

**The Relationship between Foreign Aid and
Democratization in Myanmar in respect to Civil
Society**

By

Aye Mon Paing

A thesis

**submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington
in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of International Relations**

Victoria University of Wellington

2015

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to people who helped in many ways to complete my thesis. I wish to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor Professor Stephen Levine for his guidance and invaluable support through my research. His detailed attention and encouragement significantly contributed to producing this thesis.

I am grateful to my sponsor, the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID), for providing me with full support to be in Wellington for two years to undertake a Master's Degree in International Relations at Victoria University of Wellington and to conduct my field research in Myanmar. I am really thankful to the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, especially my ministry (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and my department (East Asia and Pacific Division, Political Department) for allowing me to study for a Master's Degree.

Many thanks go to all my interviewees who gave their precious time to share their knowledge and information. My sincere thanks go to H.E. Mr. Roland Kobia, EU Ambassador to Myanmar, Mr. Chris Milligan, USAID Mission Director to Burma, Mr. Craig Gilbert, Second Secretary from Australia Embassy, Myanmar and Mr. Andy Benfield, EU consultant for their precious time, knowledge and information. Government officials from the Union Election Commission, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Planning and Economic Development and Ministry of Foreign Affairs are appreciated for all the assistance they provided for this research. I am thankful to Ma Ye Mon Oo and other friendly and helpful staff from Oxfam and other people who helped me to conduct my field research successfully.

Lastly, many thanks are due to my father, U SoePaing, who helped me to arrange interviews through his personal connections. I also want to express my thanks to my mother, Daw Aye Myint Than, for her care and confidence in me, and also other friends and family for their help and support.

Abstract

Since 2010, Myanmar has been making a transition to a democratic country after 40 years under successive military regimes. The semi-civilian government led by President U Thein Sein has been in charge of Myanmar since the democratic reform is carried out. After Myanmar's new government has carried out its democratic reform for 2 years, international assistance has come in Myanmar to assist Myanmar's democratization in 2012 unlike before 2010. Western donors who were not active in providing aid in Myanmar became enthusiastic to help Myanmar's democratization in various ways. Civil society in Myanmar is still small and informally organized to participate as a strong actor in Myanmar's democratization. Democratic aid to nurture civil society in Myanmar, which has been repressed for long time, became an important aid to strengthen democracy in Myanmar.

This thesis will analyse the relation between democratic aid through civil society and democratization in Myanmar. It is based on recently completed in-country research involving document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The paper investigates what is the impact of democratic aid through civil society on Myanmar's democratization process.

The findings of this thesis indicate that democratic aid was not delivered in Myanmar under the successive military regimes to impose democratization. Democratic aid has started to be delivered again after the Myanmar government started its process of democratization mostly due to domestic factors, such as people's dissatisfaction with the military governments. When western donors started supporting the democratization process in Myanmar, they provided democratic assistance to sustain local civil society organisations in Myanmar in order to act as a check and balance to the Myanmar government and to make it more accountable to the citizens. Democratic assistance towards civil society has been promoting the role of civil society organisations in politics, creating a platform for communication between the government and local civil society organisations to increase the all-inclusiveness in Myanmar's democratization process. With the democratic assistance from western donors, local civil society organisations became more developed and started working as one of the check and balance actors in Myanmar's politics. Thus, democratic assistance to civil society has increased the sustainability of local civil

society organisations in Myanmar to participate in the democratization process. However, democratic assistance to civil society has only started recently, in 2012, and there are challenges in providing assistance to civil society to promote democratization. If those challenges can be avoided in delivering aid to civil society, the assistance towards civil society can have a better impact on democratization in Myanmar.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| Acknowledgements | ii |
| Abstract | iii |
| Table of Contents..... | v |
| List of Abbreviations | ix |
| Map of Myanmar..... | x |
| CHAPTER (1): Overview | 1 |
| 1.1. Introduction | 2 |
| 1.2. Context of Research | |
| 1.3. Aim, Objective and Focus of the Study | |
| 1.4. Significance of the Study | |
| 1.5. Methodology | |
| 1.6. Outline of the Study | |
| CHAPTER (2): Conceptual Understanding of Terms | 9 |
| 2.1. Introduction | |
| 2.2. Democracy | |
| <i>2.2.1. Democratization</i> | |
| 2.3. Foreign Aid | |
| <i>2.3.1. Democratic Aid</i> | |
| 2.4. Civil Society | |
| 2.5. Conclusion | |

CHAPTER (3): Literature Review on Foreign Aid and Democratization.....21

3.1. Introduction

3.2. General Literature Review on Foreign aid and Democratization

3.3. Aid to Civil Society and Democratization

3.4. Electoral Support through Civil Society Organisations

3.5. Conclusion

CHAPTER (4): Myanmar's Politics and International Assistance under Successive Regimes.....33

4.1. Introduction

4.2. Myanmar's political process and the history of international assistance in Myanmar

4.2.1. Myanmar's political condition before democratization [2010]

4.2.2. The International Assistance before democratization [2010]

a) Japanese assistance to Myanmar before democratization [2010]

b) Chinese assistance before democratization

c) Other donors before democratization [2010] (Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and India)

d) Western assistance before democratization [2010] (including World Bank and Asia Development Bank [ADB])

4.3. Democratization in Myanmar, aid in Myanmar's reform era and democratic assistance from donors

4.3.1. Prior to Democratization period in Myanmar (1997 to 2010)

4.3.2. International assistance during later period of SPDC regimes and reform period in Myanmar (2008 onwards)

a)Australia Aid

b) The European Union

c) US Aid

d) DFID UK (Department of International Development)

4.4. Conclusion

CHAPTER (5): Civil Society in Myanmar.....58

5.1. Introduction

5.2. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) under military regimes

5.3. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) after reform

5.3.1. CSOs activities and their participation in democratic transitions

5.3.2. Achievement of CSOs in influencing politics

5.3.3. CSOs and the government's relation

5.3.4. Aid to CSOs from donors

5. 4. Democratic aid for civil society strengthening

5.4.1. General Overview on aid for civil society strengthening

a)DFID UK (Department for International Development)

b) US Aid

c) Paung Ku

d) Local Resource Centre (LRC)

5. 4.2. Electoral Support through CSOs

5. 5. Conclusion

CHAPTER (6): Civil Society in Myanmar.....80

6.1. Introduction

6.2. The role of democratic aid in Myanmar's democratization process

6.2.1. Aid conditionality

6.2.2. CSOs in Myanmar Democratization and aid to Myanmar CSOs strengthening

6.2.3. Limitations and Challenges in delivering aid to civil society to promote democratization

6.3. Significance of this research

6.4. Limitations and Further Suggestions

Bibliography91

Appendices101

1:Lists of Informants

2:Ethics Approval: 21329

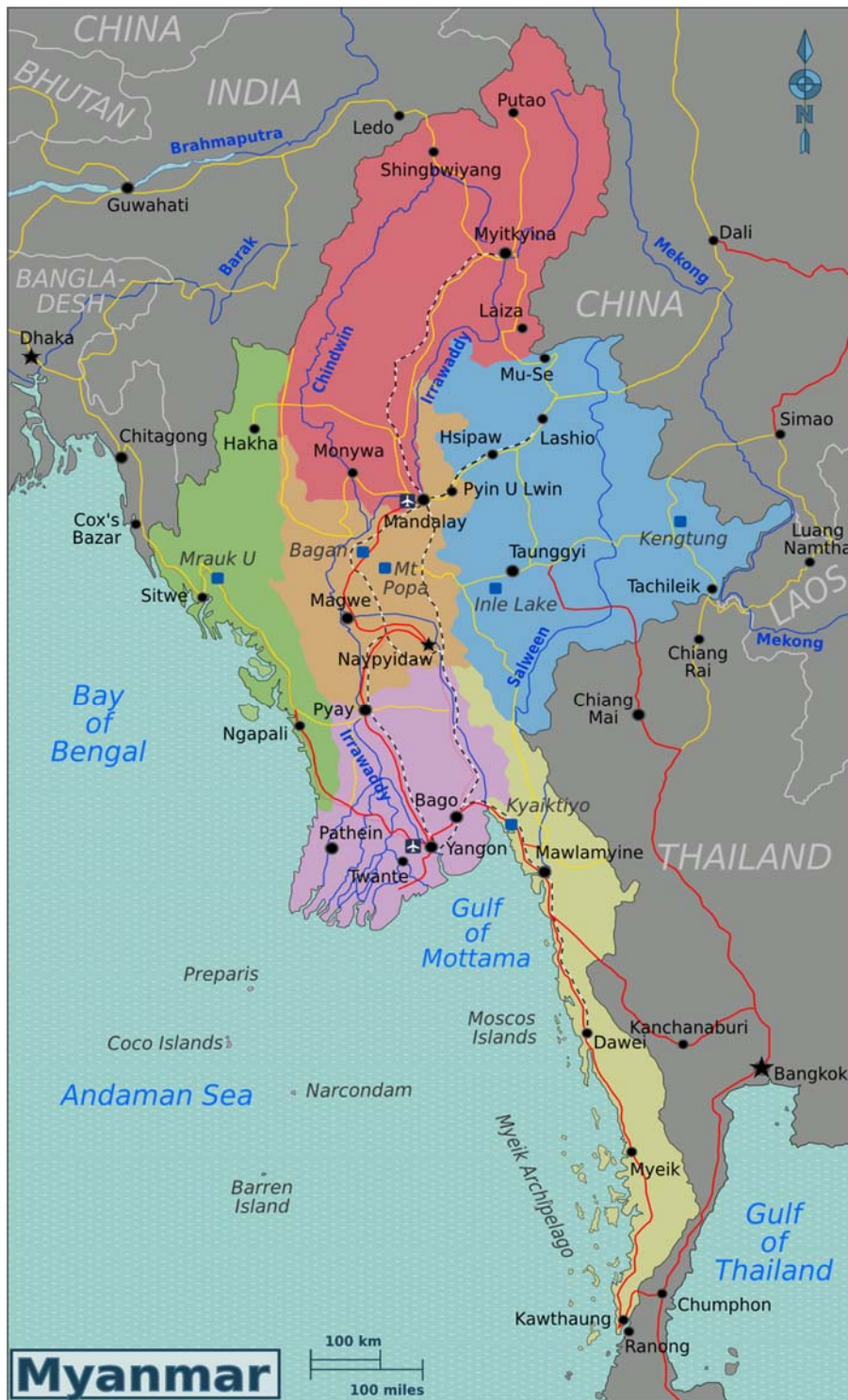
3:Socio-economic development Assistance through the United Nations system- other UN funds &Programme

4: Nay Pyi Taw Accord for Effective DevelopmentCooperations

Lists of Abbreviation

| | |
|-------|--|
| CSOs | Civil Society Organisations |
| UN | The United Nations |
| SLORC | State Law and Order Restoration Council |
| SPDC | State Peace and Development Council |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee |
| EU | European Union |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Cooperation |
| IFES | International Foundation for Electoral System |
| UEC | Union Election Committee |
| MPED | Ministry of Planning and Economic Development |
| APFL | Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League |
| FFSS | Free Funeral Service Society |
| PACE | People's Alliance for Credible Elections |
| MMCWA | Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association |
| MWAF | Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation |
| GEN | Gender Equality Network |
| WON | Women's Organisations Network of Myanmar |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| SDC | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation |
| LRC | Local Resource Centre |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |

Map of Myanmar



Chapter (1)

Overview

1.1. Introduction

Foreign aid has played a significant role in the development of small developing countries. Sometimes, foreign aid has turned the whole country into better one but it could also have negative effect on country's development too. Different kinds of foreign aid have been provided in a country with different aims according to the background and situation of the country. Certainly, aid which is aimed to promote democracy in non-democratic countries has been developed since the end of the Cold War and the “third wave” of democratization.¹ Since then, the large democratic countries such as US have used aid as one of tools of foreign policy in promoting democracy.²

The role of civil society plays an important role in promoting democracy. "This assumption derives both from theoretical expectations of the democratic potential of organized associational activity and the actual role played by civil society organizations in democratic transitions in various countries over the past two decades."³ Donors such as US aid are aware that the performance of civil society can really have an effect on democratization.⁴ Therefore, donors assume that promoting civil society in a country affect on democratization. Donors believe that civil society is "internal governance" which is able to provide voice of citizens in public debate.⁵ Citizens should have rights to demand what they need in a democratic country. Civil society is the one who can relay the messages of citizens to government. Only the strong and vibrant civil society can check the government whether they are

¹S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe, “Democracy and Democratization in developing countries”, The American study and institute for international research, Washington, DC and International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Kandy, Sri Lanka, July 1994

²S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe, “Democracy and Democratization in developing countries”, The American study and institute for international research, Washington, DC and International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Kandy, Sri Lanka, July 1994

³Robinson, Mark, and Steven Friedman. "Civil society, democratization, and foreign aid: Civic engagement and public policy in South Africa and Uganda." *Democratisation* 14, no. 4 (2007): 643-668.

⁴Ishkanian, Armine. *Democracy promotion and civil society*. SAGE publications Limited, 2010.

⁵Robinson, Mark, and Steven Friedman. "Civil society, democratisation and foreign aid in Africa." (2005).

accountable and transparent to people. Therefore, donors can provide assistance to strengthen the efficiency of civil society in order to carry out democratization in a country.

1.2. Context of the research

Since a new civilian government led by President U TheinSein came to power in early 2011, Myanmar has been carrying out their transition towards a democratic country after five decades of authoritarian rule.⁶The government has undertaken significant steps towards establishing a more open and equitable society. Democratic iconic leader Daw Aung San Su Kyi was released and the historical meeting with President U TheinSein and Daw Aung San Su Kyi was held.⁷The new government has granted releasing political prisoners and giving press and media freedom.⁸Moreover, reform in economy, poverty alleviation and rural development and other sectors such as reform in foreign investment law has been carried out.⁹Moreover, steps towards national reconciliation with ethnic-rebel groups which have long civil wars with Myanmar's military are remarkable movement towards a more democratic nations by new civilian government.¹⁰

However, there are many challenges in terms of democratization, good governance, economic development, national reconciliation, communal violence in Rakhine State, northern part of Myanmar. Likewise, better livelihood for citizens such as good education and health care system, poverty and unemployment are left to deal with. Therefore, Myanmar's reform commitments are still a long way to deliver a fully functioning democracy. This is when the role of foreign aid comes in to realise Myanmar's democratization more successfully. The international community have welcomed Myanmar current government's reform measures with rising levels of

⁶Rieffel, Lex, and James W. Fox. "Too Much, Too Soon? The Dilemma of Foreign Aid to Myanmar/Burma." *Nathan Associates Inc* (2013).

⁷ Sun, Y. (2012). "China and the Changing Myanmar." *Journal Of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 31 (4), 51-77.

⁸ Sun, Y. (2012). "China and the Changing Myanmar." *Journal Of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 31 (4), 51-77.

⁹"Myanmar Overview", World Bank, October 2014,
<http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/myanmar/overview>

¹⁰ " President U TheinSein urges EU to end submission of resolution on "Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar" at the UN General Assembly" *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Volume I, Number 18, 18-10-2014, 18 October 2014

aid.¹¹ Good-quality aid through right channel and way can definitely help in speeding up and deepening those democratic reforms. When international community has showered Myanmar with aid for development and democratization, they are providing different kinds of assistance towards state government institutions, International non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and Local civil society organisations (CSOs). They are assisting government institutions with technical assistance due to the past lesson they have learned from other countries. Apart from assistance to government, they are providing assistance to INGOs and local civil society organization in Myanmar which has just recently developed in order to support Myanmar's development and democratisation. As I said earlier in this chapter, donors in Myanmar such as US aid and EU aid have their own strategies of promoting CSOs in order to promote democratization in other countries. Informal coalitions in Myanmar have been helping their own community for better livelihood in their own way since long time ago. Strong and vibrant civil society in Myanmar will help government be accountable to citizen and represent their constituency well to the government. Therefore, donors are providing aid to civil society in Myanmar to participate in Myanmar's democratization. The link among the newly open democratic Myanmar, recently developed civil society in Myanmar and abundant presence of foreign aid is an interesting and unexplored topic.

1.3. Aim, Objective and Focus of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the role of foreign aid in democratization of recently opened Myanmar where recent increase in the amount of aid by donors is tremendous. Foreign aid is very long-term and there are different kinds of aids such as development aid, humanitarian aid, military aid and etc. In this thesis, democratic aid in Myanmar would be focused. Therefore, the main objective for this thesis is to find out the role of democratic aid in promoting civil society in Myanmar to support democratic reform process.

¹¹ Riding the wave of reform, fast-tracking Myanmar's future, Oxfam Briefing Paper, January 2014.

This thesis will focus on the main donors which are providing democratic assistance to civil society which are directly involved with Myanmar democratization. That excludes democratic aid to promote other issues such as human right, rule of law, peace building and good governance. This also does not include civil society who works on humanitarian relief and socio-economic development such as education and health.

In order to assess the above-mentioned question, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

-What was the role of aid in Myanmar before democratization? How was the role of civil society in politics before democratization?

-What is the role of aid in Myanmar now and how is the role of civil society in politics after democratization?

-How does democratic aid to civil society contribute to Myanmar's democratization process?

-What are the main achievements, challenges and constraints in providing democratic assistance to CSOs to promote democratization in Myanmar?

1.4. Significance of the Study

As mentioned earlier, Myanmar is in its early state of democracy and donors have just rushed into Myanmar to help with its democratization and development. The long-term oppressive civil society has been escaped from all restrictions and has recently been very active in carrying out Myanmar's development and democratization. Scholars such as Mark Robinson & Steven Friedman and Joseph Siegle, Stephen Brown have done their research about democratic aid and democratization in countries in Africa and Middle East.¹² However, some scholars such as Edward Aspinall have done research on a few Asian countries such

¹²"Donors' Dilemmas in Democratization: Foreign Aid and Political Reform in Africa." PhD diss., 2000.

as Indonesia and East Timor.¹³Therefore, this thesis will find out how the role of democratic aid works in democratization of Myanmar, a new country case study. Taking opportunity of my home-based research, information about civil society and political condition in Myanmar will be available. This thesis will provide insight into the role of civil society in Myanmar's politics before and after democratization. This thesis will in turn contribute by identifying the challenges and difficulties involved in providing aid for democratization in Myanmar, which would be useful information for donors, the Myanmar government and local civil society in Myanmar. This thesis will also contribute suggestions for improvement of the relations between donors to civil society.

1.5. Methodology

In this research, I have applied qualitative research to find out the role of foreign aid and democratization in Myanmar. "Qualitative methods offer direct and spontaneous sharing of information, local knowledge, expertise and experiences between researchers and participants."¹⁴Based on information, local knowledge, expertise and experiences, it helps us researchers to overview and draw conclusions from the data.¹⁵ For data collection, I used two methods: semi-structured interviews with participants relevant to my research and data collections from government, aid agencies and civil society organisations. Primary data on the role of democratic aid in democratization is generated using a case study approach, which employs semi-structured interviews. Secondary data are from academic articles on Myanmar, Myanmar newspaper articles, television reports, the official website of President's Office of Myanmar, Myanmar Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, information sheets and data sheets given from aid agencies and civil society organisations and local civil society web pages. Documents from the Myanmar government are used to get wider perspectives of the local context of Myanmar. Another secondary source is Mohingya, a website set up by Ministry of Planning and Economic Development and donors in Myanmar. It is not officially launched to the public, only to

¹³Murphy, Ann Marie. "Democratization and Indonesian Foreign Policy: Implications for the United States." *asia policy* 13, no. 1 (2012): 83-111., Edward (Assessing democratization in indonesia)

¹⁴Mikkelsen, Britha. *Methods for development work and research: a new guide for practitioners*. Sage, 2005.

¹⁵Chum, Samnang. "NGO coordination and the changing aid environment in Cambodia: Challenges and Opportunities." (2010).

government officials. I gathered information from different actors working in the aid field and data from different sources to reduce the bias and errors in the study. I conducted my field research in Myanmar over 8 weeks from 20 October to 31 December 2014.

I focused on two key informants for semi-structured interviews. They are donors who provided assistance for democratization and governance, local civil society organisations which work on issues governance, advocacy, and democratization. I do not include local civil society organisations which focus on socio-economic development such as education, health and humanitarian relief work. My second informants are government officials and staff from INGOs. I made appointments with the donors via telephone and they asked me to send a set of questions via email. Interview appointments with local civil society organisations (local CSOs) and NGOs are easily welcomed by them. Most of the staff from local CSOs are busy but they still make time to talk to researchers. Some of the interview appointments were made through personal connections. Others such as government officials and experts also welcome me to talk about their experience in aid in Myanmar. I have done interviews with 5 donor agencies, 2 INGOs, 3 local CSOs, one aid consultant, one senior government official and one mid-level government official. However, information with senior government officials would not be shared with their names. I had informal conversations with a few government officials, experts working on aid effectiveness in Myanmar.

Regarding interviews with donors, I have met with high level officials from the donors and most of them are foreigners. After selecting some donors to interview, most of my interviews with donors were conducted in their office and both in English and Burmese. Regarding with local CSOs, they were willing to be interviewed and speak frankly with me on aid issues in Myanmar. I explained to them about ethical considerations. Most interviews with donors could not be recorded since they did not let me carry any devices into their office. All the interviews with local CSOs and INGOs were recorded. For all the interviews, I have taken notes of what was said.

During my interviews, some donors, such as the World Bank and ADB, that were interviewed are not directly involved in providing assistance to democratization. Donor that I could not meet is Norwegian People's Aid. I could not meet with Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). In regards to local civil society organisations, I have selected registered, reliable, credible local civil society organisations with networks spread out over the whole of Myanmar. After most of the interviews with local CSOs, INGOs and some of the donors, they have talked to me more frankly and they told me that it would be off the record. Sometimes, information and opinions were gathered from informal conversations rather than from formal interviews.

As for secondary data, some of the information from the government is available to public. Some of the information from the government is only available to me since I am a government official. I am referring to the Mohingya website (website launched in cooperation with Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development and Donors in Myanmar) that I mentioned earlier in the first paragraph of Methodology section.

For my analysis, I would use comparative analysis and content analysis of information in order to discuss and conclude. "Content analysis involves developing 'a set of procedures to make inferences from text'; it is a method 'capable of throwing light on the ways people use or manipulate symbols and invest communication with meaning'."¹⁶ That means that I would carefully read on data and information from my research and compare with the existing literature to find out the conclusion on what is the role of democratic aid in Myanmar's democratisation.

Although there are some challenges during my field work due to time limitations, travelling and informal conversations which are not allowed to be quoted, I have gathered information to analyze my objectives for my research. Since I am a local researcher working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I have avoided many problems such as accommodation and language barriers while talking to local CSOs.

¹⁶Klotz, Audie, and Deepa Prakash, eds. *Qualitative methods in international relations*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

It is helpful to get some non-published data and get appointments easier with my personal connections. This helps the quality of thesis in authenticity.

1.6. Outline of the Study

Chapter 2 comprises a conceptual explanation of the terms democracy, democratization, foreign aid, democratic aid and civil society. I will explain which existing concept of those terms would be best suited for my research. Chapter 3 outlines a literature review covering a general overview on relations between foreign aid and democratization, aid to civil society for democratization and electoral support through CSOs. Chapter 4 explains Myanmar's political history since independence in 1948, its aid history before the reform process, the political reform process in Myanmar and aid after democratization. Chapter 5 looks at how local CSOs in Myanmar were before democratization, what was their role in politics under successive authoritarian regimes, how civil society organisations have been developed again, the current role of civil society in politics and aid to local CSOs from donors for civil society strengthening and election. Chapter 6 concludes with a discussion of the facts and data over the role of foreign aid in Myanmar's democratization process and draws an overall conclusion on how democratic aid through local CSOs has contributed to democratization in Myanmar over the past two years. Recommendations for further research will be mentioned.

Chapter (2)

Conceptual understanding of terms

2.1. Introduction

To my understanding, democracy and democratization are broad terms and can have different meanings for different people. Transition to a fully democratic country is a long process. Democratization is hard to measure. The process of democratization can be different based on their country's background and culture. Myanmar has its own political history and culture. Democratization and Democracy in the context of Myanmar will be based on its political background. Foreign aid and democratic aid have to be defined in the context of Myanmar in order to carry out this analysis. The type of CSOs which are mainly present in a country could be different. Like democratization, the term CSOs is needed to explain in order to look for the most suitable definition for CSOs in Myanmar. This chapter seeks to explain existing conceptual understanding of democracy, democratization, foreign aid and civil society, and will develop the conceptual understanding of those terms in the context of Myanmar.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section looks briefly at the original concept of democracy and how scholars have defined it. The second section discusses democratization and conceptual understanding of democratization in the Myanmar context. The third section provides an overview of the concept of foreign aid, what democratic aid is, and how democratic aid has been defined in the Myanmar case. The final section will define civil society in general and Myanmar.

2.2. Democracy

Before I came to the definition of democratization, I need to explain what a democracy means and what a democratic country should have. The simple definition of Democracy could be "rule by the people".¹⁷ A more precise definition is difficult to formulate because democracy is a term that has acquired many different meanings

¹⁷Behrouzi, Majid. *Democracy as the Political Empowerment of the People: The Betrayal of an Ideal*. Lexington Books, 2005, 9

over the course of time.¹⁸ With the very different levels and ways of development of societies in today's world, the meaning of democracy continues to be the subject of debate.¹⁹

Democracy and democratization are broad terms to define in one phrase of words. David Held defined democracy that "individuals should be free and equal in the determination of the conditions of their own lives; that is, they should enjoy equal rights (and, accordingly, equal obligations) in the specification of the framework which generates and limits the opportunities available to them, so long as they do not deploy this framework to negate the rights of others."²⁰ Generally, democracy can be understood as a system where citizens have rights to decide for their own future. In a democratic country, rule of law can protect citizens or their properties and government has to be transparent and accountable to their own citizens and work best for citizens. Citizens have the right to voice their want, need and fear and equality must be present among citizens. Women and children must have equal rights too.

Another scholar, Robert Alan Dahl, has defined democracy as having "equality".²¹ He means that everyone has the right to vote according to their democratic rule and voice freely for what they are in need and when they are unjustified. Moreover, he also argued that information should flow freely for a country to be considered a democracy, as it is a key element in creating equal competition both in the electoral process and the decision-making process.²² In a democratic country, government cannot stop citizens for speaking out loud about what is going on inside the country in reality. In addition, a free flow of information can make government listen to what citizens want so that the government is accountable.

¹⁸Engström, Jenny. *Democratisation and the prevention of violent conflict: lessons learned from Bulgaria and Macedonia*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2009, 8

¹⁹Kurki, Milja. *Democratic futures: revisioning democracy promotion*. Routledge, 2013, 246

²⁰Michael Mason, *Environmental Democracy*(Earthscan, 1999). 58

²¹Dahl: *Democracy and its critics*. 1990. Michigan law review 88, (6): 1662.

²² Jason S Enia, "Ambivalent Answers to Important Questions: The Relationship between Foreign Aid and Democracy," (2006) (cited in)

"Basically, in a democratic country, the people govern themselves by choosing their highest leaders periodically through regular elections or policies governing them."²³ In a democratic country, a true parliament which is accountable to citizens and also acts as a good check and balance to government must be present. In criteria of a democratic country, law which protects the rights of citizen should be issued and government should not be the one who set the law. Law and bills have to be passed through a genuine parliament where parliamentarians elected by citizens from their constituency to represent their wishes are present. "There is law above the state to which all authorities adhere, that provides the framework for democratic rule, and that protects democratic rights."²⁴ Democracy, therefore, now generally means that people rule themselves through periodic elections of their highest leaders under the rule of law. Myanmar has been under successive military regimes for five decades and Myanmar citizen have lost all their rights of participation in politics to decide their own future. Democracy in Myanmar means equal rights for all citizens to make collective decisions for their own society.²⁵

2.2.1 Democratization

Transition to democracy or promotion of democracy does not happen in a short period of time and it occurs in a specified period of time.²⁶ Democratization basically means a model of the process of democratization which is the movement from non-democratic (communism, socialism, authoritarian) to democratic rule. It is a complex, long-term process involving different phases. "Democratization is mainly driven by internal pressures, but the international community can assist it in a number of ways."²⁷

²³Powers, Roger S., William B. Voge, Christopher Kruegler, and Ronald M. McCarthy, eds. *Protest, power, and change: an encyclopedia of nonviolent action from ACT-UP to women's suffrage*. Vol. 1625. Taylor & Francis, 1997.

²⁴Powers, Roger S., William B. Voge, Christopher Kruegler, and Ronald M. McCarthy, eds. *Protest, power, and change: an encyclopedia of nonviolent action from ACT-UP to women's suffrage*. Vol. 1625. Taylor & Francis, 1997.

²⁵ Interview with Representatives from civil society organisations

²⁶Schumpeter, J.A. (1947). *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. London: Henderson and Spalding.

²⁷Kalyvitis, Sarantis, and Irene Vlachaki. *Democratic aid and the democratization of recipients*. Contemporary Economic Policy 28, no. 2 (2010): 188-218. 2

Samarasinghe defined "democratization as a process of political change that moves the political system of any given society towards a system of government that ensures peaceful competitive political participation in an environment that guarantees political and civil liberties."²⁸ "This is a concept that captures the dynamic quality of democratic evolution in any society."²⁹

Democratization tends to occur in countries which are unstable and prone to conflict due to long term repression of former governments or ethnic diversity. Democratization has usually happened due to the people movements under repressive regimes. In South Korea, popular movement of people brought about democratization.³⁰ In those countries, citizens have been discriminated against and repressed. Governments have been highly restrictive over the free flow of information, media and rights of citizen to express freely. Usually, citizens have to live in fear and their lives are under extreme poverty. Governments themselves cannot fulfill citizen's basic needs such as health care, clean water and education. Moreover, government institutions are also not strong enough to perform their functions and are corrupted. Leaders themselves are also corrupted. Therefore, citizens start resistance movements targeting the government. However, democratisation in Myanmar is not related to the term "democratisation by movement."

For Huntington, "democratisation can be created even by the ruling government itself even if people do not want it."³¹ Democratization could be imposed by government with a top-down approach. Authoritarian government in Myanmar itself decided to democratize due to the unrest in the country, pressure from the international community, a shortage of natural resources, difficulties in finance and a potential threat to the country from neighbouring countries. In this case,

²⁸S. W. R. de A. Samarasinghe, *Democracy and Democratization in Developing Countries*(Boston, Massachusetts: Department of Population and International Health, Harvard School of Public Health, 1994).

²⁹S. W. R. de A. Samarasinghe, *Democracy and Democratization in Developing Countries*(Boston, Massachusetts: Department of Population and International Health, Harvard School of Public Health, 1994).

³⁰Ki, Kim Ho. *Development of Democratization Movement in South Korea*. Stanford Korea Democracy Working Paper, 1993.

³¹Huntington, S. P. (1997). *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*. London: Simon and Schuster.

democratization is imposed from a top-down method and government tries to achieve democratic norms and values in the country. According to Dahl, "a democracy must provide citizens with opportunities for understanding civic issues as well as allow them control over the matters that reach the decision making agenda."³² When government uses a top-down democratization approach, Myanmar government has to reflect Dahl's definition of democracy in their process of democratization. Therefore, civic participation for a decision-making agenda is an important democratic norm to materialize in Myanmar's democratization. Myanmar's democratization should be towards a more rule-based, more consensual and more participatory type of politics.

For Richard L. Sklar, "greater scope for civil society groups to organize and educate the people can gradually erode the hegemony of the ruling party and even produce a surprising breakthrough to electoral democracy."³³ Democratization in Myanmar is supposed to have greater scope for people to reduce the hegemony of the government. Therefore, democratization in this thesis means greater participation of people in the political agenda to make the Myanmar government accountable. The extent of democratization in Myanmar will be measured on the achievement of people to mobilize over important issues in the decision making agenda.

2.3. Foreign Aid

"The standard definition of foreign aid comes from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which defines foreign aid (or the equivalent term, foreign assistance) as financial flows, technical assistance, and commodities that are designed to promote economic development and welfare as their main objective (thus excluding aid for military or other non-development purposes)."³⁴

³²Dahl, Robert Alan. *Democracy and its Critics*. Yale University Press, 1991.

³³ Richard L. Sklar, "Developmental Democracy," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29 (October 1987): 686-714, and "Towards a Theory of Developmental Democracy," in Adrian Leftwich, ed., *Democracy and Development: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1996): 25-44.

³⁴Steven Radelet, "A Primer on Foreign Aid," *Center for Global Development working paper* 92(2006).

"The foreign aid is defined as a voluntary transfer of public resources, from a government to another independent government, to an NGO, or to an international organization (such as the World Bank or UN Development Programs) with at least a 25 percent grant element, one goal of which is to better the human condition in the country receiving the aid."³⁵ This above definition in Steven Radelet's working paper is more specified and it includes that foreign aid is aimed to improve human conditions.

"Most aid has been given as **bilateral assistance** directly from one country to another. Otherwise, donors also provide aid indirectly as **multilateral assistance**, which pools resources together from many donors through major multilateral institutions such as the World Bank; the International Monetary Fund; the African, Asian, and Inter-American Development Banks, and various United Nations agencies; such as the United Nations Development Programme."³⁶ "Aid can be in the form of grants or concessional loans in kind or in the form of debt relief. These transfers can fund diverse set of activities; investment projects and research activities, economic or political reform programs, technical advice and training and humanitarian relief."³⁷

Over time, foreign aid was used for four main purposes: diplomatic, developmental, humanitarian relief and commercial.³⁸ From the early 1960s to the late 1980s, an era of intense superpower competition and foreign aid has been provided in the context of strategic alliance.³⁹ During that time, the USSR supported strategic allies, especially Marxist-Leninist regimes, and the US and other Western donors provided economic assistance to developing countries that helped contain communism and Soviet 'expansionism'.⁴⁰ For other European donors such as France and Britain, aid was given in the context of political stability; human rights and other democratic

³⁵Steven Radelet, "A Primer on Foreign Aid," *Center for Global Development working paper* 92(2006).

³⁶Steven Radelet, "A Primer on Foreign Aid," *Center for Global Development working paper* 92(2006).

³⁷Lancaster, *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Politics*.

³⁸Lancaster, *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Politics*.

³⁹Brown, Stephen. "Foreign aid and democracy promotion: Lessons from Africa." *The European Journal of Development Research* 17, no. 2 (2005): 179-198.

⁴⁰Brown, Stephen. "Foreign aid and democracy promotion: Lessons from Africa." *The European Journal of Development Research* 17, no. 2 (2005): 179-198.

values were not priorities.⁴¹ However, in the 1990s during the third wave of democratization, bilateral and multilateral donors changed their priorities for assistance to democracy promotion. Since then, donors provide aid for the purpose of democracy promotion.

2.3.1. Democratic Aid

Since the waves of democratization that have occurred in the 1990s, the democratic countries, especially the US, have been using foreign aid as a tool to promote democracy around the world. Since that time, it has been widely accepted that aid has been used as leverage to promote democracy and good governance, and strengthen public institutions and civil society apart from other existing purposes. The most common tool for promoting democracy is democratic aid although it has also been pointed out that many of the most important results of democracy programs are "intangible, indirect, and time-delayed".⁴² However, Carothers argued that "the greatest impact of democratic aid has often been the transmission of ideas that will change people's behavior".⁴³

For Carothers, democratic assistance comprises "*aid specifically designed to foster opening in a nondemocratic country or to further a democratic transition in a country that has experienced a democratic opening.*"⁴⁴ Democratic assistance is provided to foster a democratic government system, norms and values in a non-democratic country especially in authoritarian countries such as Myanmar. Democratic assistance is provided in the areas of elections, civil society strengthening, promotion of human rights and gender equality, upgrading government institutions to be accountable and transparent and parliamentary strengthening. Dietrich and Wright also pointed out that democracy assistance is often aimed at strengthening public institutions and strengthening civil society.⁴⁵

⁴¹Brown, Stephen. "Foreign aid and democracy promotion: Lessons from Africa." *The European Journal of Development Research* 17, no. 2 (2005): 179-198.

⁴²Kalyvitis, Sarantis, and Irene Vlachaki. "Democratic aid and the democratization of recipients." *Contemporary Economic Policy* 28, no. 2 (2010): 188-218.

⁴³Carothers, Thomas. 1999. *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

⁴⁴Carothers, Thomas. 1999. *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

⁴⁵Wright, Joseph and Dietrich, Simone, 'Foreign Aid and Democratic Development in Africa', UNU-WIDER working paper, May 2013,

"Fundamentally, democratic aid can influence the political environment in the recipient by strengthening the internal governance and political efficacy of civil society organizations through the provision of financial and technical resources."⁴⁶ Financial support from donors is necessary to increase the efficacy of independent organizations in developing countries such as Myanmar. That financial assistance from donors to promote democratic issues can be regarded as democratic aid. Free and fair elections are necessary to reflect a true democratic nation.⁴⁷ Election observations from independent bodies such as local civil society organizations or foreign observers are required to organize to support free and fair elections.⁴⁸ In order to organize impartially for independent bodies in developing countries like Myanmar, technical and financial assistance from donors is essential for them.

"Democratic aid can facilitate political dialogue between polarized actors, foster consensus and compromise, influence the contours of the political debate, delineate the contents of the reform agenda and change the incentive structure."⁴⁹ Myanmar has had a long standing civil war among ethnic groups and the military. Peace and stability are necessary in Myanmar's democratization. Dialogues among state actors are important to carry out democratization especially in Myanmar with ethnic conflicts or which is carrying out government-led reform to build trust among state actors. Democracy assistance can potentially also have a major impact on civil society organizations and their ability to engage effectively with state institutions since civil society organizations can strengthen their capacity and organizational structure to gain trust from government.

Influenced by these ideas and events, donors became increasingly aware of the role and potential of civil society in democratic transitions in the developing world. In particular, donors supported civil society organizations to engage in dialogue with

⁴⁶Robinson, Mark, and Steven Friedman. "Civil society, democratisation and foreign aid in Africa." (2005).

⁴⁷ UN doc. A/54/178, 'Letter dated 19 July 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General', 27 July 1999.

⁴⁸ Declaration of Global Principles for non-partisan election observation and monitoring by citizen organisations and code of conduct for non-partisan citizen election observers and monitors, Commemorated April 3, 2012, at the United Nations, New York

⁴⁹Santiso, C. "International co-operation for democracy and good governance: Moving toward a second generation?" *European Journal of Development Research*, 13(1), 2001, 154-180.

government authorities and advocate with them over key areas of policy and legislation, in order to increase greater citizen participation in public debate and decision-making processes.⁵⁰ Democratic assistance in Myanmar can be assistance for civil society strengthening, rule of law, parliament and peace-building by reflecting all the definitions mentioned by scholars. Civil society strengthening will be focused to study the relation between democratic aid and democratization in Myanmar. Civil society might be one of the actors which can materialize Myanmar's democratization. Donors in Myanmar focus on democratic assistance towards civil society organizations to be participatory in the political process, to cooperate with the government in moving forward with the democratization process, monitor the government's performance and make citizens' voice heard by government. In addition, during my field work in Myanmar, international donors provided assistance to CSOs to carry out voter education and technical support to CSOs to be able to act as independent observers for Myanmar's upcoming election in 2015. Civil society organizations in Myanmar are essential to ensure that the 2015 election will be free and fair and reflect the citizens' will. In order to monitor elections and have a capacity to work with governments and the Union Election Commission, civil society organizations have to be well-equipped with capacity and finance. Democratic assistance for the above-mentioned areas will be focused on in this thesis.

2.4. Civil Society

Civil society is one of the three important sectors of society, along with government and business, in carrying out the democratization process. Civil society can influence the strength and speed of democratization in a country.⁵¹ "Under the right conditions, civil society can contribute to the democratization of authoritarian regimes and can help to sustain a democratic system once it is established".⁵² Civil society has been one of the main driving forces to government for going forward with democratization since they voice the will of the citizen to the government. To

⁵⁰Robinson, Mark, and Steven Friedman. "Civil society, democratisation and foreign aid in Africa." (2005).

⁵¹Ishkanian, Armine. *Democracy promotion and civil society*. SAGE publications Limited, 2010.

⁵²Carothers, Thomas, and Marina Ottaway, eds. *Uncharted journey: promoting democracy in the Middle East*. Carnegie Endowment, 2010, 82

be able to achieve democracy, government should be accountable to citizens. Civil society will monitor the government's performance whether they are accountable to citizens or not.

"Civil-society organizations (CSOs) can supplement the role of political parties in encouraging people to get involved in politics, especially as voters in elections."⁵³ Political participation from various actors in the reform process strengthens the legitimacy and the institutionalization of democratic government, which are essential for democratization.⁵⁴ Civil-society organizations in many democracies perform the function of representing the interests and asserting the rights and power of the people.⁵⁵ Civil society organizations are the ones who are closest to the citizens, compared to the government and private sector, since civil society organizations themselves are born from the citizens. They can understand the public's interest. They can help the public to organize their interests together and can help to build communication between grass-roots level citizens and the government. Larry Diamond defines that "civil society involves private citizens acting collectively to make demands to the state or to express in the public sphere their interests, preferences and ideas or to check the authority of the state and make it accountable."⁵⁶ Since accountability and transparency are important in a democratic government, civil society can monitor the government's performance and whether it is reflecting well the citizen's demands. Hall also argues that "civil society has been portrayed as playing a role in controlling the state and as the organization of strong and autonomous groups that balance the state".⁵⁷

In countries under authoritarian rule such as Myanmar, civil society organizations are very restricted from being established legally or working with the government to represent civil society interests. Therefore, they usually form coalitions to solve their daily social problems with the people who are interested in solving the same

⁵³Bunbongkarn, Suchit. "The role of civil society in democratic consolidation in Asia." *Center for International Exchange* (2001): 230, 137-143

⁵⁴Bunbongkarn, Suchit. "The role of civil society in democratic consolidation in Asia." *Center for International Exchange* (2001): 230, 137-143

⁵⁵Dwivedi, MrsSangitSarita. "Civil Society and Democracy in East Asia with Special Reference to South Korea."

⁵⁶Larry Diamond. *Developing democracy: Toward consolidation*. JHU Press, 1999.

⁵⁷John R Hall, *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison*(John Wiley & Sons, 2013).

problem. They carry out their tasks with their own traditional style and culture. Jürgen Habermas's definition of civil society is that "it is made up of more or less spontaneously created associations, organizations and movements, which find, take up, condense and amplify the resonance of social problems in private life, and pass it on to the political realm or public sphere."⁵⁸ In countries like Myanmar, civil society does not start with a strong organizational structure like other actors such as political parties and institutions. The typical strong civil society organizations are meant to provide a broad and voluntary membership and a leadership that is accountable and responsive and a multi-layered organizational structure.⁵⁹ These kinds of strong civil society organizations cannot emerge initially in newly democratized countries such as Myanmar. In addition, newly democratic governments also lack trust in these social coalitions and see them as political activists who always negatively challenge them. Therefore, unlike the concept of civil society mentioned above, CSOs are not always born with strong leadership and a multi-layered organizational structure in newly democratic and developing countries such as Myanmar.

Civil societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities, non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups.⁶⁰ Civil society organizations in some countries such as Myanmar are issue-based such as gender equality, election observation or religious organizations. They only focus on a single issue to promote in their region and they are not interested in working together to promote other issues in other areas. For example, gender equality organizations in certain regions are not interested in working for women's rights for the whole country. Even though many scholars and organizations have defined civil society organization in different forms, it basically means in a political sense that civil society organizations are non-profit and non-governmental organizations which are working to represent people's voice and hold the government accountable. Since

⁵⁸Anheier, Helmut. *Civil Society: "Measurement, Evaluation, Policy"*. Routledge, 2013. (cited in) (main source in France)

⁵⁹Ib Anheier, Helmut. *Civil Society: "Measurement, Evaluation, Policy"*. Routledge, 2013. (cited in) (main source in France)

⁶⁰Najam, Adil. "Understanding the third sector: Revisiting the prince, the merchant, and the citizen." *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 7, no. 2 (1996): 203-219.

Myanmar is a newly democratized country and not all civil society organizations are strong yet, this thesis will focus on civil society organizations which are already active in Myanmar's political process and have strong organizational structures to be able to find better results for my research. My definition of civil society organizations will include local Civil Society organizations which have been active in the political process and are currently cooperating with governments and parliaments to be accountable to the citizen's needs. However, my definition does not include INGOs, political parties and political activist groups as CSOs.

2.5.Conclusion

Even though democratic aid is not the only source for democratization in developing countries, democratic aid can change the speed and strength of democratization in those countries. Democratization is simply changing the political system where people can have their rights and express themselves freely. All-inclusiveness in the political process is the most important task in democratic countries. Civil society is representative of citizens to participate in the political mainstream and their participation would be reflecting all-inclusiveness in the political process. Therefore, increasing civil society participation in the policy making process can bring a more democratic society in a country. In order to increase civil society participation in politics, democratic aid from donors can enhance their capacity and structure to effectively carry out their tasks.

When democratic aid is aimed to promote democratization by enhancing civil society, the result can be positive or negative by researching the existing relation between democratization and democratic aid due to other variable factors. In the next chapter, I will discuss the existing arguments about democratic aid through civil society and democratization before studying democratic aid for democratization in Myanmar, which may not be as effective as donors think since no one has done research on the relation between these two factors in Myanmar. My thesis will be on the analysis of the relation between democratic aid towards civil society and democratization in Myanmar using content analysis method and comparative analysis.

Chapter (3)

Literature Review on Foreign Aid and Democratization

3.1. Introduction

As aid, democratization and civil society are broad terms, I have researched the definitions of those terms in order to be compatible with Myanmar in chapter (2). In this chapter, the existing arguments of scholars on foreign aid and democratization will be studied. In detail, the impact of aid through civil society on democratization in other countries which are similar to Myanmar in context would be looked at to help to understand what will happen in the case of Myanmar.

This chapter includes existing arguments on foreign aid and democratization which will explain how foreign aid can impact on democratization with some relevant case studies. It will also specify about arguments on aid to civil society to promote democratization which will explain about the positive and negative impact and challenges of aid to civil society to promote democratization. It will touch on election support to civil society a little in order to understand how aid supports democratization.

3.2. General Literature Review on Foreign aid and Democratization

Aid has been given in the context of promoting democracy to developing countries since the start of the democratic wave in the 1990s.⁶¹ During the cold war, democratic countries aimed to prevent small, poor developing countries falling into communism and socialism rather than to promote democracy.⁶² "With the disappearance of communism and Soviet expansionism as credible threats to the US and its allies, security considerations lost much of their relevance and no longer in grave need of strategic alliances in the developing world, donors became more closely involved in the domestic matters of weaker states."⁶³ Major western donors support those developing countries which are unstable and have difficulty in making

⁶¹Rakner, Lise, Alina RochalMenocal, and Verena Fritz. "Democratisation's Third Wave and the Challenges of Democratic Deepening: Assessing International Democracy Assistance and Lessons Learned." (2007). 1

⁶²Brown, Stephen. "Foreign aid and democracy promotion: Lessons from Africa." *The European Journal of Development Research* 17, no. 2 (2005): 179-198.

⁶³Brown, Stephen. "Foreign aid and democracy promotion: Lessons from Africa." *The European Journal of Development Research* 17, no. 2 (2005): 179-198.

a transition to a democratic system. Among the international community, it is widely believed that democracy is a universal aspiration and that it is legitimate to promote and support democracy abroad.⁶⁴

Many scholars (Djankov, Montalvo, and ReynalQuerol 2008; Dunning 2004; Goldsmith 2001; Knack 2004) have done their research on the effect of foreign aid on democratization in various aspects, both qualitatively and quantitatively.⁶⁵ Their research indicated either that aid has achieved results in promoting democratization; or that aid has failed to achieve democratization; or that aid has had little impact on democratization. These are the three logical possibilities - success, failure or no effect at all. Some (Dunning 2004; Goldsmith 2001) argued that aid can have a positive impact on democratization by creating better institutions or a stronger domestic force to push government to democratize.⁶⁶ However, some scholars (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2009; Smith 2008; Djankov, Montalvo, and Reynal-Querol 2008; Rajan and Subramanian 2007; Bräutigam and Knack 2004; Bauer 2000) have seen that aid can make authoritarian regimes stronger and contribute a negative result for democratization.⁶⁷

Since aid has been a popular tool to promote democracy abroad in the 1990s, donors have used a political conditionality approach to help authoritarian governments to make a transition towards democratic government.⁶⁸ In political conditionality, donors have used aid as a carrot or a stick.⁶⁹ If authoritarian regimes move forward towards democratization, they will provide assistance for that country. If they do not do so, donors will end assistance. "Aid conditionality can require increased democratization as a condition of continued assistance, compelling aid recipients to

⁶⁴Rakner, Lise, Alina RochalMenocal, and Verena Fritz. "Democratisation's Third Wave and the Challenges of Democratic Deepening: Assessing International Democracy Assistance and Lessons Learned." (2007). 1

⁶⁵Wright, Joseph. "How foreign aid can foster democratization in authoritarian regimes." *American journal of political science* 53, no. 3 (2009): 552-571.

⁶⁶Dutta, Nabamita, Peter T. Leeson, and Claudia R. Williamson. "The Amplification Effect: Foreign Aid's Impact on Political Institutions." *Kyklos* 66, no. 2 (2013): 208-228., 4

⁶⁷Dutta, Nabamita, Peter T. Leeson, and Claudia R. Williamson. "The Amplification Effect: Foreign Aid's Impact on Political Institutions." *Kyklos* 66, no. 2 (2013): 208-228., 4

⁶⁸Emmanuel, Nikolas G. "Democratization in Malawi: Responding to International and Domestic Pressures." *African and Asian Studies* 12, no. 4 (2013): 415-434.

⁶⁹Emmanuel, Nikolas G. "Democratization in Malawi: Responding to International and Domestic Pressures." *African and Asian Studies* 12, no. 4 (2013): 415-434.

decentralize their political institutions."⁷⁰ Aid conditionality can be the force for governments and domestic actors inside the countries to democratize. Analysing the democratization of Malawi, Nikolas G. Emmanuel argued that "aid conditionality can promote democratization in certain cases under specific conditions - primarily high level of aid dependence in recipient, the presence of close inter-donor coordination, a strong and persistent domestic opposition inside the aid beneficiary."⁷¹ However, in the study by Bratton and van de Walle (1997: 219) in Sub-Saharan Africa, political conditionality is more effective in promoting democratization in an authoritarian country compared to pushing forward for full democratic transition and democratic consolidation.

In the analysis of the relationship between foreign aid and democratization that is carried out by Goldsmith, when aid has been provided to carry out structural reform in government, government also has to carry out democratic reform in order to receive aid since structural reform of the government is the basic need of the democratic reform.⁷² Aid can be a reward to autocratic regimes that undertake political reform. In that case, recipients have seen the benefit of aid to the country and move forward with their democratization. A second argument of Goldsmith is that aid may be given directly in the name of political reform either as an incentive or a reward for doing so.⁷³ These are the ways of political conditioning aid by donors in order to promote democratization in authoritarian regimes. Myanmar was under authoritarian regimes but is now imposing democracy with a top-down method. There was no political aid as a carrot or an incentive to push former authoritarian regimes to democratize. Political conditionality to Myanmar for aid started after the process of democratization had started. Aid was provided as a reward for democratization to be promoted further. It is interesting to know about the impact of this kind of political conditionality of aid on Myanmar's democratization.

⁷⁰Dutta, Nabamita, Peter T. Leeson, and Claudia R. Williamson. "The Amplification Effect: Foreign Aid's Impact on Political Institutions." *Kyklos* 66, no. 2 (2013): 208-228., 4

⁷¹Emmanuel, Nikolas G. "Democratization in Malawi: Responding to International and Domestic Pressures." *African and Asian Studies* 12, no. 4 (2013): 415-434.

⁷²Goldsmith, Arthur A. "Foreign aid and statehood in Africa." *International organization* 55, no. 01 (2001): 123-148.

⁷³Goldsmith, Arthur A. "Foreign aid and statehood in Africa." *International organization* 55, no. 01 (2001): 123-148.

Goldsmith has made another argument, namely that as foreign aid is directed toward civil society to strength their internal governance and political efficacy, a strengthened civil society can be able to influence the political environment in a country to be more democratic.⁷⁴ Civil society in Myanmar has just come out of repression and started to be active in politics. According to Goldsmith's argument, donors provide democratic assistance to civil society to strengthen their internal governance and political efficacy in Myanmar. On the other hand, Carapico makes an argument examining the case of the Arab world, where much of the aid flowing to that region has been directed at supporting non-governmental entities involved in democratization projects. Carapico points out that this only serves to exacerbate the state-society tensions within countries, as governments object to the aid on the grounds that it violates their sovereignty.⁷⁵ Therefore, aid towards civil society for democracy promotion can have both positive and negative impacts. This is the main focus of this research: to study about the democratic assistance towards civil society in Myanmar to promote democratization.

Knack suggests that aid can positively affect electoral processes in the form of technical assistance. It can also have a positive impact on the promotion of civil society and the strengthening of the judiciary and legislative branches of government, which can serve as checks on the executive power.⁷⁶ Another way of promoting democracy is strengthening the judiciary and legislative branches of government, which can be seen in Myanmar. However, this thesis will not focus on assistance to government institutions in Myanmar.

When donors have given financial assistance towards government institutions, aid can be misused by governments and governments will no longer depend on taxes of citizens. Thereby, governments will not listen to citizens' wishes; governments will work the way they want to and will not care about citizens or democratic ways. In that case, unresponsive government institutions will have emerged and democracy will not have been achieved. Knack (2004) argues that "aid might reduce

⁷⁴Goldsmith, Arthur A. "Foreign aid and statehood in Africa." *International organization* 55, no. 01 (2001): 123-148.

⁷⁵Carapico, Sheila. "Foreign aid for promoting democracy in the Arab world." *The Middle East Journal* (2002): 379-395.

⁷⁶Knack, Stephen. "Does foreign aid promote democracy?." *International Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (2004): 251-266.

the need for taxation, thereby reducing the demand for democratic accountability or aid might increase the power of the president in democracies."⁷⁷ Similarly, Djankov, Montalvo, and Reynal-Querol (2008) argue that "aid hurts democracy because a large amount of aid can reduce the incentives for democratic accountability. When revenues do not depend on the taxes raised from citizens and business, there is less incentive for accountability".⁷⁸

There can be another challenge that authoritarian governments may not utilize assistance in promoting democracy, and instead may use aid for the country's leader's personal welfare. From Friedman (1958) and Bauer (1971) to recent World Bank policy briefs (Harford and Klein 2005; Islam and Coviello 2006; Kenny 2006), critics of foreign aid have argued that "aid impedes democratization because it keeps in power dictators who, without aid, would presumably fail, or better yet, democratize."⁷⁹ Joseph Desire Mobutu's regime in the former Zaire is a prominent example of a brutal dictator kept in power with Western aid.⁸⁰ Democratic assistance is misused by the leaders of authoritarian regimes and it leads to more autocratic rule in a country due to aid. Moreover, aid can be misused in the military or in any other areas which are unnecessary for a country's development or can even bring about conflicts between communities. Collier and Hoeffler in 2007 argued that "aid money displaces government funds originally destined for specific projects, or because recipient governments simply utilize aid funds for military spending, rather than for their intended purposes."⁸¹ Sometimes, government can be over dependent on aid and they lose their capacity to carry out their own tasks. Rehman Sobhan argued "that continued provision of aid can make recipients lose their capacity to think for themselves and thereby relinquish control."⁸² Those arguments imply that aid can have a negative impact on democratization if it is not delivered in the right way to

⁷⁷Knack, Stephen. "Does foreign aid promote democracy?." *International Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (2004): 251-266.

⁷⁸Djankov, Simeon, Jose G. Montalvo, and Marta Reynal-Querol. "The curse of aid." *Journal of Economic Growth* 13, no. 3 (2008): 169-194.

⁷⁹Wright, Joseph. *Political regimes and foreign aid: how aid affects growth and democratization*. ProQuest, 2007.

⁸⁰Wright, Joseph. "How foreign aid can foster democratization in authoritarian regimes." *American journal of political science* 53, no. 3 (2009): 552-571.

⁸¹Strandow, Daniel, Josh Powell, Jeffrey Tanner, and Michael Findley. "The geography of foreign aid and violent armed conflict." *Available at SSRN 1676788*(2010).

⁸²Bräutigam, Deborah A., and Stephen Knack. "Foreign Aid, Institutions, and Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa*." *Economic development and cultural change* 52, no. 2 (2004): 255-285. (cited in)

the right actor at the right time. Most of the arguments above are direct financial assistance to regimes to democratize. Donors in Myanmar have not provided any direct financial assistance to the Myanmar government for democratization. Most of the assistance to government institutions is technical.

There is a survey conducted by Joel D. Barkan, professor emeritus of political science at the University of Iowa, on the impact of democratic assistance on the democratization of recipient countries.⁸³ According to this survey, "sixty-five percent stated that democratic assistance "made a great difference" in helping *their* organizations to achieve their goals, while only 5 percent stated that democratic assistance had made "little or no difference" or had "complicated [their] efforts".⁸⁴ Therefore, generally, it can be assumed that the chance of democratic assistance to have good impact on democratization is more. Almost 90 percent of respondents believe that democratization ultimately depends on domestic forces or domestic forces supported by democratic assistance.⁸⁵ It proves that developing countries are in need of financial or technical assistance to carry out democratisation effectively.

3.3. Aid to Civil Society and Democratization

As I have mentioned in Chapter (2), democratic assistance can promote democratization through strengthening the capacity of CSOs to check and balance the government. Many of the democracy promotion success stories are about the countries in Central and Eastern Europe where strong civil society organisations are present.⁸⁶ Indonesia is one of the success stories of democratisation through strong civil society.⁸⁷ However, democracy promotion effort through civil societies in some countries such as the former Soviet Union, sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East

⁸³BarkanJoe.D, "Perceptions of Democracy Assistance: Survey of Recipients", World Movement for Democracy (2011), <http://www.wmd.org/projects/democracy-assistance/survey-recipients>

⁸⁴BarkanJoe.D, "Perceptions of Democracy Assistance: Survey of Recipients", World Movement for Democracy (2011), <http://www.wmd.org/projects/democracy-assistance/survey-recipients>

⁸⁵BarkanJoe.D, " Perceptions of Democracy Assistance: Survey of Recipients", World Movement for Democracy (2011),

⁸⁶Ishkanian, Armine. *Democracy promotion and civil society*. SAGE publications Limited, 2010.

⁸⁷Carothers, Thomas. *Assessing democracy assistance: the case of Romania*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996.

did not succeed for democratic regimes where the vibrant, independent civil societies did not exist.⁸⁸

Since 1991, bilateral and multilateral Western donor assistance for democracy promotion, especially for civil society development, has increased dramatically.⁸⁹ Civil society strengthening subsequently became a central part of democracy promotion programmes implemented in both transitioning and developing countries. Since 1989 donors have focused on strengthening, building, nurturing and supporting the institutions of civil society, training civil society activists and funding their projects as a means of promoting democracy.⁹⁰ However, judging from Goldsmith and Caproia's arguments, a substantial amount of funding towards civil society will not always result in democracy promotion and stronger civil society.

"Democracy assistance can potentially also have a major impact on civil society organisations and their ability to engage effectively with state institutions as these organisations depend heavily on foreign aid and grants, which are sizeable in relation to their income."⁹¹ Most CSOs start out informally and their financial status is usually weak initially. CSOs usually have to depend on assistance provided by international and local donors. In developing countries, the donations from local people are not much. They usually have to rely on international donors. CSOs who work for advocacy usually have to depend on democratic assistance from international donors to strengthen their institutions and capacity. Democratic assistance can have an impact on the influence of CSOs on politics in the country. Since Myanmar is a poor developing country, democratic assistance for CSOs is important for them to carry out their tasks.

However, there can be a problem when donors are strict with their requirements for CSOs to get funded in development countries. Donors should be careful in choosing civil society organizations in order to avoid reducing the legitimacy of those civil

⁸⁸Ishkanian, Armine. *Democracy promotion and civil society*. SAGE publications Limited, 2010.

⁸⁹Jamal, Manal A. "Democracy Promotion, Civil Society Building, and the Primacy of Politics." *Comparative Political Studies* 45, no. 1 (2012): 3-31.

⁹⁰Ishkanian, Armine. *Democracy promotion and civil society*. SAGE publications Limited, 2010.

⁹¹Robinson, Mark, and Steven Friedman. "Civil society, democratisation and foreign aid in Africa." (2005).

society organizations.⁹² Donors usually choose to support civil society organizations which are registered legal entities even if they are not truly representatives.⁹³ Donors choose CSOs which meet with their requirements and standards, and which are supposed to have institutional structure. However, a lot of small CSOs cannot get funded due to the donor's strict requirement to get funding. This also can cause CSOs to follow what donors want and CSOs become no longer credible to citizens.

When donors are the main source of finance to set up or maintain organizations strong enough to carry out their tasks, a problem of donor-driven agendas in aid agency can occur. Malawi is a good example. Donors have been supporting of Malawi's domestic actors to carry out democratization.⁹⁴ However, donors suspended aid until multiparty elections were held and domestic actors did not have the strength to defend democratization after the election.⁹⁵ "There is no one to defend the public's interests or ensure that the government follows democratic rule. The government becomes strong and other actors become weak disproportionately."⁹⁶ "Thus, with little domestic pressure to sustain the democratization process, a rapid and peaceful donor-driven transition might sometimes – quite paradoxically – hinder future efforts."⁹⁷ When foreign aid has been suspended for a while, the civil society who can hold government accountable and act as a check and balance may become weak. Therefore, democratization has been hindered in Malawi due to the shortcoming of foreign aid. Democratic assistance has just started in Myanmar. A shortage of democratic assistance cannot occur at this time since donors are keen to support Myanmar's newly begun democratization.

⁹²Robinson, Mark, and Steven Friedman. "Civil society, democratisation and foreign aid in Africa." (2005).

⁹³Robinson, Mark, and Steven Friedman. "Civil society, democratisation and foreign aid in Africa." (2005).

⁹⁴Emmanuel, Nikolas G. "Democratization in Malawi: Responding to International and Domestic Pressures." *African and Asian Studies* 12, no. 4 (2013): 415-434.

⁹⁵Emmanuel, Nikolas G. "Democratization in Malawi: Responding to International and Domestic Pressures." *African and Asian Studies* 12, no. 4 (2013): 415-434.

⁹⁶Emmanuel, Nikolas G. "Democratization in Malawi: Responding to International and Domestic Pressures." *African and Asian Studies* 12, no. 4 (2013): 415-434.

⁹⁷Emmanuel, Nikolas G. "Democratization in Malawi: Responding to International and Domestic Pressures." *African and Asian Studies* 12, no. 4 (2013): 415-434

Sometimes, donors left out important civil society organizations such as professional associations and religious bodies which are vital for countries' political process according to the nature of the countries but aid tend to flow to NGOs without firm indigenous foundations.⁹⁸ This case can be seen in Myanmar. Many INGOs are carrying out their social development tasks in Myanmar before democratization. They continue to carry out democratization and good governance programs in Myanmar. INGOs cannot carry out some tasks that only local CSOs can only carry out, such as lobbying MPs and advocating laws. Providing democratic assistance to INGOs would not be as effective as to local CSOs.

However, unless there is a genuine domestic mass movement against an authoritarian regime, foreign support will have little effect.⁹⁹Beissinger (2006) and Herd (2005) agree that the financial support of Western countries and NGOs was crucial, but that revolutions against governments emerged from domestic dissatisfaction and were not instigated from abroad.¹⁰⁰ Sometimes, democratization has already happened due to the mobilization of people and foreign aid was not the main support for them. In Myanmar, democratic assistance was not present to have an impact at the start of democratization.

We can look at the example of donors providing aid to strengthen civil society in order to promote democratization. In Indonesia's democratization process, donors have put more funding towards civil society to strengthen them to hold government accountable and to advocate law.¹⁰¹ However, there was also significant donor support for government institutions, which seems important for the political transition, such as to the General Elections Commission (KPU), the National Human Rights Commission, the Supreme Court, and the national legislature.¹⁰² According to the research done by Edward Aspinall, "democratic assistance in Indonesia plays an important role to support civil society organizations to advocate rule of law and

⁹⁸Yom, Sean L. "Civil society and democratization in the Arab world." *Middle East*9, no. 4 (2005): 15.

⁹⁹Albrow, Martin, Helmut K. Anheier, Marlies Glasius, Monroe E. Price, and Mary Kaldor, eds. *Global civil Society 2007/8: communicative power and democracy*. Sage, 2007. (cited in)

¹⁰⁰Albrow, Martin, Helmut K. Anheier, Marlies Glasius, Monroe E. Price, and Mary Kaldor, eds. *Global civil Society 2007/8: communicative power and democracy*. Sage, 2007.

¹⁰¹Aspinall, Edward. "Assessing democracy assistance: Indonesia." *Fride Project Report* (2010).

¹⁰²Aspinall, Edward. "Assessing democracy assistance: Indonesia." *Fride Project Report* (2010).

to promote human rights issues on the political agenda."¹⁰³ Therefore, from the donors' perspectives, they believed that democratic assistance towards Indonesia to strengthen civil society has had a very good impact on democratization in Indonesia.¹⁰⁴ From the recipient's perspectives in Indonesia, the impact of democratic assistance was mixed. Democratic assistance provided to civil society organizations or political parties in Indonesia is sometimes not very effective since it may increase the capacity of the individual but it does not have much impact on the overall improvement of civil society or organizations or political parties. Edward Aspinall suggested that views of the usefulness and impact of donor assistance on Indonesian democracy development, or particular sectors of it, tend to be most mixed and least enthusiastic among recipients from political parties and, especially, the government bureaucracy in particular.¹⁰⁵ Civil society in Indonesia complains about the challenges dealing with the donors since donors set their requirements for local civil society organizations to be eligible to apply for funding.¹⁰⁶ However, the views of civil society activists in Indonesia on the impact of democracy assistance are generally more positive. Indonesia and Myanmar have the same political background since both countries moved to democratic regimes from authoritarian regimes. Donors could be using the same methods that used in Indonesia to provide democratization in Myanmar. I will discuss about how donors promote democratization in Myanmar in an upcoming chapter.

When civil society in a country which is in the process of democratizing is developing, it can have a good impact on democratization, since those civil society organizations can act together as a force or coalition to pressure government to be accountable. Moreover, those civil society organizations can work together to demand for government what citizens need. The mushrooming NGO movement is pressing governments to be accountable, to adhere to the rule of law, and to abide by broad principles of good government.¹⁰⁷ Civil society in Myanmar has started to develop more since the start of the process of democratization. Therefore, collective

¹⁰³Aspinall, Edward. "Assessing democracy assistance: Indonesia." *Fride Project Report* (2010).

¹⁰⁴Aspinall, Edward. "Assessing democracy assistance: Indonesia." *Fride Project Report* (2010).

¹⁰⁵Aspinall, Edward. "Assessing democracy assistance: Indonesia." *Fride Project Report* (2010).

¹⁰⁶Aspinall, Edward. "Assessing democracy assistance: Indonesia." *Fride Project Report* (2010).

¹⁰⁷Carothers, Thomas, and Marina Ottaway, eds. *Uncharted journey: promoting democracy in the Middle East*. Carnegie Endowment, 2010.

action of civil society organisations can have an impact on Myanmar's democratization.

3.4. Electoral support through CSOs

Elections are an essential part of the democratic development and consolidation of every state since it can increase civic participation in the political process.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, major donor countries and organizations have provided substantial support for elections in many countries.

"Technical assistance devoted to helping organize democratic elections and supporting election infrastructure, such as providing security at voting locations, monitoring election-day activities, and providing external observers who can certify the legitimacy of electoral outcomes, may also improve recipient countries' democracy."¹⁰⁹ In Ghana's democratization, donors have contributed to it by helping to improve voter registration, providing technical assistance to Ghana's Electoral Commission, supporting the education of Ghana's voters, and supplying vital equipment such as ballot boxes and registration form scanners.¹¹⁰ Donors have also helped promote a fruitful dialogue between parties about the issues surrounding elections.

"Gyimah-Boadi and Yakah argue that continued donor support for civil society organizations campaigning has enabled them to undertake a number of successful projects to increase governmental transparency and accountability."¹¹¹ Donors provide electoral assistance to CSOs to carry out electoral observations and to communicate with the Election Commission in the process of preparing for free and fair elections. In Ghana, donors financed a project in 1996, spearheaded by local

¹⁰⁸ "The Electoral Cycle Approach: Effectiveness and sustainability of electoral assistance", ISPI Working Paper, July 2011

¹⁰⁹ Dutta, Nabamita, Peter T. Leeson, and Claudia R. Williamson. "The Amplification Effect: Foreign Aid's Impact on Political Institutions." *Kyklos* 66, no. 2 (2013): 208-228.

¹¹⁰ Gyimah-Boadi, Emmanuel, and Theo Yakah. *Ghana: The limits of external democracy assistance*. No. 2012/40. WIDER Working Paper, 2012.

¹¹¹ Gyimah-Boadi, Emmanuel, and Theo Yakah. *Ghana: The limits of external democracy assistance*. No. 2012/40. WIDER Working Paper, 2012.

civic groups, to carry out the first non-partisan election observation.¹¹² This kind of assistance has helped Ghana in its democratization process. Therefore, electoral support through CSOs in Myanmar can be useful in holding free and fair elections which are observed by independent society.

3.5. Conclusion

According to the existing literature, democratic assistance to developing countries for their promotion of democracy has both positive and negative results depending on the way donors work and on the country. However, we have seen a successful case study, Indonesia, of how democratic aid has helped civil society to be strong and can act as a support to government in their democratization process. We also have found out that donors' behaviour in a country like Malawi can also slow down democratization. Election observation by CSOs can increase democratic values of a country. Donors have been coming into Myanmar after 2012 to support Myanmar's democratization. Since aid can possibly have a positive impact or a negative impact on a country's democratization process, in the next chapter I am going to write about Myanmar's political system, aid in Myanmar throughout successive regimes and aid during its current transitioning democratic regime.

¹¹²Gyimah-Boadi, Emmanuel, and Theo Yakah. *Ghana: The limits of external democracy assistance*. No. 2012/40. WIDER Working Paper, 2012.

Chapter (4)

Myanmar's Politics and International Assistance under Successive Regimes

4.1. Introduction

As mentioned in previous chapters, Myanmar used to be one of the most politically isolated countries in the world. Recently it carried out democratic reform measures under a new civilian government. After the international community has seen the Myanmar government's commitment towards democracy, massive international assistance has been flowing into Myanmar. Myanmar would be an interesting and new case study for the role of democratic aid on democratization since foreign aid has become present in Myanmar in its process of democratic transition.

To find out the role of democratic aid in democratization, research should be done on Myanmar's political system and the international assistance present in Myanmar until now. In this chapter, I discuss aid in Myanmar and Myanmar's political condition before 2010. Myanmar's political reforms and aid in Myanmar after 2010 will also be discussed. Moreover, I will research donors and what donors are mainly working on in Myanmar to improve the conditions of the Myanmar people. I will narrow down my research to donors who are mainly supporting democratization in Myanmar and how are they providing assistance. I will write about donors' point of view on democratization in Myanmar and assisting democratization in Myanmar.

4.2. Myanmar's political process and the history of international assistance in Myanmar

4.2.1 Myanmar's political condition before democratization [2010]

Myanmar is known ethnically and culturally as one of the most diverse nations in Asia. It is situated in Southeast Asia, and is bordered by China on the northeast, Laos on the east, Thailand on the southeast, Bangladesh on the west, India on the northwest, the Bay of Bengal to the southwest, and the Andaman Sea on the south. The country covers an area of 677,000 square kilometers. The total population is estimated at 51 million as of 2014 census.¹¹³

¹¹³ The population and housing census of Myanmar 2014, Summary of the Provisional Results, Department of Population, Ministry of Immigration and Population, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, August 2014.

According to the 1983 official statistics, there are 135 ethnicities with their distinct languages and cultures.¹¹⁴ The 8 major ethnic groups with their own land are Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine and Shan. The largest ethnic group is Bama, comprising approximately 60% of the population and occupying 40% of the landmass; the rest belongs to other ethnic nationalities. The main religions of the country are Buddhism (89.2%), Christianity (5.0%), Islam (3.8%), Hinduism (0.5%), Spiritualism (1.2%) and others (0.2%).¹¹⁵ The Chins, Kachins and Karens are predominantly Christians, while the majority Bama and other ethnic groups are mainly Buddhists.

Myanmar gained its independence from Great Britain in 1948. Its political system included, at independence, a bicameral legislature, a prime minister and a cabinet.¹¹⁶ The Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) government faced armed risings of ethnic rebels, asking for separation from the early 1950s. However, the AFPFL government split into two factions in 1958 and U Ne Win's military took over the country for two years until 1960.¹¹⁷ After elections in 1960, the U Nu government won the elections but his policy of making Buddhism the main religion in Myanmar caused riots and the military government took over again.¹¹⁸ The U Ne Win's military government ruled Myanmar from 1962 until 1972 under a revolutionary council.¹¹⁹ In 1974, U Ne Win resigned from the military and set up a new constitution providing for a unicameral legislature and only one legal political party.¹²⁰ Economic strife and ethnic tensions throughout the 1970s and 80s led to antigovernment riots in 1988.¹²¹ The series of governments that followed failed to restore order. The military seized control under the name of the State Law and Order

¹¹⁴ Than Naing Lin and ZawGoan, "resources, conflicts and challenges in Myanmar ethnic communities", <http://www.ecojesuit.com/resources-conflicts-and-challenges-in-myanmar-ethnic-communities/7105/>

¹¹⁵ Sang, LianThang Peter. "The role of civil society in promoting democracy, good governance, peace and national reconciliation in Myanmar." (2013).

¹¹⁶ "Constitutional Profile Myanmar", <http://www.constitutionnet.org/country/constitutional-profile-myanmar>

¹¹⁷ "Myanmar", <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/world/myanmar-history.html>

¹¹⁸ "Myanmar", <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/world/myanmar-history.html>

¹¹⁹ Devi, KonsamShakila. "Myanmar under the Military Rule 1962-1988."

¹²⁰ Devi, KonsamShakila. "Myanmar under the Military Rule 1962-1988."

¹²¹ Devi, KonsamShakila. "Myanmar under the Military Rule 1962-1988."

Restoration Council (SLORC); demonstrators were suppressed.¹²² The SLORC government ruled Myanmar, changing the name of the government to SPDC (State Peace and Development Council) in 1997.¹²³ Under 20 years of dictatorship rule in Myanmar, people lived under extreme poverty with difficult access to health care and education. According to the review made by the UK government, 16 million people in Burma live in desperate hardship and average annual salaries there hover at around \$US400.¹²⁴ UK government also suggests that the government has allocated only 1.3 percent of a revised budget to the healthcare sector, while nearly a quarter will go to the military.¹²⁵

4.2.2. The International Assistance before democratization [2010]

Throughout the history of Myanmar, the internal situation and domestic politics of Myanmar has been unstable due to ethnic conflicts and communist insurgencies. Series of governments have failed to look after the Myanmar people since there was no peace and stability in the country. Under U Ne Win's military regime and Socialist regimes since, Myanmar followed "the Burmese Way to Socialism" which is a closed system.¹²⁶ During that time, there was less international assistance targeted at the development of the country rather than assistance which was mostly beneficial for donors. Most financial support during U Nu's terms and the military regimes came from Asian governments such as Japan, China, India and Thailand.¹²⁷ However, Asian partners are more likely to stress infrastructure investment and less likely to back common donor approaches or governance initiatives.¹²⁸ During the military regimes from 1989 to 2010, due to the political system and dictatorship rule in Myanmar, Myanmar has long been the region's lowest recipient of overseas aid, despite it having Southeast Asia's lowest GDP per capita and ranking 132 out of 169

¹²² "Myanmar", <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/world/myanmar-history.html>

¹²³ Johansson, Anna E. "Silent Emergency Persists: The Limited Efficacy of US Investment Sanctions on Burma, A." *Pac. Rim L. & Pol'y J.* 9 (2000): 317.

¹²⁴ "UK become top donor to Burma", DVB, March 2011, <https://www.dvb.no/news/uk-to-become-top-donor-to-burma/14523>

¹²⁵ "UK become top donor to Burma", DVB, March 2011, <https://www.dvb.no/news/uk-to-become-top-donor-to-burma/14523>

¹²⁶ Bunte, Marco. "Burma's Transition to 'Disciplined Democracy': Abdication or Institutionalization of Military Rule?." (2011).

¹²⁷ interview with officials from Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

¹²⁸ Burke Adam, "Myanmar and foreign aid - recent changes, risks and opportunity", Background Paper for policy practise, 25 August 2013, https://www.academia.edu/4814076/Background_paper_for_Myanmar_and_foreign_aid_recent_changes_risk_and_opportunity

global countries in the UN's Human Development Index.¹²⁹ Japanese assistance, assistance from China and other Asian donors is discussed in order to prove that most of the international assistance are from Asian donors which mainly focus on their benefit rather than Myanmar's political and economic development.

(a) Japanese assistance to Myanmar before democratization [2010]

Japanese assistance to Myanmar in the 1950s can obviously be seen to benefit them since in the 1950s; Japan leveraged its aid program to secure political influence and economic access.¹³⁰ During those years, Japanese governments gave assistance to Myanmar, announcing that it is reparation.¹³¹ This included investment and technical support which can also be beneficial for Japan. For example, the reparation funded for the Buluchaung aid project, supported by Nippon Corporation and they had never been asked by the Burmese government and it brought massive benefit to exports for Japanese industry.¹³² During U Ne Win's rule of state coup and socialist system, Myanmar received a large amount of aid from Japan in total of US\$2.2 million.¹³³ Even though Myanmar was receiving assistance from Asian donors, it was not truly for the purpose of development in Myanmar.

Due to the brutal suppression of popular protest in 1988, one of the biggest Asian government financial supporters to the Myanmar government, till 1988, the Japanese government, also joined international condemnation in suspending its aid program to Myanmar.¹³⁴ Although Japan resumed its aid program in February 1989, after the announcement by the SLORC government about general elections, domestic and international pressure was given to the Japanese government to sanction Myanmar. Therefore, according to the 1992's Japanese ODA charter, Japanese aid to Myanmar

¹²⁹Pan, Nam. "Japanese ODA to Asian Countries."

¹³⁰Reilly, James. "China and Japan in Myanmar: aid, natural resources and influence." *Asian Studies Review* 37, no. 2 (2013): 141-157.

¹³¹Reilly, James. "China and Japan in Myanmar: aid, natural resources and influence." *Asian Studies Review* 37, no. 2 (2013): 141-157.

¹³²Reilly, James. "China and Japan in Myanmar: aid, natural resources and influence." *Asian Studies Review* 37, no. 2 (2013): 141-157.

¹³³Reilly, James. "China and Japan in Myanmar: aid, natural resources and influence." *Asian Studies Review* 37, no. 2 (2013): 141-157.

¹³⁴Kudo, Toshihiro. *Myanmar and Japan: How close friends become estranged*. Japan external trade organization (JETRO). Institute of developing economies (IDE), 2007, p.7

Those UN agencies and international organizations worked as service delivery before 2010.¹⁶² UN agencies and international organizations themselves dealt with the grass roots level in order to build schools, roads, water sanitation and other rural development projects and health projects.¹⁶³ On the other hand, those international agency donors provided assistance to governments for the socio-economic development of Myanmar. For instance, UNEP was providing assistance and cooperating with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in Myanmar since 1990.¹⁶⁴ In addition, FAO has been cooperating with the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.¹⁶⁵ They have been working with concerned ministries in order to upgrade the socio-economic life of Myanmar citizens. However, UN agencies and international organizations mostly delivered assistance themselves for health care and other services under the rule of military dictatorship. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) also provided a small amount of technical assistance through the UNDP.

Under the rule of military governments, western countries did not provide bilateral assistance to Myanmar as political conditionality. Aid from western countries did not attach the condition to impose democratization in Myanmar unlike in other countries in which aid was as an incentive to start democratization. During those eras, multi-lateral aid from the UN and other international organizations only provided socio-economic development assistance in order to upgrade the livelihood of Myanmar citizens. Appendix (2) shows the amount of socio-economic development assistance given to Myanmar governments in respective sectors through the UN agencies and international agencies.

SLORC had ignored the 1990 election result, stayed in power and shut down the country to the outside world.¹⁶⁶ The Myanmar military government itself continued

¹⁶² Personal Interviews with KyawSoe Lynn, communication officer from World Bank, 25 November 2014, Yangon

¹⁶³ Personal Interviews with KyawSoe Lynn, communication officer from World Bank, 25 November 2014, Yangon

¹⁶⁴ "Socio-economic development assistance through the United Nations System - other UN Funds & Programs" , Foreign Economic Relations Department, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

¹⁶⁵ "Socio-economic development assistance through the United Nations System - other UN Funds & Programs" , Foreign Economic Relations Department, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

¹⁶⁶ Crackdown "Repression of the 2007 Popular Protests in Burma", Human Right Watch, Volume 19, No.18 (C) December 2007,

to deny basic freedoms and placed undue restrictions on aid agencies.¹⁶⁷ Aid agencies under the military government could not effectively carry out their functions to deliver necessary assistance to the needy in Myanmar.

Therefore, the international assistance towards Myanmar was minimal based on its GDP compared to other countries and could not be effectively delivered due to the restrictions from the government. International assistance presence under military governments until 2010 was mostly for aid for infrastructure from neighbouring countries and socio-economic development assistance through UN agencies. There was no democratic aid presence to government or civil society organizations or political activists inside the country in order to persuade the military governments or other political actors to pursue democratization in Myanmar. Exceptionally, there were other US-based 'democracy support' programmes, such as those run by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Radio Free Asia (RFA)/Voice of America (VOA) and Open Society Institute (OSI) programmes of George Soros. These organisations had Burma democracy support programmes. However, these programmes do not make claims that they were in any way responsible for the post-2011 reforms. The activities of CSOs that they support cannot work freely to promote democratization in Myanmar at that time. Democratic aid was not the main force behind Myanmar's democratization before 2010. However, some claim that the poor targeting of sanctions affected only Myanmar people rather than regimes since the quantity of overseas development assistance (ODA) going into Myanmar was lower than Cambodia, despite having a population three times the size.¹⁶⁸

4.3. Democratization in Myanmar, aid in Myanmar's reform era and democratic assistance from donors

4.3.1. Prior to Democratization period in Myanmar (1997 to 2010)

Since 1997, the SPDC government, which was changed in name from SLORC, ruled Myanmar, and promised to draft a new constitution by forming a national

¹⁶⁷RoughneenSiamon, "Post Nargis Hopes Dashed as Election Looms", The Irrawaddy, April 2010, http://www2.irrawaddy.org/print_article.php?art_id=18346

¹⁶⁸ "UK become top donor to burma", DVB, March 2011, <https://www.dvb.no/news/uk-to-become-top-donor-to-burma/14523>

convention.¹⁶⁹ In 2003, the Prime Minister of the SPDC government, KhinNyunt, designed a seven point road map for Myanmar, which included a referendum, a new constitution and elections for the country.¹⁷⁰ However, the movement towards a new constitution and transition towards a democratic country was slow.

Due to the SPDC government's brutal suppression in 2007 of the Saffron Revolution, the Myanmar government faced intense international criticism.¹⁷¹ Therefore the SPDC government held the National Convention, which was the first and second step towards democracy, according to them.¹⁷² In 2007, the SPDC formed a 54-member drafting committee for the constitution, the third step towards democracy, and held a referendum for the new constitution in May 2008, when a large number of the population was actually struggling for survival in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis.¹⁷³ At the end of May 2008, the SPDC announced that almost 98 per cent of the people took part in the referendum, and out of that 92.48 per cent voted in favour of the draft constitution. In November 2010, the SPDC government held the nation-wide election and the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), a party backed by SPDC, won the election.¹⁷⁴ A semi-civilian government led by President TheinSein, the former chairman of the USDP, took power in March 2011 and put Myanmar on the path of democratization. After the formation of the new government with TheinSein as President, many reform measures have taken place. President U TheinSein has met with democratic leader Daw Aung San Su Kyi and other political leaders and asked them to work with the government and listened to what their desires were.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, President U TheinSein granted amnesty to political prisoners, introduced a relaxation of press and internet censorship, and

¹⁶⁹Myoe, Maung Aung. "A historical overview of political transition in Myanmar since 1988." (2007).

¹⁷⁰Holliday, Ian. "Voting and violence in Myanmar: nation building for a transition to democracy." (2008): 1038-1058.

¹⁷¹ Crackdown "Repression of the 2007 Popular Protests in Burma", Human Right Watch, Volume 19, No.18 (C) December 2007,

¹⁷²Martin, Michael F. *Burma's 2010 Elections: Implications of the New Constitution and Election Laws*. DIANE Publishing, 2010.

¹⁷³Martin, Michael F. *Burma's 2010 Elections: Implications of the New Constitution and Election Laws*. DIANE Publishing, 2010.

¹⁷⁴Hlaing, Kyaw Yin. "Understanding recent political changes in Myanmar." *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 34, no. 2 (2012): 197-216.

¹⁷⁵Hlaing, Kyaw Yin. "Understanding recent political changes in Myanmar." *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 34, no. 2 (2012): 197-216.

implemented new labour laws that allowed unions and strikes.¹⁷⁶ Even if the democratization process of Myanmar appears to be slow and sometimes seems to be moving backwards, the new civilian government is definitely on the move to democratization. Myanmar citizens are enjoying more freedom than in the past and have more rights to express their opinions. Although Myanmar has yet to become a fully-fledged democracy, many citizens, political activists and even Western governments have now accepted that the new administration has provided more political space to the country's citizens and opposition groups, and that further political liberalization is possible.

4.3.2. International assistance during later period of SPDC regimes and reform period in Myanmar (2008 onwards)

After cyclone Nargis in 2008, international assistance to Myanmar became active again since the government could not provide necessary assistance to victims.¹⁷⁷ Since cyclone Nargis, bilateral humanitarian assistance was increased from western donors, such as the US, UK, EU, Australia, and Sweden.¹⁷⁸ Even though the military government blocked international relief assistance due to the fear of invasion from outsiders, finally the government had to allow international aid agencies to carry out their activities in cyclone affected areas in the delta. However, the problems faced by international agencies – and, to some degree, local aid groups – ranged from simply getting access to the affected areas to ensuring relief supplies were distributed effectively and reached the intended beneficiaries.¹⁷⁹ During the time of Nargis, the U.S., France and the UK sent naval ships carrying the necessary relief aid to Myanmar even though the Myanmar government did not let the US ship into Myanmar territory.

Due to the humanitarian effort to save lives in cyclone Nargis, aid to Myanmar was restarted again from western donors. International donors and agencies have focused more on humanitarian aid in Myanmar other than socio-economic development aid.

¹⁷⁶Hlaing, Kyaw Yin. "Understanding recent political changes in Myanmar." *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 34, no. 2 (2012): 197-216.

¹⁷⁷ Personal Interviews with Officials from Oxfam, Yangon, 2 December 2014

¹⁷⁸ "Aid starting to trickle into Burma: agencies", CTV News, <http://www.ctvnews.ca/aid-starting-to-trickle-into-burma-agencies-1.293822>

¹⁷⁹ "listening to voices from inside: Myanmar Civil Society's Response to Cyclone Nargis", Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies

Humanitarian assistance peaked at US\$522 million in 2008, when it was the seventh largest recipient of humanitarian assistance.¹⁸⁰ According to the Myanmar profile issued in 2011 on the global humanitarian assistance website, which is based on data from the World Bank, Development Credit Agreement and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, "humanitarian assistance accounts for nearly quarter of aid to Myanmar."¹⁸¹ "Major donors to the sector are the US and EU and most humanitarian assistance is delivered through NGOs and multilateral organizations. A further 23% of total aid goes to agriculture and food security."¹⁸² "Health is the third sector of aid to Myanmar."¹⁸³ Therefore, until 2011, the international community or donors have been more focused on humanitarian aid after Nargis apart from initial socio-economic development aid to Myanmar. There was no political aid in order to push the military regime to democratize until the new civilian government gained trust from the international community in 2012 that Myanmar was on the path of democratization.

The international community welcomed Myanmar's reform by increasing the level of aid.¹⁸⁴ It seems that the international community believes that Myanmar can go forward with its political transition if necessary assistance is provided to increase democratic criteria and at last bring development and prosperity to the citizens. Dr. KanZaw, Union Minister for Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, also admits that "the rapid pace of development would be impossible without generous international cooperation."¹⁸⁵ It can be said that aid for political transition has been provided only since 2012.

From 2000 to 2011, total donors were 54 and total aid commitment to Myanmar was only 254.5 million.¹⁸⁶ Most aid went to education and health.¹⁸⁷ There was aid for

¹⁸⁰Myanmar Profile, Global Humanitarian Assistance, <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/countryprofile/myanmar>

¹⁸¹Myanmar Profile, Global Humanitarian Assistance, <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/countryprofile/myanmar>

¹⁸²Myanmar Profile, Global Humanitarian Assistance, <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/countryprofile/myanmar>

¹⁸³Myanmar Profile, Global Humanitarian Assistance, <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/countryprofile/myanmar>

¹⁸⁴ Riding the wave of reform, fast-tracking Myanmar's future, Oxfam Briefing Paper, January 2014.

¹⁸⁵ "Guide to International Assistance in Myanmar", issued by Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, July 201

¹⁸⁶ The webpage only available to government officials and donors currently, <http://mohinga.info/en/>, As of January 2015

government and civil society sector, and it only accounts for 43 million in US dollars even though it is the fourth sector to which donors provide assistance after education, health and agriculture.¹⁸⁸ Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) is the donor who was supporting to strengthen civil society sector before reform.¹⁸⁹ SIDA started carrying out Myanmar Civil Society Strengthening Programme (BCSSP) programs in only January 2011.¹⁹⁰ Other western donors such as Aus Aid and EU were providing aid to civil society in order to carry out humanitarian relief and socio-economic development in grass-root level.¹⁹¹ Western donors rarely supported the government sector development due to the military regime.¹⁹² After reform, now there are 73 donors to Myanmar and total aid committed to Myanmar from those donors is 7.2 billion from 2012 till now.¹⁹³ The main focus sectors of aid are still mostly on socio-economic development for Myanmar citizens such as health, transport and goods storage, energy generation and supply, agriculture, water and sanitation, and education.¹⁹⁴ However, there are more donors and aid programs, such as US aid and UK DFID (Department for International Development), focusing on good governance and civil society strengthening sector.¹⁹⁵

Good governance and civil society participation in the political process is the most important feature of democratization. When Myanmar is in the process of democratization, it can be said that one of the most important areas to improve in a healthy democracy is the Myanmar government's institutions and civil society. It seems that donors are increasing their attention to development of government institutions and civil society strengthening sectors according to their experiences in

¹⁸⁷ The webpage only available to government officials and donors currently, <http://mohinga.info/en/>, As of January 2015

¹⁸⁸ The webpage only available to government officials and donors currently, <http://mohinga.info/en/>, As of January 2015

¹⁸⁹ The webpage only available to government officials and donors currently, <http://mohinga.info/en/>, As of January 2015

¹⁹⁰ The webpage only available to government officials and donors currently, <http://mohinga.info/en/>, As of January 2015

¹⁹¹ Personal Interview with Mr. Cragis, AusAid, 4 Dec 2014, Yangon and Personal Interview with EU Ambassador, 27, Dec 2014

¹⁹² informal conversation with officials from Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

¹⁹³ The webpage only available to government officials and donors currently, <http://mohinga.info/en/>, As of January 2015

¹⁹⁴ The webpage only available to government officials and donors currently, <http://mohinga.info/en/>, As of January 2015

¹⁹⁵ The webpage only available to government officials and donors currently, <http://mohinga.info/en/>, As of January 2015

other countries. During the reform era, different donors have different ways of providing different kinds of assistance in Myanmar.¹⁹⁶ Japan and India are the two bilateral donors which continue their support to Myanmar, although Chinese aid has been slowed down after democratic reform.¹⁹⁷ Even though Japan is the biggest donor in Myanmar from 2012 to 2014, contributing 1.6 billion US dollars aid in total, they mostly provide aid in debt relief, infrastructure, education sector, health, humanitarian aid and water-sanitation.¹⁹⁸ Japan is providing a public financial management project, which is planning to advise and assist the Ministry of Finance in establishing a new treasury department; to assist the Budget Department of the Ministry of Finance to draw up a strategic road map for improving the budget formulation process; in capacity building initiative; and in wider public financial management reforms.¹⁹⁹ Improving local governance and capacity development of legal and judicial sectors are also sectors to which the Japan government is providing assistance.²⁰⁰ Therefore, Japan helps Myanmar democratization through providing assistance to government institution and government projects in order to build strong government institutions. Civil society strengthening was not the main focus for Japan.

¹⁹⁶ Interviews with government officials from Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, 2 Dec 2014. Nav Pvi Taw

¹⁹⁸ The webpage only available to government officials and donors currently, <http://mohinga.info/en/>

²⁰⁰ the report for Foreign Economic Relations Department of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development of Myanmar in respect to bilateral and multilateral development partners operating in and for Myanmar, November 2013

²⁰² "The balancing Act: Myanmar between China and US", China and US Focus, August 2014, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/the-balancing-act-myanmar-between-china-and-the-us/>

According to data from the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, China is not even listed as a donor. It may be because there are problems measuring China's aid, and that possibly overall aid from China's government may not be declining. Meanwhile, India is stepping up its assistance to Myanmar in agriculture sector and building infrastructure.²⁰³ Myanmar is emerging as the biggest recipient of Indian development aid after Afghanistan.

World Bank and ADB are two international financial institutions which started to re-engage with Myanmar for its development after Myanmar's democratization. Between the two of them, the World Bank is a multi-lateral donor which works with government to provide assistance for socio-economic development of Myanmar apart from western bilateral donors.²⁰⁴ It provided 254.9 million US dollars in total aid to Myanmar from 2012 to 2014.²⁰⁵ The aim of the World Bank is to reduce extreme poverty and to promote shared prosperity. The World Bank is helping to raise living standards of Myanmar aligned with the Myanmar government's policy.²⁰⁶ The World Bank's goal is the same as the Myanmar government's aim. The World Bank cooperates with the Myanmar government institutions in order to fill the gap where additional capacity in Myanmar is needed. For instance, they work with the Ministry of Electric Power to upgrade the existing Thaton Gas Turbine station and provide technical assistance focused on institutional and capacity building to the Ministry of Electric Power and the Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise.²⁰⁷ The World Bank is the donor which is focusing on government institution reforms.²⁰⁸ However, the World Bank emphasis consultation with a wide range of stakeholders when consideration of starting a particular project in order to bring democratic values in working with government institutions.²⁰⁹ Before carrying

²⁰³ The webpage only available to government officials and donors currently, <http://mohinga.info/en/>

²⁰⁴ Personal Interviews with KyawSoe Lynn, communication officer from World Bank, 25 November 2014, Yangon

²⁰⁵ The webpage only available to government officials and donors currently, <http://mohinga.info/en/>, As of January 2015

²⁰⁶ Personal Interviews with KyawSoe Lynn, communication officer from World Bank, 25 November 2014, Yangon,

²⁰⁷ The webpage only available to government officials and donors currently, <http://mohinga.info/en/>, As of January 2015

²⁰⁸ Personal Interviews with KyawSoe Lynn, communication officer from World Bank, 25 November 2014, Yangon,

²⁰⁹ Personal Interviews with KyawSoe Lynn, communication officer from World Bank, 25 November 2014, Yangon

out a project or planning a project, the World Bank holds a consultation meeting involving government ministries, development partners, civil society and the private sector.²¹⁰ Those kinds of consultation meetings can create a good communication environment among the government, civil society (which is representing the local community) and the private sector, such as economic enterprises. It will bring a more democratic nature of implementing or carrying out the development of Myanmar with all actors' participation. The World Bank's assistance is indirectly enhancing the basic democratic nature of all actors' participation in planning projects other than government institution reforms.

Analysing the report of the Foreign Economic Relations Department of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development of Myanmar, issued in November 2013, Western bilateral donors such as US, DFAT, Australia, EU and DFID UK which are primarily more focused on humanitarian aid moved to a longer-term development program including political support.²¹¹ Those donors used to deliver assistance only through UN agencies, regional institutions and international non-government organizations. After 2012, those donors extended their assistance in implementing government sector reform and civil society strengthening programs, including media, which can be counted as democratic assistance. Based on my interviews with local and international NGOs such as Oxfam, Local Resource Centre (LRC), PACE (People Alliance and Creditable Election), Paung Ku, SIDA (Swedish international development cooperation), Norwegian's People Aid are bilateral donors which have been contributing democratic assistance, mostly working with civil society organizations in Myanmar.²¹² Among western donors who are providing democratic assistance to Myanmar, EU and Australia are mostly working with government institutions in order to carry out governance sector reform. During the interviews with the EU Ambassador and officials from Australia Aid, they mentioned that when they want to provide a large amount of aid, local civil society do not have the capacity to hold a large amount of aid to carry out large

²¹⁰ Personal Interviews with KyawSoe Lynn, communication officer from World Bank, 25 November 2014, Yangon

²¹¹ The report for Foreign Economic Relations Department of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development of Myanmar in respect to bilateral and multilateral development partners operating in and for Myanmar, November 2013

²¹² Interviews with officials from Oxfam, Paung Ku, PACE and LRC

tasks.²¹³ They usually work with INGOs and UN agencies in order to deliver assistance in other sectors such as poverty reduction, education, health and livelihood.

(a)Australia Aid

Australia's aid to Myanmar has increased by 120 per cent since 2009-10 (from 29.1 million in 2009-10 to 63.8 million in 2012-13).²¹⁴ Australia's main focus areas to support are education, health and livelihood and governance. They work with multi-donor trust funds which are Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT), Multi-Donor Education Fund (MDEFII), INGOs such as Burnet Institute and CARE Myanmar, Oxfam, UN Agencies such as UNHCR, FAO/WHO, WFP and International Organizations such as ADB and the World Bank to support in those areas.²¹⁵ For aid for governance in order to support democratization, they are giving aid to support the election process in order to hold free and fair elections in 2015 and to watch the accountability and efficiency of the election.²¹⁶ The way they work is demand-driven, where they find out what the government need and support them.²¹⁷ They do not give direct funding to the government. In order to support the election process in Myanmar, they are now partnering with International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), which is an INGO working with Union Election Commission (UEC).²¹⁸ They do not give a direct grant to a civil society organization to carry out specific functions, such as human rights or gender equality, which are features of democratization. They put their funds together in Multi-Donor Funds which might disburse aid to civil society organizations to carry out development in Myanmar.²¹⁹ However, they have a small grant scheme which any group or civil

²¹³ Personal Interviews with EU Ambassador Mr. Kobia and Interviews with Aus Aid Mr. Cragis

²¹⁴ the report for Foreign Economic Relations Department of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development of Myanmar in respect to bilateral and multilateral development partners operating in and for Myanmar, November 2013

²¹⁵ the report for Foreign Economic Relations Department of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development of Myanmar in respect to bilateral and multilateral development partners operating in and for Myanmar, November 2013

²¹⁶ Personal Interview with Mr. Cragi, AusAid, 4 Dec 2014, Yangon

²¹⁷ Personal Interview with Mr. Cragi, AusAid, 4 Dec 2014, Yangon

²¹⁸ Personal Interview with Mr. Cragi, AusAid, 4 Dec 2014, Yangon

²¹⁹ Personal Interview with Mr. Cragi, AusAid, 4 Dec 2014, Yangon

society organization can apply for.²²⁰ Prior to the reform era, they used to provide assistance to the civil society organization Phaung Ku. As the development of Myanmar has become faster, they want to put more funding and thus put more funds into multi-donor trust funds.²²¹

(b) The European Union

"The European Union and Member States have responded in a gradual and measured way to the opening and reforms."²²² The goals of the EU and its member states are to support peace, democracy, development and trade while fostering respect for human rights and assisting the government in building its place in the international community.²²³ The European Union (EU) has announced that it has allocated EUR 688 million (USD 900 million) to Myanmar under its bilateral cooperation programme over the period 2014-2020 to reinforce its support to the country's transition.²²⁴ The funds will help rural development, health, education, trade and private sector development, peace building and governance.²²⁵ The assistance from the EU to Myanmar was allocated by EU (EEAS and European Commission) and EU member states Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and UK.²²⁶

"In support of democratic and institutional reforms which is up to EUR 96 million, it will include the support to Parliament, the Union Election Commission and the 2015 elections, actions to entrench the rule of law and establish a professional judiciary, initiatives to strengthen transparency and accountability, capacity building support to civil servants, improvement of public finance management and statistical capacity, reinforcement of the media, support to the national census, technical assistance to assist with aid and development partner management, and support for

²²⁰ Personal Interview with Mr. Cragi, AusAid, 4 Dec 2014, Yangon

²²¹ Personal Interview with Mr. Cragi, AusAid, 4 Dec 2014, Yangon

²²² "Joint EU Development Partners' Transitional Strategy for Myanmar 2014-2016, given by EU Ambassador, 27 Dec 2014, Yangon

²²³ "Joint EU Development Partners' Transitional Strategy for Myanmar 2014-2016, given by EU Ambassador, 27 Dec 2014, Yangon

²²⁴ "The European Union will provide EUR 688 million in grants to Myanmar from 2014-2020," given by EU Ambassador, 27 Dec 2014, Yangon

²²⁵ "Joint EU Development Partners' Transitional Strategy for Myanmar 2014-2016, given by EU Ambassador, 27 Dec 2014, Yangon

²²⁶ "Joint EU Development Partners' Transitional Strategy for Myanmar 2014-2016, given by EU Ambassador, 27 Dec 2014, Yangon

Myanmar's ASEAN chairmanship."²²⁷ The EU also supports to promote lasting peace, which includes support to the monitoring of a nationwide ceasefire, an inclusive political dialogue, security sector reform and mechanisms to accompany the transition. Those mostly focus on improving inter-communal relations and socio-economic recovery in conflict-affected communities.²²⁸

The EU's assistance is mainly in election support and peace building in order to help democratization in Myanmar. The EU is providing assistance to the UEC through the International Management Group (IMG) in the area of voter's list update, voters' education and capacity building program of UEC staff.²²⁹ EU support has been given to host dialogues among UEC, political parties and civil society in order to hold 2015 elections accountable to Myanmar citizens.²³⁰ Like Australia, the EU has the same small grant scheme for any civil society organization to apply in carrying out tasks in specific areas which EU has announced.²³¹

"The EU and some of its member states, such as the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the UK, support civil society in order to establish an enabling working environment and protect civil society's rights, facilitate engagement with government, expose local organisations to international best practice, ensure their involvement in our own planning processes and channel other support to Myanmar through them."²³² Basically, the EU and its member states support funding to strengthen the capacity of civil society, which is still weak and not up to international practice yet, but the amount of aid which is given for that sector is less compared to election support. While the EU provides 96 million Euro to the governance sector, the EU only supports 5 million Euro annually for civil society strengthening.²³³ The two projects which support civil society in order to

²²⁷ "Joint EU Development Partners' Transitional Strategy for Myanmar 2014-2016, given by EU Ambassador, 27 Dec 2014, Yangon

²²⁸ "The European Union will provide EUR 688 million in grants to Myanmar from 2014-2020," given by EU Ambassador, 27 Dec 2014, Yangon

²²⁹ Personal Interviews with Dr. TunTunOo, Deputy Director, Union Election Commission of Myanmar, 24 November, Nay Pyi Taw

²³⁰ Personal Interviews with Dr. TunTunOo, Deputy Director, Union Election Commission of Myanmar, 24 November, Nay Pyi Taw

²³¹ Personal Interviews with EU Ambassador to Myanmar, Mr. Kobia, 27 Dec 2014, Yangon

²³² "Joint EU Development Partners' Transitional Strategy for Myanmar 2014-2016, given by EU Ambassador, 27 Dec 2014, Yangon

²³³ "Joint EU Development Partners' Transitional Strategy for Myanmar 2014-2016, given by EU Ambassador, 27 Dec 2014, Yangon

achieve specific goals are Empowering Civil Society, to promote the enhanced socio-economic wellbeing of vulnerable young people in Myanmar, and Support to Civil society and local authorities in development.²³⁴

(c) US Aid

USAid has been providing humanitarian assistance to Burma since 2000.²³⁵ Since 2008, USAID has extended its aid program in the health and education sector apart from humanitarian assistance. USAID started their political and economic reform assistance after the visit of President Obama in November 2012. "USAID aims to support and accelerate the political and economic reform process through targeted assistance to promote the rule of law, respect for human rights, a robust civil society reflective of the country's diversity, a vibrant parliamentary system, independent media, and effective measures to counter trafficking in persons, and preparations for a free and credible national election in 2015."²³⁶

There are a number of programs that USAID has been supporting for Myanmar's democratic reform. First, USAID is supporting Parliament in order to re-energise the parliament system in Myanmar.²³⁷ Now the Myanmar parliament system is working in its traditional way. Parliamentarians have to be made aware how Parliament in other democratic countries works and how they have to represent their constituencies. USAID has set up a Parliament resource center for Parliamentarians to gather information, which is necessary to run a systemic and accountable parliament to citizens.²³⁸

Another program that USAID has been supporting is to hold credible, inclusive, and transparent elections in 2015 and strengthen political parties and the Union Election Commission. USAID is supporting through the Consortium for Elections and Political Processes for voter's education, technical assistance for UEC, training for all political parties and also creating discussion opportunities among UEC, political

²³⁴ the report for Foreign Economic Relations Department of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development of Myanmar in respect to bilateral and multilateral development partners operating in and for Myanmar, November 2013

²³⁵ US Aid Myanmar website, <http://www.usaid.gov/burma>

²³⁶ US Aid Myanmar website, <http://www.usaid.gov/burma>

²³⁷ Personal Interview with Chris Milligan, Program Director of USAID Myanmar, 4 December 2014

²³⁸ Personal Interview with Chris Milligan, Program Director of USAID Myanmar, 4 December 2014

parties and civil society organizations so that they can discuss how to hold free and fair elections in 2015.²³⁹ USAID is providing assistance to the Attorney General Office and the Supreme Court in order to promote fair, equitable and accessible justice and to enable the public to participate in rule of law reform.²⁴⁰

USAID is one of the donors which support strengthening civil society in Myanmar as part of democratic aid. "Civil society strengthening program for US aid is to support the sustainable development of a robust civil society sector in Myanmar by enhancing its organizational and programming capacity in order to promote participation in democratic reforms and strengthen its role in local level development."²⁴¹ They have aimed to strengthen CSO institutional and technical capacity, improved coordination, collaboration and networking among CSO's partners and increased civic awareness and engagement among the general public.²⁴² They are providing assistance to LRC, a local NGO, in order to advocate new organizational law in Myanmar with this fund.²⁴³

USAID is a donor not only working for institutional reforms in the government sector, but also working to promote civil society organizations with its democratic aid. It also supports "the communication platform"²⁴⁴ between civil society and government, which is creating the opportunities for civic participation in Myanmar's reform process. Increasing civic participation in the reform process can promote democratization.

(d) DFID UK (Department of International Development)

DFID is one of the donors in Myanmar which is providing assistance for good governance and civil society in order to help democratization in Myanmar. Other than democratic assistance to Myanmar, DFID UK is providing assistance in other sectors such as peace building, prosperity, trade and investment, humanitarian aid,

²³⁹ Personal Interview with Chris Milligan, Program Director of USAID Myanmar, 4 December 2014

²⁴⁰ Personal Interview with Chris Milligan, Program Director of USAID Myanmar, 4 December 2014

²⁴¹ Profile of US Aid and its Assistance in Myanmar, gathered from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar

²⁴² Profile of US Aid and its Assistance in Myanmar, gathered from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar

²⁴³ Personal interview with U Myo chit from Local Resource Centre (LRC), 3 Dec 2014, Yangon

²⁴⁴ Words spoken by people that I have interviewed.

health and education and livelihood.²⁴⁵ More than 50% of the DFID Burma program is delivered through multi-donor funds.²⁴⁶ The main multi-donor funds, such as the 3MDG fund, The Multi Donor Education Fund (MDEF) and The Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund, cover health, education and rural livelihoods. In democratic assistance from DFID, it includes public financial management in government sector, parliamentary strengthening, transparency and the rule of law and civil society strengthening.²⁴⁷

DFID UK has engaged in parliamentary strengthening through improving the Myanmar Public Accounts Committee's scrutiny of spending; legal advice and expertise to the Bills Committee and the Attorney General on drafting of laws; and training and study visits for parliamentarians.²⁴⁸ It also provides support for reform of key administrative institutions, such as the civil service and local government/townships. As for public financial management in the government sector, it is building the Myanmar government's capacity to manage public money by providing 20 million Euro over 5 years to improve the collection, management, use, transparency and accountability of those funds.²⁴⁹

Like USAID, DFID is supporting civil society strengthening programme with 11 million Euro for 2011-2016 in order to make CSOs and non-state actors to be able to engage the state machinery on important issues and hold it to account, particularly by strengthening coalition building, advocacy, research and monitoring capabilities. This program provides "medium term core funding"²⁵⁰ to build the organisational capacity of local civil society organisations engaged in social and policy change.

Norway and Sweden are other donors which are also providing assistance for civil society strengthening. In this thesis, since EU aid is included in the analysis, this

²⁴⁵ the report for Foreign Economic Relations Department of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development of Myanmar in respect to bilateral and multilateral development partners operating in and for Myanmar, November 2013

²⁴⁶ the report for Foreign Economic Relations Department of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development of Myanmar in respect to bilateral and multilateral development partners operating in and for Myanmar, November 2013

²⁴⁷ Personal Interviews with PyoneThetThetKyaw, Governance Advisor, DFID Burma, 10 December 2014

²⁴⁸ Personal Interviews with PyoneThetThetKyaw, Governance Advisor, DFID Burma, 10 December 2014

²⁴⁹ UK activities issued by DFID, 2014 April, data provided from Foreign Economic relation and Development Department, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

²⁵⁰ Words spoken by people that I have interviewed.

includes Norway and Sweden, which are EU member States. This thesis will not separately take into account their civil society strengthening program in the analysis.

4.4. Conclusion

Even though aid was not popular during the military government and aid was not an incentive to democratize in Myanmar, aid has become a reward for the new Myanmar civilian government to move forward with their democratization process. In Myanmar, political reform has started from actors inside the country and the government itself, where donors did not play a major role when stepping towards a democratic country. However, democratization in Myanmar has been carried out genuinely and all actors inside the countries show enthusiasm. Therefore, international donors have come to support the democratic transition since 2012. Now, aid is playing a major role in government sector reform and civil society strengthening, which is needed in a democratic country. Donors usually support government sector reform, peace building and election support in 2015 as democratic assistance and donors are also working with either government institutions or through INGOs, UN agencies to provide assistance. Myanmar is going to hold elections in 2015 and so it seems that election support has become popular among donors. Too much aid in one area can reduce aid in other sectors which also need to be reformed, such as media and civic education through local civil society organizations. Support for civil society strengthening is less than support for other reform sectors. In the next chapter of this thesis, the importance of civil society in the Myanmar democratization process, aid to civil society strengthening program is my focus for analyzing how the relation between democratization and aid has been developing until now in Myanmar. Election support to civil society to promote democratization in Myanmar would be part of the case studies on the relation between democratic aid and democratization in Myanmar.

Chapter (5)

Civil society in Myanmar

5.1. Introduction

In Myanmar, civil society has a critical role to play for the success of Myanmar's social and political transition as well as for ethnic conflict resolution. Therefore, to help successful democratization in Myanmar, civil society in Myanmar has to be strong and vibrant in order to participate in Myanmar's political process and cooperate with government to fulfil the need of Myanmar citizens in a democratic way. International donors are aware that civil society can be one of the actors to make democratization more successful in Myanmar. Therefore, like in other countries, donors aimed to strengthen civil society. Since civil society strengthening programs have been one of the democratic support programs from international donors, this chapter discuss Myanmar's civil society under successive military regimes and during the reform era. In this chapter, civil society under the military regimes, civil society during the current reform era, the role of civil society in politics, the relation between CSOs and government and the electoral support given through CSOs will all be discussed. It is important to discuss how donors are supporting civil society in order to participate in the reform process effectively.

5.2. CSOs under military regimes

Myanmar used to be one of the most isolated and most oppressive countries in the world. Under military regimes, people were still heavily restricted to express themselves freely. Social media were under strict rules and regulations and civil society movements were systematically repressed. During U Nu's democratic government from 1948 to 1962, civil society organisations in urban areas were developed but those in rural areas were repressed.²⁵¹ Throughout the military junta of Ne Win's regime from 1962, state-controlled civil society organisations which advocate or promote regimes' interests were allowed.²⁵² The nation-wide pro-

²⁵¹ "Myanmar: the role of civil society", International crisis group, Asia Report N27, Dec 2001, pg 1

²⁵² Lagerkvist John, "Between Isolation and Internationalization: The State of Burma", SIHA Paper No.4, 2008

democracy demonstrations in 1988 were led by student organizations, parties and independent media. At that time student organizations could be categorised as active civil society organizations and the role of civil society in politics became important again in this time of 1988 pro-democracy movement. However, the military brutally suppressed those student organizations and independent media and took control over Myanmar. Since that time, civil society movement for politics or democracy was strictly prohibited by the military junta. The military government jailed anyone who spoke about democracy, for long terms.²⁵³

Under SPDC and SLORC military regime, due to brutal suppression on civil societies, people were afraid to challenge the unfairness of the government and ask for their rights. The rule of law of a country has to be followed by all citizens, including leaders of the government. However, it was not followed by the military leadership and legitimacy was in the hand of the military leaders. There was no one to check and balance their power during that time in Myanmar. One example of abuse of human rights under the military regime was widespread use of forced labour.²⁵⁴ Since there was no legal human rights groups inside Myanmar, civil society based in the areas controlled by armed ethnic organizations or in the neighbouring countries were the organizations who could inform the ILO about forced labour.²⁵⁵

Government-organized non-governmental organizations were prominent as civil society in Myanmar under military governments. The military junta who took control in Myanmar after the 1988 democracy uprising also established local non-government organizations, such as the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) which later changed to the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) which is under the control of the military government itself.²⁵⁶ USDP is the party which won the 2010 election and gained power in government after the 2010 election in Myanmar. Apart from USDA, there were more government-organised and controlled organizations during SLORC and SPDC governments.

²⁵³ "Myanmar: the role of civil society", International crisis group, Asia Report N27, Dec 2001, pg 1

²⁵⁴ "Myanmar: the role of civil society", International crisis group, Asia Report N27, Dec 2001, pg 1

²⁵⁵ "Myanmar: the role of civil society", International crisis group, Asia Report N27, Dec 2001, pg 1

²⁵⁶ Sang, LianThang Peter. "The role of civil society in promoting democracy, good governance, peace and national reconciliation in Myanmar." (2013).

They were the Myanmar Red Cross, the Myanmar Medical Association, the Myanmar Maternal Child and Welfare Association, and the Auxiliary Fire Brigade.²⁵⁷

However, according to Myanmar culture, people usually gather together to form a group to work for religious festivals and to carry out social work in their town or region or city. Even under the repressive military rule, civil society organizations had still been developed into those kinds of social groups to work specific tasks which are the welfare of their society and environment. Religious-based organizations and community-based organizations, such as student organizations, funeral associations which help poorer people cover burial expenses, women's groups, literature and culture groups and sports groups, are the types of civil society organisations that can be found under the SLORC and SPDC military regimes.²⁵⁸ Independent NGOs and professional associations were only legal if they registered under the Companies Act.²⁵⁹ Therefore, all those above-mentioned organizations were not registered for fear that they would draw unwanted attention. There was no group or association that can organize for political purpose during that time.²⁶⁰

Very few civil society organizations were allowed to be set up legally for social work; two organizations were Metta and FFSS.²⁶¹ However, they were closely watched by government not to associate or get involved in any political activities. At that time, Myanmar Egress was a civil society organization which would claim to work for positive changes in Myanmar, working together with all state actors including government during the military regime.²⁶² It was established in 2006 and

²⁵⁷Sang, LianThang Peter. "The role of civil society in promoting democracy, good governance, peace and national reconciliation in Myanmar." (2013).

²⁵⁸Kramer, Tom. "Civil Society Gaining Ground." *Opportunities for Change and Development in* (2011).

²⁵⁹Liddell, Zunetta. "No room to move: legal constraints on civil society in Burma." *Strengthening Civil Society in Burma: Possibilities and Dilemmas for International NGOs, Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books* (1999): 54-68.

²⁶⁰Kramer, Tom. "Civil Society Gaining Ground." *Opportunities for Change and Development in* (2011).

²⁶¹Sang, Lian Thang Peter. "The role of civil society in promoting democracy, good governance, peace and national reconciliation in Myanmar." (2013).

Metta is the local NGOs which was established in 1998 and promote the social and economic welfare in remote war-torn areas such as Kachin.

FFSS is Free Funeral Society which give free funeral services and provide health care to poor people

²⁶² About Myanmar Egress, Myanmar Egress,

was working on research and educational training, including government officials, development and news media.²⁶³ However, it was developed as an organization which aims to work for capacity building program and they kept good relations with government by providing training for government officials.

On the other hand, according to the history of Myanmar, civil society organizations to promote democracy have emerged from those kinds of social and religious based organizations when Myanmar citizens became frustrated towards dictatorship rule. Despite the numerous military-imposed restrictions and cultural inhibitions, political parties, students, monks, and others have tried to carry out democratic movement.²⁶⁴ Moreover, even though some Myanmar businessmen gathered informally to discuss economic advancement with foreign businessmen, they did not help much in persuading the regime to carry out economic reform too.²⁶⁵ Even though Myanmar's democratic transition in 2010 was imposed by SPDC military regimes, it can say that the force of the movement of groups of political activists such as student groups and monk groups can be taken into account for the decision of the military regimes to democratize. Students and monks could always individually challenge the regime through some widespread demonstrations.²⁶⁶ Therefore, formal civil society organizations for democracy and political purposes might be weak under the military regimes but if the groups of students or monks can be considered as civil society organisations, the force of political movements by them has to be taken into account for the reason to carry out a political transition by military leaders.

Under military regimes, the government failed to provide a good healthcare system, education and relief efforts to regions that were in need, especially in ethnic areas. Therefore, CSOs under military regimes have worked as service providers which are traditionally considered as the responsibility of the state.²⁶⁷ While civil society was

http://www.myanmareregress.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=47&Itemid=246

²⁶³ About Myanmar Egress, Myanmar Egress,

http://www.myanmareregress.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=47&Itemid=246

²⁶⁴ "Myanmar: the role of civil society", International crisis group, Asia Report N27, Dec 2001

²⁶⁵ Personal Interview with Ko Nay, Governance Section, Yangon, Myanmar, 2 Dec 2014

²⁶⁶ "Myanmar: the role of civil society", International crisis group, Asia Report N27, Dec 2001

²⁶⁷ Kramer, Tom. "Civil Society Gaining Ground." *Opportunities for Change and Development in* (2011).

working for livelihood projects, social work and relief efforts, democratic components such as civic participation were built in the project or social work in the past. Civil society applied for funding to work on these kinds of livelihood projects from international donors through UN agencies and INGO.²⁶⁸ This is the way donors support civil society for democratic movement under the repressive SPDC regime. In addition, civil societies were also working towards democratic changes in a discreet way without openly promoting democratic rights in the eyes of the military ruler.²⁶⁹

Since civil society organizations could not widely carry out relief work or social work under the regime, INGOs were the most important service providers in social welfare of Myanmar citizens. Many international NGOs and several U.N. agencies have carried out relief programs since the mid-1990s.²⁷⁰ They have focused on providing safe drinking water and sanitation, education and health care, starting community based development projects and micro-loans, and confronting the HIV/AIDS crisis.²⁷¹ However, INGOs have to operate through Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the government.²⁷² Under the military regime, INGOs only work for socio- economic development projects and they did not have interest in providing aid for political movements, since the aim of donors who were supporting them, was the socio-economic development of Myanmar citizens. Moreover, they could carry out their service provision in urban communities but they were restricted to access remote areas.²⁷³ Some international NGOs tried to include democratic behaviour into their project designs, such as participatory development, but it was not very effective at that time.²⁷⁴ The International Crisis Group also argued that "international NGOs are establishing the foundation for

²⁶⁸ Jesnes Kristin, "developing relation between political parties and CSOs", Norgeiwan Peacebuilding Resource Centre, June 2014

²⁶⁹ Jesnes Kristin, "developing relation between political parties and CSOs", Norgeiwan Peacebuilding Resource Centre, June 2014

²⁷⁰ "NGOs Law Monitor: Myanmar (Burma)", The International Centre for Not for profit Law, 5 Nov 2014, <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/Myanmar.html>

²⁷¹ "NGOs Law Monitor: Myanmar (Burma)", The International Centre for Not for profit Law, 5 Nov 2014, <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/Myanmar.html>

²⁷² "Myanmar: the role of civil society", International crisis group, Asia Report N27, Dec 2001

²⁷³ "Myanmar", Humanitarian Multi-Task Stakeholders Fund, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Annual Report 2012,

²⁷⁴ Personal interview with Ko Nay, governance Section, Oxfam, 2 December 2014, Yangon

community groups to dramatically expand activities and roles in civil society once they have the chance."²⁷⁵

After Nargis cyclone, CSOs have become more developed so as to carry out humanitarian tasks since the government cannot do all the relief work alone. Ye Mon Oo from Oxfam said, "Since cyclone Nargis, the role of CSOs become active again to provide assistance for victims."²⁷⁶ For example, a Local NGO called 'i Love Myanmar' was started in 2008 to provide social humanitarian aid to victims of Cyclone Nargis.²⁷⁷ After Nargis cyclone, the government also realized that they alone cannot work to provide necessary humanitarian assistance to the people affected. Therefore, the government relaxed regulations for INGOs and LNGOs to provide relief in places where humanitarian work was needed.²⁷⁸

It can be said that many citizens in Myanmar were frustrated about the ruling military governments but they did not dare to form coalitions or groups to campaign against the government for their freedom and rights. Even Myanmar people knew if they fought the government for their rights and freedom, they would fail since the government would brutally suppress them. Therefore, the role of civil society was very weak in the restoration of democracy during military rule and INGOs were also working under the government's close watch. It could be a reason why international donors did not provide democratic aid to civil society or INGOs in order to impose democratization in Myanmar.

5.3. CSOs after reform

5.3.1. CSOs activities and their participation in democratic transitions

The number of registered civil society organisations present in Myanmar now has grown to 500 civil society organisations including international NGOs.²⁷⁹ After the 2010 election, the USDP won the election and the U TheinSein government has

²⁷⁵ "Myanmar: the role of civil society", International crisis group, Asia Report N27, Dec 2001

²⁷⁶ Personal Interview with Ma Ye Mon Oo, Governance Section, Oxfam, 30 November 2014, Yangon

²⁷⁷ Sang, LianThang Peter. "The role of civil society in promoting democracy, good governance, peace and national reconciliation in Myanmar." (2013).

²⁷⁸ Steinberg, David I. *Burma/Myanmar: what everyone needs to know*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

²⁷⁹ Informal conversation with high-level government officials from Ministry of Home Affairs, 24 November, Nay Pyi Taw

started walking on the democratization path for Myanmar. The U TheinSein government has taken a series of democratic measures such as releasing political prisoners, relaxing censorship and meeting with the democratic leader Daw Aung San Su Kyi, holding by-elections freely and fairly. Civil society has become free and there are more voices in all sectors including democratic reform such as elections and law-making. Although Myanmar is still at the early stages of democratization, President TheinSein publicly noted that the government would welcome citizen participation and CSOs participation in what the country needs.²⁸⁰

The engagement of civil society has been expanded considerably since 2011 due to more open space for them and financial support from international donors. Initially, civil societies were usually active in the social development of the community and worked as service providers. After 2011, civil societies started engaging other sectors such as advocating law to government and participation with business firms or investors to protect the community in the investment areas.²⁸¹ Civil society organisations that raised awareness on human rights, inter-religious understanding, land rights, health and environmental issues also emerged. Some civil society groups communicate with MPs to advocate new laws in various ways, such as holding informal discussions with civil society about new laws.²⁸² Using opportunities of freedom for civil society, they have tried to reach their voices to government in order to express the needs of the community.

Moreover, some of civil society is taking responsibilities of watchdog by advocating for policy change, putting issues on the spotlight of the government and promoting democratic norms and values such as human rights, gender equality and women's rights.²⁸³ Women's rights and gender equality used to be low profile in Myanmar due to the fact that democratic leader Daw Aung San Su Kyi is a woman seeking to achieve democratic aims in Myanmar. Under military rule, there were two government-controlled local INGOs representing women even though they were strictly prohibited to associate with politics. These two organizations were Myanmar

²⁸⁰ Hlaing, Kyaw Yin. "Understanding recent political changes in Myanmar." *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 34, no. 2 (2012): 197-216.

²⁸¹ Personal Interview with Ma Ye Mon Oo, Governance Section, Oxfam, 30 November 2011

²⁸² Personal Interviews with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, 3 December 2014

²⁸³ Personal Interviews with Ko Nay, Oxfam, 2 December 2014

Maternal and Child Welfare Association (MMCWA) and Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation (MWAFF) in Myanmar.²⁸⁴ They were led by military leaders' wives and they only carried out the social welfare of the women.²⁸⁵ However, those organisations were not very effective in remote areas and they did not touch upon sensitive issues such as gender equality.

Under the U Thein Sein government, the issues of welfare of women and gender equality have been spotlighted by civil society organizations in Myanmar. Gender Equality Network, Women Organizations Network and Phan Tee Eain Women group are new civil society organizations and civil society networks for upgrading Myanmar women's lives to be able to participate in democratic reform.²⁸⁶ "Gender Equality Network (GEN) is a diverse and inclusive network of more than 100 civil society organizations, national and international NGOs and Technical Resource Persons working hard to bring about gender equality and women's rights in Myanmar."²⁸⁷ They set up in 2008 as a social organization to respond to the issues of women affected by Cyclone Nargis.²⁸⁸ GEN has been working to advocate laws and policies to protect women's rights, to be able to participate in all levels of government system.²⁸⁹ GEN is also promoting participation in women's leadership and public life and is also working on awareness of preventing women's discrimination and violence against women. Moreover, WOM is The Women's Organisations Network Myanmar (WON), which includes, 30 organisations working to support community women's groups across Myanmar.²⁹⁰ WON was also established to carry out social tasks in post-conflict and conflicted areas in Myanmar after cyclone Nargis.²⁹¹ When setting up the organization, their intention was to promote the life of women in post-conflict and conflict areas. After 2011, they have much wider space to carry out women's participation in peace process such as

²⁸⁴ Personal Interviews with Ma Poe EiPhyu, Gender Section, Oxfam, 10 December 2014

²⁸⁵ "Myanmar: the role of civil society", International crisis group, Asia Report N27, Dec 2001

²⁸⁶ Personal Interviews with Ma Poe EiPhyu, Gender Section, Oxfam, 10 December 2014

²⁸⁷ Gender Equality Network, their official page on facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gender-Equality-Network/523596230993393>

²⁸⁸ Gender Equality Network, their official page on facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gender-Equality-Network/523596230993393>

²⁸⁹ Gender Equality Network, their official page on facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gender-Equality-Network/523596230993393>

²⁹⁰ Personal Interviews with Ma Poe EiPhyu, Gender Section, Oxfam, 10 December 2014

²⁹¹ "Women Organisation Network of Myanma (WON)", <http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/myanmar/peacebuilding-organisations/won/>

engaging and advocating for peace, justice and equality for women through working at all levels towards positive social change in Myanmar.²⁹² Since 2010 the WON has organized awareness-raising discussions and workshops based on Gender-based Violence and Gender roles in Myanmar society. While data collection for this thesis has been carried out in November 2014, all women civil society organizations have held "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" in the whole Myanmar.²⁹³ Moreover, WON is also currently holding awareness workshops and discussions to promote women's participation in the peace building process of Myanmar.²⁹⁴

Civil society organisations tried to engage in the democratization process by raising awareness about human rights, gender issues and democratic governance through capacity-building measures. Civil society can help to spread knowledge about democratic governance among political parties and other political actors, including the government, the military and ethnic armed groups. This also opens space for CSOs to engage with political actors through capacity-building work and also help to develop the younger generation into good future leaders. There are CSOs aiming to increase democratic awareness in political actors and the younger generation. Myanmar Egress used to be one of the civil society organisations to increase awareness about democracy through capacity building in the past. Yangon School of Political Science and Pandita Development Institute -- PDI are one such kind of civil society and institution to promote awareness about democracy and democratic values.²⁹⁵

Therefore, the freedom of civil society has extended to work on gender equality, women's rights and human rights during the U TheinSein's government. While home-based research has been carried out, a civil society forum was held from 14 to 16 October 2014 in Yangon.²⁹⁶ In this civil society forum, 650 representatives from

²⁹² Personal Interviews with Ma Poe EiPhyu, Gender Section, Oxfam, 10 December 2014

²⁹³ Personal Interview with Ma Ye Mon OO, Governance Section, Oxfam, Yangon, 30 November 2014

²⁹⁴ Personal Interview with Ma Poe EiPhyu, Gender Section, Oxfam, Yangon, 10 December 2014

²⁹⁵ Personal Interview with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, Yangon, 3 December 2014, Yangon School of Political Science <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Yangon-School-of-Political-Science/332409810154072>,

<https://www.facebook.com/PanditaDevelopmentInstitute>

²⁹⁶ civil societies' review on Myanmar's Transition Process: Prospects for 2015 and Beyond, Press-Statement, Myanmar Civil Society Forum, Yangon Myanmar, 17 October 2014,

257 organizations and networks in Myanmar gathered to exchange opinions, debate and to assess a wide range of issues currently confronting Myanmar in the context of recent political developments and the transition process that started in 2011.²⁹⁷ This is another development of the role of civil society in Myanmar politics.

Under the military regimes, international NGOs were only focused on humanitarian work such as providing health care and education and relief services following cyclone Nargis. However, at the time of Myanmar in the process of transition towards democracy, not only local civil society but also international NGOs became active in promoting good governance and democratization in Myanmar. In Oxfam, the governance and democratization section has become more active to build civil society and help governance and democratization in Myanmar after 2011.²⁹⁸ Their aim is to raise civilians' voice heard by law-makers and leaders of Myanmar and to raise the awareness of citizens about democracy, creating a platform between government and local civil society to increase inclusiveness in the reform process.²⁹⁹ They are mostly working with local civil society in civic education, decentralization, resource management and governance.³⁰⁰

5.3.2. Achievement of CSOs in influencing politics

During the reform era, civil society has made some achievements in influencing governments in their policy making, advocating new laws and amending old laws. The suspension of the Myitsone Dam project in 2011 is one example where civil society has succeeded in advocating the law. The environmentalist in Myanmar has found out the impact of Myitsone dam on the environment and the damage to civil society living around the Myitsone dam.³⁰¹ Civil society in Kachin promoted this danger to the environment to civil society all over Myanmar.³⁰² All civil societies have come together and they work with members of political parties from

²⁹⁷ civil societies' review on Myanmar's Transition Process: Prospects for 2015 and Beyond, Press-Statement, Myanmar Civil Society Forum, Yangon Myanmar, 17 October 2014,

²⁹⁸ Personal Interviews with Ma Ye Mon Oo, Ko Nay, KoThiha, Ma Poe EiPhyu, Oxfam, Yangon, December

²⁹⁹ Personal Interviews with Ko Nay, Governance Section, Oxfam, Yangon, 2 December 2014

³⁰⁰ Personal Interviews with Ko Nay, Governance Section, Oxfam, Yangon, 2 December 2014

³⁰¹ Personal Interviews with Dr. Aung Than, Paung Ku, Yangon, 9 December 2014

³⁰² Personal Interviews with Dr. Aung Than, Paung Ku, Yangon, 9 December 2014

different ethnic backgrounds, political lines and protesters.³⁰³ "They have pointed out the lack of transparency and perceived corruption in procurement processes of the project and the potential environmental damage that might be caused by the Chinese company involved."³⁰⁴ At last, President U Thein announced the suspension of the Myitsone dam, saying "it is against the will of the people".³⁰⁵

"Land ownership is a sensitive issue in Myanmar since according to 2008 constitution, "the territory of the State shall be the land, sea, and airspace", which gives the impression that the appropriation of land by the state might be acceptable."³⁰⁶ Therefore, civil society lobbies to Parliament to establish an enquiry commission to the confiscation of land for commercial or other purposes. The Farmlands and Other Land Acquisition Inquiry Commission was established in July 2012.³⁰⁷ "It issued the report in which recommend to return of land to the former owners or that appropriate compensation for the land should be given by the state".³⁰⁸ It can be assumed that civil society has done well in lobbying MPs about land confiscation.

Another achievement of civil society is that an associational law for organizations has been passed in Parliament.³⁰⁹ The associational law for organizations was out of date and unfairly issued by military regimes.³¹⁰ Getting registered as a civil society organization was very hard under military regimes.³¹¹ Civil society organizations were strictly prohibited from participating in anything related to politics, and if they did so, their license would be cancelled and participants would be jailed.³¹² LRC has started researching on associational law and made civil society debate on this

³⁰³ Jesnes Kristin, "developing relation between political parties and CSOs", Norgeiwan Peacebuilding Resource Centre, June 2014

³⁰⁴ Jesnes Kristin, "developing relation between political parties and CSOs", Norgeiwan Peacebuilding Resource Centre, June 2014

³⁰⁵ Jesnes Kristin, "developing relation between political parties and CSOs", Norgeiwan Peacebuilding Resource Centre, June 2014

³⁰⁶ Jesnes Kristin, "developing relation between political parties and CSOs", Norgeiwan Peacebuilding Resource Centre, June 2014

³⁰⁷ Jesnes Kristin, "developing relation between political parties and CSOs", Norgeiwan Peacebuilding Resource Centre, June 2014

³⁰⁸ Jesnes Kristin, "developing relation between political parties and CSOs", Norgeiwan Peacebuilding Resource Centre, June 2014

³⁰⁹ Personal Interview with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, Yagnon, 3 December 2014

³¹⁰ Personal Interview with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, Yagnon, 3 December 2014

³¹¹ Personal Interview with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, Yagnon, 3 December 2014

³¹² Personal Interview with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, Yagnon, 3 December 2014

matter.³¹³ Then all civil society organizations collectively advocated a law to Parliament. Parliament and the government agreed to discuss amending the associational law. Now the law has been amended in favour of civil society unlike the past associational law.³¹⁴ During the process, Parliament and high officials from government opened channels for civil society organizations to discuss matters together. This is also an improvement in the relationship between the government and civil society.

5.3.3. CSOs and the government's relation

It can be seen from the success story of CSOs in advocating or lobbying for new law or to amend old law in a more democratic way that the role of CSOs has been considered in legislation. In parliament, a range of laws is currently under debate and civil society has been included in informal discussion panels. The opinions of civil society have been considered and thought relevant by MPs in legislation.³¹⁵ For instance, "Parliament authorities have opened channels for CSOs to come and talk to them anytime for advice on current debating laws and advocating new laws. CSOs can even discuss not only with MPs but also with higher officials in Parliament, which cannot be imagined in the past under military regimes."³¹⁶ Another example of the increased involvement of CSOs is that trade union representatives have been informally included in discussions on the Factory Act, the Social Security Act and the Health and Safety Act.³¹⁷ This shows that MPs and authorities from Parliament have an interest to a certain extent to learn from civil society.

However, some civil society organizations have been developed from coalitions of political activists in the past under military regimes. Some still dislike the new civilian government due to the fact that the leaders from the new civilian government were also in the military junta from former military regimes.³¹⁸ When the discussion panel was held by donors on a project for development with

³¹³ Personal Interview with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, Yagnon, 3 December 2014

³¹⁴ Personal Interview with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, Yagnon, 3 December 2014

³¹⁵ Personal Interview with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, Yagnon, 3 December 2014

³¹⁶ Personal Interview with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, Yagnon, 3 December 2014

³¹⁷ Jesnes Kristin, "developing relation between political parties and CSOs", Norgeiwan Peacebuilding Resource Centre, June 2014

³¹⁸ Personal Interview with official from IFES, Nay Pyi Taw, November 2014

government officials and civil society organisations together, civil society tended to give negative feedback on the government instead of constructive engagement.³¹⁹ It is because some civil society organizations have been transformed from political activists and they are still carrying political grievances against the government. Civil society organisations tend to say "No" to any assistance from donors to the government. Civil society does not totally trust the governments till now.³²⁰ Some government officials from the new government also carry a certain mistrust on civil society since some of them were leaders from former military regimes. Trust between government and civil society still needs to be built to carry out democratization in Myanmar effectively.

However, there are some important issues such as discussion about amending the 2008 constitution, where the government has not considered the opinions from civil society yet. "Civil society made a voice in 2014 civil society forum that Myanmar cannot be said to have genuine democracy until the 2008 Constitution is amended and Parliament is fully elected by the people since under the 2008 Constitution, the Burma Army retains 25% of seats in Parliament, thereby ensuring an effective veto on any democratic, and constitutional amendments." ³²¹ Therefore, while the relation between government and civil society has improved compared to the past 4 years, there is still mistrust between government and civil society organisations in order to carry out political reform together. In that case, the important role of international donors comes in to help both of them to engage in democratization more effectively.

5.3.4. Aid to CSOs from donors

As mentioned in Chapter (4), not all the donors working in Myanmar provide aid to civil society organisations, especially local civil society. Some of the donors such as Aus Aid want to provide larger funds to help Myanmar's democratization.³²² Some

³¹⁹ Personal Interview with official from IFES, Nay Pyi Taw, November 2014 and Personal Interviews with KyawSoe Lynn, communication officer from World Bank, 25 November 2014, Yangon

³²⁰ Personal Interview with Ma Ye Mon OO, Governance Section, Oxfam, Yangon, 30 November 2014

³²¹ civil societies' review on Myanmar's Transition Process: Prospects for 2015 and Beyond, Press-Statement, Myanmar Civil Society Forum, Yangon Myanmar, 17 October 2014,

³²² Personal Interview with Mr. Craig Gilbert AusAid, 4 Dec 2014, Yangon

of the donors cannot directly provide assistance to local civil society in order to carry out large projects, since local civil society in Myanmar is not strong enough to handle projects requiring large funds.³²³ Donors do not directly deal with local civil society organizations. Most of the funds for local NGOs come from intermediaries such as INGOs, UN agencies and Multi-donor trust funds. Diagram (1) shows how aid in Myanmar has distributed.

Diagram One: Map of all the various funding arrangements

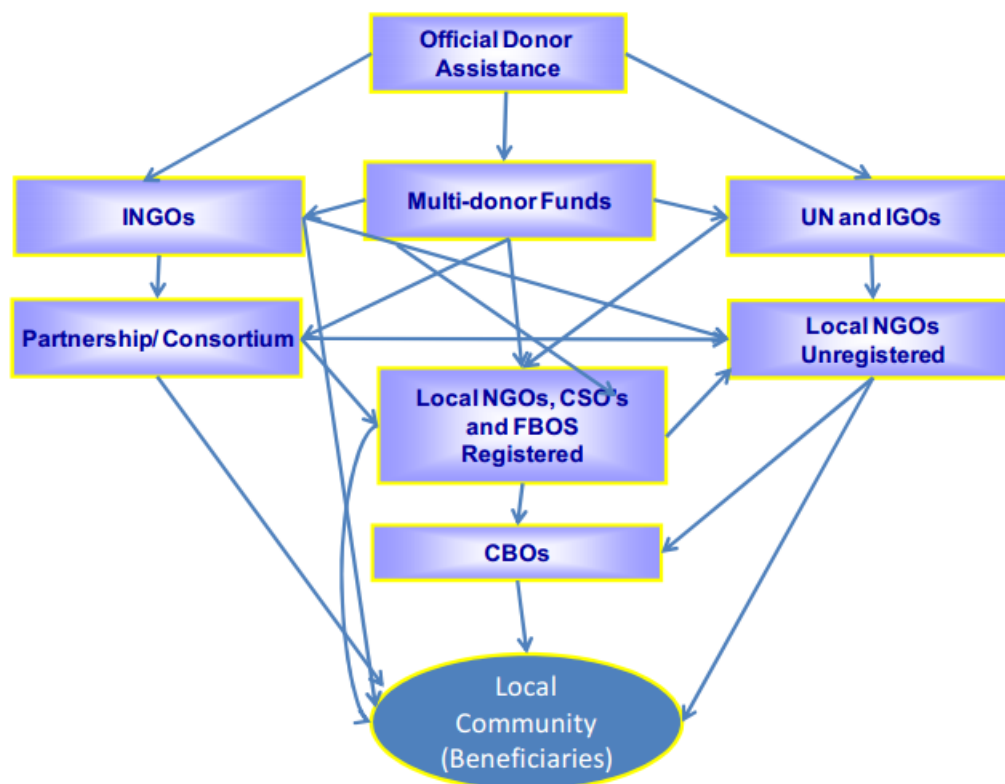


Diagram (1) : The Chart to show how aid has transferred among donors, INGOs and local CSOs

After decades of military rule and civil war, civil society in Myanmar has little experience in how to manage an organization systemically.³²⁴ Since civil society has been repressed by military regimes for so long, civil society in Myanmar is mostly informal and is organized in a traditional way. Craig from Aus Aid said that "local civil society organization's financial management is not up to expectation of

³²³ Personal Interviews with PyoneThetThetKyaw, Governance Advisor, DFID Burma, 10 December 2014 and Personal Interviews with Andy Benfield, EU consultant, Yangon, 8 December 2014

³²⁴ Personal Interviews with LRC, Paung Ku and PACE, Yangon, December 2014

donors." ³²⁵ Local civil society in Myanmar started out from a group of people who were interested to help others from their region to increase their livelihood. They do not have office or management system formally to hold funding. They do not have strong rule and regulation for leadership system.³²⁶ According to the 1988 Organization of Association Law, local groups and local society organizations must be registered under the Ministry of Home Affairs to be able to open foreign currency accounts in the organization's name.³²⁷ However, registration as civil society organizations can take time in the past so most of the civil society organizations are not legally registered.³²⁸ According to donors' policies, civil society organizations have to be a legal entity to be able to sign a binding contract between the local civil society and donors.³²⁹ Due to lack of legal status, donors usually fund INGOs and multi-donor trust funds through local NGOs. Generally, local NGOs do not have capacity to fulfil the requirement of donor's policies in order to get direct funding.³³⁰

Local NGOs have been complaining that funding through INGOs cannot be effective where it is necessary since they have their set goal which they want local civil society to work on.³³¹ Sometimes, INGOs usually go to areas needed for help and stay there for a while when they are investigating. Therefore, sometimes, they do not truly know which assistance is mostly needed in that region. The same problem applies with the donors too. Even though donors have a small grant scheme for local civil society organizations, donors have their set aims. However, they do not know the real problem facing in their project area.³³² Some donors are strict and cannot be negotiated with to change their set goals. Local civil society organizations know the local community better and they know which assistance is needed and where it is most needed.³³³ Sometimes, aid to civil society becomes donor-driven but

³²⁵ Personal Interviews with Craig, Aus Aid, Yangon, 4 December 2014

³²⁶ Personal Interviews with Ko Nay, governance Section, Oxfam, Yangon, 2 December 2014 and Personal Interviews with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Center, Yangon, 3 December 2014

³²⁷ Informal conversation with high-level official from Ministry of Home Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw, November 2014

³²⁸ Personal Interview with Dr. Aung Than, Paung Ku, Yangon, 9 December 2014

³²⁹ "Bridging the Gap between Donor Community and local organisations in Myanmar", local Resource Center, May 2012

³³⁰ Personal Interviews with U Sai Ye KyawSwarMyint, People's Alliance for credible election (PACE), Yangon, 5 December 2014

³³¹ Personal interviews with LRC, Paung Ku, PACE, Yangon, December 2014

³³² Personal interviews with LRC, Paung Ku, PACE, Yangon, December 2014

³³³ Personal interviews with LRC, Paung Ku, PACE, Yangon, December 2014

it is diverted from a community-focused one. Direct assistance towards local civil society is needed to increase the effectiveness of aid.

CSOs in Myanmar are mostly dependent on financial resources from donors abroad, especially the international NGOs. Donors have the initial set plan to improve a targeted sector. CSOs in Myanmar tend to focus on what donors want instead of what the community wants or needs. For example, when donors are focusing on women's rights in Myanmar, many civil societies which are working on other sectors, such as the election, try to shift their focus on women's rights in order to get funding from donors.³³⁴ Civil society organisations in Myanmar are not strong enough to hold onto their aim due to lack of financial capacity. In order to maintain their civil society organisations, they have to follow what the donor wants rather than what their targeted goals are.

When donors provide assistance in focus of activities, another disadvantage is that civil society is only funded for activities. After a project term, the civil society group will not get funded anymore. As civil society organizations in Myanmar depend on the funds from international donors, they do not have financial capacity and human capacity to carry out their intended tasks which could be necessary for political reform after the project term. Aid delivered for civil society strengthening in order to act as check and balance is still less compared to aid to other sectors even though aid for civil society strengthening is a basic need to develop a strong civil society sector in Myanmar which can help keep the government accountable and transparent.³³⁵ Therefore, in this next section, I will write about aid for civil society strengthening, which is important for democratization in Myanmar.

Civil society organizations in Myanmar have another problem in that they usually work by themselves. They do not communicate or cooperate with each other in order to make their strength stronger. Civil society who works for gender equality should cooperate with civil society who works for elections in order to bring women's

³³⁴ Personal Interviews with U Sai Ye KyawSwarMyint, People's Alliance for credible election (PACE), Yangon, 5 December 2014

³³⁵ Personal interviews with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Center, Yangon, 3 December 2014

participation into the election process.³³⁶ They can even help the group in monitoring or watching election ballots on Election Day. Moreover, sexual abuses in conflict in Kachin State should not only be concerned with Kachin civil society or community. Civil society from the whole of Myanmar have to act together to stop that issue.³³⁷ Civil society networking should be developed in Myanmar to have a stronger civil society who can hold government accountable.

5. 4. Democratic aid for civil society strengthening

5.4.1. General Overview on aid for civil society strengthening

Since there are weaknesses in civil society in Myanmar, in order to act as one of the check and balance actors to Myanmar's government to have successful democratization, civil society sector in Myanmar should be strengthened. Human capacity and awareness of democratization for people who work in the civil society sector should be promoted. People in civil society organizations should be educated about how a civil society organization should be organized or managed. Civil society organizations are informal, so there was no rule and regulation to select leaders or boards to decide what they should do.³³⁸ Moreover, civil society organizations in Myanmar usually do not have large sums of money to set up formal offices and structures in order to practice formal organisational features. In addition, civil society organizations in Myanmar are fragmented, with groups often doing good work in isolation, which does not influence wider society.³³⁹

Most of civil society support from donors in Myanmar is capacity building through training, mentoring organizational development and project funding.³⁴⁰ USAID and DFID are donors which support assistance for civil society strengthening programs. These two donors would be considered in analysis of aid to civil society strengthening programs.

³³⁶ Personal Interviews with U Sai Ye KyawSwarMyint, People's Alliance for credible election (PACE), Yangon, 5 December 2014

³³⁷ Personal Interview with Ko Nay, governance Section, Oxfam, Yangon, 2 December 2014

³³⁸ Personal interviews with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Center, Yangon, 3 December 2014

³³⁹ Civil Society Strengthening Program, Project Summary, DFID

³⁴⁰ Personal Interviews with PyoneThetThetKyaw, Governance Advisor, DFID, Yangon, 10 December 2014

(a) *DFID UK* (Department for International Development)

DFID used to provides project funding to local groups through multi-donor funds in emergency humanitarian relief.³⁴¹ DFID has realized that civil society wants to pursue their own visions and wants to build stronger organisational and group capacity in order to shape their visions.³⁴² However, in recent years, the focus of DFID's civil society support has been an innovative programme that has adopted an issue-based approach to build the capacity and readiness for people to engage in decision making processes.³⁴³ The programme combines funding and capacity support to work around common issues which are identified and agreed with local groups themselves. Starting from 2011, DFID is providing 11 million pounds to civil society strengthening program with Swedish co-funding. ³⁴⁴ DFID has issued that with DFID help to set up a formal network of local civil society organisations (e.g. the creation of a new Mangrove Environmental Rehabilitation Network of 17 NGOs and existing network are strengthened (e.g HIV/AIDS Network of over 100 groups).³⁴⁵ In some cases these improvements in capacity of local civil society have contributed to improve policy and practice. For example, the HIV/AIDS Network elected representatives to a national policy forum and has influenced policy on the priority given to HIV/AIDS treatment by health services. ³⁴⁶

(b) *US Aid*

US Aid is another donor providing assistance for civil society strengthening. The overview of US Aid civil strengthening program is mentioned in Chapter (4). Milligan, the US Aid program director, said that "US Aid is providing assistance for local civil society to make sure that sophisticated organisational systems are in place."³⁴⁷ He said that "they make sure that civil society organisations received their assistance are accountable to the community and those CSOs are making positive

³⁴¹ Personal Interviews with PyoneThetThetKyaw, Governance Advisor, DFID, Yangon, 10 December 2014

³⁴² Personal Interviews with PyoneThetThetKyaw, Governance Advisor, DFID, Yangon, 10 December 2014

³⁴³ Civil Society Strengthening Program, Project Summary, DFID

³⁴⁴ Personal Interviews with PyoneThetThetKyaw, Governance Advisor, DFID, Yangon, 10 December 2014

³⁴⁵ DFID information sheet given by PyoneThetThetKyaw (need to attach with appendix)

³⁴⁶ Civil Society Strengthening Program, Project Summary, DFID

³⁴⁷ Personal Interview with Chris Milligem, Program Director of USAID Myanmar, 4 December 2014

improvement."³⁴⁸ He said that "Dialogues between civil society and government help to interact more and build trust to work together for democratization".³⁴⁹

(c) Paung Ku

Paung Kuis a recently registered local civil society organization, in 2013, but it started in 2007 as a consortium of international and local agencies in Myanmar (with Save the Children as lead agency).³⁵⁰ "In Myanmar language, 'paungku' means 'bridging' or 'connecting,' and this best states Paung Ku's role: acting as bridge and connector, linking civil society actors within Myanmar with each other, with financial and technical resources, and with allies and targets in the Myanmar government, ASEAN region and on the global stage."³⁵¹ Paung Ku is one of the local civil society organizations working for civil society strengthening. Paung Ku's vision is to strengthen small local civil society organizations to able to drive positive social change and shape the country to have freedom, justice, rights, peace and development that is pro-poor and environmentally sustainable.³⁵² Paung Ku has been supported by 15 international donors such as DFID, Norwegian People's Aid, US Aid and Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC).³⁵³ Relating to the effectiveness of aid towards civil society strengthening program, Dr Aung Than said "85% of local society organizations have been improved and they measured effectiveness in two dimensions; organizational structure improvement (horizontal improvement) and ability to communicate and advocate with governments (vertical improvement)."³⁵⁴ "15% of civil society organisations are set up for short terms and implement the set objectives and then they vanished."³⁵⁵ He said that "in general, aid for civil society strengthening have made small local regional civil society organizations stronger to engage with respective their local governments."³⁵⁶

³⁴⁸ Personal Interview with Chris Milligan, Program Director of USAID Myanmar, 4 December 2014

³⁴⁹ Personal Interview with Chris Milligan, Program Director of USAID Myanmar, 4 December 2014

³⁵⁰ Personal Interview with Dr. Aung Than, Paung Ku, Yangon, 9 December 2014

³⁵¹ "Paung Ku", Amatae, <http://www.amatae.org/amatae/organizational-profile-paung-ku>

³⁵² Personal Interview with Dr. Aung Than, Paung Ku, Yangon, 9 December 2014

³⁵³ Personal Interview with Dr. Aung Than, Paung Ku, Yangon, 9 December 2014

³⁵⁴ Personal Interview with Dr. Aung Than, Paung Ku, Yangon, 9 December 2014

³⁵⁵ Personal Interview with Dr. Aung Than, Paung Ku, Yangon, 9 December 2014

³⁵⁶ Personal Interview with Dr. Aung Than, Paung Ku, Yangon, 9 December 2014

(d) *Local Resource Centre (LRC)*

"LRC was launched on May 15, 2008 to enable better coordination between local and international implementers, advocate on behalf of local groups, ensure access to capacity development services and ultimately strengthen the collaborative response to Cyclone Nargis between local and international organizations."³⁵⁷ Following the Nargis phase of operation (May 2008 – September 2010), LRC shifted its focus from disaster response to the holistic development of indigenous CSOs. LRC officially registered as a local NGO in May 2012.³⁵⁸ LRC was backed by EU aid and US Aid.³⁵⁹ U Myo Khin said that "due to the financial support from international donors, it is easier for local civil society to communicate with government since civil society need to hold meeting which are costly to strengthen relation between government and local civil society organizations. LRC can strengthen civil society networks by organizing discussion panels for other civil society organizations."³⁶⁰ He also said that "Aid for civil society is 80% effective in Myanmar democratization process."³⁶¹

5. 4.2. Electoral Support through CSOs

Democratic aid towards election is very popular among donors in Myanmar since Myanmar is scheduled to hold its next election in 2015. The 2010 elections were announced by the international community as an unfair election. To be a true democracy, a free and fair election should be held in Myanmar. Therefore, donors are concentrating on election support to Myanmar. Election support has been provided to the Union Election Commission (UEC) to carry out voter's registration, capacity building programs for staff in UEC, voters' list update and voter's education. Those programs have been helpful for Myanmar which does not have experience in the election process.³⁶²

Donors have been providing aid to civil society organizations in order to carry out independent election observation of the election ballot. Moreover, donors provided

³⁵⁷"About LRC", local Resource Center, <http://www.lrcmyanmar.org/en/about-lrc>

³⁵⁸ "About LRC", local Resource Center, <http://www.lrcmyanmar.org/en/about-lrc>

³⁵⁹ Personal Interview with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, Yangon, 3 December 2014

³⁶⁰ Personal Interview with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, Yangon, 3 December 2014

³⁶¹ Personal Interview with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, Yangon, 3 December 2014

³⁶² Personal Interview with Dr. TunTunOo, Deputy Director, Union Election Commission, Nay Pyi Taw, November 2014

funding to those civil society organizations to hold discussions between government, civil society organizations and political parties. In those discussions, civil society and political parties can discuss with what they really need to UEC in order to hold free and fair election. Back in 2010, there was no civil society organization to observe the 2010 election.³⁶³ For the 2015 election, civil society organizations who will be independent observers are supported by donors and they will observe the 2015 election to be accountable.³⁶⁴

PACE (People Alliance for Credible Election) was formed for humanitarian assistance purposes in 2008 Nargis.³⁶⁵ However, when Myanmar has been in transition to democracy in 2010, PACE has been transformed into local CSOs in order to carry out election support for democratization. PACE has been backed by the National Endowment for Democracy and the National Democratic Institute.³⁶⁶ However, they do not have a direct grant from donors such as US aid, DFIT or Aus Aid. They have been provided from INGOs which is backed by main donors. Their main function is to work together with UEC to hold credible elections in 2015 and to monitor the election ballot in 2015. They are now working with UEC for civic education, voters' registration and a voter update program.³⁶⁷

5. 5. Conclusion

Regarding the history of civil society and the role of civil society in politics in Myanmar, it is not true that civil society in Myanmar did not exist for a long time. Civil society in Myanmar was there from the start of the country's independence. However, civil society in Myanmar was never favoured under the military repressive regimes since leaders of those regimes feared that civil society could challenge their existing power. Those leaders repressed civil society in Myanmar brutally. By all means, civil society in Myanmar has existed informally and has carried out social welfare of Myanmar citizens that government has left out as much as they can. In

³⁶³ Personal Interview with U Sai Ye KyawSwarMyint, PACE, Yangon December 2014, 5 December 2014

³⁶⁴ Personal Interview with U Sai Ye KyawSwarMyint, PACE, Yangon December 2014, 5 December 2014

³⁶⁵ Personal Interview with U Sai Ye KyawSwarMyint, PACE, Yangon December 2014, 5 December 2014

³⁶⁶ Personal Interview with U Sai Ye KyawSwarMyint, PACE, Yangon December 2014, 5 December 2014

³⁶⁷ Personal Interview with U Sai Ye KyawSwarMyint, PACE, Yangon December 2014, 5 December 2014

order to carry out those tasks, civil society had a restricted amount of support from international donors since they were not legal entities and there were sanctions against Myanmar. Most of the assistance for local civil society goes through INGOs and multi-donor trust funds. Moreover, apart from social-welfare tasks, civil society was not allowed to participate in any democratic movement or political reform under military regimes. However, they tried to organize political movements from time to time. After cyclone Nargis, civil society has grown since the military government realized that they themselves alone could not carry out relief work. After 2011, when a new civilian government took over the country, there was more freedom for civil society to work on any of the issues that they would like, including politics, democracy promotion, and governance. After international donors have seen that some positive improvement in democracy has happened in Myanmar, they have come to Myanmar to provide more assistance in all necessary sectors including political reform. Donors have realized the importance of the role of civil society in the democratization process of Myanmar. Therefore, they have started to provide aid to civil society to carry out a number of tasks in different sectors including democratization. Donors have found improvements in providing aid to civil society to participate in the democratization process, together with the government. However, there are still challenges for donors providing aid to civil society. In addition, donors have seen problems in civil society and government working together towards democratization.

Chapter (6)

Discussion, Conclusion, Limitation and Recommendation

6.1. Introduction

This thesis has carried out research on foreign aid delivered in Myanmar under successive regimes, foreign aid after reform, civil society before and after reform process starts, the role of civil society in politics under successive regimes and current democratic regime and aid to civil society. This chapter explains about the role of democratic aid in Myanmar's democratization process till now. It draws conclusions on what the impact of democratic aid is in Myanmar's democratization process, analyzing data, findings and interviews that I have carried out during my field work. I consider limitations and challenges in delivering democratic aid through civil society for promotion of democracy in Myanmar. This chapter also includes the limitations of this research and suggestions for further research.

6.2. The role of democratic aid in Myanmar's democratization process

6.2.1. Aid conditionality

Aid conditionality was not the most significant force behind Myanmar's transition before 2011 and aid intended to assist democratic transition was absent in Myanmar until 2011. Therefore, the argument for aid conditionality is not valid in Myanmar.

As one of Goldsmith's argument, aid may be given directly in the name of political reform either as an incentive or a reward for doing so.³⁶⁸ In Myanmar, aid was never given to authoritarian regimes as an incentive to democratize. I assume that aid as an incentive to democratize did not work with Myanmar since Myanmar is a resource rich country and all successive governments mostly depend on the resource for the income. Aid conditionality to democratize did not happen in Myanmar since there was no aid aiming to promote democracy.

However, after the reform in Myanmar, aid has been provided as a reward for its political reform. As Nabamita Dutta's argument, aid as a reward can push Myanmar

³⁶⁸Goldsmith, Arthur A. "Foreign aid and statehood in Africa." *International organization* 55, no. 01 (2001): 123-148.

to move forward with democratization.³⁶⁹ Technical assistance and capacity assistance to government institutions help them to work effectively for promoting democratic government. Technical assistance from donors to the Union Election Committee helps them to carry out the electoral process easily and effectively.³⁷⁰ The Myanmar government itself values international assistance to help democratization. As I mentioned in chapter (4), in the guide to international assistance in Myanmar, Dr. KanZaw said that the rapid pace of development would be impossible without generous international cooperation. Therefore, aid from donors to government will have a certain effect on Myanmar's further political reform process. However, it seems that with or without aid, the Myanmar government would be carrying out a democratization process since the initial force behind the democratization was not aid but other domestic factors.

6.2.2. CSOs in Myanmar Democratization and aid to Myanmar CSOs strengthening

According to the terminology of CSOs mentioned in chapter (2), CSOs can advocate new laws to government. They check the authority of the state to make sure that their performance would benefit and represent the wishes of the people. CSOs are the voice of the citizens to make the state become a people's state. CSOs in Myanmar have been the voice of the citizens.

The role of CSOs in politics cannot be under-estimated. CSO's democratisation is the civil society's social movements including labour and those social movements contribute to social and political democratization.³⁷¹ This argument is directly implied in the research of democratization in Myanmar. CSOs in Myanmar have been repressed by the successive authoritarian regimes until it has transformed to democratization. However, CSOs in Myanmar have been seeking to promote democracy throughout the country's history, such as the mass protest of students in 1988 and the protest of monks known as the Saffron revolution in 2007. If the students and the monks had not carried out their protests as part of the democratic

³⁶⁹Dutta, Nabamita, Peter T. Leeson, and Claudia R. Williamson. "The Amplification Effect: Foreign Aid's Impact on Political Institutions." *Kyklos* 66, no. 2 (2013): 208-228., 4

³⁷⁰ Personal Interview with Dr. TunTunOo, Deputy Director, Union Election Commission, November 2014

³⁷¹Doowon, Suh. "Civil society in political democratization: social movements impacts and institutional politics." *Development and Society* 35, no. 2 (2006): 173-195.

movement in Myanmar, it is uncertain whether Myanmar would today be walking on the path of democracy. Those democratic movements of those groups have given a push to the authoritarian military regimes for democratization. The role of CSOs in politics may not be prominent or strong. Nonetheless, as a Myanmar citizen who went through those experiences, I believe that it has definitely affected the movement towards democratization in Myanmar. During my informal conversation with local CSOs, they all have mentioned that student movements in 1988 and the Saffron Revolution in 2007 may have had some impact on the military leader's decision to transform Myanmar into a democratic country, since their repression of those movements was strongly criticized by the international community and more sanctions towards Myanmar were put in place.

As I mentioned in Chapter (3), Diamond argued that "a strong and plural civil society is necessary to guard against the excesses of state power, but also to legitimate the authority of the state when it is based on the rule."³⁷² One of the most important aspects in democratization is the presence of a strong civil society to check and balance the government. While Myanmar is in the middle of its transition, strong CSOs should be present to push the government towards more democratization.

However, Myanmar is a developing country and has been closed to the international community and knowledge under former military regimes. Under long repression on CSOs in Myanmar, CSOs in Myanmar have been informal and with an indigenous structure before 2011. Due to the Associational Law which was issued in 1988 and was biased, i.e., CSOs cannot be formed for any political purposes, most CSOs in Myanmar carried out their tasks with an informal organisational structure. CSOs in Myanmar were always based on their social activities and people who have enthusiasm to do social work gathered together in order to participate in social welfare. Therefore, people who worked in CSOs did not have enough capacity to check and balance.

Mark Robinson and Steven Friedman (2005) argued that "The effectiveness of civil society organisations in influencing policy and acting as agents of democratisation is

³⁷²Mercer, Claire. "NGOs, civil society and democratization: a critical review of the literature." *Progress in development studies* 2, no. 1 (2002): 5-22. (cited in)

not only shaped by internal organisational factors but is conditioned in significant measure by the availability of resources."³⁷³ In Myanmar, the finance of CSOs was provided from either the donations from citizens or the pool of funds supported by people who worked in CSOs. Sometimes, in the past, finance was limited to achieve their desired aim. As mentioned in chapter (4), before 2012, assistance from international community which was provided for civil society strengthening was less than assistance for other sectors. There was no aid from donors to civil society for political purposes. Most of the projects were on socio-economic development and donor-driven. CSOs in Myanmar need resources to act as agents of democratization and to influence policy making in Myanmar.

Many bilateral donors, such as the US, EU and Norwegian Aid, have come into Myanmar to provide assistance in many sectors including democratization and governance, after 2012. Other existing donors such as DFID and Aus Aid have increased their amount of aid and extended aid to various issues including democratization and governance. Under the title of aid for democratization, they have assisted civil society to strengthen their capacity in order to check and balance the government in a democratic Myanmar. In the process of democratic transition in Myanmar, those achievements of CSOs mentioned in chapter (5), such as making government aware of the environment effect of the Myitsone dam, lobbying MPs in land confiscation and advocating associational law, could not be achieved without finance. Capacity and efficiency to communicate with government and MPs were improved by technical assistance provided by donors. Financial assistance to CSOs and assistance to promote the efficiency of the CSOs were provided by international donors.

As in Robinson's argument, democracy assistance can potentially also have a major impact on Myanmar civil society organisations and their ability to engage effectively with state institutions since their income depend heavily on foreign aid and grants.³⁷⁴ U MyoKhin said that "they have to do research on how other democratic countries in the world behave and study their law and with regulations to compare,

³⁷³Robinson, Mark, and Steven Friedman. "Civil society, democratisation and foreign aid in Africa." (2005).

³⁷⁴Robinson, Mark, and Steven Friedman. "Civil society, democratisation and foreign aid in Africa." (2005).

the situation in Myanmar. They have to find which is more suitable for Myanmar to be more democratic and open. In order to carry out their research, unless donors fund them, they do not have financial capacity to work."³⁷⁵ He continues saying that "in order to increase the relation between CSOs and government and strengthen CSOs networking, LRC has to organize discussions and workshops in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and other cities in Myanmar. For organizing discussions and workshops, they have to depend on financial assistance provided by their donors EU aid and US aid. In addition, trainings to raise the capacity of people working in CSOs are held using the financial and technical assistance provided by their donors."³⁷⁶ Therefore, without aid from their donors, they would not be able to carry out their desire to promote democratization through civil society. LRC already has three branch offices in other cities such as Mandalay, Mawlamyein and Lashio. Their donors, the EU and the US, have supported to strengthen the network for LRC. Therefore foreign aid played an important role in assisting civil society to shape Myanmar into a more democratic country. With the availability of financial resources by international donors, CSOs in Myanmar can work effectively to promote democratisation.

According to Mark Robinson's argument, democratic aid strengthens internal governance and political efficacy of CSOs in Myanmar to some extent to influence public policy and hold government accountable.³⁷⁷ As mentioned in Chapter (5), Dr Aung Than from Paung Ku said that "CSOs in the various regions have now efficiency to engage with their regional governments and Parliaments to improve democracy within the region and development of the region."³⁷⁸ U Sai KyawSwarMyint from PACE said that "overall, civil society have been developed due to the international assistance and the performance of CSOs in politics have been satisfactory to **certain extent** compared to the performances of CSOs in 2 years ago."³⁷⁹ While conducting interviews with local CSOs, most of the interviews took place in their office where all the office facilities are present. All three LNGOs mentioned that CSOs in Myanmar did not start with a formal structure but now, with the assistance from international donors, they have set up strong organizational

³⁷⁵ Personal Interview with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, Yangon, 3 December 2014

³⁷⁶ Personal Interview with U MyoKhin, Local Resource Centre, Yangon, 3 December 2014

³⁷⁷ Robinson, Mark, and Steven Friedman. "Civil society, democratisation and foreign aid in Africa." (2005).

³⁷⁸ Personal Interview with Dr Aung Than, Paung Ku, Yangon, 9 December 2014

³⁷⁹ Personal Interview with U Sai KyawSwarMyint, PACE, Yangon, 9 December 2014

structure to **some extent**. Ko Nay from Oxfam (INGO) said that generally, "aid through CSOs in promoting democratization is successful. CSOs can advocate and media in Myanmar (regarded as CSOs) also have a voice in politics. Civic participation has increased in gender, human rights, elections and the census."³⁸⁰ He also said that "technical assistance raises the efficiency of organizational networking and social accountability and financial management awareness which are necessary for CSOs to work effectively in democratization process."³⁸¹ Both Chris Milligan, US Aid program director, and EU Ambassador Roland Kobia said that "we assist in organizing civil society forum which can increase trust between government and CSOs and represent more civic participation in political process."³⁸² During my field study in Myanmar, I have experienced that due to the development of CSOs with international assistance, CSOs are working on issues which were not very popular in four years ago, such as women's rights and gender equality. The network for CSOs on women issues is stronger and carries out more effective work for women. In order to participate in democratization in Myanmar by local CSOs, donors have been supporting CSOs financially and technically. Donors have helped to improve Myanmar CSOs to be strong and vibrant **to some extent** in order to hold government accountable.

6.2.3. Limitations and Challenges in delivering aid to civil society to promote democratization

"Certain extent" and "some extent" have been mentioned in my analysis on the role of aid through civil society to promote democratization. There are some limitations and challenges in providing aid to civil society to promote democratization in Myanmar. Those limitations and challenges can hinder the effort of aid to promote democratization.

(1) Donors are supporting CSOs to hold discussions or forums to communicate with government. When holding those forums, trust between CSOs and government can be built. However, till now some CSOs which came from political activists'

³⁸⁰ Personal Interview with Ko Nay, Governance section, Oxfam, Yangon, 2 December 2014

³⁸¹ Personal Interview with Ko Nay, Governance section, Oxfam, Yangon, 2 December 2014

³⁸² Personal Interview with EU Ambassador Mr. Kobia, Yangon, 27 December 2014 and Personal Interview with Chris Milligan, US Aid Program Director, 9 December 2014

background are not engaging with the government constructively because they still carry their political mistrust. They do not trust government till now.³⁸³ They are trying to oppose whatever government is trying to negotiate. Those forums organized with funding from donors sometimes cannot be effective to increase civic participation when some CSOs are not constructive towards government.

(2) As I have mentioned in Chapter (5), donors contribute assistance to CSOs calling for proposals for specific projects. Donors provide assistance to CSOs focusing on activities, such as promoting civic awareness in Patheingyi Township in Ayeyarwaddy Division. However, civic awareness may not be necessary for Patheingyi citizens since Patheingyi is the capital of Ayeyarwaddy Division and most of the people are educated. Instead of providing aid to civic awareness program in Patheingyi, those programs may be needed in border areas or ethnic regions such as Kayah State. Donors do not understand the local context of Myanmar and where assistance is most needed. When donors provide assistance for specific projects which may not be necessary, it could lead to the ineffectiveness of assistance. Instead of set aims for specific projects, they should talk to local CSOs to know where assistance is most needed in order to deliver effective assistance.

In order to work with local CSOs, donors need to know local CSOs and communicate with them directly. However, in Myanmar, some donors do not have much idea about local CSOs.³⁸⁴ Instead of engaging directly with local CSOs, they engage with INGOs and UN agencies. INGOs and UN agencies work under the MOU with government, as I have mentioned earlier. INGOs and UN agencies cannot access some of the remote areas. INGOs and UN agencies also do not know much about the context of Myanmar. Aid has not been delivered to necessary areas such as border areas and remote areas such as Rakhine State and Chin State. Donors left out the important local CSOs who know the context of Myanmar well. Instead of that, they support INGOs which do not have indigenous knowledge.

³⁸³ Personal Interviews with KyawSoe Lynn, communication officer from World Bank, 25 November 2014, Yangon

³⁸⁴ Personal Interview with Mr. Craig, Gilbert, Aus Aid, Yangon, 4 December 2014

Since CSOs in Myanmar have been under repression for so long, CSOs are informal and have an indigenous structure where they do not have a proper management system for finance.³⁸⁵ CSOs do not have efficiency to manage large amounts of money such as million dollars projects. Donors cannot even fund large amounts of money to local CSOs in order to achieve their desired aim. Since donors provide activities-focused aid to CSOs, CSOs in Myanmar can only apply for specific programs and their initial motives have been changed. For instance, CSOs working on human rights promotion have to apply for project grants to support election monitoring which may be currently provided by donors. In reality, those CSOs do not have funds to continue their work on human right promotion. They are following the issues for which they can access finance in order to be able to continue their organisations. CSOs in Myanmar may not be accountable to their constituency but CSOs follow donors' wish for finance. Moreover, their initial aim was lost and became weak since they do multi-tasking in different areas. Aid becomes donor-driven. Therefore, they are not strong enough to act as a check and balance to government. Donors in Myanmar should provide more assistance to CSO strengthening in order to hold government accountable.

To sum up, democratic aid through civil society in Myanmar has played an important role in Myanmar's democratization process. However, donors should be aware of mentioned limitations and challenges to increase the effectiveness of democratic aid through CSOs to promote democratization. So far, democratic assistance through CSOs to promote democratization has certainly helped democratization in Myanmar to a certain extent. However, like Indonesia, it is unsure that promotion of democratization through CSOs would be the most effective way to promote democracy in Myanmar.

6.3. Significance of this research

After I have done my research and field work on democratic aid, CSOs and democratization in Myanmar, my research would be beneficial to CSOs in Myanmar and donors in Myanmar since I have talked to both donors and CSOs about the

³⁸⁵ Personal Interview with Dr. Aung Than, Paung Ku, Yangon, 9 December 2014

challenges and difficulties that they have in communicating with each other. Moreover, when I had an interview with the EU Ambassador to Myanmar, I had a chance to discuss with him about what CSOs in Myanmar really need according to all my interviews with CSOs. After all our discussion and interviews, he mentioned that he would consider increasing aid to strengthen CSOs in Myanmar. As a government official, I have gained knowledge about what a democratic government should have and how democratic government institutions should be accountable to citizens. I will inform my higher authorities about my findings that trust building between government, parliament and non-state actors should be enhanced in order to move forward to a more open and democratic society.

6.4. Limitations and Further Suggestions

Even though the role of civil society to hold the government accountable and make sure all actors' inclusiveness in political process is important in Myanmar, there are other factors affecting democratization, such as peace and stability, free market and less corruption. Therefore, donors have to be aware that democratization cannot be enhanced or promoted in Myanmar just by providing assistance to civil society. Government institutions have to be improved in order to set up a more accountable and transparent government.

The analysis on the relation between democratic aid and democratization can be varied in Rakhine and Kachin State where conflicts are present. In Rakhine State, local NGOs work within their local NGOs network and assistance or funding mainly comes from local ethnic Rakhine people. In Rakhine State, local civil society do not trust INGOs since they think that INGOs are biased towards another community called Rohingya.³⁸⁶ Local NGOs think that INGOs working in Rakhine themselves reinforce the conflicts. In Rakhine state, international assistance can have a different effect on stability, which is essential for democratization.

To my understanding, aid to civil society in Myanmar can be delivered in different sectors. Civil society in Myanmar is still taking responsibility for service delivery. They are still involved in socio-economic development sectors such as education and health care, water sanitation, rural development projects and the humanitarian

³⁸⁶ Personal Interview with Ko Nay, Governance section, Oxfam, Yangon, 2 December 2014

relief sector. They are also engaged in new initiatives such as environmental sector and EITI (the extractive industry transparency initiatives). Donors have been providing assistance to civil society in all those areas. Civil society has been carrying out their tasks in different areas such as civic awareness, elections, gender equality, human rights, advocating policy, good governance, rule of law, parliamentary strengthening and Public Financial Management. They have become involved in a number of areas which are related to democratization. In this research, only aid to civil society for civil society strengthening has been considered. This research did not go into details about aid for CSOs to promote specific issues such as human rights, civic awareness and gender. However, there are some areas which are left out to explore to show the contribution of democratic aid through civil society for democratization.

Moreover, civil society strengthening program for democratization are long term initiatives. Their results, affecting democratization, can be seen over time, unlike short term initiatives. Therefore, the result may be varied through time and further research can be carried out in five years, which is also the term of a government according to Myanmar's political system. The measurement for democratization is also intangible.³⁸⁷

The contribution of aid to elections in Myanmar's democratization process in my research is based on the performance of civil society and collaboration with government in order to hold the 2015 election accountable, compared with preparation for the 2010 election. The conclusion drawn from the interviews with donors who provide election support, and local CSOs which are working with the UEC to provide the election can only be the outcome of the effect of election aid to civil society on Myanmar's democratization. It can be fully understood to what extent 2015 election have been held in a credible, transparent and fair process only a year after the election has been held. Further research should be conducted on the impact of election support from donors to civil society.

Deeper analysis of the impact of democratic aid on democratization in Myanmar could be done with a more quantitative method. This research has been conducted as

³⁸⁷ For example when the water level goes up, this can be easily seen. Democracy, however, is not quite so easily observed or measured

a general overview of democratic aid on democratization in Myanmar in its early state of democratization, including international assistance and the re-emergence of local CSOs. Therefore, further study is suggested for a deeper analysis of democratic aid on democratization in Myanmar after five years. The impact of democratic aid on governance, such as the rule of law and parliamentary strengthening, should be assessed through further research.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Audie Klotz, and Deepa Prakash, eds. *Qualitative methods in international relations*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Ann Marie Murphy. "Democratization and Indonesian Foreign Policy: Implications for the United States." *asia policy* 13, no. 1 (2012): 83-111., Edward (Assessing democratization in indonesia)

ArmineIshkanian, *Democracy promotion and civil society*. SAGE publications Limited, 2010.

AdilNajam. "Understanding the third sector: Revisiting the prince, the merchant, and the citizen." *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 7, no. 2 (1996): 203-219.

"Aid starting to trickle into Burma: agencies", CTV News,
<http://www.ctvnews.ca/aid-starting-to-trickle-into-burma-agencies-1.293822>

About Myanmar Egress, Myanmar Egress,
http://www.myanmareregress.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=47&Itemid=246

"Bridging the Gap between Donor Community and local organisations in Myanmar", local Resource Center, May 2012

Bilateral assistance and Assistance from International organistaions (1988-2012),
Aid data based on country/ organisations chart
(

(
/

[written in Myanmar Font]), Data available
from Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

Civil societies' review on Myanmar's Transition Process: Prospects for 2015 and Beyond, Press-Statement, Myanmar Civil Society Forum, Yangon Myanmar, 17 October 2014,

Doowon, Suh. "Civil society in political democratization: social movements impacts and institutional politics." *Development and Society* 35, no. 2 (2006): 173-195.

DAHL: DEMOCRACY AND ITS CRITICS. 1990. Michigan law review 88, (6): 1662.

Dahl, Robert Alan. *Democracy and its Critics*. Yale University Press, 1991.

"Donors' Dilemmas in Democratization: Foreign Aid and Political Reform in Africa." PhD diss., 2000.

Declaration of Global Principles for non-partisan election observation and monitoring by citizen organisations and code of conduct for non-partisan citizen election observers and monitors, Commemorated April 3, 2012, at the United Nations, New York

Djankov Simeon, Jose G. Montalvo, and Marta Reynal-Querol. "The curse of aid." *Journal of Economic Growth* 13, no. 3 (2008): 169-194.

Daniel Strandow, Josh Powell, Jeffrey Tanner, and Michael Findley. "The geography of foreign aid and violent armed conflict." *Available at SSRN 1676788*(2010).

Deborah A Bräutigam., and Stephen Knack. "Foreign Aid, Institutions, and Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa*." *Economic development and cultural change* 52, no. 2 (2004): 255-285. (cited in)

Emmanuel, Nikolas G. "Democratization in Malawi: Responding to International and Domestic Pressures." *African and Asian Studies* 12, no. 4 (2013): 415-434.

Edward Aspinall. "Assessing democracy assistance: Indonesia." *Fride Project Report* (2010).

Goldsmith, Arthur A. "Foreign aid and statehood in Africa." *International organization* 55, no. 01 (2001): 123-148.

Gupta Rujit, "China and its Peripheries: Beijing's Myanmar Strategy", issues brief, institute of peace and conflict studies, <http://www.ipcs.org/issue-brief/southeast-asia/china-and-its-peripheries-beijings-myanmar-strategy-215.html>

"Guide to International Assistance in Myanmar", issued by Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, July 201

Gender Equality Network, their official page on facebook,
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gender-Equality-Network/523596230993393>

Helmut Anheier. *Civil Society: "Measurement, Evaluation, Policy"*. Routledge, 2013. (cited in) (main source in France)

HaungZho, Japan and China Compete for Good Relations with Myanmar, ISSN 2335-6677, July 2014,

Ian Holliday. "Voting and violence in Myanmar: nation building for a transition to democracy." (2008): 1038-1058.

Jenny Engström. *Democratisation and the prevention of violent conflict: lessons learned from Bulgaria and Macedonia*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2009, 8

Jason S Enia, "Ambivalent Answers to Important Questions: The Relationship between Foreign Aid and Democracy," (2006) (cited in)

J.A Schumpeter. (1947). *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. London: Henderson and Spalding.

Joseph Wright and Dietrich, Simone, *'Foreign Aid and Democratic Development in Africa'*, UNU-WIDER working paper, May 2013,

John R Hall, *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison*(John Wiley & Sons, 2013).

Joe.DBarkan, "Perceptions of Democracy Assistance: Survey of Recipients", World Movement for Democracy (2011), <http://www.wmd.org/projects/democracy-assistance/survey-recipients>

Johansson, Anna E. "Silent Emergency Persists: The Limited Efficacy of US Investment Sanctions on Burma, A." *Pac. Rim L. & Pol'y J.* 9 (2000): 317.

"Joint EU Development Partners' Transitional Strategy for Myanmar 2014-2016, given by EU Ambassador, 27 Dec 2014, Yangon

Jesnes Kristin, "developing relation between political parties and CSOs", Norgeiwan Peacebuilding Resource Centre, June 2014

Kramer, Tom. "Civil Society Gaining Ground." *Opportunities for Change and Development in* (2011).

Kyaw Yin Hlaing. "Understanding recent political changes in Myanmar." *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 34, no. 2 (2012): 197-216.

Kim Ho Ki. *Development of Democratization Movement in South Korea*. Stanford Korea Democracy Working Paper, 1993.

KonsamShakila Devi. "Myanmar under the Military Rule 1962-1988."

Lex Rieffel, and James W. Fox. "Too Much, Too Soon? The Dilemma of Foreign Aid to Myanmar/Burma." *Nathan Associates Inc* (2013).

Lancaster, *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Politics*.

Larry Diamond. *Developing democracy: Toward consolidation*. JHU Press, 1999.

LiseRakner, Alina RochalMenocal, and Verena Fritz. "Democratisation's Third Wave and the Challenges of Democratic Deepening: Assessing International Democracy Assistance and Lessons Learned." (2007). 1

LianThang Peter Sang. "The role of civil society in promoting democracy, good governance, peace and national reconciliation in Myanmar." (2013).

Liddell, Zunetta. "No room to move: legal constraints on civil society in Burma." *Strengthening Civil Society in Burma: Possibilities and Dilemmas for International NGOs, Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books* (1999): 54-68.

Lagerkvist John, "Between Isolation and Internationalization: The State of Burma", SIIA Paper No.4, 2008

"Listening to voices from inside: Myanmar Civil Society's Response to Cyclone Nargis" , Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies

Mark Robinson and Steven Friedman. "Civil society, democratization, and foreign aid: Civic engagement and public policy in South Africa and Uganda." *Democratisation* 14, no. 4 (2007): 643-668.

"Myanmar Overview", World Bank, October 2014 ,
<http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/myanmar/overview>

Majid Behrouzi. *Democracy as the Political Empowerment of the People: The Betrayal of an Ideal*. Lexington Books, 2005, 9

MiljaKurki. *Democratic futures: revisioning democracy promotion*. Routledge, 2013, 246

Michael Mason, *Environmental Democracy*(Earthscan, 1999). 58

Manal A. Jamal. "Democracy Promotion, Civil Society Building, and the Primacy of Politics." *Comparative Political Studies* 45, no. 1 (2012): 3-31.

Martin Albrow, Helmut K. Anheier, Marlies Glasius, Monroe E. Price, and Mary Kaldor, eds. *Global civil Society 2007/8: communicative power and democracy*. Sage, 2007. (cited in)

"Myanmar", <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/world/myanmar-history.html>

Marco Bünte. "Burma's Transition to 'Disciplined Democracy': Abdication or Institutionalization of Military Rule?." (2011).

Maung Aung Myoe. "A historical overview of political transition in Myanmar since 1988." (2007).

Michael F. Martin, *Burma's 2010 Elections: Implications of the New Constitution and Election Laws*. DIANE Publishing, 2010.

Myanmar Profile, Global Humanitarian Assistance, <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/countryprofile/myanmar>

"Myanmar", Humanitarian Multi-Task Stakeholders Fund, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Annual Report 2012,

"Myanmar: the role of civil society", International crisis group, Asia Report N27, Dec 2001, pg 1

Mercer, Claire. "NGOs, civil society and democratization: a critical review of the literature." *Progress in development studies* 2, no. 1 (2002): 5-22. (cited in)

Nabamita Dutta, Peter T. Leeson, and Claudia R. Williamson. "The Amplification Effect: Foreign Aid's Impact on Political Institutions." *Kyklos* 66, no. 2 (2013): 208-228., 4

Nikolas G Emmanuel. "Democratization in Malawi: Responding to International and Domestic Pressures." *African and Asian Studies* 12, no. 4 (2013): 415-434.

"NGOs Law Monitor: Myanmar (Burma)", The International Centre for Not for profit Law, 5 Nov 2014, <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/Myanmar.html>

"President U TheinSein urges EU to end submission of resolution on "Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar" at the UN General Assembly" *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Volume I, Number 18, 18-10-2014, 18 October 2014

Pan, Nam. "Japanese ODA to Asian Countries."

James Reilly. "China and Japan in Myanmar: aid, natural resources and influence." *Asian Studies Review* 37, no. 2 (2013): 141-157.

Riding the wave of reform, fast-tracking Myanmar's future, Oxfam Briefing Paper, January 2014.

Roger S. Powers, William B. Vogeley, Christopher Kruegler, and Ronald M. McCarthy, eds. *Protest, power, and change: an encyclopedia of nonviolent action from ACT-UP to women's suffrage*. Vol. 1625. Taylor & Francis, 1997.

Richard L. Sklar, "Developmental Democracy," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29 (October 1987): 686-714, and "Towards a Theory of Developmental Democracy," in Adrian Leftwich, ed., *Democracy and Development: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1996): 25-44.

Robinson, Mark, and Steven Friedman. "Civil society, democratisation and foreign aid in Africa." (2005).

RoughneenSiamon, "Post Nargis Hopes Dashed as Election Looms", *The Irrawaddy*, April 2010, http://www2.irrawaddy.org/print_article.php?art_id=18346

Samnang Chum. "NGO coordination and the changing aid environment in Cambodia: Challenges and Opportunities." (2010).

S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe, "Democracy and Democratization in developing countries", The Amercian study and institute for international research, Washington,DC and International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Kandy, Sri Lanka, July 1994

SarantisKalyvitis and Irene Vlachaki. *Democratic aid and the democratization of recipients*. Contemporary Economic Policy 28, no. 2 (2010): 188-218. 2

S. P. Huntington (1997). *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*. London: Simon and Schuster.

Steven Radelet, "A Primer on Foreign Aid," *Center for Global Development working paper* 92(2006).

Stephen Brown. "Foreign aid and democracy promotion: Lessons from Africa." *The European Journal of Development Research* 17, no. 2 (2005): 179-198.

SarantisKalyvitis, and Irene Vlachaki. "Democratic aid and the democratization of recipients." *Contemporary Economic Policy* 28, no. 2 (2010): 188-218.

SuchitBunbongkarn. "The role of civil society in democratic consolidation in Asia." *Center for International Exchange* (2001): 230, 137-143

SangitSaritaDwivedi. "Civil Society and Democracy in East Asia with Special Reference to South Korea."

Stephen Knack. "Does foreign aid promote democracy?." *International Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (2004): 251-266.

Sean L. Yom. "Civil society and democratization in the Arab world." *Middle East*9, no. 4 (2005): 15.

SaikiaHiranya, " India- Myanmar Relations- from past to present scenario", Times of Assam, 2014 August <https://www.timesofassam.com/headlines/india-myanmar-relations-past-present-secenerio/>

"Socio-economic development assistance through the United Nations System - other UN Funds & Programs", Foreign Economic Relations Department, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

Steinberg, David I. *Burma/Myanmar: what everyone needs to know*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Thomas Carothers. 1999. *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Toshihiro Kudo. *Myanmar and Japan: How close friends become estranged*. Japan external trade organization (JETRO). Institute of developing economies (IDE), 2007, p.7

Thomas Carothers, and Marina Ottaway, eds. *Uncharted journey: promoting democracy in the Middle East*. Carnegie Endowment, 2010, 82

"The Electoral Cycle Approach: Effectiveness and subtainabilty of electoral assistance", ISPI Working Paper, July 2011

"The population and housing census of Myanmar 2014, Summary of the Provisional Results", Department of Population, Ministry of Immigration and Population, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, August 2014

Than Naing Lin and ZawGoan, "resources, conflicts and challenges in Myanmar ethnic communities", <http://www.ecojesuit.com/resources-conflicts-and-challenges-in-myanmar-ethnic-communities/7105/>

The report for Foreign Economic Relations Department of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Develoopment of Myanmar in respect to bilateral and multilateral development partners operating in and for Myanmar, November 2013

"The balancing Act: Myanmar between China and US", China and US Focus, August 2014, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/the-balancing-act-myanmar-between-china-and-the-us/>

The webpage only available to government officials and donors currently, <http://mohinga.info/en/>, As of January 2015

"The Eurpoean Union will provide EUR 688 million in grants to Myanmar from 2014-2020," given by EU Ambassador, 27 Dec 2014, Yangon

"UK become top donor to Burma", DVB, March 2011, <https://www.dvb.no/news/uk-to-become-top-donor-to-burma/14523>

UN doc. A/54/178, 'Letter dated 19 July 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General', 27 July 1999.

Yun Sun, (2012). "China and the Changing Myanmar." *Journal Of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 31 (4), 51-77.

Yun Sun. "China Adapts to New Myanmar Reality." *Asia Times* 23 (2013).

Appendix (1) :Lists of Informants

| No. | Type of Organisations | Name | Position | Locations |
|-----|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| 1. | Union Election Commission | Dr. TunTunOo | Deputy Director | Nay Pyi Taw |
| 2. | Ministry of Planning and Economic Development | DawThuzarKhin | Assistant Director | Nay Pyi Taw |
| 3. | Ministry of Planning and Economic Development | Mr. Leigh H. Mitchell | | Nay Pyi Taw |
| 4. | EU Delegation | H.E. Roland Kobia | EU Ambassador to Myanmar | Yangon |
| 5. | US Aid | Mr. Chris Mililgan | Mission Director to Burma | Yangon |
| 6. | Aus Aid | Mr.Craig Gilbert | Second Secretary | Yangon |
| 7. | | Mr. Andy Benfield | EU consultant | Yangon |
| 8. | DFID | PyoneThetThetKyaw | Governance Advisor | Yangon |
| 9. | Oxfam | Ye Mon Oo | Governance | Yangon |
| 10. | Oxfam | Ko Nay | Governance | Yangon |
| 11. | Oxfam | Poe EiPhyu | Gender Equality | Yangon |
| 12. | Oxfam | KoThiha | Governance | Yangon |
| 13. | Local Resource Centre | U MyoKhin | | Yangon |
| 14. | People's Alliance for credible election | Dr. Sai Ye KyawSwarMyint | | Yangon |
| 15. | Paung Ku | Dr. Aung Than | | Yangon |
| 16. | IFES International Foundation for Electroal System | | | Nay Pyi Taw |
| 17. | Ministry of Home Affairs | A high level official | | Nay Pyi Taw |
| 18. | World Bank | KoKyawSoe Lynn | Commuciation Officer | Yangon |

Appendix (2): Ethics Approval 21329



MEMORANDUM

Phone 0-4-463 5676
Fax 0-4-463 5209
Email Allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz

| | |
|---------|---|
| TO | Aye Mon Paing |
| COPY TO | Stephen Levine |
| FROM | Dr Allison Kirkman, Convener, Human Ethics Committee |
| DATE | 2 October 2014 |
| PAGES | 1 |
| SUBJECT | Ethics Approval: 21329 Foreign aid and democratization in Myanmar in respect to civil society |

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Standing Committee of the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval continues until 4 January 2015. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Allison Kirkman
Human Ethics Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Allison Kirkman".

Appendix (3)

Socio-economic development assistance through the United Nations system- Other UN Funds & Program

US\$ in Thousands

| No | Indicator | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|----|---|---|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| 1 | 1.1 United Nations Development Program(UNDP) | 13050 | 13740 | 3490 | 4180 | 1310 | 6390 | 7640 | 15540 | 16740 | 18140 | 24060 | 31000 | 7570 | 4570 |
| | 1.2 United Nations Population Fund(UNFPA) | - | - | 30 | 40 | 3200 | 3200 | 3200 | 3200 | 4200 | 4590 | 6460 | 7540 | 2620 | 4000 |
| | 1.3 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees(UNHCR) | An organization which is cooperating with the Ministry of Immigration and Population. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1.4 United Nations Children's Fund(UNICEF) | 32000 | 40000 | 1250 | 12570 | 12590 | 12590 | 12630 | 18620 | 32670 | 32730 | 31630 | 31750 | 6250 | 39710 |
| | 1.5 United Nations Environment Program(UNEP) | An organization which is cooperating with the Ministry of Forest. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1.6 United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS(UNAIDS) | An organization which is cooperating with the Ministry of Immigration and Population. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1.7 United Nations Human Settlements Program(UN-Habitat) | An organization which is cooperating with the Ministry of Construction. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1.8 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs(UN-OCHA) | An organization which is cooperating with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1.9 World Food Program(WFP) | An organization which is cooperating with the Ministry of Border Affairs. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Socio-economic development assistance through the United Nations system- Specialized agencies | An organization which is cooperating with the Ministry of Agriculture. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2.1 Food and Agriculture Organization(FAO) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Appendix (4)



Nay Pyi Taw Accord for Effective Development Cooperation

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has embarked on a far reaching reform programme to transform Myanmar into a modern, developed and democratic nation that improves the livelihood of its people. The Government has high aspirations for people-centred development while staying focused on achievable results. It shall start modestly, but move decisively with international assistance to enlarge capacity and skill development to reduce incidence of poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is enhancing relations with the international community to access knowledge, experience and resources to accelerate its development progress. It recognises its responsibility to its citizens and to its partners to achieve the most it can from this co-operation. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and its development partners agree to take concrete actions to make their cooperation more effective. The Nay Pyi Taw Accord for Effective Development Cooperation is a set of localised commitments that take as its foundation Myanmar's unique history, values, governance systems, and socio-economic circumstances to create a country-specific set of clear, measurable and monitorable actions.¹

These commitments build on previous discussions between the Government and partners and also reflect the conclusions of the international dialogue on aid effectiveness, including the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. In particular, the Accord has been informed by deliberations at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and takes forward the principles of ownership, focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, and transparency and accountability, embodied in the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar intends that the agreement be embraced and observed by all development partners.

The Nay Pyi Taw Accord for Effective Development Cooperation has been developed in collaboration between the Government and development partners in a spirit of mutual benefits and accountability. The range of country-level development effectiveness agreements negotiated across the Asian region and globally has informed local efforts. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar intends to move progressively in the coming years towards similar arrangements to promote broader development effectiveness, starting with this agreement on effective development cooperation.


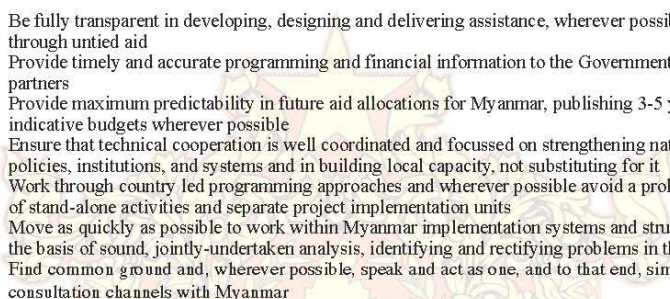
¹ This Accord represents the shared intention of the Government of Myanmar and Development Partners and does not constitute a legally binding instrument.

I. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR COMMITS TO:

1. Continue to deepen consultation on development priorities and plans
 - 1.1. Develop systems for dialogue and knowledge sharing across all levels of government: national, state, regional and local levels
 - 1.2. Engage strongly with civil society in participatory approaches, including providing greater voice to women, minorities and marginalised people
 - 1.3. Seek and consider the views of development partners
2. Focus on achieving national priorities
 - 2.1. Develop a culture of democratic practices that recognises human rights and empowers citizens through participatory processes
 - 2.2. Strengthen the rule of law and improve access to justice and to information
 - 2.3. Create an enabling environment for civil society to contribute to policy formulation, budgetary processes and delivery of services at the grass roots level
 - 2.4. Pursue market based, inclusive growth, equitable and sustainable development with a pro-poor focus to accelerate achievement of the MDGs, including by securing property rights
 - 2.5. Accelerate peace-building, political reforms and development initiatives to promote reconciliation and national harmony in recent conflict and cease fire areas
3. Enable effective decision making
 - 3.1. Build and use an evidence base for decision making, including by increasing the quality of statistics and statistical systems
 - 3.2. Integrate capacity enhancing objectives into all development plans and develop appropriate strategies to unleash and develop capacities
 - 3.3. Publish costed and prioritised national, sub-national and sector development plans with specific results frameworks, and reflect national priorities in budget allocations and public policy decisions
4. Further develop coherent and efficient aid management systems
 - 4.1. Publish, review and streamline regulations for approval and implementation of development cooperation
 - 4.2. Develop an aid information management system to help inform planning and budgeting and create one framework to monitor government and development partner aid effectiveness performance
 - 4.3. Create systems for regular, nationally-led dialogue with development partners at the national, sub-national and sectoral/thematic levels
5. Strengthen public administration to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of government programs and foreign assistance
 - 5.1. Support the legislative and oversight functions of the Hluttaws and new forms of public participation in policy making
 - 5.2. Clarify and simplify lines of authority and devolve decision making processes while strengthening cross-government linkages and the whole- of- government coordination
 - 5.3. Strengthen government institutions to deliver core functions effectively, and establish benchmarks and feedback systems on government performance to improve efficiency and effectiveness
 - 5.4. Increase the transparency of budget operations, including through the timely and reliable publication of budget information, including electronic publications
 - 5.5. Strengthen fiduciary management and safeguard local resources and development cooperation from misuse through improvement of public procurement and implementation of the anti-corruption law
 - 5.6. Encourage domestic resource mobilisation and increase reliance on national resources
 - 5.7. Strengthen social and environmental safeguards and compliance with their implementation

II. DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS COMMIT TO:

6. Take the unique local context in Myanmar as the starting point:
 - 6.1. Collaborate with each other and local and international institutions on diagnostic studies and sectoral reviews
 - 6.2. Build and make greater use of national capacity to collect, interpret, share and use development data, consistently disaggregated by gender
 - 6.3. Support South-South cooperation and sharing experience from regional successes, especially within ASEAN
7. Align development assistance with national priorities
 - 7.1. Align development assistance with national, sub-national and local priorities based on Myanmar ownership, as set out in the Framework for Economic and Social Reforms, the National Comprehensive Development Plan and other official planning documents
 - 7.2. Undertake sustained and efficient dialogue with relevant national counterparts on strategies and programmes
 - 7.3. Consult with civil society organisations, local communities and beneficiaries, especially women and minorities
8. Participate in and be guided by country-led coordination processes
 - 8.1. Take strategic direction from the conclusions of high level dialogue with the Government
 - 8.2. Establish complementary dialogue with and other partners, including the private sector
 - 8.3. Actively support manageable, Ministry-led, sectoral and thematic coordination mechanisms, organised around Myanmar government structures, avoiding the creation of an excessive number of working groups
9. Use conflict-sensitive and inclusive approaches to support peace and state building
 - 9.1. Build deep knowledge of conflict situations and consult widely on strategies and programs
 - 9.2. Move quickly but thoughtfully through established structures to provide transparent and equitable assistance in cease fire and conflict affected areas
 - 9.3. Strengthen the Government's capacity to perform and be accountable for its core functions in conflict-affected areas, and across the nation in managing risk from external shocks and natural disasters
 - 9.4. Strengthen the role of oversight institutions and organisations, including Hluttaws, statutory authorities and participatory processes to empower citizens to engage in policy making and review
10. Focus on maximising development results for the people of Myanmar
 - 10.1. Support national and sub-national strategies and programs that are pro-poor and inclusive to accelerate achievement of the MDGs
 - 10.2. Engage with the private sector to understand better and respond to impediments to private sector development and to improve the development impacts of private investment
 - 10.3. Work to build and implement one nationally led development results reporting system that includes and encourages joint monitoring and evaluation and that integrates targets for gender equality and women's empowerment
 - 10.4. Ensure adequate social and environmental impact assessments are undertaken and ensure compliance with the results in designing and delivering development activities
11. Work with government to strengthen institutions, build capacity, reduce transaction costs and increase aid effectiveness

- 
- 
- 11.1. Be fully transparent in developing, designing and delivering assistance, wherever possible through untied aid
 - 11.2. Provide timely and accurate programming and financial information to the Government and other partners
 - 11.3. Provide maximum predictability in future aid allocations for Myanmar, publishing 3-5 year indicative budgets wherever possible
 - 11.4. Ensure that technical cooperation is well coordinated and focussed on strengthening national policies, institutions, and systems and in building local capacity, not substituting for it
 - 11.5. Work through country led programming approaches and wherever possible avoid a proliferation of stand-alone activities and separate project implementation units
 - 11.6. Move as quickly as possible to work within Myanmar implementation systems and structures on the basis of sound, jointly-undertaken analysis, identifying and rectifying problems in the process
 - 11.7. Find common ground and, wherever possible, speak and act as one, and to that end, simplify consultation channels with Myanmar

III. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

A joint Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar – Development Partner working group will be formed to prepare a performance framework or action plan to guide implementation of this agreement. This framework will include a manageable number of key indicators of the standards and benchmarks that will be used to assess the extent to which its commitments are being kept. They will be reasonable, achievable and monitorable.

The Nay Pyi Taw Accord for Effective Development Cooperation was presented to development partners by the Minister of National Planning and Economic Development and approved by acclamation at the First Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum, Nay Pyi Taw, 20th of January 2013.

For the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar



H.E. Dr. Kan Zaw,
Union Minister,
Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development