

Africa Considered as a “Civil Society”

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1. Elements of the concept of “civil society”

Some basic distinctions (who does use it, and how is it used)

“Civil Society” as Ideology or norm (political/social thoughts, political theory)

“Civil Society” as analytic concept (comparative politics, international politics)

“Civil Society” as integrals of various social groups (international organization, business world)

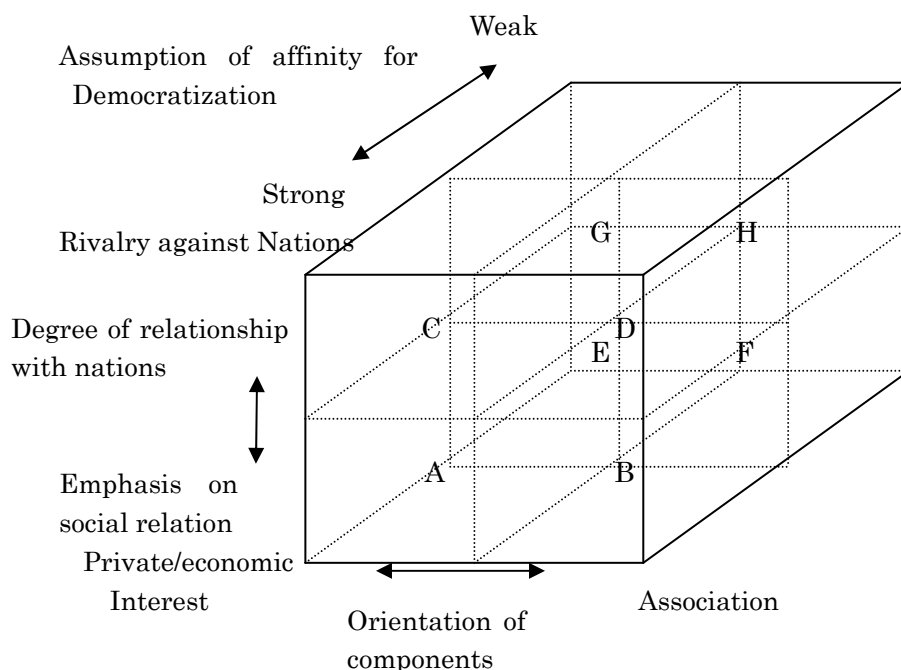
2. Diversified “civil society” concepts and recent features

Basic types (refer to a diagram below)

- A. Idea that under liberal economy, social group formation is only promoted autonomously away from nation
- B. Idea that focus on ability of associational life which fosters “civility” embodied in certain types of civil activities
- C. Idea that emphasis on social groups which have tendency and ability to counter back nation’s hegemony orientation, by pointing power balance between classes created by capitalistic mode of production
- D. Idea that “conflict” is an important component of social groups which act as counterweights against nations (notice that social groups are relating not only with class relation but also with various counter axis)

Although ABCD has strong directivity toward the premise which is harmonious basically between democracies, democratization and “civil society”, there are still EFGH that do not share its premises. EFGH can be explained as follows: discussion about the fact that a certain types of social group must be included in the concept of “civil society”, even if those social groups are hard to recognize –or it is hard for them to contribute to the democratization and stability of the order, because reasons of exclusion can be sometimes be arbitrary. Also discussion about “incivility” and aspects of violence which must be included in “civil society”

Diagram: basic types of "civil society" concepts (domain setting)



Source: modified from theory of civil society : possibilities and problems of global applied "International problems" 2000, 7, P.4

□ Features observed in relatively common within recent "civil society" concepts

- "Civil society" as autonomic territory from Nation (government) and Market (civil activity) ("the Second public realm" theory etc)
- Basic unit of groups (rather than individuals), various medium organization, spontaneous association
- Focus on "new social movement" and activities of civil movement which pursue "post materialistic" values such as environment or feminism etc.
- Evaluation on NGO transnational activity and critics on market-centered globalism
- Comparative research and its analytical conceptualizations of worldwide democratization and reality of "civil society"

3. African reality and the concept of "civil society"

4. Unused "civil society" concept and existed "civil society" activities

- A case of South Africa during late-Apartheid in 1980s: civil activities conducted in urban African residential districts
- Context of democratization in Africa during early 1990s (the case of Zambia): activities of student organization, religious groups, labor union
- ① Adopting "civil society" concept and its strategies
 - Context of South Africa heading toward post-Apartheid: Civic striving strategy
 - Context of democratization (the case of Zambia): groups that own self-recognition as "civil society"
- ② Background

Diffusion of "civil society" discourse: transformation from academic jargon to practical term

"civil society" discourse: this term tends to be positively used by actors, such as international

organizations searching for new support policy, bilateral donors, and NGOs on site who are a receiver of support.

After the Cold War, this thinking has been diffused deeply that "civil society" as liberalism values, by a process of diffusion worldwide, evaluates positively itself which has been formed historically within Europe/American liberalism, fosters itself on policy level, and connects directly its support with promote of democratization.

③ Interpretation of NGO growth

It is the consequence resulting from the discourse of emphasis on "civil society" by international organizations and donors, accumulated finances are returning through NGO, rather than the consequence of boosting political recognition on importance of "civil society". Besides, some point out that these NGOs do not compose some parts of "civil society", but play the roles of receivers of finances from "supporting market", and as a result, they have something to do with the instability of the political order.

4 Problems between "democratization" over Africa, afterwards of "civil society", and of practical standard

"civil society" in Africa: consensus lies as underdevelopment or immaturity

"civil society" as construction issues and assistant of "civil society" as construction support problems over given and allocated (and its potential influence of) "civil society"

□Case 1 Kenya

Site of support practice of "civil society" (the case of Kenya)

- Selecting NGOs which become targets of donor's "civil society" support has biases to particular NGOs, because selection is done by human relationship
- In the case of "civic education" which is a major object in "civil society" assistant among various NGOs supported, there are possibilities that some particular ethnic groups are more strongly supported than others, such as the case of the Kiyuku, a large ethnic group in Kenya, that supported the opposition party in the late 1990.
- As a consequence of above, that is, by emphasizing ethnicity, it has political significance in augmenting of social fissures

"civil society": site where support as resources are fought over, reemphasis on ethnicity as the logic for differentiation

□Case 2 Zambia

Concerns about NGO hierarchy in governance filed that superior NGO leaders excel in the collection of money and the power of organization when compared to others

Alternation of NGO Agenda: problems as extreme dependency of finances on specific donors

Vulnerabilities of external control and of South NGO's financial dependency

However, in some aspects, they actually backup the actual democratization process (interception of constitutional revision which would be advantageous to the incumbents and substantial participation in constitutional amendments)

Conclusion

Diversification and manifold of "civil society" concept

Existence of "civil society" activities which are developed in a conceptually unconscious way

Generation of politics is performed over discourses through parameters circulated in policy

Political practice in targeted nations which separated from donor's intentions