with a debt of more than \$1 billion due to 22 years of economic mismanagement and private expenses (Maclean and Jammeh 2017). The issue of economic despair, which was also delineated as one of the structural factors leading up to the transition, is a top priority for the Gambian government. This issue was likewise pointed out by various civil society organizations stating that “... *If people don't have access to food, if people don't feel secure what is democracy then?*” (Personal communication 8-6-2017). Likewise, the staff of one of the only rural NGOs physically present in Central River Region, the poorest region in the Gambia, stated “... *If the new regime cannot accommodate any livelihood change for the people in CRR they will not feel the change*” (Personal communication 26-4-2017). However, while a bilateral debt can be reduced by the international community, Gambia's main debt is caused by domestic borrowing by the former regime, a debt that has to be solved domestically, to prevent inflation (Fieldnotes). Hence, it will take years for the government to tackle this issue. Furthermore, widespread poverty in the Gambia and especially in the rural interior presents another challenge to civil society. Various organizations have pointed out how the lack of education and high levels of illiteracy present an obstacle in terms of civic education. To this regard a Gambian lawyer active in a Gambian activist network points out: “... *We need to create economic rights they are more important than political rights, because those are the ones that directly impact the citizen.*” Explaining that it will take a long time to create an understanding of political and economic rights and that they reinforce each other, stating that” *you and I understand that, but try to explain this to somebody who does not know where his next meal is coming from. That is a different story.*” (Personal communication 8-6-2017). At the same time, lack of funding was pointed out by almost all organizations I visited. In some cases, the lack of funding resulted in cut-backs in the projects itself, for example the head of the CSO coalition for election observation explains how they could only monitor election day in previous years due to the lack of funding. Likewise, the bulk SMS sent by a civil society organization to 250.000 GAMCELL subscribers encouraging Gambians to

go vote and vote in peace could not be sent to all 350.000 GAMCELL subscribers due to a lack of funding (Personal communication 5-7-2017). Other organizations struggled to implement any projects at all, and were desperately writing project proposal after project proposal. Which leads to the impact of donors on civil society.

5.6 Civil Society Strengthening?

As argued in chapter 2, especially when it comes to international initiatives to strengthen civil society abroad, NGOs have become widely perceived to perform the imaginations of democracy promotion (Carothers, 1999, 213). However, NGOs and their position in civil society have been criticized in various ways. The next section will discuss some of these critiques and how they apply to NGOs in the Gambia. The main overarching critique regarding NGOs as civil society organizations is that they are disconnected from the grassroots (Bebbington et al. 2008, 15). This disconnection is inter alia caused by the strong influence of the neoliberal agenda, as well as the power of donor agencies shifting accountability upward from the grassroots to the donors. Especially the latter can be observed in various ways in the Gambia. As mentioned above, many organizations and especially the smaller national NGOs greatly struggle with getting funds. The staff of a rural NGO in the poorest region in the Gambia explained that while their vision is to eradicate poverty, their approach is project based, but when asking further questions about these projects or their planned projects it all depended on the funding they could get (Personal communication 26-4-2017). Likewise, the founding member of the largest domestic NGO, and one of the only national organizations working with a strategy plan explains how funding has become a major issue for many of the national organizations. He explains how NGOs are set up with a certain purpose, but completely lose this purpose because at some point all that matters is to get some resources so ‘you can put some money in your pocket’ (Personal communication 17-05-2017). As a result, the majority of these organizations work according to the funding they can get. Vividly showing the impact that donors have on the course of action of these organizations. Moreover, a big difference in terms of power is to be observed between the large, mostly international, organizations and local organizations. The two main international NGOs collaborate with various community based organizations who help in the implementation of projects. This collaboration coincides with various trainings on the course of action, greatly reflecting the

neoliberal agenda as pointed out by Bebbington et al. promoting the NGO terminology about participation, human rights, empowerment and democratic rights (2008, 15). Thereby directing action based on international expectations rather than local needs.

The impact of donors on the course of action of these organizations is problematic as international donors and national civil society organizations do not necessarily share similar ideas about the needs of communities or society at large. To this regard, the vision of the EU, as one of the largest donors in the Gambia, regarding civil society and the organizations it collaborates with is of interest. While the EU has shifted most of its funding back to the government since the change of regime, as it sees new opportunities to collaborate with the Barrow administration, it still collaborates with some civil society organizations. From the EU perspective civil society mostly consists of the larger international NGOs like Action Aid, Article 19, Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) and the Gambia Press Union. These are organizations that are rather institutionalized, because as the EU argues, it is the money of the European tax payer that they are spending and have to account for, hence the process involves a lot of bureaucracy and the organizations need a strong administration, which is often the burden of national CSOs. Furthermore, the focus of the EU is not only on the larger institutionalized organizations but also on organizations that mostly focus on human rights (Personal communication 29-6-2017). At the same time, a Gambian policy consultant and blogger points out that “... *Today Gambia does not have human rights problem compared to six or nine months ago [...] Gambians problem today is poverty, unemployment, creation of economic opportunities, and civic education these are the top priorities in the Gambia if you ask me*”. (Personal communication 16-6-2017). An interesting discrepancy between an EU perspective and a national perspective in terms of focus. At the same time, because the international community has this focus on human rights, it could be observed how various organizations are writing project proposals involving a human rights aspect wherever possible, planning a human rights training for the police, for local governors or civil society members (Fieldnotes). This shows a discourse that as long as human rights are involved in some way, chances of getting funding would increase, while considering the aforementioned discussion in socio economic rights, this is not necessarily the main priority as perceived by many Gambians. Thus, one can clearly observe how the international community has a vast impact on Gambian civil

society with a strong focus on human rights, and many local organizations, desperately in need of funding, are willing to implement any project they get funds for.

Besides the fact that the international community pushes Gambian NGOs towards human rights and the implementation thereof, donors have come to influence NGO's in another way by creating a certain 'NGO- culture' over the years. One of the manifestations of this 'NGO- culture' is that participants to trainings or meetings given by an NGO or other organization expect to get allowances to cover their costs of travel. On average these costs contained 300 dalasi per person (approx. €6,-) while transport in the Greater Banjul area where the great majority of the organizations and employees of these organizations are situated costs D100 (€2,-) maximum taking public transport. Moreover, when the event covers lunch, you are expected to provide lunch for your guests, which is in itself logical, but during the month of Ramadan this meant that organizing NGO's pay extra allowances instead of providing lunch for the participants. Paying allowances in itself is not the main issue however, apart from the fact that the money could have been spent on the implementation of the projects itself too. The main problem arises due to the fact that these allowances are integrated in the NGO culture to such an extent, that people simply do not show up, or leave early when they do not get this money. This resulted in an absurd situation where an organization is raising funds to bring members of civil society (mainly consisting of NGOs) together to have a discussion on how to engage with the new government and to come up with a plan to develop a roadmap for civil society engagement (Personal communication 4-7-2017). The very fact that people who call themselves civil society workers, are only willing to come together when payed allowances to have a discussion about the way forward, is worrisome at least. Furthermore, these developments fit the critiques of NGOs as civil society members as discussed in chapter 2. The very fact that the Gambia is so deeply embedded in an NGO culture of paying allowances greatly affects the ability of NGO's as civil society to be transformative. Finally, Mercer argued how NGOs pluralize particular spaces but neglect others (2002, 13). This is clearly shown in the Gambia where the great majority of NGO's are located in the urban coastal area, underlining the rural urban divide rather than challenging it.

Thus, donors have a vast impact on NGO's in the Gambia. Conforming to the literature, one can observe how NGO's in the Gambia are greatly dependent on funding, and are therefore willing to align their work with the neoliberal discourse favored by donors, rather than designing

projects based on local needs. Furthermore, the adopted NGO-culture greatly limits NGOs in their manifestations as civil society as organizing meetings has come to costs allowances, and makes them even more dependent on outside funding. At the same time, international donors prefer to collaborate with large institutionalized mostly internationally based organizations, with a preference to fund projects of which the results are clearly measurable. In this sense, it should be questioned whether the impact of international donors is strengthening civil society in its aim to be transformative, or whether it only strengthens particular institutions which may change conditions for some beneficiaries by providing services but do not contribute to the transformation of society as such. Moreover, it remains to be questioned to what extend the information dissolved during these human rights trainings will actually be absorbed within society.

5.7 Civil Society and Democratic Consolidation in the Gambia

Gambian civil society workers do realize that their efforts towards democratic consolidation remain limited. But what stands out when analyzing the different perspectives on civil society, is that many civil society actors do argue that they have played a big role in the coming about of the transition, and that if it was not for civil society the transition would not have happened at all, emphasizing how they were active in voter education and ‘sensitizing’ people to go out and vote. However, when asking these same civil society members how they see civil society now (3 months later) they argue that civil society is weak, disorganized, and that civil society should be more pro-active. The director of a West African organization for conflict prevention explains that she experiences that expectations are high nowadays as an NGO worker in the Gambia, from the government but also from civil society itself. In this sense she explains that all process is made in baby steps since civil society was “put in a box” under Yahya Jammeh (Personal communication 29-6-2017). Likewise, a Political and Press officer of the EU delegation in the Gambia explains that civil society *should* be as engaged as possible, but because there was no space for civil society under the Jammeh government this means that they will have to work hard to make their voices heard, and “...*elbow their way back in*” (personal communication 29-6-2017). Another interviewee who has worked in civil society for almost 20 years and is now chair of the board of the NGO umbrella organization is more lenient but mainly worries about the organization and collaboration of civil society stating: “*Right now civil society is a bit disjointed everybody is doing their own thing.*” (Personal

communication 4-7-2017). Others are more radical in their opinion about Gambian civil society like an Imam in KFC area who stated: *“there is nothing like civil society as far as I am concerned right now, because during the past regime he [Jammeh] ended all their activities”* (personal communication 6-7-2017). Likewise, a Gambian policy consultant is rather critical about Gambian civil society stating that *‘One we don’t have a strong civil society, two we don’t have the right people in civil society and three the people in civil society are not choosing the battles that need to be fought for the public and the public relation.’* (Personal Communication 16-6-2017). Furthermore, he argues that things are not organized neither orchestrated in civil society resulting in when people are doing good things the public does not get to know about it because coordination is ineffective and organization is poor (ibid).

Why do many civil society members assume to have played an important role in the coming about of the transition while the majority is complaining about civil society and its efforts three months later? A lecturer of the University of the Gambia argues that it has to do with the Gambian mentality, and that because the fear is gone and people feel much more comfortable with what is there they become less active (Personal communication 24-6-2017). Another interviewee, head of GHD, observes that where there was a lot of energy from Gambians and so likewise from civil society members to push Jammeh out, this same energy is lacking to build a democracy. Furthermore, he explains how Gambians were so focused on defeating Jammeh and removing him from office, that nobody thought about what to do next, how to move forward after Jammeh and how to build a democracy in “the new Gambia” (Personal communication 8-6-2017). The protests in April followed by the formation of the coalition along with civil space that had become increasingly narrow created momentum for civil society. Especially during the impasse various initiatives erupted and parties came out with statements condemning the acts of Yahya Jammeh. However, as peace and stability returned when Jammeh left the country and Barrow took office, this momentum got lost.

The apparent opposition between the perceived influential role of civil society during the transition and its feeble position under the new dispensation also reflects the contrast between the ascribed role of civil society in democratic transition versus democratic consolidation. A clear role is ascribed to civil society during the period of transition, with a clear short-term end goal to defeat

the incumbent leader. As theory has shown, the process of consolidation on the other hand is much lengthier and undefined, hence this process comes with a lot of insecurity.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

This thesis has assessed the research question *What was the role of civil society in Gambia's political transition in December 2016 and how does it contribute to the first stages of democratic consolidation?* In order to answer this question three months of qualitative field research in the Gambia have been conducted. The approach to answering this research question was twofold: first it analyzed the role of civil society in Gambia's transition deductively, guided by expectations from the democratization literature; second, it approached civil society inductively, focused on the ability of civil society to nurture democratic norms. The analysis of Gambia's transition guided by democratization theory shows that while the change in electoral laws and the formation of coalition 2016 are necessary conditions for Gambia's transition, they are not sufficient to explain the defeat of Yahya Jammeh. In the end, the Gambian people voted against Jammeh despite the fear and misconceptions regarding the voting process. Especially the mobilization of youth through social media networks may be designated as an important factor causing the defeat of Yahya Jammeh. Furthermore, the unification of Gambians during the political impasse encapsulated by a hashtag as well as the statements throughout civil society condemning Jammeh's decision showed that Gambians stood by their decision thereby justifying the intervention of national and international elites. Moreover, through effective networks of communication various protests were withheld preventing the outbreak of violence between protesters and the regime. Thus, while civil society did not play a key role as a mobilizer of social protest pushing for change from below, it reacted to the elite led changes encouraging Gambians to vote for change, maneuvering through and utilizing the little space that was available in the preamble of the 2016 transition. Likewise, the accumulation of events, along with the space that had become increasingly narrow for civil society created momentum during the impasse where one can observe a conglomeration of civil society initiatives demanding for a peaceful transition of power and to stand by the decision of the Gambian voters.

Secondly, this thesis has assessed the role of civil society during the first months of democratic consolidation. This part of the thesis approached civil society inductively guided by observations in the field. It was shown that while democratization theory ascribes an ambitious role to civil society in democratic consolidation, the practical reality of how this role is to be performed

is insecure and results in a variety of sometimes contradicting manifestations. These contradicting manifestations are due to the inconsistent imagined roles of Gambian civil society of both wanting to be a watchdog and partner to government. Furthermore, insecurity regarding the required course of action as well as being in limbo between ambiguity of the government and great expectations of the population resulted in a variety of scattered manifestations and loose initiatives of civil society. Moreover, it was shown that some of the more important manifestations in terms of civic education and creating social capital are performed by actors who do not necessarily perceive themselves as civil society, such as religious leaders. Besides these scattered manifestations, civil society faced various challenges in the first months after the transition. These challenges include the sudden spread of information including fake news on social media, but most importantly challenges revolve around the economic hardships that the Gambia is facing, due to years of economic mismanagement. Widespread poverty in the country especially in the rural interior makes the promotion of democratic norms precarious when the economic well-being of Gambians cannot be improved. Likewise, insecurity about the way forward complicates communication both to the grassroots and among civil society members themselves thereby failing to develop a coherent vision and course of action.

In addition, this thesis questions the ability of international donors to strengthen civil society in its aim to be transformative and contribute to democratic consolidation. Showing that due to a constant search for funding of organizations in the Gambia donors have a vast impact on the course of action, shown by the usage of the term human rights as a buzzword in many project proposals. At the same time, international donors prefer to collaborate with large institutionalized organizations, thereby strengthening particular institutions which may change conditions for some beneficiaries by providing services, but do not really contribute to change society as such, neither to nurture democratic norms or build social capital. Moreover, since these organizations are so focused on donors, they lose their connection with the grassroots, it is to be questioned to what extent their messages will be absorbed in society.

Thus this thesis has shown that while the role of civil society in democratic transition is quite clear, and the accumulation of events created momentum for civil society to come together and be heard, this momentum soon got lost in the much more undefined process of democratic consolidation. This insecurity combined with a constant search for funding resulted in scattered

manifestations of civil society unable to really contribute to societal transformation. Finally, this thesis has shown a contradiction between those who present themselves as civil society and are funded by the international community and those actors that actually contribute to nurturing democratic norms.

6.2 Discussion and Interpretation

This thesis embeds itself in the wider debate on civil society and democratic transitions. Chapter 2 has shown how the shift of focus within the democratization debate towards the question of what makes democratic rule stable coincided with a renewed interest in structural factors (Haggard and Kaufman 2016b, 127-128). However, although these structural factors are not dismissed all together, they prove to be conditional and it remains hard to connect these enduring structural factors to the often short run dynamics of transition (Idem 132). It has therefore been argued that if a change of regime is to occur these structural factors need to be translated into action which can either be elite-led or bottom up (Haggard and Kaufman 2016a, 13). The analysis of Gambia's transition has shown however that one should not focus on either/or relation, but that elites and civil society may reinforce each other and that an effective transition may need the best of both forces. That being said, the role of civil society in a transition is clear, it aims to achieve democratic reform by either pushing an incumbent leader out or pushing for increased openness and democratic norms. Likewise, in the Gambia the goal in the preamble of the 2016 elections was clear: to defeat Yahya Jammeh. With this clearly defined short term goal also come clear tasks and duties for civil society; voter education, monitoring the elections, enhance peace and stability, and educate the masses about Jammeh and his regime and the possibilities for change. Similarly, during the political impasse the message was clear: Gambia Has Decided, Jammeh's decision to amend the elections is unconstitutional and Adama Barrow should be inaugurated as the new president of the Gambia. The subsequent defeat of Yahya Jammeh coincides with euphoria and is a historic achievement for an African nation. However, after a few months of euphoria and increased international attention the question is how to evolve from here. As shown in chapter 2, within the process of regime change both the start of democratic consolidation, its enabling conditions as well as the right way to measure it remain disputed (Schedler 2001, 18; Beetham 1994, 160; Svobik 2014, 715). The only way to assess civil society's progress towards democratic consolidation is in terms of how it

evolves according to the parameters set by the substantive approach (Svolik 2014, 715). These parameters include a vibrant civil society, robust political competition, widespread acceptance of democratic norms and practices, the effective enforcement of the rule of law, a functioning state bureaucracy, a non-monist economy and finally a relatively autonomous political society (Svolik 2014, 715; Linz and Stepan 1996, 1-4). Moreover, civil society is ought to contribute to democratic consolidation by nurturing democratic norms, check the abuse of state power, prevent the relapse into authoritarian rule, build social capital and contribute to democratization through direct programs of democracy promotion (Cheeseman 2015,4; Mercer 2002,8; Boulding & Gibson 2009, Warren 2011, 382-383). Civil society organizations, associations and individuals know that something is expected. But where to start? The noble and ambitious roles ascribed to civil society suddenly seem very abstract and far away. Civil society should take a position, but where? Will it monitor government activity and play a watchdog role, or rather collaborate with government in terms of development? If it monitors government activity, how will it hold the government accountable without jeopardizing its position in society? Can civil society continue its day to day activity, or is it expected to change drastically just like its government? Such questions demonstrate that civil society is still searching how to position themselves and what their roles should be. Furthermore, the momentum that arises in the wake of a transition due to accumulative actions and reactions of the regime, opposition and civil society is often lacking in the process of democratic consolidation. Besides, structural factors come to play a role and while the lack of development and economic hardships can be a powerful factor behind a transition, refraining to address the lack of development by the new regime can greatly hinder democratic consolidation. Likewise, in the Gambia, if the Barrow administration cannot change the economic well-being of the population, especially in the rural areas where poverty is highest, the democratic system will soon be questioned. Finally, in the case of the Gambia the focus during the transition was to replace Yahya Jammeh, this focus did not coincide with a vision of what Jammeh should be replaced with. Identifying this goal split in achievable short term goals seems needed to draw a course of action both for the Gambian government and for civil society.

A second dimension that is discussed in this thesis is that in practice NGOs take up a central position as civil society players (Chandhoke 2010, 176). NGO's got this central position because they became perceived as central players by international donors, and the means through which the

international community could strengthen civil society abroad. At the same time, because the international community perceived NGO's as an alternative sphere one can observe a great expansion of NGOs in the third world especially during the 1990s and early 2000s (Cheeseman 2015,128). In the Gambia, this discourse that NGOs are the key players of civil society is still largely present. As observed in the Gambia, the large demand for funding and the relatively small supply gives donor agencies a vast impact on the projects executed by NGOs. In this sense, while the theorized role of civil society is to represent the grassroots and strive for social change, the urgent need for funding shifts accountability from the grassroots to these donor agencies. This proves problematic, most vividly shown in the Gambia with regards to the topic of human rights. The EU and other large donor agencies prioritize projects aimed at human rights and civic education, while many Gambians point out that, while they experienced human rights abuses in the past, the pressing issue in the Gambia right now is socio-economic. Likewise, the EU prefers to collaborate with large institutionalized organizations. However, the case of the Gambia shows that the most important manifestations during the transition; Gambia Has Decided and an information network for youth guided by a Gambian rapper, as well as the role of religious leaders in creating social capital and nurturing democratic norms after the transition are arguably more important in terms of creating social capital and nurturing democratic norms than the internationally funded projects by NGOs. In this sense the Gambian case conforms to the critical literature questioning whether donors will really contribute in changing society and nurture democratic norms, or whether they strengthen some institutions and mostly provide services to a certain group of beneficiaries (Banks et al. 2015; Mercer 2002).

The following generalizations can be withdrawn from this case study. Firstly, while the role of civil society during a transition is clear, its role within democratic consolidation remains rather undefined and is in need of further case study research. Furthermore, the fact that the Gambia had no agenda 'after Jammeh', made the first phase of consolidation even more insecure. Thus, in order to keep focus and possibly extend the momentum of the transition it is suggested for a movement, whether elite led or bottom up, to define goals beyond defeating the incumbent leader. Secondly, strengthening civil society by the international community is at odds with its stated intentions. The Gambia shows that the struggle for funding comes to decide the course of action rather than local needs. Furthermore, in hindsight, the strongest civil society manifestations are initiatives like

Gambia Has Decided and the youth network initiated by a Gambian rapper which unified people by a common goal. Hence, civil society in its ideal form in the Gambia erupts out of local needs and grows within society thereby building networks of trust and creating social capital. In addition, Imams in the Gambia play an important role in terms of raising civic awareness and educating the masses during their Friday prayers. Hence, it is important to consider this role of religious institutions especially in societies that are highly religious.

6.3 Strengths and weaknesses

This thesis has ambitiously aimed to combine two academic approaches in the analysis of Gambian civil society. It both deductively tried to assess the validity of the assumptions about CS in transition; and inductively explored the actual roles in the consolidation of democracy. As the democratization debate mostly treats civil society as an exogenous variable, the analysis of the civil society debate provides a more in depth perspective of what this unit of analysis actually entails. Furthermore, especially since the process of democratic consolidation remains rather abstract, the practical analysis of the civil society debate helps to delineate more concrete processes as to how civil society can contribute to democratic consolidation. In this sense these two debates reinforce each other and provide for a stronger theoretical background of this thesis. At the same time, because both debates are rather substantive and are variously linked to other societal processes and debates the chosen approach to combine these two approaches also diffuses the focus of this thesis and challenges to analyze Gambian civil society from a wide range of perspectives, and could thereby likewise be a weakness. Especially since this thesis has aimed to engage in the discussion of the conceptualization of civil society rather than deducting one working definition it proved challenging to delineate what sort of manifestations of civil society contribute in what way to the democratization debate. Especially since Gambians hold their own definition of civil society and what it is ought to do.

Secondly, this thesis might be culpable of a conceptual deceit that might lead to falsification in the future. As theorized in the literature on regime change, a transition is followed by a process of consolidation, and while it proves hard to delineate between the two processes this thesis has chosen to distinguish between transition and consolidation at the moment that Adama Barrow takes office in the Gambia. However, while the distinction is to be made to enhance analytical clarity,

chapter 2 also describes the fierce critiques regarding the linear process of democratization. That is to say, while the defeat of Yahya Jammeh by democratic means is promising for the prospects of democratic reform, there is no evidence that the 2016 transition will lead to a consolidated democracy. And while the Barrow administration showed commitment to democratic reform, the system is still very fragile and it remains to be seen whether the next presidential elections in 2021 will hold democratic standards. Furthermore, a topic that has not been addressed in this thesis but which is of vital importance for the Gambia to move forward is how it will deal with its past. During the time of research various meetings and discussions were taking place regarding the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission to address impunity of the atrocities committed during the Jammeh regime. The successful execution of a truth and reconciliation commission will enhance democratic consolidation, while failing to do so might greatly affect this process.

6.4 Future research

This thesis suggests several topics for further research. Firstly, as suggested above increased case study research is required regarding the process of democratic consolidation as well as how to measure it. Secondly, for this case study, it is of interest to conduct a similar analysis during the next presidential elections in order to make an assessment of the process made both by the regime and by civil society. Furthermore, while this thesis has combined two theoretical debates, it would be of interest to zoom in on the effects of international democracy promotion and civil society strengthening by researching the effects of the various programs implemented by (inter)national NGOs.

Bibliography

- Aberbach, J. D., & Rockman, B. A. (2002). 'Conducting and coding elite interviews'. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 35(4), 673-676
- Acemoglu D., Robinson J. A. (2006) *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Adejumobi, S. (2015) 'Democratic Renewal in Africa: Trends and Lessons Learned'. In *Democratic Renewal in Africa Trends and Discourses*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp. 1-20.
- African Research Bulletin (ARB) (2017) 'The Gambia: stunning presidential victory' *ARB: Political Social and Cultural Series*, 53(12) pp 21239-21242 Available at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-825X.2017.07392.x/full> [Accessed on 26-1-2018]
- Ahlquist, J. S., & Wibbels, E. (2012). 'Riding the Wave: World Trade and Factor-Based Models of Democratization.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(2), 447-464.
- Banks N. Hulme D. and Edwards M. (2015) *NGOs, States and Donors Revisited: Still Too Close for Comfort?* *Word Development* 66, 707-718.
- Bayer, M., Bethke, F. S., & Lambach, D. (2016). 'The democratic dividend of nonviolent resistance'. *Journal of Peace Research*, 53(6), 758-771.
- BBC (2011) 'Gambia's Yahya Jammeh wins fourth presidential term'. *BBC*. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-15897134> [Accessed on 13-11-2017]
- BBC (2017a) 'Gambia's President Jammeh refuses to leave office as deadline passes'. *BBC* Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-38672840> [Accessed on 22-02-2017]
- BBC (2017b). 'Gambia Elections: President Elect Adama Barrow's life story. *BBC*. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-38185428> [Accessed on 2-3-2017]
- Bebbington, A. J., Hickey, S., & Mitlin, D. C. (Eds.). (2008). *Can NGOs make a difference? the challenge of development alternatives*. London: Zed Books Ltd.
- Beetham, D. (1994). 'Conditions for democratic consolidation'. *Review of African political economy*, 21(60), 157-172.

- Bekele D. (2017) 'Talking Human Rights in the New Gambia' *Human Rights Watch* 25, May 2017 Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/25/talking-human-rights-new-gambia> [Accessed on: 14-2-2018]
- Bellin, E. (2012). 'Reconsidering the robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring'. *Comparative Politics*, 44(2), 127-149.
- Boix C, Stokes S. (2003). 'Endogenous Democratization'. *World Politics*. 55: 517-549.
- Boulding, C. E., & Gibson, C. C. (2009). 'Supporters or challengers? The effects of nongovernmental organizations on local politics in Bolivia'. *Comparative Political Studies*, 42(4), 479-500.
- Bratton M. and Van de Walle, N. (1994) 'Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa' *World Politics* 46(4): 453-489.
- Breuer, A., Landman, T., & Farquhar, D. (2015). 'Social media and protest mobilization: Evidence from the Tunisian revolution'. *Democratization*, 22(4), 764-792.
- Bryman A. (2016) *Social Research Methods*. Fifth edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Burke, J. 'The Gambia: troops deployed to streets as president rejects election defeat'. *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/10/the-gambia-troops-deployed-to-streets-as-president-rejects-election-defeat> [Accessed on 22-02-2017]
- Camara M. (2017) 'No Dumping at Bakoteh Dumpsite say Protesters' *The Point*. Available at: <http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/no-dumping-at-bakoteh-dumpsite-say-protesters> [Accessed on 27-2-2017]
- Chabal, P. (2013). *Africa: the politics of suffering and smiling*. Zed Books Ltd.
- Chandhoke N. (2007) 'Civil Society' *Development in Practice*. 17:4-5 : 607-614
- Chandhoke N. (2010) 'Civil Society' in *Deconstructing Development Discourse Buzzwords and Fuzzwords*. Warwickshire: Oxfam.
- Carothers, T. (1999) *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*. Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Carothers T. (2002) 'The end of the transition paradigm' *Journal of Democracy* 13 (1) 5-21.

- Caux, H. (2017) 'As Gambia's crisis passes, displaced return from Senegal'. *UNHCR*. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2017/1/588719bf4/gambia-crisis-passes-displaced-return-senegal.html> [Accessed on 13-11-2017]
- Ceesay, E. (2006). *The military and 'democratization' in the Gambia: 1994-2003*. Oxford: Trafford Publishing.
- Celestino M. R. and Gleditsch K. S. (2013) 'Fresh carnations or all thorn no rose? Nonviolent campaigns and transitions in autocracies'. *A journal of Peace Research*. 50(3). 385-400.
- Cheeseman, N. (2015) *Democracy in Africa Successes, Failures and the Struggle for Political Reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- Diamond, L. (2008) *The Spirit of Democracy The Struggle to Build Free Societies throughout the World*. New York: Holt Paperbacks.
- Diamond L., Fukuyama F., Horowitz D.L., & Plattner M. F. (2014) 'Reconsidering the Transition paradigm'. *Journal of Democracy*. 25(1) 86-100.
- Durac, V., & Cavatorta, F. (2009). 'Strengthening authoritarian rule through democracy promotion? Examining the paradox of the US and EU security strategies: the case of Bin Ali's Tunisia'. *British journal of Middle Eastern studies*, 36(1), 3-19.
- Ekeh, P. (1992) "The Constitution of Civil Society in African History and Politics" *Proceedings of the Symposium on Democratic Transition in Africa*. Ibadan Nigeria: CREDU. 187-212
- Encarnacion O. G. (2011) 'Assisting Civil Society and Promoting Democracy' In *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Available at: <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195398571.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195398571> [Accessed on 12 Oct 2017]
- European Union (2017) 'Final Report the Gambia National Assembly Elections 6 April 2017' *Final Report Election Observation Mission to The Gambia*.
- Fagan L. (2016) 'Elections in the Gambia: But what happens if Jammeh Loses?' *Africa Times*, 27 November. Available at: <http://africatimes.com/2016/11/27/elections-in-the-gambia-but-what-happens-if-jammeh-loses/> [Accessed on 26-1-2018]

- Fatton, R. (1995). 'Africa in the age of democratization: the civic limitations of civil society'. *African Studies Review*, 38(02), 67-99
- Ferguson, J. (2014) "Transnational Topographies of Power: Beyond "the state" and "civil society" in the study of African politics". *Occasional Paper* (18) 45-71.
- Finkel, S. E. (2003) 'Can Democracy be Taught?' *Journal of Democracy*. 14(4) 137-151.
- Fish, M. S., & Brooks, R. S. (2004). 'Does diversity hurt democracy?' *Journal of democracy*, 15(1), 154-166.
- Fish, M. S., & Kroenig, M. (2006). 'Diversity, Conflict and Democracy: Some Evidence from Eurasia and East Europe'. *Democratization*, 13(5), 828-842.
- Fofana, U. (2016) 'How Gambia's Yahya Jammeh lost his grip on power.' *BBC*. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-38249924> [Accessed on 25-1-2018].
- Foley M. W., & Edwards, B. (1996). 'The paradox of civil society'. *Journal of democracy*, 7(3), 38-52
- Foley M. W. & Hodgkinson V. A. (2003) 'Introduction'. *The Civil Society Reader*. Tufts University Press. vii-xxiv
- Freedom newspaper (2017) 'Gambia: Breaking News: Gambia's Fisheries Minister Shed Light On The Gunjur And Kartong Illegal Fish Dumping Controversy; Full Interview Will Be Published Later!' Available at: <https://freedomnewspaper.com/2017/05/22/gambia-breaking-news-gambias-fisheries-minister-shed-light-on-the-gunjur-and-kartong-illegal-fish-dumping-controversy-full-interview-will-be-published-later/> [Accessed on 27-2-2018]
- Froissart, C. (2014) 'The Ambiguities between Contention and Political Participation: A study of Civil Society Development and Authoritarian Regimes'. *Journal of Civil Society* 10(3) 219-222.
- Gerring J. (2006) 'What is a Case Study Good for? Case Study versus Large-N Cross Case analysis'. In: *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 37-62.
- Gerring J. (2008) 'Case Selection for Case-Study Analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Techniques' in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology* Oxford: Oxford University press.: 645-698.

- Goodin, R. E. (2007). 'Enfranchising all affected interests, and its alternatives'. *Philosophy & public affairs*, 35(1), 40-68.
- Haggard S. and Kaufman R.R. (2016a) *Dictators and Democrats masses, elites and regime change*. Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Haggard S. and Kaufman R.R. (2016b) 'Democratization During the Third Wave'. *The Annual Review of Political Science*. (19) 125-144.
- Higley, J., & Burton, M. G. (1989). The elite variable in democratic transitions and breakdowns. *American sociological review*, 17-32.
- Houle C. (2009). 'Inequality and democracy: why inequality harms consolidation but does not affect democratization'. *World Politics*. 61: 589-622.
- Hughes, A. (2000). 'Democratization' under the military in The Gambia: 1994–2000. *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 38(3), 35-52.
- Hultin, N. (2008). 'Voter Registration Cards, Political Subjectivity, and Trust in Paper in the Gambia.' *Journal of Legal Anthropology*, 1(1), 70-91.
- Hultin, N., Jallow, B., Lawrance, B. N., & Sarr, A. (2017). 'Autocracy, migration, and The Gambia's 'unprecedented' 2016 election'. *African Affairs*, 116(463), 1-20.
- Human Rights Watch (2016) 'More Fear than Fair, Gambia's 2016 Presidential Election'. *Human Rights Watch*.
- Huntington, S. P. (1993). *The third wave: Democratization in the late twentieth century* (Vol. 4). University of Oklahoma press.
- Hutchful, E. (1996) 'The civil society debate in Africa'. *International Journal*. 51 (1): 54-77.
- Kadivar M. A., Usmani, A. and Bradlow B. H. (2017) 'The Long March Contentious Mobilization & Deep Democracy' *The Varieties of Democracy Institute* 2017:6. 1-32.
- Kadivar, M. (2018). 'Mass Mobilization and the Durability of New Democracies'. *American Sociological Review*, 83(2), 390-417.
- Kaldor, M. (2003) *Global Civil Society an Answer to War*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Kandeh, J. D. (1996) 'What does the 'Militariat' Do When it Rules? Military Regimes: The Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia' *Review of African Political Economy*. 23(69): 387-404.

- Kendall- Taylor, A. and Frantz. E. (2014) 'How Autocracies Fall'. *The Washington Quarterly*. 37:1 35-47.
- Kora S. and Darboe M. N. (2017) 'The Gambia's Electoral Earthquake' *Journal of Democracy*. 28(2) 147-156.
- Kuran, T. (1989). 'Sparks and prairie fires: A theory of unanticipated political revolution.' *Public choice*, 61(1), 41-74.
- Lake D.A., Rothchild D. (1996). 'Containing fear: the origins and management of ethnic conflict'. *International Security*. 21(2): 41-75.
- LeVan A. C. (2011) 'Questioning Tocqueville in Africa: continuity and change in civil society during Nigeria's democratization'. *Democratization*, 18:1, 135-159
- Levitsky, S., & Way, L. (2002). 'The rise of competitive authoritarianism'. *Journal of democracy*, 13(2), 51-65
- Lewis, D. (2013) 'Civil Society and the Authoritarian State: Cooperation, Contestation and Discourse'. *Journal of Civil Society*. 9(3) 325-340.
- Lipset SM. (1959) 'Some social requisites of democracy: economic development and political legitimacy'. *American Political Science Review*. 53: 69-105.
- Linz, J. J., & Stepan, A. (1996). *Problems of democratic transition and consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and post-communist Europe*. JHU Press.
- Lynch, M. (2011). 'After Egypt: The limits and promise of online challenges to the authoritarian Arab state.' *Perspectives on politics*, 9(2), 301-310.
- Maclean, R., Graham-Harrison, E. (2016) "The Gambia's President Jammeh Concedes Defeat in Election". *The Guardian*. Available at:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/02/the-gambia-president-jammeh-concede-defeat-in-election> [Accessed on 22-02-2017]
- Maclean R. (2017) "West African leaders make last-ditch effort to end Gambian crisis" *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/13/west-african-leaders-banjul-end-gambian-crisis-president-yahya-jammeh-elections> [Accessed on 22-02-2017]
- Maclean R. and Jammeh S. (2017) 'New Claims over scale of ex-Gambian leader's theft from state coffers' *The Guardian* 23 February 2017. Available at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/23/the-gambia-debt-theft-mismanagement-jammeh-allegations> [Accessed on: 14-2-2018]

- Mamdani, M. (1996). *Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism*. Princeton University Press.
- Mbai, P. N. (2016) 'Gambia: Breaking News: Unknown Arsonists Burn Down The Ruling APRC Political Bureau In Kanifing; Police Officer Left Injured During The Blast!' *Freedom newspaper* Available at: <https://freedomnewspaper.com/2016/08/14/gambia-breaking-news-unknown-arsonists-burn-down-the-ruling-aprc-political-bureau-in-kanifing-police-officer-injured-during-the-blast/> [Accessed on 22-3-2018]
- Mercer, C. (2002) 'NGOs, civil society and democratization: a critical review of the literature.' *Progress in Development Studies*. 2 (1): 2-22
- Munck, G. L., & Leff, C. S. (1997). Modes of transition and democratization: South America and Eastern Europe in comparative perspective. *Comparative Politics*, 343-362.
- Mustapha, A. R. (2015) 'Assessing Trends in African Democratization: Methods and Challenges' In *Democratic Renewal in Africa Trends and Discourses*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 21-41.
- Nasong'o S. W. (2004) 'The role of Civil Society'. *Contending Political Paradigms in Africa: Democratization vs. Authoritarianism in Kenya and Zambia*. Northeastern University: Boston Massachusetts. 100-138.
- Newton, K. (1997). 'Social capital and democracy'. *American behavioral scientist*, 40(5), 575-586.
- Nourhussen S. (2017) 'Vanuit Gambia naar Europa dwars door de woestijn' *Trouw de Verdieping* 28-06-2017 Available at: <https://www.trouw.nl/home/vanuit-gambia-naar-europa-dwars-door-de-woestijn~a8f637d6/> [Accessed on; 9-2-2018]
- Obadare, E. (2012) 'Introduction'. *Voluntas* 23: 1-4.
- O'Donnell, G. and Schmitter, P. C. (1986) *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule, Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. Vol 4. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Ottaway, M. (2013). *Democracy challenged the rise of semi-authoritarianism*. Carnegie Endowment.

- Orvis, S. (2001). 'Civil society in Africa or African civil society?' *Journal of Asian and African studies*, 36(1), 17-38.
- Owen, J. M. (1994). 'How liberalism produces democratic peace'. *International security*, 19(2), 87-125.
- Paffenholz, T., & Spurk, C. (2006). 'Civil society, civic engagement, and peacebuilding'. *Social Development Papers: Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction*, 36
- Perfect, D. (2017). 'The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath'. *The Round Table*, 1-15.
- Perfect, D. (2010). 'The Gambia under Yahya Jammeh: An Assessment'. *The Round Table*, 99(406), 53-63.
- Perfect D. (2008) 'Politics and Society in the Gambia since Independence' *History Compass* 6(2) 426-438.
- Przeworski A. Cheibub J, Limongi F. (2000) *Democracy and Development*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Przeworski, A. (1991). *Democracy and the market: Political and economic reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Putman R. D. (2003) 'from Making Democracy Work'. *The Civil Society Reader*. Tufts University Press. 322-327.
- Rathbun, B. C. (2008). 'Interviewing and qualitative field methods: pragmatism and practicalities'. In *The Oxford handbook of political methodology*. 685-702.
- Reuter, O. J., & Szakonyi, D. (2015). 'Online social media and political awareness in authoritarian regimes'. *British Journal of Political Science*, 45(1), 29-51
- Ross, M. L. (2001). 'Does oil hinder democracy?'. *World politics*, 53(3), 325-361.
- Saine A. (2003) 'The Military and "Democratization" in the Gambia: 1994 2002. In *Political Liberalization and Democratization in Africa Lessons from Country Experiences*. London: Prager. 179 -197.
- Saine, A. (2008). 'The Gambia's 2006 Presidential Election: Change or Continuity?' *African Studies Review*, 51(1), 59-83.

- Sallah A. R. (2017) 'Supplementary voter registration kicks off today' *The Point* Available at: <http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/supplementary-voter-registration-kicks-off-today> [Accessed 26-1-218]
- Saward, M. (2006) 'The Representative Claim'. *Contemporary Political Theory* 5: 297-318.
- Schedler, A. (2001). 'Taking uncertainty seriously: the blurred boundaries of democratic transition and consolidation'. *Democratization*, 8(4), 1-22
- Schedler, A. (2006). 'The logic of electoral authoritarianism'. *Electoral authoritarianism: The dynamics of unfree competition*, 2006, 1-23.
- Schedler, A. (2015). 'Electoral authoritarianism'. *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences: An Interdisciplinary, Searchable, and Linkable Resource*
- Spires, A. J. (2011) 'Contingent symbiosis and civil society in an authoritarian state: Understanding the survival of China's grassroots NGOs.' *American Journal of Sociology*, 117(10) .1-45
- Stephan, M. J., & Chenoweth, E. (2008). 'Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict' *International security*, 33(1) 7-44
- Svolik, M. (2008). 'Authoritarian reversals and democratic consolidation'. *American Political Science Review*, 102(2), 153-168.
- Svolik, M. W. (2014). 'Which democracies will last? Coups, incumbent takeovers, and the dynamic of democratic consolidation'. *British Journal of Political Science*, 45(4), 715-738.
- Tufekci, Z., & Freelon, D. (2013). 'Introduction to the special issue on new media and social unrest'. *American Behavioural Science* 57: 843-847
- Tufekci, Z., & Wilson, C. (2012). 'Social media and the decision to participate in political protest: Observations from Tahrir Square'. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 363-379.
- Van de Walle, N. (2002) 'Africa's Range of Regimes'. *Journal of Democracy*. 13(2) 66-80.
- Verkoren, W., & van Leeuwen M. (2013). 'Civil society in Peacebuilding: global discourse, local reality'. *International Peacekeeping*, 20(2), 159-172
- Warren, M. E. (2002). 'What can democratic participation mean today?'. *Political theory*, 30(5), 677-701.
- Warren, M. E. (2011) 'Civil Society and Democracy'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society* : Oxford Univeristy Press Availabel at:

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195398571.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195398571> . [Accessed on 12 Oct 2017]

Welsh, D. (1993). 'Domestic politics and ethnic conflict'. *Survival*, 35(1), 63-80.

White, G. (1994) 'Civil Society, democratization and development (I): Clearing the analytical ground'. *Democratization* 1(2): 375-390

WorldBank (2018) 'The Gambia' Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/Gambia>
[Accessed on 22-2-2018]

Zakaria, F. (1997). The Rise of Illiberal Democracy. *Foreign Affairs*, 76(6), 22- 43.

Appendix A

#	Organization	Date	Position	Area of work
1	WASDA	25-4-2017	Executive Director	Agriculture
2	CHIGAMBAS	25-4-2017	Manager	Education
3	AVISU	26-4-2017	Program manager and acting director Project manager	Rural Development (food security, livelihood, environment)
4	Freedom From Hunger Campaign	15-5-2017	Director	Agriculture
5	ADWAC	17-5-2017	Founding member, Director	Rural Development
6	4H	17-5-2017	Program Director	Agriculture
7	FORUT	17-5-2017	Director	Agriculture
8	Alliance for Democracy (ADA)	5-6-2017	Program officer	Human Rights/ civic education
9	Peace Ambassadors the Gambia (PAG)	6-6-2017	Entire team	Youth, Peace education
10	Gom Sa Bopa movement	7-6-2017	Founding member, leading figure and manager	Youth Activists
11	Gambia Has Decided	8-6-2017	Director	Activist Movement
12	Activista	12-6-2017	Program Manager	Global Youth Network
13	-	16-6-2017	Private consultant + blogger	Private consultant + blogger
14	United Purpose	19-6-2017	Executive Director	Poverty alleviation
15	Action Aid	20-6-2017	Women's rights program specialist	Poverty alleviation, human rights
16	Girls Agenda	23-6-2017	Program Manager	Women's rights (raising awareness)
17	University of the Gambia	24-6-2017	Lecturer Political Science	University
18	University of the Gambia	24-6-2017	Research Assistant	University
19	Holy Family Church	27-6-2017	Priest	Church

20	Student Union UTG	27-6-2017	Secretary General	Student Union
21	Christian Council	28-6-2017	Interchurch interfaith committee	Priest
22	NGO Affairs Agency	28-6-2017	1. Director Program Officer	NGO Affairs
23	YMCA	29-6-2017	Head of ICT	Youth empowerment
24	WANEP	29-6-2017	Executive Director	Regional peacebuilding organization
25	EU	29-6-2017	Political and Press Officer	EU Delegation the Gambia
26	University Staff Union	30-6-2017	Vice president	University
27	Gambia Bar Association	4-7-2017	1. President 2. Secretary General Executive member	Association of Lawyers
28	TANGO	4-7-2017	Executive Director	NGO Umbrella
29	YMCA	4-7-2017	Director of YMCA and Board Chair of TANGO	Youth empowerment
30	Institute for Human Rights and Development Africa (IHRDA)	5-7-2017	Executive Director	Human Rights
31	TANGO	5-7-2017	Program Officer	NGO Umbrella
32	Central Mosque Kanifing	6-7-2017	Imam	Mosque
33	New town Football team	6-7-2017		Football team
34	Gambia Press Union (GPU)	10-7-2017	Secretary General	Media
35	National Youth Council	12-7-2017	Executive Director	Youth