The changing status of Civil Society Organisations in South Africa, 1994 to 2014

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Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the South African Civil Society Organisation (CSO) sector for the period 1994 to 2014. For its purposes, the paper adopts a role-focussed and context specific definition of civil society, in which the analysis of the changing status of the CSO sector is limited to Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) and the so-called 'new social movements'. NPOs include non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs).

The broad consensus in the literature reviewed (and which is accepted as a basic premise for the analysis in this paper) is that the CSO sector exists to promote, consolidate and protect democracy (Malan, 2007, Heinrich 2001, Nthambeleni 2007, Patel 2012, Peekhaus W, Mdoda 2014, Van Zyl, 2014), and that the sector plays a role in the delivery (or enforcing the delivery of) goods, social welfare services, and basic services (Nthambeleni, 2007, Patel 2012).

The author examines the assumptions and key arguments that underpin what is termed the 'dominant discourse' on the sector. The 'dominant discourse' is defined as the most prevalent views and arguments presented by CSO representatives and in the literature on the sector. In doing so, the paper identifies, and argues against, a number of inaccuracies in the 'dominant discourse'.

It is argued that the CSO sector; (1) is more complex and diverse than much of the literature suggests, (2) is not in decline, (3) has probably been affected negatively by changes in human resource capacity distribution, (4) is less affected by changes in the funding environment than is claimed, (5) can benefit from increasing requirements for monitoring and evaluation, (6) has become more diverse and critical in the post 2000 period, but, in response to localised not ideological motivations, and (7) is, in general, in a positive relationship with the state. The paper also demonstrates that the widely held belief that funding to South African civil society has substantially decreased is factually incorrect.

An underlying aim of the paper is to illustrate that a lack of quantitative research and empirical data on the sector is a primary reason for the arguable discourse inaccuracies. The paper, thus, advocates for a more evidence-informed analysis of the sector.

The paper is structured thematically around the identified inaccuracies. In each instance, a summary of the 'dominant discourse' is presented, followed by a brief critique indicative of the need for further research.

Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were employed. Qualitative methods included a literature review, in-depth (face-to-face) interviews with 18 key representatives of, or experts on, the CSO sector, in-depth telephonic interviews with two representatives of donor institutions, and a scan of 66 foreign donor websites. The quantitative component consisted of the distribution of an electronic survey to 66 foreign donor institutions. Only 15 institutions had responded by the time of writing and most were unable to provide all the data requested.

In examining the 'dominant discourse' on the CSO sector, this paper faced the same constraints that contributed to the construction of the arguably inaccurate account of the CSO sector in South Africa; notably that much of the literature available is anecdotal and few empirical studies have been conducted.

More comprehensive data collection is required for definitive statements, but what was collected is sufficient to point to flaws and unsupported assumptions in the 'dominant discourse' on the South African CSO sector.

1. A brief 'popular' history of CSOs: 1994 to 2014

The 'popular' narrative of the history of the CSO sector in South Africa can be summarized as follows:

In pre-1994, South African CSOs were vibrant, effective and united in their opposition to the illegitimate apartheid government. Following the first democratic election, in 1994, the CSO sector was thrown into turmoil as it sought to redefine its relationships (primarily with the government), roles, responsibilities, strategies, and identity, within the newly established democratic structure and associated civil liberties. This CSO sector 'crisis', in combination with two other key factors, resulted in a contraction of the sector and an associated decline in its impact.

The two key factors were; firstly, a substantial decline in donor funding to the CSO sector, in part because donor funding to SA, now a middle-income country, decreased, and, in part, because funding was now directed via the democratically elected government. Many CSOs were forced to downsize or to close-down. Secondly, a loss of skilled and experienced staff (particularly those in leadership positions) to government diminished the sector. CSOs were forced to scale-down operations as a result of skills, leadership and general human resource deficits.

In the latter part of the 1990s, the CSO sector gradually recovered but it remained smaller, less effective, and more fragmented than it had been in the 1980s. The CSOs that were more likely to succeed where the more bureaucratic institutions with the capacity to respond to the reporting, accountability, and monitoring and evaluation requirements of the donor sector, which increasingly focused on measurement and demonstrable impact.

A further change was evident in the CSO sector in the early 2000s. The change came in response to the ANC-led government's adoption of the GEAR policy as its macro-economic strategy. The adoption of this macro-economic strategy, it was argued, was the cause of increases in poverty and inequality. The 'new' social movements and CBOs that emerged as a direct consequence, were said to be responding to 'bread and butter' issues. The 'new' social movements, in particular, were more confrontational and critical of the government than CSOs had been until then, and they had 'grassroots' support to indicate that they represented the 'poor'.

In 2008, the global financial crisis resulted in a further decline in funding for, and further contraction of, the CSO sector.

Throughout this period (1994 to 2014) the relationship between CSOs and the government/ruling party deteriorated. Where relationships did not deteriorate it was because the CSOs in question had taken on a service delivery function (i.e. the responsibilities of government) and received state-funding in return.

2. A critical assessment of the popular history of CSOs in South Africa

2.1. Contesting the myth of pre-1994 CSO homogeneity

There is a tendency in the available literature to homogenise the pre-1994 CSO sector, thereby, producing a romanticised history against which the current CSO sector is unfavourably compared (see Malan 2007, Heinrich 2001, Kaarsholm, 2009, Kotze, 2002). In this literature, the history of one component of the pre-1994 sector is simplified and presented as 'the history' of 'the CSO sector'. It purports that South Africa had a large and vibrant NGO sector, which

grew dramatically in the 1980s, and presented a unified civil action against the apartheid state. The sector played 'a vital part' in the success of the struggle against apartheid, and the establishment of a democratic society (Ballard et al, 2006). The sector was said to be represented by various umbrella bodies (for example, by the United Democratic Front in the 1980s, and the South African NGO Coalition in the 1990s).

Of course, such homogeneity never existed, and some authors have attempted to categorise known differences into 'types' of pre-1994 CSOs. Notably; organisations in extra-parliamentary opposition to the state, organisations attempting to change the status quo through cooperation with the state, CSOs focussing on service delivery while attempting to maintain political neutrality, and large welfare-oriented bodies cooperating with the state (Heinrich 2001, citing Habib and Taylor 1999, Patel 2012).

Diversity existed within these "types" as well. Take, for example, the long-standing and institutionalised relationship between the apartheid-government (e.g. the National Department of Welfare) and various welfare service delivery organisations. These organisations provided welfare services to the general population, and in return received state subsidies that were skewed to favour whites (Patel 2012). However, 'multiplicities of NGOs operate[d] in the welfare and development field with different political and ideological orientations' (Patel, 2012, pp. 606). A range of welfare NPOs emerged within communities and in parallel to the state-supported structure in the 1970s and 80s. These organisations provided welfare services to marginalised black communities independent of the state, and were mostly self- or donor funded (Patel, 2012).

Neither was there unity within the component of the CSO sector that actively opposed the apartheid government. The strong presence of the Black Consciousness movement in the 1970s introduced a range of ideological and strategy debates that impacted profoundly on the CSO sector. Concurrently, debates between so-called Charterist and Africanists were reflected in sector and organisational debates and decision-making.

Finally, although the pre-1994 sector undoubtedly played a key part in bringing about the transition and consolidating democracy, the sector was less 'formidable' than is generally acknowledged (Greenberg & Ndlovu, 2004). Greenberg argues that popular organisations were 'fragile', 'welfarist' and 'survivalist'. (Greenberg and Ndlovu, 2004). In a context where organisations in opposition to the apartheid government were repressed, state-aligned CSO actors like the Broederbond and the Dutch Reformed Church were simultaneously hugely influential.

Given the diversity described, it becomes apparent that none of the so-called 'umbrella bodies' could accurately be described as having represented the civil society sector. There were undoubtedly groups and formations within the civil society sector, but certainly no over-arching institutional body existed.

As this paper will show, the CSO sector remains complex and diverse. Given the roles of the sector, diversity can be considered an indicator of citizen engagement and of a healthy democracy (Habib 2005).

2.2. Questioning the argument for the contraction of the CSO sector

The 'dominant discourse' is that the CSO sector has been in decline since 1994 (see inter alia O'Riordan 2014, Greenberg & Ndlovu 2004).

Those who contest the 'sector-in-decline-argument', cite the emergence of the 'new' social movements, the 'cyber movement', newly established CBOs and CSOs[1], and, the continued existence of many CSOs (Friedman 2014, Jenkins 2014, Graham 2014, Ballard et al 2006, Lewis 2014) as evidence to the contrary.

Critics also cite evidence of CSO impact on policy, societal perceptions, legislation, and service delivery, as evidence in support of the argument that the sector is not in decline (Ballard et al, 2006, Robbins, 2008). Frequently cited examples included the Treatment Action Campaign[2] (Friedman 2014, Wilson 2014), Section 27[3] (Lewis 2014, Kasambala 2014, Wilson 2014), POWA (Kasambala 2014, Nsibande 2014), HURISA (Kasambala 2014), Afri-Forum (Cronje 2014), the Legal Resources Centre (Wilson 2014), and the Right to Know Campaign[4] (February 2014, Kasambala 2014, Mdoda 2014). Organisations in particular sectors are also cited as having been influential. These include health, land rights, human rights, social justice and gender-based violence (Kasambala 2014, Nsibande 2014, Wilson 2014).

The empirical evidence available also undermines the argument for contraction. Evidence suggests that the NPO sector has grown since the early 1990s. In 1998/9, the NPO sector was estimated to be a R9.3 billion industry, employing 645 315 persons, and consisting of 98 920 NPOs (Swilling and Russell, 2002). These were also not transient organisations, and, on average, South African NPOs had been in existence for 19 years (Swilling and Russell, 2002).

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[1] For example Corruption Watch and the Transformation Initiative
[2] In 2003, the government succumbed to pressure from TAC and agreed to distribute anti-retroviral medication to people living with HIV/AIDS (Friedman 2006), saving 2 million lives (Friedman 2014).
[3] Legally forced the Department of Education to provide textbooks to schools
[4] Which contributed to key changes to the Protection of State Information Bill

2.3. Human resource constraints and capacity trends in the CSO sector

Given apartheid policies (and opposition to them), key human resources were available to the sector in the 1970s and 80s. Habib (2005) states that human resources 'increasingly became available to the sector in the 1980s, as university students and graduates' and released political prisoners joined the sector.

There is consensus in the literature and among interviewees that the CSO sector lost many of its key leaders, thinkers and skilled managers to the public sector in the period following the transition to democracy (Winkler 2009, Kotze 2002, Geyer 2009, Greenberg & Ndlovu 2004). The consequent loss of capacity and skills had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the sector, and on the sector's ability/willingness to critically engage government (Malan 2007, Greenberg & Ndlovu 2004). It also arguably increased staff turnover and contributed to a loss of institutional memory (Kotze 2002, February 2014).

Although data is lacking, an empirical analysis on the backgrounds of key public figures will likely support this. Case studies on the decline of the South African National Civic Organisation (Winkler 2009, Nthambeleni 2007) provide some corroborative evidence.

It is argued that the CSO sector's human resource capacity was further depleted, post 2000, by the recruitment strategies (and higher salaries) of the 'increasing number of international' CSOs that established themselves in South Africa (Mandeep 2014, Nthambeleni 2007, O'Riordan 2014, February 2014, Graham 2014). There is, currently, no empirical evidence to support this assertion.

An argument, made by interviewees, is that the restructuring of the CSO sector had a racial dimension, and that it was mostly white, males who were not recruited into the public and private sectors (e.g. Jenkins 2014). Others claimed that it was more difficult to retain black and female employees because of better paid opportunities in the public and private sector (Sidiropoulous 2014, Graham 2014, Jenkins 2014). The empirical evidence available, however, shows that of the total management staff of surveyed NPOs, 59% were women and 73% were black (Swilling and Russell, 2002). Of the full-time employees, 60% were female and 80% were black (Swilling and Russell, 2002).

2.4. A critical analysis of the 'funding myth' and the impact of donor funding on the CSO sector

The dominant discourse on funding to the South African CSO sector can be summarized as follows:

In the **period 1960 to 1994**, CSOs in opposition to apartheid received extensive financial support from a variety of donors to whom they were not expected to meticulously report on their spending (inter alia most interviewees, and Kotze 2002). The data available supports the

claim for extensive support. For example, Sweden provided more than $400 million between 1972 and 1993, and the US approximately $340 million between 1985 and 1994 (Hearn, not dated). Other key donors of the period included Denmark, Norway and the European Union.

Although extensive financial support continued in the **period 1994 to 1998**, when the largest donors, in rank order, were the USA ($530 million), the European Union ($420 million), Canada (approximately $50 million), Japan, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries, Germany and the UK ($45 million) (Hearn 2000, Hearn not-dated and Bond 2001), funding to CSOs decreased. The decrease resulted from the diversion of donor funds to specific 'types' of NGOs, the government[5] and the African National Congress (Hearn 2000, Bond 2001, Robinson and Friedman 2007, Patel 2012, Warshawsky 2012, Greenberg 2004, Naidu 2014).

Reportedly, the specific 'types' of CSOs now favoured were those focussing on democratic consolidation and good governance (Hearn 2000, Winkler 2009). Winkler cites a 2002 USAID pledge of approximately $7 million 'to promote democratic consolidation' as evidence, and claims that CSOs that did represent 'the people', ceased being recipients of foreign funds. Authors (like Winkler 2009, & Hearn) see the alleged focus of donor funding on CSOs involved in the promotion of democracy and good governance as a means to promote 'neo-liberal' macro-economic change, to reduce 'the radicalisation of the general population', and 'to increase stability to promote capitalism'. This, Winkler argues, has resulted in CSOs 'that are ineffectual in dealing with the poverty, inequality and socio-economic problems they aim to address'. It also resulted in 'drastically diminished' capacity among formerly key organisations such as SANCO (Winkler 2009), in smaller CSOs changing their programmes and approaches in order to access funding (Malan 2007, Kasambala 2014, Nsibande 2014, Naidu 2014) and, in the longer-term, to reduce organisational diversity as surviving CSOs sought to comply with donor agendas (Winkler 2009). It further resulted in the closure of many of the smaller and more informal CSOs (Patel 2012). Overall, CSOs were said to be lacking in financial resources and support, resulting in a shrinking of the sector (Warshawsky 2013).

In the **period 2000 to 2008**, CSOs reportedly continued their 'struggle for funding' and many 'were on the verge of bankruptcy' (O'Riordan 2014), while certain 'types' of CSOs, notably 'larger, technical and administrative' CSOs with the capacity to meet the reporting and accountability demands of donors, received much of the available funding (Winkler 2009, Mueller-Hirth 2012, Buhlungu, 2006).

In the **period 2008 to 2014**, which started with the 2008 global economic crisis and the appointment of a new South African President, the CSO sector reportedly experienced 'another'

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[5] According to Hearn, 52% of US aid to South Africa went to the government in 1997. Also, the $420 million from the European Union was for the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme by the state.

contraction. Interviewees said that a number of key donors ceased, or reduced, their funding to SA in this period. According to interviewees the reasons for the decline (in addition to the consequences of the economic crisis) include; deteriorating relationships between key donors (e.g. DIFD) and the South African government (Graham 2014), and a donor move away from South Africa towards funding low-income countries, or regional initiatives (February 2014, Graham 2014, Jenkens 2014, Kasambala 2014, Nsibande 2014, Naidu 2014). O'Riordan (2014) argues that donors diverted funds towards paying high salaries to the employees of 'unscrupulous international organisations' and cites OECD data that 'illustrates that some of the more successful international NGOs registered more than a quarter billion rand a year' as evidence (O'Riordan, 2014). Interviewees also cited examples of long-standing CSOs closing (Idasa and the Centre for Policy Studies) or downsizing (ISS, SAIRR and SAIIA) in this period.

As the subsequent discussion demonstrates, many of the arguments above are anecdotal, derived from personal experiences, and are not supported by the evidence.

2.4.1. Analysing the data

The empirical data that is available suggests that although there are changes in funding priorities and methods of distribution, as well as, fluctuations in the overall amount available to South African CSOs, the foreign donor 'funding crisis' as a primary cause for the (debatable) contraction of the CSO sector, is a myth.

2.4.1.1. Overall, foreign donor funding probably did not decrease in the period 1994 to 2014

With due consideration of the limitations of the data, it seems clear that foreign donor funding (in terms of total dollar value) has not decreased. Indicative figures are presented below:

For the **period 1994 to 1998**: A survey of members of SANGOCO found that more than 60% of the NGOs surveyed had witnessed an increase in funding in 1996/7 (Volhart, 2001). A study (cited in Muller et al 2005) argued that funding channelled through the development ministries of European governments and the United States had remained generally stable in the late 1990s. The study found that for the period 1994 to 1999, R18.5 billion in international aid (grants, concessionary loans and technical assistance) had been invested in South Africa, averaging between R2.3 and R3 billion per annum. The distribution was as follows; 50% to the government (partly for redistribution to civil society), 25% to parastatals, 15% directly to CSOs, and 10% to the 'voluntary sector' (i.e. CSOs) (Govender 2001, cited in Muller et al 2005).

Post 2008: Although much of the United Nations contributions to South Africa are channelled through the state to CSOs working in fields related to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, the following figures suggest that the contribution to South Africa is not

insignificant. In 2010, UNDP contributed $5 million to South Africa, followed by a further $0.5 million in 2011. UN Women contributed approximately $0.2 million in 2010 (UNDP website).

Between 2009 and 2012, US Foundations (alone) provided $300 million to civil society organisations in South Africa.[6] In the same period, the Austrian Development Agency spent approximately $0.6 million in South Africa (ADA website).

There is a lack of data on what percentage of bilateral aid reaches CSOs, but in 2012, SA received just over R15 billion in foreign aid (O'Riordan, 2014). The Paris based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development reported in 2013 that their development assistance grew by 6% (to R1.5 trillion) (O'Riordan, 2014). Increasingly, resources are received from 'emerging donors' such as the United Arab Emirates (R60 billion), Turkey (R36 billion), Poland (R5 billion), Israel (R 2 billion), Japan, and Korea (O'Riordan, 2014).

Total Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) from the 29 Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries amounted to approximately $1.4 billion in 2011, $1 billion in 2012, and S1.3 billion in 2013 (but data on the percentage contribution to CSOs is not available). This amounts to twice as much as Zimbabwe, approximately six times more than Namibia, and more or less the same as the amount received by Zambia. In 2012-2013, just the top ten donors of ODA to South Africa accounted for $1 .2 billion (OECD website). In rank order, in $US million, this includes the US at 492.3, France at 243.6, EU Institutions at 211.3, Global Fund at 95.2, the United Kingdom at 78, Germany at 77.4, Norway at 201.1, Belgium at 18.9, Sweden at 16.0 and the Netherlands at 16.1.

USAID PEPFAR (as another example of increased income) has spent annually increasing amounts on supporting HIV/AIDS related programmes, many of which are implemented by CSOs. In 2013, the organisation donated $484 million.

The Australian Agency for International Development spent $106 million on aid to sub-Saharan Africa in 2014/15, an unspecified percentage of which went to South Africa (a target country of this spending), through its Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme ($83 million in 2011-2916), the Australian NGO Cooperation Programme ($27.3 million) and the Direct Aid Programme, to CSOs (AUSAID website).

There are also a number of 'new' donors who are contributing large amounts. These include Irish Aid, which started funding post 1994, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which started funding in South Africa in 2000.

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[6] http://www.fundsforngos.org/developing-countries-2/south-africa/alternative-sources-funding-south-african-ngos/

Although the data (obtained from agency websites or annual reports) is by no means representative or comprehensive, the table below suggests that overall funding to the CSO sector has not declined as much as is claimed in the 'dominant discourse'. Although there is a noticeable decrease in funding from some donors (Embassy of Finland, SIDA and ADA), there is also an increase in funding particularly from 'new' donors (Irish Aid, USAID, the US overall, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation). The data further suggests that the 2008 economic increase had little impact on funding.

A crude analysis[7] of funding patterns for the period 1990 to 2014 of 14 international donors[8] shows that funding to South African civil society increased from approximately US $82.5 million in 1990, to approximately US $ 156.7 in 1994, to US $ 601.2 million in 2008, and to over US1 billion in 2013.

2.4.1.2. *Foreign donor funding is not the primary source of income for the CSO sector*

The data presented in this section, highlights the extent to which CSO dependence on foreign donor funding is exaggerated in the 'dominant discourse', and illustrates that much of the funding is obtained from the state, the private sector and self-generated income.

One of the few empirical studies on the CSO sector shows that in 1998, the non-profit sector had an income of R14 billion, of which income from foreign donors accounted for only R0.5 billion (Swilling and Russell 2002). This suggests that the importance and impact of foreign donor funding is exaggerated in the 'dominant discourse'. R5.8 billion of the total amount was derived from government grants and contracts (43%), R3 billion came from the private sector, and R4.7 billion was self-generated (Swilling and Russell 2002).

A 1996 survey of Sangoco member organisations revealed a similar distribution of income sources, with only 37% of income from foreign donors, 20% from the South African government, 13% from corporate donors, and 28% self-generated (Volkhart, 2001).

A 2009 study calculated private sector CSI contributions at R5 billion, at least 12% of which went for social development, and R5 million to CSOs providing food (Warshawsky 2012 citing Trialogue 2009). Despite legitimate criticism levelled against the private sector for funding 'projects with short-term gains' (Naidu 20014), the sector evidently provides large amounts of funding to a variety of CSOs. A cursory scan of the funding priorities of corporate social

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[7] Figures rounded to the nearest million, as per exchange rate on August 1, 2015, and using convenience sampling (i.e. information available on websites, in annual reports, and from electronic responses to a general survey sent out to donor institutions)

[8] Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Irish Aid, Danish International Development Agency, Austrian Development Agency, Embassy of Finland, USAID Pepfar, Hanns Seidel Foundation, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, Swedish International Corporation, Atlantic Philanthropies, Kresge Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ford Foundation, United States Foundation

investment initiatives shows that some specifically fund CBOs and organisations directly servicing communities. First Rand, for example, specifically funds under-resourced CBOs working toward a reduction in the prevalence of gender-based violence (Weideman 2014). Interviewees pointed to examples of CSOs that have been successful in obtaining resources from the private sector (e.g. The Nelson Mandela Foundation) and argued that the CSO sector could access increased resources from the private sector should they capacitate themselves to do so (Makwela, 2014).

The state also continues as a leading financier of social development (welfare) NPOs and CBOs that provide services to marginalised and impoverished groups (Patel 2012). In addition to funding developmental (i.e. welfare) CSOs, the Department of Social Development is also a key funder of gender-focussed organisations such as the Tshwarang Legal Advocacy Centre to End Violence Against Women (TLAC) and People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA) (Nsibande 2014). The 2002 Swilling & Russell study indicated that the South African government contributed 42% of the NPO sector's income in 1998 (R5.8 billion), of which R2.1 billion went to social service CSOs, R1.7 billion to NPOs in the health sector, and R1.1 billion to NPOs active in the 'development and housing' sector (Swilling & Russell 2002). Approximately half of these state-funded NPOs were concentrated in middle-income socio-economic categories. The inference is that the others were smaller, CBO-type, organisations.

With regard to own-agency and the ability of some organisations to generate income, the 2002 Swilling and Russell study illustrated that in 1998, CSOs self-generated R4.7 billion. Further, various CSOs have adopted pragmatic strategies to enhance their sustainability. Some, like the ISS, SAIIA, POWA, HURISA and IGR, have adopted a regional focus (February 2014). Others have linked themselves more closely to academic institutions (February 2014, Graham 2014, Sidiropoulous 2014). Many CSOs have improved their governance procedures to comply with donor requirements for accountability. The 'new social movements' in particular have utilised voluntarism, public fund raising initiatives, and membership structures to increase their income. The Treatment Action Campaign, for example, launched a public fundraising campaign in November 2014, which aimed to collect R10 million within two months. TAC at the time also had 8000 members and 182 branches campaigning and contributing towards its survival (TAC, 2014). Many others have utilised diverse strategies. SAIIA, for example, obtains funding from traditional donors, the private sector, research grants, and membership structures (Sidiropoulous, 2014). Yet others position themselves strategically in an area for which funding is available (e.g. the In Transformation Initiative in international peace-building). The South African Institute of Race Relations generated income through subscriptions (including over 200 corporate subscriptions) (Cronje 2014).

At times a mixture of funders combines to strengthen a CSO. FoodBank Johannesburg, for example, grew considerably in size, reach and impact, and, in 2009, became one of the largest food security NGOs in South Africa (Washawsky 2011). This growth followed from the establishment of a partnership arrangement with the Chicago based Global FoodBanking Network, and from securing funding from the South African government (73% in 2009) and a range of private sector food manufacturers and distributors (Warshawsky 2011)

2.4.1.3. *Foreign donors are not a homogenous group and do not fund specific 'types' of CSOs*

Foreign donors, who do not constitute a politically, ideologically, socially or economically homogenous group, do not exclusively, or predominantly, fund the 'types' of CSOs identified in the 'dominant discourse'. The data from the analyses of the funding priorities (for the period 1994 to 2014) of 67 donor institutions showed that neither specifically 'pro-democracy', nor 'large technical' CSOs are targeted for funding. Donors have consistently funded the following broad subject categories:

- Film and media (including art)
- Education (basic and higher)
- Democracy and good governance (institutions, systems, judiciaries, advocacy, human rights, access to justice, public participation)
- Economic development (sustainable development, business development, SMME support, training, skills development, entrepreneurship)
- Infrastructure (construction)
- Basic service provision (sanitation, water, energy)
- Youth development
- Children (rights, development, welfare, early-childhood development)
- Gender (women's rights, gender-based violence, gender-focussed economic development, health, social services)
- Environment (climate change, sustainable energy)
- Health (reproductive, research, TB, Malaria, HIV/AIDS, public service provision, training, capacitation, infrastructure)
- Housing
- Research (all categories)
- Agriculture (agro-forestry, agricultural industry, fisheries, food security)
- Rural development (land reform, food security)
- General philanthropy
- Peace and security (national and regional)
- Heritage
- Political parties (elections)

- Disaster relief
- Science and Technology
- Advocacy (all kinds)
- Poverty and inequality (initiatives to reduce and research)

Many donors specifically fund smaller, less capacitated, CSOs, or support citizen capacitation and advocacy at community level. The French Embassy's Civil Society Development Fund, for example, provides financial support to CBOs primarily engaging in advocacy, such as, the Built Environment Support Group (BESG), Planact, Masimanyane, Rhodes University Legal Aid Clinic (RULAC), and Afesis-Corplan (Weideman 2012).

There are also examples of donors specifically funding the 'new Social Movements'. The Anti-Privatisation Forum, for example, received funding from the United Kingdom (UK) based War on Want, Oxfam Canada, the Polaris Institute, and the South African Development Fund (Buhlungu, 2006).

2.5.   Bureaucratisation and rise of the 'blue chip' CSO

It is argued in the 'dominant discourse' that an upsurge of requirements from donor institutions for reporting, monitoring and evaluation[9], and related impact measurement contributed to the development of a CSO sector increasingly composed of larger, strongly institutional, bureaucratic organisations (Mueller-Hirth, 2012). Smaller (community-based) organisations that could not (for reasons of skills or capacity) comply with these requirements were unable to access funding and many closed-down as a result. The approach rewarded organisations for their 'ability to produce strategic management plans and log-frames' rather than for their developmental impact (Winkler 2009). The approach also diverted financial and human resource capacity towards 'training managers' in monitoring and evaluation and related disciplines, and away from development or advocacy work (Winkler 2009). The focus on monitoring and evaluation has also influenced employment policies (Mueller-Hirth 2012, Kasambala 2014) and costs, as CSOs increasingly have to hire relevant specialists who demand higher salaries. In smaller organisations these duties fall to directors, whose own time and impact are then negatively affected (Mueller-Hirth, 2012). Overall, 'the time and resources spent on donor-led monitoring diverts from . . . core activities' (Mueller-Hirth, 2012).

Some of the CSO sector representatives interviewed by the author expressed frustrations about the time, and the opportunity and costs constraints associated with extensive reporting. They also pointed to the difficulties in measuring the 'impact' of complex activities in the short term.

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[9] See Mueller-Hirth

However, empirical evidence fails to support the argument for a decline in the number of smaller organisations. In 1999, for example, approximately 53% (more than half) of the 98 920 NPOs in South Africa were categorised as 'less formalised' community-based organisations (Swilling and Russell, 2002). Further, the collected data has shown that donor funding strategies are diverse and that some donors specifically fund community-based organisations.

It is also possible that the impetus for accurate monitoring and evaluation could increase the efficiency and the accountability of the CSO sector, particularly if donor reports (and evaluation data) are made available in the public domain. Some interviewees, for example, argued that donor reporting requirements have (through skills development) improved the accuracy of their internal organisational performance management, which, in turn, has improved their efficiency and sustainability (Lewis 2014, Sidiropoulous 2014).

2.6. Who are the new social movements? Moreover, does the existence of this sector indicate a change in the nature of the South African CSO sector?

The most prevalent view in the literature reviewed is that the South African CSO sector underwent a profound change in the early 2000s, characterised most specifically by the emergence of the 'new' social movements (NSMs).

Organisations often cited as examples of the NSMs include the Homeless People's Alliance, the Treatment Action Campaign, Abahlali baseMjondolo, the Anti-Eviction Campaign, the Landless Peoples Movement, the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC), the Concerned Citizens Group (CCG), and the Anti-Privatisation Forum.

These 'movements' are said to have emerged from a general disillusionment with the performance of the government, and increased poverty and inequality (Winkler 2009, McKinley 2004). They focus on 'bread and butter' issues (i.e. evictions, water meters, electricity cut-offs, access to land, free medication) (Desai, 2004, McKinley 2004).

Since most of these authors also ascribe increases in poverty and inequality to what they term the neo-liberal macro-economic policies of the state, they describe the NSMs as anti-capitalist or anti-neoliberal (Winkler 2009, Habib 2005, Egan et al 2006, McKinley 2004, Benjamin 2004, Venava & Ngwane, 2004).

The NSMs are said to represent large constituencies (Winkler 2009), and are described as 'grassroots organisations' (Malan, 2007, Greenberg & Ndlovu 2004), representing 'the poor' or the 'masses' (Desai, 2004, Benjamin 2004).

NSMs are described as 'new' because of their recent formation and because they are seen as having emerged independently (i.e. are not linked to the ANC or the established CSO sector) (Buhlungu, 2006). They are described as 'radical' (Winkler 2009, Benit-Ghaffou), ultra-left, and are said to adopt 'illegal'[10] (Malan 2007), 'oppositional', or more technical strategies and tactics (Ballard et al, 2006).

An analysis of these movements does suggest that there are changing and more diverse responses from civil society in the post 2000 period, but the tendency towards homogenising these developments should be checked.

Social movements are defined as 'politically and socially directed collectives, often involving multiple organisations and networks, focussed on changing one or more elements of the social, political and economic system within which they are located' (Ballard et al, 2006). As a first point, therefore, these organisations are not all 'movements' in the sense that only some of them (e.g. TAC) have a national or international presence (Habib 2005). Organisations like the SECC and CCG operate at a local (community) level, and focus on very particular issues.

These organisations vary greatly in size and institutional form. There is also a greater diversity of issues in the sector than the dominant analysis allows. As Ballard et al explain, 'they are by no means limited to demands for delivery or indeed to the concerns of the poor . . . some speak to legal rights, social and environmental justice, and stigmas and discrimination of certain categories of people'. (Ballard et al, 2006). The environmental movement in SA is a case in point.

A brief analysis suggests that only the Anti-Privatisation Forum is coherently claiming an ideological identity (linked to anti-neoliberalism). Most of the NSMs derive from local struggles for access to resources, and remain limited to the local context. There have not been calls from communities for a regime or political system change. Their calls have been for the current government to deliver services.

2.7.   Investigating the complexity of state-CSO relationships

The literature reviewed, in the main, argues that the relationship between the apartheid state and the CSO sector was adversarial (Habib, 2005, Kaarsholm 2009).

This was followed, in the late 1990s, by a generally amicable and cooperative relationship between the CSO sector and the state. Complex relationships were established following the transfer of personnel from the CSO sector to the government sector, the deployment of ANC cadres to key and local CSOs (Benit-Ghaffou, 2012), and the establishment of development

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[10] Referring to the TAC's at times illegal initiatives to supply ARVs

committees (Malan 2007, Kaarsholm 2009). The government also involved CSOs in national planning and policy development processes (Malan, 2007, Hearn 2000, Graham 2004, Jenkins 2004). In this period, CSOs played a key role in policy development (Patel 2012, Sidiropoulous 2014, Weideman 2004). The relationship between the government and CSOs also became 'institutionalised' (Volkhart, 2001, Warhshawsky 2013, Greenberg 2004, Jenkens 2014). Methods enabling institutionalisation included; the demilitarisation of society, the repeal of repressive legislation and processes; the introduction of enabling legislation for the voluntary registration of NPOs[11] and tax (exemption) legislation; and the introduction of additional state funding mechanisms and agencies (Volkhart 2001, Habib 2005, Warshawsky 2013, Ballard R et al 2006).

CSOs were, for these and a variety of reasons that included their long-standing personal and organisational relationships with the ANC-led government, therefore, reluctant or unable to take-on a critical role. Government, similarly, expected 'loyalty' from the CSO sector (Greenberg 2004 Nthambeleni 1999).

The state-CSO sector relationship gradually and continuously deteriorated from 1998 onward, as the CSO sector become more critical of the ANC-led government and (especially) its (macro-economic) policies (Malan 2007, Hearn 2000, Volkhart 2001, Habib 2005, Ballard R et al 2006, Warshawsky 2013, McKinley et al 2006, Greenberg 2004, Venava et al 2004). Community protests, non-payment for basic services, and the emergence of (and methods of engagement employed by) poverty-based CSOs and the NSMs is cited as examples (Malan 2007, Habib, 2005, McKinley et al 2006). Simultaneously, the ruling party became increasingly 'suspicious' of CSOs (Oldfield et al, 2006, Lewis 2014. Mdoda 2014), 'intolerant to criticism', increased 'surveillance' of the sector (Benit-Ghaffou 2012), and stepped-up tactics to 'undermine' the sector (Bihlungu, 2006, Graham 2014). In the social development (welfare) sphere, the government increasingly shifted the function of social service delivery (including welfare, housing, and in particular, health services) onto the private and CSO sectors (Malan 2007, Patel 2012). There was also reportedly an increasing reluctance (or perhaps ability) on the part of government to disseminate information. In the early 2000s, the South African government responded to less than 15% of the requests for information it has received from civil society (Peekhaus, 2011).

In critiquing the summary above, the preceding discussion on the lack of homogeneity in the CSO sector and the funding role of state has already disproved the myth of a wholly adversarial pre-1994 state-civil society relationship. It stands to reason that the diversity argument

[11] Non-Profit Act in terms of which voluntary registration and increased accountability through reporting to government resulted in benefits for NPOs. The process is coordinated by the Directorate of Non-Profit Organisations in the Department of Social Development. See Habib 2005 for more detail.

applies to post 1998 relationships as well. Not surprisingly, a number of CSO representatives were able to cite positive post 1998 relationships, as well as, cases in which they were able to hold government accountable, facilitate service delivery, or influence policy development or implementation. At a local level, experiences and tactics like those employed by the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (Oldfield 2006), SANCO (Zuern 2006), the TAC (Friedman 2006), or the Homeless People's Alliance (Khan et al 2006), demonstrate that relationships with government structures can be both cooperative and oppositional. As the reliance on CSOs for the provision of social welfare services, and the roll-out of medication (e.g. TAC) suggest, government is also not unwilling to utilise cooperative engagements to achieve its own mandate. Further, state-CSO discourse continues to take place in a liberal democratic framework.

3. Key findings

This paper set out to provide an overview of the South African CSO sector for the period 1994 to 2014. It found that a number of inaccuracies about the CSO sector have been widely accepted and perpetuated as a result of; (1) a lack of empirical research and reliance on anecdotal data, and (2) a tendency among academics and media and other civil society representatives to homogenise the CSO sector in their discussions, analyses and outputs. In this regard, the key findings of the paper are summarised:

- The paper has demonstrated that the CSO sector is not in decline, and is (and has been) complex, diverse, active, relevant, and representative of a relatively broad range of civil society interests.
- The sector has been negatively affected by a loss of human resource capacity and skills, and attraction and retention of suitably qualified and experienced employees remains a challenge.
- Although there have been important changes in the funding environment over the preceding twenty years that negatively affected components of the CSO sector, and which has necessitated adaptive behaviours among others, foreign donor funding remains available to the sector (and it seems has not declined). Further, the influence of changes in foreign donor funding is less significant than is often argued, because the CSO sector dependence on foreign donor funding is less than is claimed in the 'dominant discourse'. Foreign donors are ideologically and funding-subject diverse and do not fund specific 'types' of CSOs.
- Although donors have increased their monitoring and evaluation requirements, and although that introduces cost and opportunity constraints, it has not contributed to a lack of diversity or a decline in the CSO sector. For some organisation it has, however, contributed to increased organisational efficiency.

- The emergence of the new social movements suggests that there are changing and more diverse responses from the CSO sector post 2000. This includes a greater willingness to critically engage the government. Despite important differences among these organisations, in general, they emerge from communities and respond to local issues. They do not constitute an ideological or coherent threat to the political order, nor do they aim toward regime change. Their emphasis is on facilitating service delivery and access to socio-economic goods.

- The CSO sector-state relationship is equally diverse, ranging from collaborative to adversarial, and takes place within a liberal democratic framework.

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