The impacting of Civil Society in Argentina post 1983

Challenges for Civil Society organizations in monitoring public policies and vitalizing democracy

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to examine and analyze different components of the Civil Society in Argentina. Predominantly, two components are at focus: the monitoring process and the vitalization of democracy through the Civil Society.

The method conducted to fulfill the purpose of this thesis has been a qualitative approach. Furthermore, primary and secondary sources are used. Primary sources were established through the field study conducted in Argentina, where in-depth interviews with several of NGOs were assembled. Secondary sources were used in order to establish the theoretical approach but also to complement the primary sources in the analytical part.

The conclusion in this study is that the component regarding the monitoring process conducted by Civil Society organizations are partially functional, however with several incapacities. Factors explaining the incapacities are due to lack of leverage and resources. The component regarding the vitalization process through the Civil Society has been significant throughout the history of Argentina, and distributing democratic values are essential for the Civil Society. Factors as high degree of polarization amongst citizens and institutions and the extension of governmental authority are however threatening attributes such as moderation, tolerance, compromises, and hence jeopardizing the consolidation phase of democracy.

**Key words:** Civil Society, Argentina, Civil Society Organizations, Non-governmental organizations, Monitoring, Vitalization, Minor Field Study, Consolidation, Larry Diamond.
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<tr>
<td>ACIJ</td>
<td>Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justica (Civil Association for Equality and Justice)</td>
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<td>ADC</td>
<td>Asociacion por los Derechos Civiles (Association for Civil Rights)</td>
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<td>APDH</td>
<td>La Asemblea Permanente por los derechos humanos (Permanent Assembly for Human Rights)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Banco de Bosques</td>
<td>The Forest Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cascos Verdes</td>
<td>The Green Helmet</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDES</td>
<td>Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad (The Center for the Study of State and Society)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIPPEC</td>
<td>Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento (Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth)</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<td>EBV</td>
<td>Estudio Beccar Varela (Law firm)</td>
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<td>ELA</td>
<td>Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género (Latin American Justice and Gender Team)</td>
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<td>FARN</td>
<td>Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (The environment and Natural Resources Foundation)</td>
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<td>FOPEA</td>
<td>Foro de Periodismo Argentino (Argentine Journalism Forum)</td>
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<td>Fundación RAP</td>
<td>Red de Acción Política (Policy Action Network)</td>
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<td>Fundación Directorio Legislativo</td>
<td>Legislative foundation</td>
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<td>LALCEC</td>
<td>Liga Argentina de lucha contra el Cáncer (The Argentina League Against Cancer)</td>
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<td>MFS</td>
<td>Minor Field Study</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
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<td>RACI</td>
<td>Red Argentina para la Cooperación Internatctional (The Argentine Network for International Cooperation)</td>
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1. Introduction

Throughout the history, Argentina has been characterized by various unstable politically and economically systems. In various occasions, Argentina has been a victim of authoritarian rule between 1943 to 1955 and 1973 to 1975. In addition to the authoritarian rule the country has also experienced totalitarian rule between 1976 and 1983. ¹ Argentina’s unstable political and economic structure has characterized and formed the country’s horizon. During the authoritarian regime in 1943, Argentina’s political culture changed significantly. Peron’s ruling philosophy shifted the outcome, which led to less democracy. Oppression against the opposition and media characterized the country rigorously, and despite transferring political leaders, Argentina’s route led to further non-democratic reforms.² In 1976 it reached its peak and switched to further brutalized regime: the military junta.³ Thus, the entire history of the country only consists of 30 years democracy. The period of post 1983 is significantly for this thesis. Since the Civil Society was vastly weak during authoritarian and totalitarian regime, the aim is to examine how it has developed during the democratic system.

1.1 Defining Civil Society

In order to comprehend and study Civil Society, one must define the very concept of it. Larry Diamond argues in the Journal of Democracy that: “…it is now clear that to comprehend democratic change around the world, one must study civil society.”⁴ One famous definition constructed by two famous scholars who have studied and conducted research about the civil society, will in this thesis act as the core concept. Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan present the concept in their book “Problems of Democratic Transitions and Consolidation” as follows:

“By Civil Society we refer to that arena of the polity where self-organizing groups, movements, and individuals, relatively autonomous from the state, attempt to articulate values, create associations and solidarities and advance their interests.”⁵

¹ McSherry. 1997: 90
² McSherry. 1997: 40-43
³ Taylor. 1998: 43
⁴ Diamond. 1994: 5
⁵ Linz, et. al. 1996: 7
This definition covers essential parts of the functioning of Civil Society and will operate as the core concept in this thesis.

Jamie Elizabeth Jacobs and Martín Maldonado emphasis another reason for the increased influence of CSOs in the Journal of Latin American Studies:

“The forces of democratic transition and consolidation in Argentina, including the constitutional reform of 1994, provided an opportunity for individuals and civil society organizations to strengthen citizenship rights and express demands for government accountability.”

As other scholars have argued, Argentina has experienced severe difficulties with Civil Society’s influence from post 1983. According to Amy Risley, an American scholar who claims that the development of Civil Society is still today characterized by the history. Her argument emphasizes that: “CSOs participation in policy-making is an emergent area of inquiry within the field of Latin American politics”.

Depending on the interpretation and mixture of significance regarding the Civil Society, it can be analyzed from various perspectives. The central aim in this thesis is to identify that in the context of Civil Society; Non-governmental organizations are symbolically the heart of the Civil Society. NGOs are the primarily platform for citizens to “articulate values and advance interests”, according to Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan. Significantly, it should be without the interference or nonetheless in collaboration with the government. When authoritarian and totalitarian regimes have had strong influence, as in the case of Argentina, the importance to advocate for values such as accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness, effectiveness are reasonably important. These democratic elements are also important to take into account when the Civil Society aims to have an impact in public policies. It is also essential for those holding power to strive for these elements and to permit the Civil Society to increase participation and representation to acquire legitimacy towards the political system from the citizen’s viewpoint. Thus in this case, the Civil Society in

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6 Jacobs, et. al. 2005: 142
7 Risley. 2011: 665
8 Ibid.
9 Diamond. 1994: 10
Argentina is significant in order to comprehend the big picture of the country’s development towards democracy.

1.2 **Purpose**
The purpose of this thesis has been to examine and analyze different components of the Civil Society in Argentina post 1983. In relation, two components are at focus: the monitoring process and the vitalization of democracy through the Civil Society. What remains relevant is to examine certain events that have affected the role of the Civil Society from the transition to democracy to the present. Focus is hence to examine what impact the Civil Society has in monitoring the policy-makers, and how the Civil Society has vitalized democracy in Argentina post 1983.

1.3 **Research Questions**
The focus in this thesis will answer two key questions concerning the Civil Society in Argentina:

*I. How does the Civil Society manage to monitor the decision-making process?*

*II. How has the Civil Society vitalized democracy in Argentina post 1983 to present time?*

In order to provide answers to these questions, several aspects will be observed. To answer the first question, the first component of Larry Diamond theory will be the base, since the monitoring process is essentially a narrow question. The second question is a broader question and contains several aspects, since Civil Society in general is comprehensive. Thus, attributed such as moderation, tolerance, compromises will be analyzed but also the relationship between Civil Society and the state.
1.4 Disposition

This thesis will be divided in seven different chapters. Since this thesis is based on primary and secondary sources, the aim is to establish prevalent information and maintaining focus. The first chapter begins with an introduction, which emphasizes on background, definition, purpose and research questions. The second chapter emphasize on the theoretical approach. As the starting point, the Civil Society is presented as one part of democratization. Later, incitements of democratization are elaborated and how they can be achieved efficiently. Further, the main theoretical approach for this thesis is elaborated. The theory of Larry Diamond is significant in order to comprehend the functioning of Civil Society. Chapter three presents relevant background concerning Argentina’s political development and how it has formed the country. Chapter four presents methodology. Since this thesis is based on a qualitative approach with primary and secondary sources, this section elaborates the relevance of these sources and how they will be used in this thesis. This chapter will also elaborate how in-depth interviews are conducted. This guide was highly relevant when conducting the field study. Furthermore, this chapter also emphasize on the material used in the thesis. Here, the minor field study is elaborated in a further explicit way and to provide prevalent information of its significance. The selection of NGOs is also relevant to this section. Lastly, additional material is presented in order to complement the field study with high reliable statistic. Chapter five begins by elaborating the role of Civil Society in Argentina and how it has developed. Furthermore, this section presents the thesis. In this section, empirical data and analysis is correlated. The main focus is to comprehend the research questions from the perspective of Larry Diamond’s theory. The incitements of democratization are of relevance in order to comprehend how the process operates and if Civil Society can achieve this in the case of Argentina. The thesis is concluded in chapter six. This section combines reflections over the analysis together with a future perspective.
2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis is based on different approaches, which connects the Civil Society with democratization. Political scholars have various interpretations and presents different conceptions about the Civil Society. Andrew Arato and Jean L. Cohen have analyzed the concept of Civil Society from a pluralistic analysis. They emphasize on the collective essence and as: “…the sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication”.  

Through self-mobilization and institutionalization, modern Civil Society is able to construct and reproduce. Their theory bases the role of the Civil Society as a safeguard against regime intervention and injustice. Hostile interactions between the Civil Society and the state can only ascend when decision-makers claims complete authority and isolating initiatives from Civil Society organizations. Other scholars, such as Robert Bellah, Robert Putnam and Alan Wolfe emphasize the Civil Society as the source to personal joy, contributing to economic richness and ensuring prosperity towards the citizens.

In general the Civil Society can indicate several interpretations based on the context and operate towards either the collective or the individual essence. However assumingly, the Civil Society functions as a strong element towards the phenomenon presented in the next section: democratization.

2.1 Democratization

The democratization process has continuously been a subject that fascinates individuals and where scholars provide several studies regarding the area. One of the most famous scholars within the subject of democratization is Samuel Huntington. Huntington emphasize on the democratization process as an interweaved process. Significant interactions in a process of democratization are between government and opposition, between reformers and old liners in the government, and between

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10 Cohen, et.al. 1994: ix  
11 Cohen, et.al. 1994: x  
12 Lang. 2012: 33
moderates and extremists in the opposition. According to Huntington these three interactions have some significance in the process. A successful alienation of these assemblies lead to the breakdown of a non-democratic regime and hence introducing transition to democracy. Huntington’s definition of a wave of democratization is based on: “… a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period of time.” Additionally, these transitions do not frequently occur during democratic waves. Political history is not sorted into specific timelines; reforms and transitions do not occur categorically. Significantly these waves emphasize specific indications within specific time periods that encouraged democratization. Spillover effects that occur in one specific place motivate similar events to occur into other places.

Some scholars distinguish democracy and democratization. Democracy emerges power and democratization generates political equality. As the interactions of power resolves into stabilizing democracy and maintaining it, capitalist development and industrialization changes the balance and empowers subordinated classes. Democratization can hence enable lower classes to confront the hierarchy and promotes an equal class structure.

The phenomenon of democratization and its bolstering could be based by three key components, which modifies the implementation of a democratic system: liberalization, transition and consolidation. These incitements are highly relevant in conducting research about democratization. These attributes combined with the role Civil Society functions in the process of democratization are of significance in this thesis as well.

13 Huntington. 1991: 124
14 Ibid.
15 Huntington. 1991: 15
16 Ibid
17 Vanhanen. 2003: 9
2.1.1 Incitement of Liberalization

Liberalization is a term which necessarily does not have to lead to democratization but could indicate signs of democracy. In a non-democratic regime, a wave of liberalization may cause policies influencing the social and economic sector. For instance, changes that permit media to operate independently and abolish censorship, civil rights for individuals and to allow an opposition to operate. Thus, for the process of democratization to bolster it requires some signs of liberalization, which are essential to advance the question of eventually regime shift.

2.1.2 Incitement of Transition

For the phase of transition towards democracy to occur it is essential that the process is efficient. A transition phase is an adequate arrangement, which guidelines the various procedures of governmental power through free and fair elections and the

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18 Linz, et. al. 1996: 3
adoption of a democratic political system. The writers of the book “Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation”, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan elaborates the significance of transition, which has been used by many scholars explaining the occurrence:

“A democratic transition is complete when sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government de facto has the authority to generate new policies and when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies de jure.”

Thus, a transition to democracy is only complete when the elected government has authority to purpose and create various policies. However it is not scripted in a context of law. The three branches: legislative, executive and judiciary have the full authority in the context of law to fulfill its objectives and are not obligated to share its power with other institutions.

2.1.3 Incitement of Consolidation

When involving the concept of consolidation, scientists have various explanations of an effective process of consolidation. Consolidation is according to some scholars a process where democracy is strengthened and reaches stability. Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan view consolidated democracies as a system, which requires various bodies interrelated with each other, in order to strengthen the process and eventually accomplishing democratic consolidation. This process is divided into five areas. (1), they emphasize on the development of a vigorous and independent Civil Society. (2), a political society that operates moderately independent is significant for the consolidation process. (3), the significance of rule of law, which ensures the citizens right to articulate their values and interests should be functional. (4), a state bureaucracy is essential and cooperates with the new democratic

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19 Linz, et. al. 1996: 4
20 Linz, et. al. 1996: 3
21 Linde, et. al. 2006: 25
22 Linz, et. al. 1996: 7
23 Ibid
24 Ibid
25 Ibid
government.\textsuperscript{26} (5), institutionalized economic society is to be established. \textsuperscript{27}

\subsection*{2.2 The Civil Society}

An independent and vigorous Civil Society is crucial for a country to achieve consolidation in its democracy. Alfred Stepan and Juan Linz emphasize for the Civil Society’s ability to consolidate democracy. Civil Society’s objectives and how they operate in general are also highlighted in their book.\textsuperscript{28} CSOs are vigorously by permitting people to mobilize in order to articulate their values and ideas to influence society. CSOs and movements may contain groups such as: women’s group, religious grouping, human rights organizations, environmental movements, trade unions, media and entrepreneurial groups.\textsuperscript{29} The awareness of Civil Society may involve pluralism, where individuals overlook party –or group identification. Their impact can be to either enable a transition; as in the case of Argentina, where human rights organizations mobilized against the authoritarian regime.\textsuperscript{30} Civil society can also bolster liberalization through a convincing Civil Society, as in the case of Soviet Union where Gorbachev was persuaded towards a further liberal course \textsuperscript{31}. Furthermore, Civil Society can consolidate democracy where several of CSOs, fairly independent from the regime can generate a strong opposition without loosing their political rights.\textsuperscript{32} Civil society’s significance to democratization is fundamental as a collective actor, regardless political or non-political, in developing a richer associational life operating outside the state.

\subsubsection*{2.2.1 Social Capital, NGOs, and Civil Society integrated to democratization}

Various components are significant to the comprehension of the Civil Society and how it can have an impact into the political spectrum. Francis Fukuyama emphasize social capital as: “… an instantiated informal norm that promotes co-operation between two or more individuals... can range from a norm reciprocity between two friends all the way up to complex and elaborately articulated doctrines like

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid
\item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid
\item \textsuperscript{29} Ibid
\item \textsuperscript{30} Friedman, et. al. 2002: 32
\item \textsuperscript{31} Gill. 2000: 175.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Linz, et. al. 1996: 7
\end{itemize}
Christianity and Confucianism.” 33
These norms are based on honesty, commitments and reliable performances, which are applied to the interest of public good and for the public in the society. 34
Social capital is hence significant in establishing networks, unions, CSOs etc. It is the foundation for a solid Civil Society and it is essential for it to function in modern liberal democracy.

NGOs are another component that strengthens Civil Society’s ability to operate vigorously and independently. From the influence of Alexis de Tocqueville, Samuel Huntington and Robert Putnam, NGOs are viewed as a liberal maxim, which improves Civil Society’s role as vibrant and autonomous. 35 Since the Civil Society is considered as the actor generating organized social life: NGOs are significant in combining different classes into associational groups.

Civil Society can be viewed as the necessary guardian for citizen’s individual and political rights. In the democratization process, Civil Society can according to scholars be distinguished into different stages during democratization. For instance in democratic transition, the Civil Society can mobilize various organized in order to impact the political establishment in order to achieve changes. 36 In the consolidation of democracy, the Civil Society functions to scrutinize governmental authority, preventing abuse of power and encouraging civilian participation. 37

Thus, the enlargement and enforcement of Civil Society is a significant component in the process of democratization, through its impact on the three components of democratization: transition, liberalization and consolidation. Civil Society can increase state legitimacy through the essence of vigorously and independence. The next section will present a further in-depth explanation of the Civil Society and how it ideally should operate and function. This idealistic structure of the Civil Society will be the core theoretical approach for this thesis.

33 Fukuyama. 2001: 7
34 Ibid
35 Mercer. 2002: 7
36 Ibid
37 Ibid
2.2.2 Theory of Larry Diamond

The purpose of this section is to apply a relevant theory in order to understand the functioning of the Civil Society and how it should be constructed in order to uphold democracy. Larry Diamond has produced a recognized theory in an eminent publication platform named the Journal of Democracy. This theory emphasizes the functioning of the Civil Society and how it should operate. It consists of ten components which all need to be adopted in the ideal case of a flawless Civil Society.

The first component emphasizes the most vital element of the Civil Society, which would be the scrutiny of the state by the Civil Society. Diamond states that this fundamental element is divided into two factors, which are to “monitor and restrain the exercise of power by democratic states and democratize authoritarian states.”

Diamond continues to underline the Civil Society’s role for “containing the power of democratic governments, checking their potential abuses and violations of the law, and subjecting them to public scrutiny.” In addition to the Civil Society, the media also shares this commitment in a democracy, where reporting about governmental abuse of power is crucial for the public, in order for citizens to hold the government accountable.

The second component of Diamonds theory of Civil Society develops the meaning of participation. He also claims that associational life leads to political efficiency and towards support for democratic values. High participation would also lead to the consolidation of democracy, in other words higher quality of democracy.

Civil society could also contribute to other democratic attributes according to Diamond, as the third component emphasizes. Such attributes would be increased “tolerance, moderation and willingness to compromise, and a respect for opposing viewpoints.” These values tend to be likely when appearing through experience and contestation. When these values are well incorporated in the Civil Society of the democracy they tend to have a high spillover effect to other actors in the best-case scenario.

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38 Diamond. 1994: 7
39 Diamond. 1994: 8
40 Diamond. 1994: 7-8
41 Diamond. 1994: 8
The fourth component that Diamond describes is the secondary channel of influence and this is especially relevant when traditional groups are excluded from articulating their preferences and also experiences a lack of representativeness. When such exclusion presents, organizational pressure must come from below in order to increase social and political equality and the outcome will be more legitimate. Diamond also argues that Civil Society must advance in order to create opportunities for participation and influence. The Civil Society must progress for all levels of influence and participation both on local and national level. Diamond emphasize further importance concerning participation and influence, especially at local level since public policies impact citizens mainly at local level, due to the high level of decentralization.

The fifth component underlines the importance of developing a pluralistic Civil Society in order to reduce the risks of polarization between different groups in the society, particularly when the economy is growing and expanding due to globalization. Through a vigorous Civil Society new interests are encouraged, which are not traditionally oriented by nature and this combines new constituencies to compete over. Citizens will likely gain when joining multiple numerous of CSOs. A high level of associational life will lead to increased interaction with other individuals who have divergent opinions and interests. This will generate new perspectives and optimistically tolerance towards other individuals.

A sixth functioning in Diamonds theory is that civic organizations function deliberately for the purpose of training and recruiting future politicians. He also claims that civic organizations educates and prepares future leaders for service in the political life. This chain of events is a long-term byproduct from the success of the CSOs. It is also highlighted that individuals within the Civil Society gain the accurate competence and knowledge for future careers within the politics through different debate topics, motivating and structuring agendas such as budget issue. The wide Civil Society also represents the gender equality and this is an important platform for the education of women through future careers within the public sector. This

42 Ibid
43 Diamond. 1994: 9
statement exemplifies the importance of increasing legitimacy for the democratic structure. 44

Component seven is about CSOs work for strengthening the legitimacy of the electoral system through observations that will ensure free and fair elections. The Organization for Co-operation and Security in Europe plays an important role to observe and monitor elections worldwide. Other democratic institutes according to Diamond are crucial in their work to ensure several actions such as “reforming the electoral system, democratize political parties, decentralize and open up government, strengthen the legislature, and enhance governmental accountability.” 45

Component eight emphasizes a vigorous and strong Civil Society that is supposed to operate as a platform for the distribution of information towards the citizens. The preferences of the citizens cannot be defended and fought for if they are not well informed regarding which issue is high on the agenda. 46

The ninth component evolves the idea of distributing information and encourages innovation for the reason of producing economic reforms to guarantee economic stability. In order to achieve successful innovation, reforms such as privatization or liberalization of the economy need to be targeted for the public sector and public debate. When this occur these reforms seems to be more sustainable and more legit toward the democratic process. If the reforms don’t have the support from the society and through coalitions they are not likely to stand. 47

The tenth component Diamond emphasizes the importance of “accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness, effectiveness, and hence legitimacy of the political system, a vigorous civil society gives citizens respect for the state and positive engagement with it.” 48 By enhancing these democratic elements the system will experience a high level of confidence and hopefully a high level of participation.

44 Diamond. 1994: 9-10
45 Diamond. 1994: 10
46 Ibid
48 Diamond. 1994: 11
In order to increase the comprehending of how the Civil Society operates ideally, a model has been constructed. The interaction between the citizens, the Civil Society and the policy makers are the central context of this model and presents the elementary feature of this research. The citizens are to articulate their values, norms and interests in order to get the most out of their daily life. The interests and the preferences of the citizens should be one of the most vital elements in a democracy. The objective of the Civil Society is to embrace and represent these preferences in order to have a successful impact in the policy-making process. Those holding powers are assumed to represent the will of the people, which in most cases aggregates through the Civil Society. If the decisions implemented by the policy-makers are based on public interests, the result will hence increase the legitimacy over the government. The policy-makers need to be transparent in order to be accountable and representative towards the citizens and the democratic system.

This model describes some very fundamental aspects of democratic system. It is also a quite simplified version of the reality. It is through this model and other relevant theories about Civil Society connected with democratization, which will be applied to the case of Argentina. The establishment of this model is to emphasize which institutions are central for this research. However citizens can turn to different channels of impact. Corporations for instance can turn to lobbyist-groups to gain influence in the policy-making process. The citizens can also be directly politically active at local or/and national level for example. Regardless of the selection of actors in order to influence, this model elaborates the general process on aggregating preferences and articulating them.

Figure 2. Civil Society Model
3. Argentina’s political development

3.1 Political history: totalitarian rule between 1976-1983

During the totalitarian regime Argentina suffered a major downfall. The military junta, which was in power during the time period between 1976-1983, was the most brutal and arguably the most violent regime in the history of Argentina. Approximately 10,000 people were murdered or disappeared during this period.\(^49\)

This era was considered a huge setback for democracy in Argentina. The totalitarian regime also known as ‘El Proceso’ was a time period, which marked the citizens of Argentina extraordinarily. Armed forces controlled areas such as education, culture and media, people’s thoughts and ideas were restricted by the military and individual freedom did not exist.\(^50\) The Civil Society arena was what one might argue as non-existing.

3.2 Political history: the return to democracy in 1983

After the military breakdown there were high expectations and requirements. Citizens required numerous individual rights and liberties from the first elected president after the transition; Raúl Alfonsin. The opposition, which was the Peronist-movement (a political movement which has made its mark in Argentina’s political history) at that time was willing to compromise regarding amnesty pact with the military and that was not appreciated amongst the people. The Peronist-movement lost the elections due to their potential collaboration with the military. Instead the radical party won the election because they opposed any pacts with the military. Through a vigorous Civil Society, the citizens mobilized and demanded that no pacts with the military were to be accepted and this is perhaps what led the radical party to victory. In sum, the mobilization of the citizens through the Civil Society and the radical party’s unwillingness to compromise with the military had a major influence in the successful transition to democracy in 1983.

\(^{49}\) Taylor. 1998: 43
\(^{50}\) Stang. 1989: 15
4 Methodology

The idea in this thesis is to further analyze how Civil Society organizations are able to conduct their objectives. Primarily, a field study has been established and is the essence for this thesis. Through the field study conducted in Argentina it is possible to respond these questions and further present more elaborated answers in order to comprehend the role of the Civil Society. The incitements of monitoring and vitalization of democracy will be responded by the qualitative methodology.

4.1 Qualitative Research: Primary and Secondary sources

The method used in this thesis is a qualitative method. The interviews that were conducted in the field study will be analyzed, combined with articles and literature presented about the case concerning Civil Society in Argentina. Since a field study was conducted, a mix of different methods is essential to this thesis. The idea is to maximize the understanding regarding two aspects: the first is to understand the Civil Society’s importance in Argentina. Secondary sources are the most beneficial approach in order to provide valid information to that aspect. Since 1983 and the transition to democracy, Civil Society in Argentina has managed to reinforce its position amongst the people and also been a platform for mobilization. Hence there was a social consensus amongst different class groups that throughout the Civil Society democracy could be implemented in a more effective way.

The second aspect is the general functioning of the Civil Society in Argentina. Larry Diamond’s well-known theory about how Civil Society should be constructed in a democracy presents the basic structure in order to present relevant answers. In order to test this theory, practical approaches are essential. Hence the idea is to gather empirical data through qualitative surveys with different NGOs representing the Civil Society. The intention is then to determine how this theory is applicable in the case of Argentina. In this aspect, primary sources are the most beneficial approach in order to provide significant answers. In order to maintain objectively and achieve reliability, participants who are subject to the survey will present the information and the viewpoints of the NGO and not their individual opinions.

51 Fontecoba. 2009: 1
4.2 Case study: Why Civil Society in Argentina?

The case of Argentina is considered to have a unique development. Since Argentines are descendents of western Europeans, the political history that has characterized the country might be viewed as quite remarkable. One might argue that western ideas and philosophy embraces successful liberal democracy. This has however not been the case in Argentina. This intrigues scholars in conducting research about Argentina’s political history. The reason why particularly Civil Society in Argentina is because of the significance it has played in the successful transition towards democracy in 1983. People’s mobilization and emerging social movements, which are important aspects within the Civil Society, were key factors. In order to completely comprehend the successful transition in Argentina, research is required within the area of Civil Society.

4.3 Performing in-depth interviews

A significant source of literature will be used in order to adopt the method of qualitative research and in-depth interviews. The book *Qualitative Research Practice* by Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis will function as a reliable source in order to collect the empirical data. When involving in-depth interviews: “…it is often said that good in-depth interviewing involves open questions.” The book provides relevant information about the structure of an interview and how it should be conducted. The purpose is to establish credibility where the respondents can feel free to answer in a broad way rather than short and consistent. There are some key features with in-depth interviews, which are vital to retrieve the accurate information of a qualitative research. An advantage with the method is the combination between structure and flexibility due to the themes or issues, which will be stated and assist us during the process.

The first key feature emphasizes the researcher to have some sort of framework as a jumping of point. This will make the interview more efficient and flowing. Though the purpose with the method is to keep the interview open to follow up questions,

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52 Ritchie, et. al. 2003: 153
where the respondent can provide answers in a broadly sense and at every interview, the importance of well-elaborated answers is highlighted. 53

The second key feature evolves the strength of interaction between the researcher and the respondent. The questions or themes will be formulated to encourage the respondent to answer freely and not strictly. The follow up questions are based on the theme, which could generate a more accurate and relevant answer for the purpose of retrieving appropriate information. 54

The third key feature emphasize on the method that allows the interviewers to reach more far deeper and broader information. In order to achieve this the interview must be build on a technique that strives for answers of penetration, exploration and explanation. 55

This method also contributes to new knowledge and thoughts that hopefully will be shaped. Of course, this would vary depending on how the questions are formulated. It is also stressed that the participant has the possibility to generate ideas and suggestions on a specific topic or theme and also suggest solutions to a topic or a theme. 56

The method suggests that the data should be captured in its natural form. Then a good idea might be to record the interview, if the researcher or the respondent would miss out on some specific details. 57

Thus, these stages will function as a framework when conducting the interviews during the field study. This framework will moderate the process and establish a reliable understanding between the interviewer and the interviewees where openly and broad answers are essential.

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53 Ritchie, et. al. 2003: 141
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ritchie, et. al. 2003: 142
57 Ibid.
4.4 Material

The theoretical approach for this thesis will be from primary and secondary material. Secondary material will be presented through literature and various articles. The literature for conducting in-depth interviews, which in this case is the Qualitative Research Practice, is secondary material and explains the basic features of a qualitative approach. In order to provide answers regarding the theoretical aspect, article and literature concerning the Civil Society and democratization are adopted in this thesis. Thus, the material used in this thesis is a hybrid approach between primary and secondary material. Additional material in this thesis consists of a survey conducted by a famous worldwide Civil Society network called CIVICUS. Their mission is to present significant reports and statistics regarding Civil Society. In this case it will function as a complement to the field study. Factors in the report that are relevant to the thesis will be identified in order to obtain credibility.

4.5 Minor Field Study

In order to gather empirical data for this thesis, which will function as primary material; a field study has been conducted in Argentina. A Minor Field Studies (MFS) is a scholarship funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and is addressed to students at undergraduate and graduate level. The target of the scholarship is to provide students the possibility to organize a field study and collect data and material, which can later be used in a minor or master thesis. The MFS-program aims to accumulate knowledge regarding international development cooperation and to improve student’s preparation in global context and to provide the possibility to strengthen international contacts. The field study has empowered the thesis by providing a combination of in-depth interviews with CSOs, pooled with scientific articles and other research methods presented about the Civil Society in Argentina. Furthermore, a field study can provide a more direct perspective; in this case with participants working for various organizations within the Civil Society. To collect answers directly from them can increase the credibility on the subject.

The field study was conducted in a structured manner. In order to establish contact

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58 Programkontoret: Minor Field Studies, MFS
with the NGOs, it was severely important for form a essence of confidence
Significantly during the approach was to establish trust and professionalism. One of the major setbacks was the aspect of trust. In some occasions NGOs interpreted me as a journalist with the agenda of a critical approach. To ensure this, it was essential to present relevant material that was going to be used. The designed questions were attached to all participants that agreed to an interview. Furthermore, the purpose of the project was emailed to participants requiring it. This was the pre-stage. During the interview it was of significance to further strengthen trust. Before conducting the interviews, details such as introduction, home university, purpose of the field study was important. Essentially before starting the interview the participant was asked whether he/she wanted to be recorded and if he/she wanted to remain anonymous. These stages were essential in order for the participant to feel comfortable in partaking and responding the questions. This procedure was established early during the field study and it was successful until the end.

4.6 Selection of NGOs
The amount of NGOs that were interviewed reached the number of 17 organizations. Challenges in conducting this form of interviews were to achieve relevant and objective answers, in order to achieve credibility. Thus, the questions need to specifically be constructed in a way where it was possible to connect those answers to the main questions and the focus of the thesis. Another challenge was to successfully achieve a certain amount of interviewers. A small amount of organizations would not have been optimal in achieving credibility in the empirical part. Deliberately, the aim was to determine interviews with various different NGOs. In order to achieve this, the interviews established were a mixture of viewpoints with different agendas such as human rights, environment, equality etc.

Nine questions were inquired to each participant in this field study. The questions are based from the theory of Larry Diamond, presented earlier in the thesis. The motive behind the selection of question is significant to correlate the questions with something that ideally could describe the progress of Civil Society in Argentina. Furthermore, it strengthens the credibility since it provides relevant answers linked to the functioning of the Civil Society.
The empirical approach for this thesis will be retrieved from in-depth interviews with respondents from different NGOs. It is fundamental to be “striving to be as objective and neutral as possible in the collection, interpretation and presentation of qualitative data”.\footnote{Ibid} One problem that might occur with the reliability is how reliable conclusions in fact are. The solution would be to solve this by maintaining an objective position in relation to the data.\footnote{Ritchie, et. al. 2003: 20} The purpose is always to struggle for high levels of reliability and validity, which would certainly increase the quality of the thesis.
5. Civil Society’s ability to operate in Argentina post 1983

The focus in this section will emphasize the analytical approach and how it will be structured. In order to answer the first question, the first component of Larry Diamond’s theory is essential. This narrow focus will provide sharp answers regardless of the organizations agenda since it is the principal of monitoring that is being investigated. This principal and component is also applicable to secondary material. The report conducted by the worldwide Civil Society network Civicus is a virtuous compliment to the interviews conducted during the field study. It will also strengthen credibility through providing reliable statistic conducted by a legitimate network organization. The second question does not contain a similar narrowly focus. The vitalization of democracy in a country is a mixture of attributes. Some of these attributes can be identified in Larry Diamond’s second, third and fifth component of his theory: moderation, tolerance and other democratic values. The incitement of consolidation and strengthening the role of Civil Society is also a key factor in the vitalization process by allowing the Civil Society to operate independently, ensuring free and fair elections and providing citizens with valuable information.

This chapter will however begin by presenting the general history of the Civil Society in Argentina and how it has formed the political context.

5.1 General history of the Civil Society in Argentina

Post 1983, the mobilization of Civil Society organizations had a significant impact in the country. Civil Society in Argentina has continuously been recognized as an actor in distributing positive democratic values and promoting positive attributes to areas such as the environment, rule of law and citizen mobilization.  

The history of Civil Society in Argentina originated back in the 19th century, associated with the high migration flow of Europeans. In that period of time, CSOs were successful in their formation in order to moderate the living conditions for the recent arrived immigrants.  

Thus, in the 1930s due to the entry of Argentina into the world-market and corporatism, the government ruling at that time period attempted to

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61 CIVICUS. 2006: Xiii
62 CIVICUS. 2006: 9
establish a register of CSOs, in order to maintain them under state control. 63

The time period between 1955 until 1983, illustrated a low level of civil participation and CSOs. The existing CSOs were divided into opposing groups, as one group supporting the political regime and the development occurring in the nation, while the other group was in opposition 64

Post 1983, with the transition and implementation of democracy and liberal economy, CSOs development and impact formed the new and modern Argentina. Civil society in general had an essential role in the formation of different organizations with different agendas. Undoubtedly, organizations with the agenda of human rights were vital and the most important actor in the process of democratization by bringing justice to the families that lost beloved ones during the military regime. Progressively, organizations that advocated for new grounds, such as women’s right and environmental protection were established and hence able to lobby for their agenda. 65

5.2 Civil society’s ability to monitor public policies
Larry Diamonds first component in his theory concerning the Civil Society’s operational structure emphasizes the significance of the monitoring dimension. In order for a country to remaining democratic, a vibrant Civil Society that subjects the government for public scrutiny, if any form of constitutional violations occurs, is essential for comprehending the democratic system. 66 Thus, this aspect is fundamental for the public awareness concerning any violation of law or abuse of power conducted by the government. In order for accountability to function, the monitoring process is a key element.

Civicus, which is a network that strengthens and conducts research about Civil Society and its ability to operate and impact. In their survey rapport presented, the absence of CSOs in Argentina in the monitoring process was strong. An international budget project measured CSOs in Argentina and their ability to achieve objectives

63 CIVICUS. 2006: 10
64 Ibid
65 Ibid
66 Diamond. 1994: 7
such as document availability; budgetary monitoring and encouragement of public participation had a mediocre functioning. A large amount of CSOs lack the ability to monitor and hence the probability to establish a network, where negotiations and collaboration with state officials working in various branches – is inadequate, and thus restricting Civil Society’s objectives in the monitoring process.

The views amongst the participants that were interviewed regarding the topic on whether or not Civil Society in Argentina acts as a watchdog and essentially monitors the work of the government are divided. Meagerly, most of the participants however argues for the ability to monitor however with severe flaws. The reasons also tend to differ depending on the participant answering the questions.

Daniel Ryan from the organization FARN and Eduardo de la Rua from the law firm EBV, both have different replies regarding Civil Society’s ability to monitor and restraining the government. Both participants agree that the Civil Society has partially the ability to monitor the government and their work. However, the ability to monitor depends vastly on leverage and whether or not organizations can benefit from that particular leverage.

Daniel Ryan, one of the directors of the organization debates about Civil Society organizations leverage as following:

“The Civil Society organizations capacity to monitor during the transition phase in 1983, was high. Human rights movements have always had a strong leverage and have had a lot of access of the government’s work and government officials.”

He further elaborates the development of the Civil Society when it comes to monitoring. He addresses the development during the 90s where human rights organizations had a lot of influence to monitor and to affect policies. However, when it comes to other organizations such as environmental organizations, their ability to monitor policy-makers are fragile. Unless there is a strong public opinion and environmental issues are high on the agenda, environmental organizations have little leverage to have an impact.

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67 CIVICUS. 2006: 59
68 CIVICUS. 2006: 68
69 Ryan. 2013
70 Ibid
Eduardo De la Rua, main partner of the law firm EBV also points to the significance of leverage:

“The government pay little attention to the ideas of NGOs except from the ideas coming from the organization Plaza de Mayo (A strong NGO consisted of mothers who had lost their children during their dictatorship). The current government has supported most of their demands because of their strong position in the public opinion.” 71

Both of these two participants refer to the aspect of leverage in being able to monitor public policies and the government. What might be required is for NGOs to identify violation of power by the government. Their leverage can be established throughout the public opinion and use public mobilization against the government. Power of that kind is essential for the process to work, however both participants agree that there are only certain NGOs power of that kind.

The power of leverage can also outburst trough a crisis; for instance the financial crisis that occurred in 2001. The inability to repay foreign debts instigated a persistent financial recession, which evidently led to a significant financial crisis. 72 The situation escalated to a spillover effect, where the political sector was affected as well. Several members of the government, such as the vice-president and the minister of finance resigned due to corruption and hence lack of legitimacy. 73 The country progressed towards the worst financially crisis and a significant challenge to its democratic system. The majority of the participants in the field study elaborated that time period as a vital success and the rising influence of Civil Society. Two organizations were veritably established after the crisis. Due to the mistrust of the government, the citizen’s requirements to further monitoring and impacting the policy-makers sprouted significantly and CSOs became vital in this process. Lorenzo, the chairman of one of the organizations that was founded due to the financial crisis in 2001, Civil Association for Equality and Justice, argued that the role of the government was stagnating at that period of time and emphasized as to why this

71 De la Rua. 2013
72 Schamis. 2002: 82
organization was founded:

“*In Latin-America, traditionally, the role of government has been very weak and other institutions have played in the role in implementing public policies. So the idea that we need a strong government is very important if a society is supposed to be based on democratic values but also the idea that we need to control and monitor the government.*”\(^{74}\)

The large amount of the participants have a vibrant consensus as to which area the Civil Society has been predominantly in the monitoring process: explicitly human rights. Movements working for human rights such as Plazo de Mayo have after the breakdown of the military been able to monitor policies that essentially concern human rights and hence been able to scrutinize the outcome. Particularly in 1983, the movements struggling for human rights issues were able to monitor the situation that developed after the collapse of the military, and were also able through monitoring to hinder agreements with the military.\(^ {75}\)

However, there is also a large skepticism on the issue of monitoring. Amongst some of the participants who argued that Civil Society has little ability to monitor, the issue seems, according from their perspective, to stem from the strong power of the current regime. The government can provide access of public records, but to essentially monitor and influence the policy-makers is in practice very vague. Emiliano Esquere from Banco de Bosques, an organization working for the conservation of rain forests, compares the whole process like the cinemas:

“*It’s like a theater. Everything is there to look good, but in terms of influence you don’t see that happening for real.*”\(^ {76}\)

Amendments can according to Emiliano be completed, but in most cases it requires political scandals made by the officials for the government to essentially take input from NGOs. Thus, there is a strong and loud Civil Society with a convincing activism by its members, but the path towards monitoring a government, which is unwilling to

\(^{74}\) Lorenzo. 2013  
\(^{75}\) Gill. 2000: 173  
\(^{76}\) Esquere. 2013
Another group who is skeptical to NGOs ability to monitor, refer to organizations inability to achieve economic independency as the main reason. Flavio Mecau from LALCEC and Natalia Gerardi, from ELA, emphasize on this matter, and argue that domestically public funding’s and international funding’s are decreasing. Thus, this evokes an inability amongst organizations to act as watchdogs. As Natalia elaborates it:

“You need to be independent, and you have to be quite a sound organization with professional capacity to do that, and to do that independently…. in Argentina the Civil Society is under economic restraints for the last few years and public funding is not available in a transparent way, and international funding is not available because Argentina is not a priority for international funders”

Thus, it is evident that the decreasing funds from the international community affects the objectives for several NGOs, in the area of monitoring. Flavio Mecau referred this issue as a bargaining chip for the state in order to gain support from NGOs. The state grant public funding’s to organizations that agree with the government, and thus legitimizes their power.

The process of monitoring and the Civil Society’s ability to act as watchdogs towards policy-makers is a question with vast divided answers. While one large of the participants arguably emphasize on transparency amongst policy-makers, and the ability for organizations to monitor policies and prevail in their objectives. The power of leverage operates as one significant key factor in this ability to monitor. The financial crisis in 2001 could relate to leverage as the citizens of Argentina mobilized throughout the Civil Society, due to economic and political crisis occurring. Another group of participants argue for obscurity. Governmental power is too strong and their willingness to cooperate with organizations within the Civil Society is very vague. Further, NGOs lack resources and hence economic independency and due to the state’s powerful position, NGOs are negotiated to agree with the regime and

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77 Esquere. 2013
78 Gerardi. 2013
79 Mecau. 2013
acknowledge their authority. However, regardless of their diverse opinions in the issue, there is a general consensus amongst the participants that organizations operating within the area of human rights have the ability to essentially monitor governmental policies, due to the controversy subject regarding human rights throughout the country’s history.

5.3 How democracy has been vitalized throughout the Civil Society

The process of consolidation and vitalizing democracy in a country should be in correlation with Civil Society. For the bolstering of democracy to ingrain throughout the legislative, executive and judicial branch and the various different institutions and authorities, it is necessary for state institutions to establish accountability and representativeness to its citizens – hence the Civil Society operates as the link that distributes these attributes to the citizens. ⁸⁰

Civil Society has post 1983 represented a significant role in the strengthening and consolidation of democracy in Argentina. After the breakdown of the military regime, human rights movements played a significant role and acted with a strong influence in strengthening its position within the political landscape. Plaza de Mayo, an organization consisted predominantly of mothers that had lost a son or a daughter during the military regime, has driven the issues of human rights and required no amnesty towards the military and thus helped strengthen democratization and continued doing so during and after the transition. ⁸¹ Several organizations particular within the area of human rights, had significant influence and thus convinced the first elected democratic regime in 1983 to strengthen rule of law and state institutions, without any involvement from other actors such as the military or the church. Their mobilization and representation managed to generate a civilian commission to which main objectives were to investigate the violations of human rights conducted by the military regime. ⁸²

Thus, post 1983, after the collapse of the military regime, CSOs participation infinitely increased and gained influence, but also assisted the elected regime in 1983 to design the new democratic system. Sustaining democracy in Argentina has been

⁸⁰ Brysk. 2000: 155
⁸¹ Friedman, et. al. 2002: 32
⁸² Ibid
one of the key objectives by non-governmental organizations within the Civil Society. Large umbrella networks such as Social Sector Forum, operates for the increasing of participation regarding public policies amongst the citizens, but also guaranteeing a fair distribution of international funds, which are intended for NGOs. 83 Other methods and structures used in order to strengthen democracy were through delegating authority to actors, which are considered reliable and competent within a specific area. For instance, the Catholic Church (as an actor with long tradition of influence in Argentina) were granted authority to handle issues concerning conflicts, monitoring of human rights and essentially dealing a broad social issues amongst citizens. 84

The rapport presented by the CIVICUS, illustrated the importance of democratic promotion by CSOs in Argentina. A high percentage of the participants in this survey agreed that the Civil Society’s main objective was democratic promotion in Argentina. 85 Additionally, the campaign that was the most successful in the effort for democratic promotion was a project that targeted reforms within the political parties. It was an initiative supported and conducted by a network of CSOs. The aim was to provide more transparency and scrutinized mechanisms for public funding’s, in order to avoid a clientele relationship between the government and civil society, where the government has the ability to shift Civil Society’s agenda by not providing public funds. 86 The promotion of democracy was also accurate in other areas, where civil society played an important role, for instance in areas such as environmental protection.

According to Larry Diamond’s ideal vision, the Civil Society is a vital instrument for distributing a rich associational life, where democratic values and norms are prevalent throughout society and helps increasing moderation, tolerance and compromises amongst the citizens. 87 Amongst all of the participants that were interviewed, there was a clear consensus concerning the relevance and significance of Civil Society in distributing democratic values and norms. The basic argument is clear: democratic

83 Friedman, et. al. 2002: 35
84 Brysk. 2000: 151
85 CIVICUS. 2006: 47
86 Ibid
87 Diamond. 1994: 9-10
standards are the most accurate approach for a more progressive future, regardless of political orientation. Throughout the Civil Society, democratic values, such as respect for human rights, freedom of religion, and freedom of speech, are of vital significance amongst the citizens and also vastly valued. These values are also resolutely applicable towards public participation and grassroots activities. The image of public mobilization is generally acceptable and encouraged; the role of CSOs has been the key element in boosting participation and mobilization amongst the citizens. Amongst a large group of the participants that were interviewed, Civil Society has post 1983, helped to rebuild and formed democracy and thus contributed in the foundation of democratic institutions. Through lobbying and monitoring, CSOs ability to require accountability, representativeness and transparency was determinedly successful.

Attributes of moderation, tolerance and compromises are on the other hand contrarily. Diamonds third component in his theory emphasize on these attributes as vital and being stimulated through the Civil Society. These attributes are later generated to a spillover to different sectors and institutions. In the rapport presented by the Civil Society network Civicus, 57 % of the participants in the Stakeholders Survey viewed Civil Society as a vital actor in regards to promoting tolerance, while 34% viewed the role of Civil Society in promoting tolerance as insignificant. Thus there were insufficient programs conducted by the Civil Society in the area of tolerance and their presence tended to be relatively low.

The majority of the participants that were questioned in the field study argued for a high level of polarization between the government and non-governmental actors, and hence making attributes such as compromises and tolerance difficult to vitalize the democratic society. Andres from the organization FOPEA, which operates in the interest and protection of the media, highlights polarization between the government and their organization, and how it obstructs their objectives:

“For example in our case, we have many problems with the situation of polarization because the government use media and different journalists to fight against other journalists and other media groups, and this creates a more sensation of polarization

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88 Ibid
89 CIVICUS. 2006: 50
and changes the real objectives of the media."^{90}

Guillermo, from the organization RACI, further emphasizes on the threat of polarization towards democracy:

"I think Argentina right now is passing through a moment of really hard polarization and I think for the culture of democracy of our country that polarization is not good in terms of improving the quality of democracy itself."^{91}

Based on the respondent’s answers, the attributes of moderation, tolerance and compromises are being threatened. The political culture is at the moment characterized by a friction between supporters of the government and anti-government people. This indicates that individuals view other individuals with different opinions as their enemy and not as individuals with merely different opinions and a certain acceptance.

Maria Baron, from the organization Directorio Legislativo, discussed the matter and emphasized the problematic situation, where Civil Society is categorized as the opposition:

"We have done an agreement with a national newspaper and that paper is a strong oppositional newspaper. Because of that agreement, the government views us as the opposition, because we reached this agreement. If we have an agreement with the opposition we are the opposition. This is a very traditional reformist thinking and actually many members of congress told us that we were fascist because of this."^{92}

Several of the participants that were interviewed also argued for a strong polarization in areas such as the media, same-sex marriage and the environment. The polarization occurring in the nation has derived essentially from one factor and led to spillover in several other areas. This trend can arguably be clarified through the expanding power of the current government. As presented in section 5.2 (analyzing the monitoring-process), governmental authority has reached its peak. The controlling and distribution of public funding’s illustrates this high degree of polarization. Several of the participants working within NGOs, elaborates on the lack of resources as

^{90} D’Allesandro. 2013 ^91 Corea. 2013 ^92 Baron. 2013
extremely problematic. In order to receive public funds, it would require a shift on NGOs agenda and hence their objectives such as requiring transparency and accountability from the government.

The area where polarization however tends to be low is human rights. The human rights issues are, regardless of political group or opinion, debated in respectful substance and policies concerning human rights generally achieves consensus.

A high level of polarization and the less independent status of Civil Society can have an impact in the respect towards the state and positive attributed towards it. Larry Diamonds tenth component emphasize the importance of a vigorous and independent Civil Society and allowing it to operate ideally. When attributes such as accountability, transparency and responsiveness are encouraged it contributes to legitimacy over the political system and citizens establishes positive engagement and respect towards the state.\(^93\) Thus, this is enrichment where citizens can establish positive attitudes towards the government, if access of information is available and governments illustrate full transparency.

The level of autonomy and support towards the Civil Society in Argentina by the state is according to the survey conducted by Covicus a clear indicator as to how it should behave. The respect towards the state and any positive engagement towards it, depend on the degree to which the state accepts Civil Society to operate without unwarranted intervention and hence allowing it to operate independently.\(^94\) The autonomous status of Civil Society is sufficient. Since post 1983, CSOs have been the autonomous authority where citizen’s values could be contained and represented. Throughout recent years this model has however shifted to further co-option by the state and increasing collaborative models, where CSOs have obtained funds provided by the government in order to implement their projects.\(^95\) Thus, these funds have been converted as an optional mechanism, where the government exploits CSOs in order to promote biased interests, to which benefits the state.\(^96\)

All of the participants in the field study agree and views the government as the key

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\(^93\) Diamond. 1994: 8
\(^94\) CIVICUS. 2006: 41
\(^95\) Ibid
\(^96\) Ibid
actor in ruling and governing the state. Since weak institutions have characterized the country’s history, institutions such as the church or the military have been capable to execute authority. Nevertheless, when the autonomy of Civil Society is compromised and not completely respected, this modifies the public opinion and any positive engagement towards the state.

Emiliano Esquere highlights the threatened status of the vigorously Civil Society and how it impacts the citizens:

“NGOs are the instrument to hit that guy called the state, with a hammer to get things done. The state as an institution has lost a lot of credibility. 85 percent of the citizens think that the people working for the state are only working to get rich. NGOs have monopoly on credibility in this country and that is for sure, however not completely in the church.” ⁹⁷

Guillermo further elaborates on the issue of independence how it has an impact on credibility:

“In Latin America that is completely different. If you are an NGO and you got 95% of your budget coming from the government, other NGOs and the public will think that you are working for the government. You become an unofficial agency for this government.” ⁹⁸

The relationship between the state and the Civil Society depends vastly on the autonomous status of Civil Society. When preventing the Civil Society to operate vigorously, the public does not establish positive attitudes towards the state. Thus, the state can be viewed as a corrupt actor that commands full control over public policies where CSOs, which is the nearest actor operating to represent citizens values is not included.

⁹⁷ Esquere. 2013
⁹⁸ Corea. 2013
6. Conclusion

This thesis has had two main focuses in presenting the role of Civil Society in Argentina:

I. The monitoring process and how Civil Society organizations can require external accountability from the government

II. Vitalizing democracy through the Civil Society.

The objective has been to apply Civil Society in correlation with democratization, and also the structure of an ideally operational Civil Society.

The monitoring process is a crucial factor. According to the several scholars presented in this thesis, it is one of the major dimensions that should contain in the assembly of the Civil Society. Larry Diamond highlights the monitoring process as the first component in his ideal structure of Civil Society. The answers provided by the participants that were interviewed regarding the monitoring process in Argentina, is that CSOs has the ability to operate as watchdogs but it requires capability. Elements such as leverage or incidents as the financial crisis are profoundly for CSOs establishment in monitoring public policies. Further, with international and public funding’s decreasing; NGOs lack expertise and resources to essentially provide monitoring of public policies and government officials. Thus, this is a democratic deficit in Argentina that is not sustainable. To be able to monitor the government and policy-makers is a way for the citizens to be well informed and hence increasing knowledge about politics in general. The survey conducted by Civicus further emphasize on the issue of monitoring, where CSOs lack absence in that area. The Civil Society is that link between the state and the citizens, where citizens through mobilization give input to NGOs in order to generate their preferences. NGOs impacting the policy-makers and hence output from policy implementation is vital for the process to be completely operational. The aspect of output, which involves monitoring, becomes dysfunctional when monitoring of policies is not accessible. However, the ability of monitoring is achievable for NGOs working in area of human rights, since it still is a controversial and sensitive subject for the country. Their
access of information regarding public policies and implementation is fully transparent and within the area of human rights, NGOs have full capacity to monitor without any obstacles preventing them. Thus, the component of monitoring is very fragile and to a great extent not transparent from the current regime in Argentina. In order for NGOs to distribute information and output from the government to the citizens, the monitoring process is essential for government to illustrate transparency, accountability and representativeness. This can not be accomplished when NGOs that are not working within the area of human rights, are denied or do not have the capability to monitor the regime concerning areas such as equality, environment or state finances.

Since post 1983 the importance of Civil Society has been vital for a successful democratic transition in Argentina. Attributes such as moderation, tolerance and compromises have been significant in distributing democratic values amongst the citizens of Argentina. Admittedly, the Civil Society has contributed to a greater democratic culture amongst the citizens. There is a general consensus amongst the participants that were interviewed by declaring the vast importance of NGOs in this form of process such as establishing democratic values. Arguably, this has consolidated democracy in the country and hence democracy is viewed as the only game in town. Citizens and institutions accept democracy and want democracy. However, practically these attributes are hindered to establish further vitalization of democracy. A high degree of polarization jeopardizes these attributes and thus further vitalization of democracy. Growing governmental power and lack of resources amongst the NGOs are forming a path where the government is trying to rule the country on its own capability without any involvement. The key element in the issue of polarization implies capital. NGOs that contain a solid budget tend to have influence in the monitoring process and also impacting the policy-makers. Those NGOs that lack resources are however a different scenario. The current government grants them public funds, but in return the government requires full cooperation and control over their objectives; a clientele agreement. Thus, this is a threat to the importance of a vigorous and independent Civil Society. Public funding’s are not instruments for the government to allure NGOs in order for them to legitimize governmental power and certifying NGOs inability to accomplish their objectives. This trend concerning high degree of polarization does not only apply at institutional
level, but it also has an impact on citizens. The Argentinian people appear to act in a further differentiated way. Having dissimilar opinions can be viewed in a negative matter and it can instead lead to antagonism. Arguably, this political culture and environment is a serious threat to the development of the country.

How has the Civil Society achieved monitoring and vitalizing democracy in Argentina then? Viewing it from a theoretical and ideally aspect of Civil Society, the Civil Society in Argentina operates moderately. The severer flaws within the Civil Society should however not be underestimated. Being able to monitor governmental policies and access information is essential for a well functioning Civil Society. When the monitoring process depends on leverage and crisis: the civil and political society has problems. Modifications are required; NGOs priorities on the agenda must contain independence from the government and asserting that public funding’s does not result in a governmental cooperation that affects their objectives in scrutinizing policy-makers. This aspect is correlated in vitalizing the democratic structure in the country. The vast governmental authority is supported from the idea that Civil Society is less independent and hence this acknowledges and further reinforces the power of the government. Thus polarization is a fact. When the government is controlling CSOs, fractions between groups and citizens tend to be inevitable. Institutions, organizations, middle- and elite class tend to support and legitimize governmental authority, whereas the working- and underclass are less beneficial and further oppose governmental authority. This is the outcome witnessed in Argentina and high level of polarization is a fact.

The Civil Society is the source of inputs and outputs towards the government and from the government. Polarization seems to evidently be the result of increasing governmental power. Civil society can play a key factor in decreasing this, but initially NGOs need to reorganize and establishing more independence from the current regime. Public funding’s are not a bargaining chip and NGOs should cooperate through large networks in this matter to confirm that despite public funding’s from the government, NGOs should maintain their agenda and operate independently and hence being able to act as watchdogs.

The Civil Society is the closest platform for the citizens to influence and scrutinize
governmental authority. Too much partnership with the government could jeopardize the consolidation phase and hence citizen mobilization, which was a key factor towards democratic transition in the first place.

Argentina is a country with a rough authoritarian history and it is still emerging, after merely 30 years of democracy. Thus, with a history of that kind it is essential for monitoring and control of the political establishment in order to not risk going backwards, but instead towards consolidation and vitalization of democracy.

6.1 Future perspective for the Civil Society in Argentina
When discussing the future progress of the Civil Society in Argentina, several factors should be kept in consideration. However, the aspect of economic circumstances is essential. Instable economic reforms’ that has characterized the country has had an impact in the political, cultural and other essential sectors. The future of Civil Society in Argentina depends vastly on the economy. Main challenges facing Civil Society in Argentina is efficient independency. In order to operate independently depends on vastly on economic circumstances. Mobility of the Civil Society has always been a strong aspect in Argentina, and it will continue to be a strong aspect in the future. The future might require NGOs to restructure their organization in order to achieve independency and hence operate more efficiently. Furthermore, I believe that CSOs in the future will require rejecting strong partnership agreements with the government. In order to maintain credibility and to strengthen the consolidation phase, this is of significance for CSOs to achieve in the future.
Annex A. Respondent, Organizations and Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guilerrmo Corea</td>
<td>RACI</td>
<td>International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorenzo Lavin</td>
<td>ACIJ</td>
<td>Justice and rule of law</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diego Difelitas</td>
<td>APP</td>
<td>Public Policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mario Roitter</td>
<td>CEDES</td>
<td>Think Tank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gisela Cardazo</td>
<td>APDH</td>
<td>Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavio Macuea</td>
<td>LALCEC</td>
<td>Health Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emiliano Esquere</td>
<td>BANCO DE BOSQUES</td>
<td>Sustainable development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Ryan</td>
<td>FARN</td>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andérs D’Alessandro</td>
<td>FOPEA</td>
<td>Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natalia Gerardi</td>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>Equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Baron</td>
<td>Directorio Legislativo</td>
<td>Public policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia Lacrantoze</td>
<td>RAP</td>
<td>Democracy and leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eduardo de La Rua</td>
<td>EBV</td>
<td>Legal council towards organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas Hunter</td>
<td>TECHO</td>
<td>Socio-economic development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leandro Echt</td>
<td>CIPPEC</td>
<td>Citizen strengthening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonazlo Bazgan</td>
<td>CASCOS Verdes</td>
<td>Social policies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Annex B. Questions for respondents

1. Do you think that the Civil Society monitors and restrain the exercise of power within the government of Argentina?

2. Would you agree or disagree that the progress of the civil society in Argentina has contributed to democratic values, ideas & thoughts amongst the citizens?

3. Would you agree or disagree that the Civil Society of Argentina has advanced towards attributes such as tolerance, moderation and willingness to compromise within the political power of Argentina?

4. Would you agree or disagree that the Civil Society in Argentina works for progress at local or national level? And if so, which level?

5. Would you agree or disagree that the Civil Society in Argentina has decreased the polarization within different fractions in the society? (By polarization we mean in general terms of the political spectrum.)

6. In what way does your organization distribute the information towards the citizens regarding your work? Is there any platform for this?

7. Would you agree or disagree that a vigorous civil society contribute to respect for the state and positive engagement with it? And if so, is that the case of Argentina?

8. How would you elaborate/explain the progress of the civil society in Argentina?

9. Would you claim that the financial crisis has stagnated your role in impacting the policy-makers?
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