

Abstract:

The growing partnerships between the state and civil society organizations (CSOs) in the development process of aid-dependent states are largely explained by the New Policy Agenda, which put emphasis on a minimalist state and the enhanced role of civil society. The article observes that the partnership has been derailed by conflicting interests, approaches, suspicions and competition for aid and legitimacy. It also points out that the partnership has been affected by the state's goal to co-opt CSOs while CSOs also suffer from dependency, lack of downward accountability and linkages to grassroots organizations, which compromise their autonomy and legitimacy. The article argues that unless a framework is established in which terms of collaboration are spelled out for purposes of coordination and conflict resolution, the partnership in poverty reduction may not achieve significant gains.