The Role of Civil Society in Development:
African and Asian perspectives on (transnational) activism and the relationship with the state

SNU Civil Society Programme 2022

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Agenda

1. Understanding Civil Society in Development;
2. Framing Development;
3. Knowing the state;
4. Transnational Activism;
5. Research

Activism!

African, European and Asian Protests

Hong Kong 2014 & 2019/20

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JllJNupvDnY&index=32&list=PLuljBR2lI2yC1dXqnjsM_wmbPczSkmkst

South Africa

Uganda's Dr Stella Nyanzi: feminist naked protest against patriarchy and President Museveni

Check out: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrqJTEGHm5c

POEM 41: NOW THAT HE IS PRESIDENT

When he was a guerrilla,
We fed his troops with cassava, maize and millet.
Now that he is president,
He feeds us with pain, tear gas and bullets.

When he was a rebel leader,
We hid him in our grass-thatched huts.
Now that he is president,
He defends those who steal our land with guts.

When he was a freedom fighter,
We raised our hopes of freedom inside his struggle.
Now that he is president,
We are locked up in prisons – our life a haggle.

When he was a liberator,
We dreamt Uganda on the road to development.
Now that he is president,
We are dying of corruption, poverty and unemployment.

When he was fighting in the bush,
We gave him our sons to boost his troops.
Now that he is president,
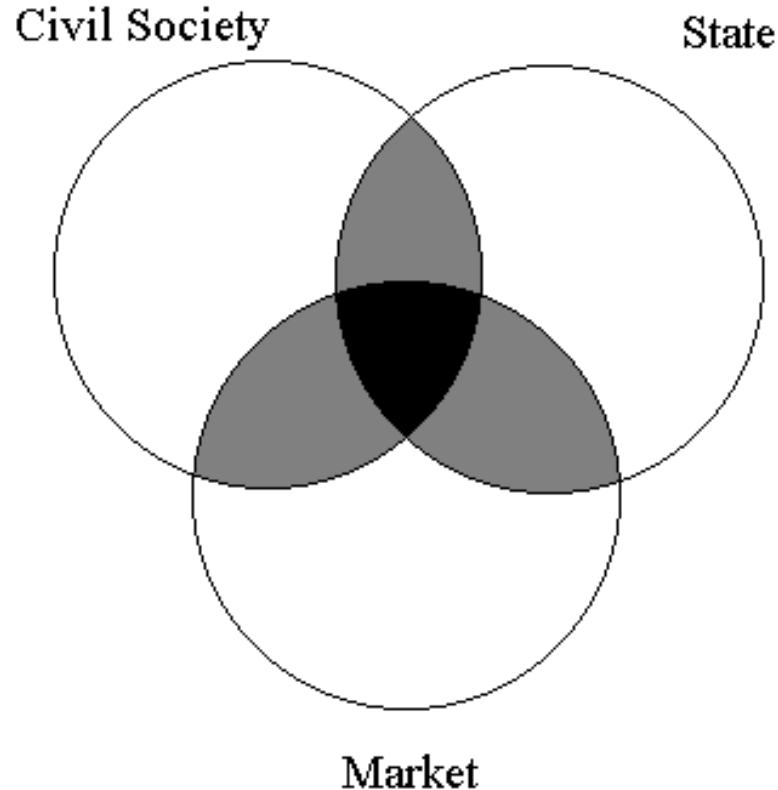Our children sleep in graves – buried with our hope.

Stella Nyanzi.

In court…

Understanding Civil Society in Development

Overlapping Realms in Nation State Context

Civil Society — State — Market

Civil Society

- **Analytical term:**
    - To distinguish *associational society* from the *state* and the *market*;
    - Includes NGOs (international, national, local), Community-based organizations (CBOs) etc.;
- **Normative term:**
    - '**actor term**' that *"...inspired many resistance movements and NGOs to present themselves and act in certain ways, it has acquired –and is **continually in the process of acquiring– new, or transformed, meanings...**"* (Source: Nauta, 2004)

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Blurred Boundaries
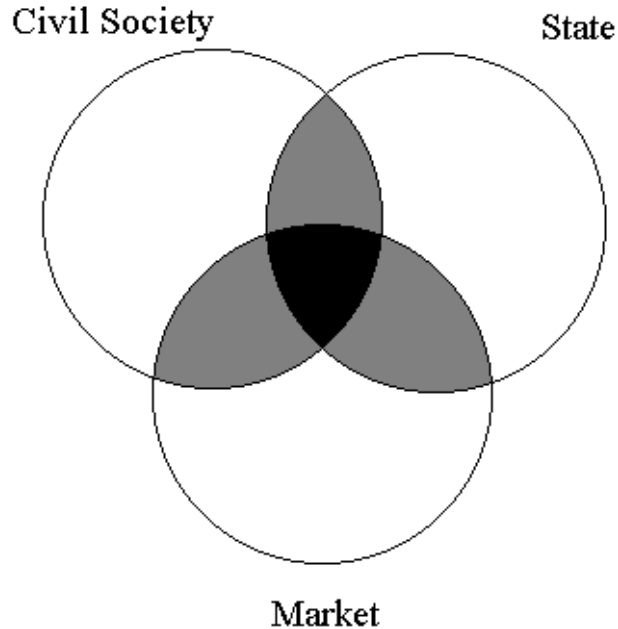
Who initiates/funds CS initiatives?
- People:
  - membership based?
  - non-membership based?
- State:
  - subsidies or GONGOs?
  - CSOs as service providers?
- Corporate:
  - Donations?
  - Funding?
  - Corporate initiated?

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Civil Society: Useful Dimensions

Michael Edwards (2020)

- As **Associational life**
  - analytical: types of human organization;
- As the **Good Society**
  - normative term: ideals of people;
- As the **Public Sphere**
  - its about politics: democracy.

Edwards warns against **a Neo-Tocquevillean** definition of civil society:

- Depoliticized view of CS as associations (NGOs)

Civil Society

1. Associational Life: Alexis de Tocqueville

French Philosopher 1805-1859:

- "In no country in the world has **the principle of association** been more successfully used, or more unsparingly applied to a multitude of different objects, than in America".

2. The good society: Michael Walzer (2009)

- "The peaceful co-existence of all [groups] that aim at goodness. That kind of practical plurality (...) can be imagined as a framework that encompasses all the versions of goodness";

3. The Public Sphere: Sabine Lang (2013)

- "...the composite of real and virtual arenas in which private citizens come together to give voice to matters of public concern or common interest"; Focus on **Interests**, **Power**, **Politics**;

A vibrant public sphere = a 'healthy' democracy...

Global Civil Society

Ferguson on the globalization of politics:

"If relations of rule and systems of exploitation have become transnational, so have forms of resistance…" (2006: 109)

Kaldor:
Global civil society is a platform inhabited by activists, NGOs and neoliberals, as well as national and religious groups, where they argue about, campaign for (or against), negotiate about, or lobby for the arrangements that shape global developments. There is not one global civil society but many, affecting a range of issues… (2003: 590-1).

Global Civil Society

A **more political** Habermasian interpretation of civil society -**civil society as public sphere**- is frequently ignored by mainstream development actors

- **Public spheres**: blogs, internet fora, pamphlets, speeches, newspaper articles, demonstrations;
- IFIs prefer negotiations with professional NGOs: danger of cooptation.

Chandhoke: do **global or international NGOs actually help ordinary people in the South to be empowered or disempowered, to be politicised or be depoliticised?**

The Limits of Global Civil Society

Chandhoke (2002) argues that:

- **the notion that global civil society can institutionalize normative structures that run counter to the principles of powerful states** or equally powerful corporations, (...) should be treated with a fair amount of **caution**;

- Actors in **global civil society function** (...) **within** the realm of **the possible**, **not** within the realm of the **impossible** (...), within inherited structures of power that they may modify or alter but seldom transform...(2002: 52).

Post-Democratic Times (Crouch, 2004)

- While many countries now showcase **democratic principles, 'deep' democracy** seems **besieged** in the West, South and East;
- **Corporations** are increasingly **determining the global agenda**;
- **Elites dominate politics** across the globe;
- **Populism** –soundbite politics; fact-free politics; personalized politics; media-hype politics– **is on the rise**;
- **Inequality is on the increase**; and
- **Public spheres** are **under attack** of **commercialism**. (Crouch, 2004)

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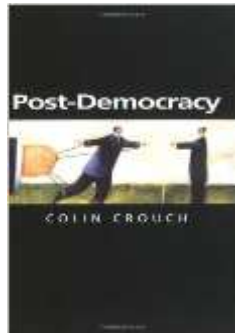
Global South Perspectives on 'civil society': can we simply transplant European notions?
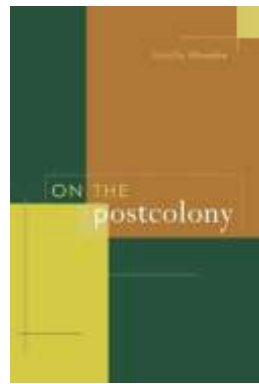
I agree with Mbembe who is critical about use of the concept of 'civil society' in context of the postcolony (2001); Do not simply transplant it…

- To understand "…postcolonial relations of power, we must **go beyond the binary categories** used in standard interpretations of domination (resistance/passivity, subjection/autonomy, state/civil society, hegemony/counter hegemony…).

- These **oppositions are not helpful**; rather, they **cloud our understanding** of postcolonial relations.

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Sub-Saharan African Postcolonial Context

Mahmood Mamdani (1996)**: Citizen & Subject**

Urban Citizens were under **Direct Rule:**

- Free association of Civil Society;
- Political Representation;
- Private Ownership;
- Society is highly racialized.

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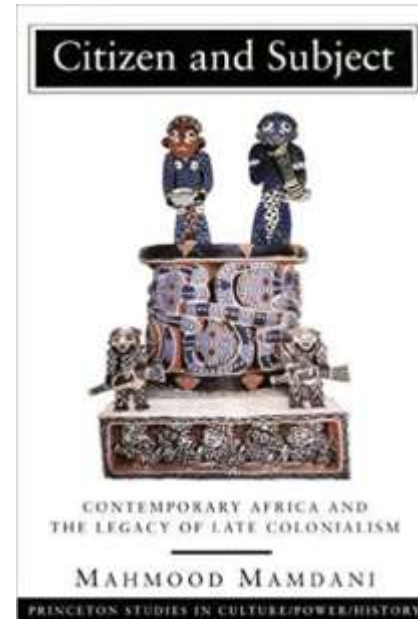
Citizen & Subject: the bifurcated state

Rural Subjects were under **Indirect Rule**:

- **Power** in the hands of the **Native Authority** (as defined by the colonial power);
- **Exploitation System** geared to free resources; e.g. labour
    - Seizure of land
    - Hut tax: direct monetary benefit & indirect benefit labour
- **Communal Land** presided over by **the Chief**;
- **All realms of life defined by the Customary** (as defined by the colonial power);
- **Society is tribalized:** even in postcolonial times;
- Nauta: **'traditional authorities'** in contemporary Africa have been perverted and transformed by colonialism: authoritarian, patriarchal

Exploitative System geared to free resources

Cecil Rhodes Puts it Bluntly in a Speech at the Cape House of Assembly in 1894:

"Every black man cannot have three acres and a cow (…). It must be brought home to them that in the future nine tenths of them will have to spend their lives in daily labour, in physical work in manual labour".

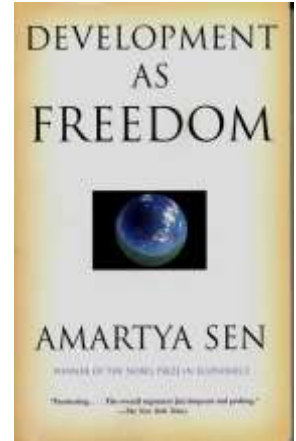Maastricht University

Framing Development

Development is the process of expanding human freedoms

Freedom is:

- **The primary goal;**

  and

- **The principal means of development.**

According to Amartya Sen (1999):
political participation and **dissent** are *crucial* parts of **development** itself

Five types of important freedoms:

- **Political Freedoms**: civil rights, press freedom;
- **Economic Facilities**: access to economic/financial opportunities;
- **Social Opportunities**: e.g. health & education;
- **Transparency Guarantees**: openness, anti-corruption;
- **Protective Security**: social safety net, famine relief, unemployment benefits.

These are a set of **checks & balances**

Agenda 2030 (the Sustainable Development Goals)

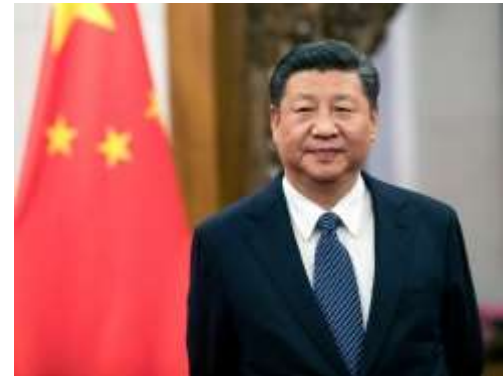Is global capitalism compatible with climate concerns, equality goals, human rights?

Framing Sustainable Development: emphasis?

- Social;
- Environmental;
- Economic;

And

- Institutional

Rise of the South…

- **China, crucial for global capitalism:**
  - One Belt One Road (OBOR);
  - President Xi Jinping for life

Source: China Investment Research
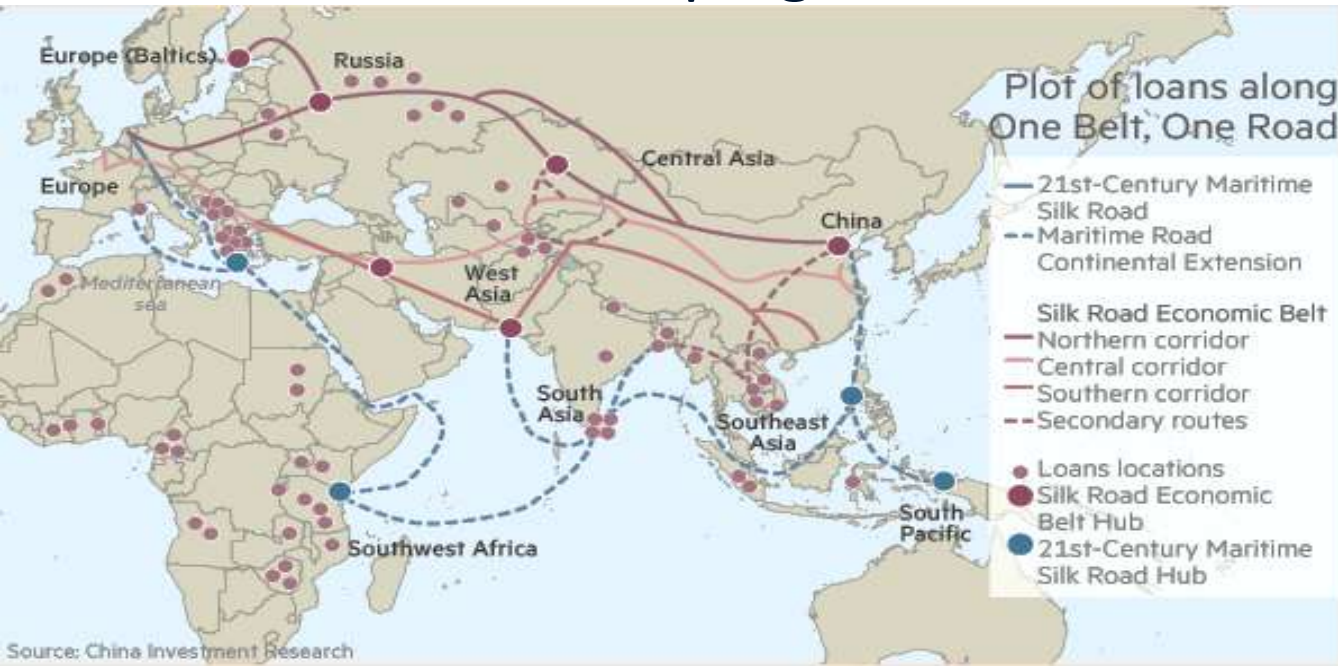
'Southern' Voices & the 'White gaze': race?

- Robtel Neajai Pailey: De-centring the 'White Gaze' of Development
  www.open.ac.uk/ikd/dsa2019

- Her main thesis is that **'race' is omnipresent in development** but also a taboo that is rarely addressed

Do We Need Africa to Continue to Feel Superior?

- "Reductive repetition becomes an effective tool with which to conflate the many heterogeneous characteristics of African societies into a core set of deficiencies."
Andreasson, S. (2005), p. 972.

- Do we need 'helping Africans' to be respected by the world community and, ultimately, ourselves?

Examples from my own research

- "…in our deconstructions of development, however, we may reproduce problematic tropes, such as calling **white migrants** 'expatriates' while referring to their **counterparts of colour** as 'migrants' marked by racialized otherness" (Pailey, 738).

- In the conclusion of our recent book I argue that "…we seem to be influenced by and trapped in matrices of power and the manner in which actors, processes and phenomena are framed". Should we not acknowledge that **SNDC**, although not labelled as such, actually does exist?

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South-North Development Cooperation

- Thousands of **Zimbabwean health professionals** in the **United Kin**gdom as providers of development assistance to a struggling health system?

Or,

- …the manner in which **South African peace and transition negotiators**, associated with the African National Congress (ANC), assisted the **Irish parties** during their **peace negotiations** in Ireland in the 1990s (Guelke 2000)**;**

- Although we may be aware of such 'modernities', we still **struggle to fundamentally alter our mind-sets**: …we are yet to see a Burundian team of researchers conducting ethnographic research on the way in which such SNDC is delivered. In that sense, and so many others, global academia is still highly uneven.

Korean Saemaul Actors: Reforming African Minds & Communities

- Paternalistic?
- Patriarchic?
- Neo-colonial and/or Asia-centric?
- Emancipatory?

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Images of the Other: Reforming African Minds

In the SGF publication, *Saemaul Undong a hope for the world*, for example, the description of local Tanzanian culture is very value-laden:

- "The people of Tanzania always cry out '**Hakuna Matata**,' meaning 'no need to worry even though there are problems' in Kiswahili. This reflects their positive and gentle nature, but it has **led them to the evasion of responsibilities, which in turn impeded social developments**;

- (…) one can commonly see people spending meaningless hours, sitting in front of their houses, and will notice the disconsolate looks on the faces of **those who are idle**, which is not always by choice". (SGF, 2013: 12).

Promoting New Communities: Asia-centrism?

According to a high-level official of the **Saemaul Academy** of Kyungwoon University the most difficult thing is to teach local Africans about "cooperation" and "diligence":

- "**They don't seem to understand** the concept of '**contributing their private land for the purpose of community development**' or 'sacrificing themselves to cope with the difficulties their nation is facing with'" (SGF, 2013: 69)

Knowing the state

States:

The state provides **the most important framework** (…), within which **movements**, **associations**, and **communities** can **co-exist**.

The **state is also a community of a kind**: it seeks to educate its children to be good citizens and to sustain a common political life across generations.

It **protects** its citizens:
- not only **against other states;** but
- also against oppression or illegitimate coercion in the different groups: **guarantor of individual rights**.

So **a good state** is (…) **effective for all its citizens**; this is what makes **its own coercive power legitimate. But effectiveness requires** (…) **that the state be in the hands of** [the] **citizens:** it is a **democratic state**.

Democratic vs Authoritarian States

Civil Society and Civil Liberties (citizenship):

- "**Democratic states**, broadly defined, impose some constraints on the spaces, rights, and liberties of civil society organizations, [largely] functional in nature" (Sidel, 2011: 298):
  - Registration to provide tax incentives or eligibility for subsidies;
  - However, counter-terrorism (post 09/11) measures have had a major impact in US and Europe (e.g. funding from and funding to Islamic regions).

- "**Undemocratic** (…) **states** can raise and lower restrictions on civil society virtually at their discretion" (2011: 305):
  - Registration to curtail (prevent foreign interference);
  - E.g. China and Vietnam

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The Public Sphere needs Democracy and Vice versa

Jürgen Habermas:

- "…comprises those nongovernmental and non-economic **connections** and **voluntary associations** that anchor the **communication structures of the public sphere**"(1998, p.366);
- The **public sphere** is the **social space** in which **communicative action** occurs;
- Requires the existence of a "liberal political culture" with effective **legal** and **constitutional rights** and **freedoms**

Theorizing the state and civil society

- Foucault: **governmentality** is a "...very specific albeit complex form of power"
  - as its target population;
  - as its principal form of knowledge political economy;
  - as its essential technical means apparatuses of security"

- Associated with the development of various institutions as well as "**a whole complex of savoirs**", knowledges [102-103].
  - Also Gramsci's (1999) concept of **hegemony**

Theorizing the state and civil society

- The "**state** is no more than a **composite reality** and a **mythicized abstraction**"
- Foucault: "Pastoral Power" of the state:
  - Power is "a set of actions upon other actions" :789
  - "without the possibility of **recalcitrance**, power would be equivalent to a physical determination" (:790);
- We can use this concept of **recalcitrance** to investigate what role civil society can play…

The African State: neoliberal governmentality

- Ferguson and Gupta urge us to better understand development contexts in African states where Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), "…**outsourcing of the functions of the state**", have left their mark (2002: 990);

- Ferguson contends that **we as scholars**, interested to understand the relationship between the state and civil society, **are blinded** by our "pervasive way of thinking about the analytic 'levels' of local, national, and global – (…) that rests on (…) **the vertical topography of power** (2006: 90)

Global Shadows AFRICA IN THE NEOLIBERAL WORLD ORDER

James Ferguson

The African State: neoliberal governmentality

Transnational Topographies of Power

We need to **be aware of "spatializing states"** and an ethnography of **"neoliberal governmentality"** can help to reveal "transnational topographies of Power" (Ferguson: 2006)

- Where 'national' 'state decisions' are actually taken in **Washington** (WB/IMF), **wealthy country capitals** or **corporate headquarters**;

and

- The **'local'** is strongly shaped by **International NGOs** that are active on the ground with head-offices in wealthy nations…

Global Shadows: AFRICA IN THE NEOLIBERAL WORLD ORDER

James Ferguson

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Transnational Activism

Transnational Activist Networks (TANs)

Keck and Sikkink warn us not to think only of 'progressive activists'.

Actors are **much more diverse**, including:
- international and domestic NGOs;
- research and advocacy organizations;
- local social movements;
- foundations;
- the media;
- churches, trade unions, consumer organizations, intellectuals;
- **parts of regional and international intergovernmental organizations**;
- **parts of the executive and/or parliamentary branches of governments.** Source: Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics (1999: 92)

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TANs: Boomerang Pattern

According to Keck & Sikkink "**Transnational advocacy networks appear most likely to emerge** around those issues where:

1. channels between domestic groups and their governments are hampered or severed [and] ineffective for resolving a conflict, setting into motion the **'boomerang' pattern** of influence characteristic of these networks;
2. activists or 'political entrepreneurs' believe that **networking will further their missions and campaigns**, and actively promote them;
3. international **conferences and other forms of international contacts** create arenas for forming and strengthening networks".

Useful Tactics:

1. **Information politics:** use of information;
2. **Symbolic politics:** use of powerful symbols/situations;
3. **Leverage politics:** enlist support powerful allies; and
4. **Accountability politics:** call on powerful actors to act on promises.

Source: Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics (1999)

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TANs: Theoretical Innovations

Building on Keck & Sikkink (1999):

1. **Temper** (2019):
   - **Catapults:** extra-local [NGOs] "…aim to gain legitimacy and broader recognition of their issues through their strategic insertion and representation into local politics and communities".;
   - **Minefields:** "conflictive or cancelled projects lead to a shift in government policy, investment trends or confidence due to perceptions of increased danger and financial or political risk";
2. Moreira et al. (2019) on **South–South Transnational Advocacy Networks (SSTANs)**:
   - Important to be aware of more recent phenomenon **SSTANs** as "…Southern actors are mobilizing against new and emerging patterns of South–South cooperation" and new forms of domination.

Research

Korean 'Aid' Actors in Rwanda

- **Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA):**
  - World Friends Programme;
  - Korea Saemaul Undong Centre (GONGO?);
- **NGOs and Civil Society Groups:**
  - Good Neighbors International;
  - Global Civic Sharing;
- **Korean Ministry of Agriculture:**
  - Korea Rural Community Corporation (KRCC);

Nauta & Lee (2017): South Korean Civic Actors in Rwanda

Korean Promotion of Participation

- In Rwanda "the mere **existence of NGOs** and other formal or informal groupings [potentially **hides**] **how government** fundamentally **moulds** these, by attacking them for perceived dissention, or urging them to cooperate in the work of the state";

- "the increasing **permeation of the state into all aspects of life** reflects the preoccupation with assuring alignment" (Purdeková, 2011: 493)

- Nauta & Lee coin the term: "emerging civil society"

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Saemaul Education

Promoting civil society in contexts controlled by the state?

A **govern-'mentality'** that resonates well with the Rwandan state's ideas and practices of governance is relatively easy for most Korean organizations and volunteers as they are used to a **government/management 'culture' in Korea**, shaped by **diligence, discipline, planning, determination** and **hierarchical** relations.

Korean Promotion of Participation

- **Associational Life:** there is some, but limited, space to organize people's participation:
  - Rwandan Government decides where Korean actors operate;
  - Often local officials (village/sector/district) are closely involved;
  - Everything is subsumed under national development plans (Imihigo contracts/'decentralization';

- **Good Society:** some room for manoeuvre to discuss what people consider 'good';

- **The Public Sphere: more or less non-existent** outside government influence, therefore limited possibilities for 'real' political engagement.

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Critical CS at home: ODA Watch/PIDA

Global Development Assistance:

- is partly **rooted in Korea's** troubled **authoritarian past**;
- has a **donor centric** perspective;
- it is **unsustainable** as it tends to promote 'green growth';
- it frequently contains **"othering"**, especially when it comes to indigenous people: "We [seem to] think that developing country people are not like us"

ODA Watch
Our Development Alternatives

PIDA
People's Initiative for Development Alternatives

People's Initiative for Development Alternatives

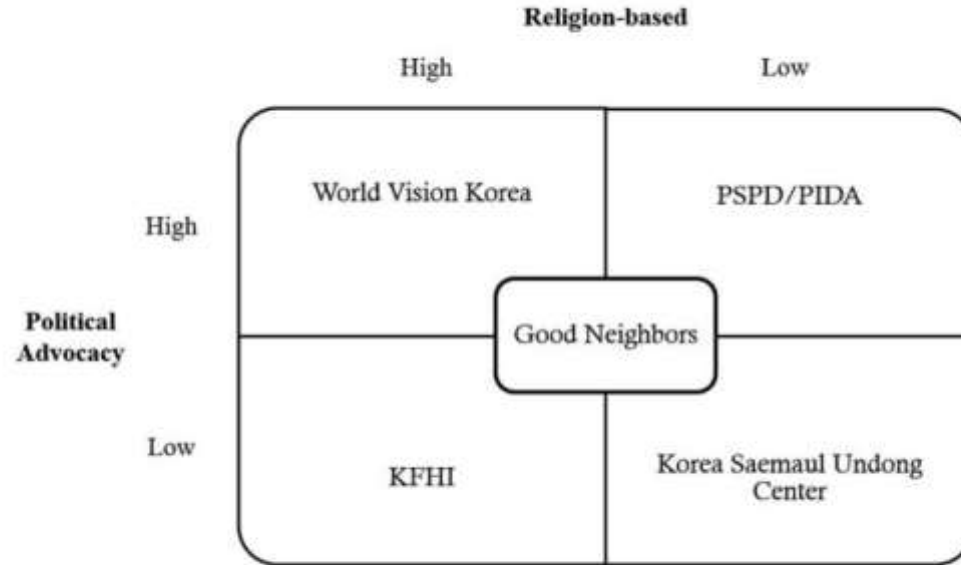# 2017 Candlelight Protests against President Park Geun-Hye: ODA corruption

Moon Jae-in Administration: government-civil society partnership in ODA

In the 2019 Policy Framework "…Korean **CSOs are officially recognized as crucial recalcitrant actor**s with public advocacy role vis-à-vis the government, regarding an overarching ODA vision and pressing for more participatory implementation mechanisms. It also ensures the bundling of civic expertise and CSO capacity to bring voices and experiences in developing countries back to the negotiation table with the government." (Nauta et al. 2021: 326)

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Nauta, Han & Kim (2021): Inspiring Democratic Progress in Development Assistance

Korean NGOs in Korea's Development Architecture

Figure 1: Typology of Korean CSOs in development sector.

Source: By authors. PSPD: http://www.peoplepower21.org/English/39340; PIDA: http://pida.or.kr/ (former ODA Watch); World Vision Korea: http://www.worldvision.or.kr/; KFHI: http://eng.kfhi.or.kr; Good Neighbors: https://www.goodneighbors.kr/; Korea Samaul Undong Center: https://www.saemaul.or.kr/eng/.

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Source: Nauta et al. 2021

Inspiring Democratic Progress in Development Assistance

- governments (…) may not be sufficiently critically monitored and assessed and only professional CSOs, with limited recalcitrance, are recognized as partners;
- In such environments, forms of undemocratic governmentality may become institutionally and societally entrenched, based on hegemonic knowledges of elites, over-represented in particular bureaucracies (Gramsci, 1971);
- In this light we recognize the dominance of the 'conservative' intellectuals at MOEF, illustrated by discourses in which capitalist logics and Korean logics of competition abound.

Inspiring Democratic Progress in Development Assistance

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Inspiring Democratic Progress in Development Assistance

- Through the Policy Framework in 2019, Korean CSOs are officially recognized as crucial recalcitrant actors with public advocacy roles vis-à-vis the government, regarding an overarching ODA vision and pressing for more participatory implementation mechanisms;
- Ensures the bundling of civic expertise and CSO capacity to bring voices and experiences in developing countries back to the negotiation table with the government:
  - more serious engagement of the Korean government with the SDG agenda in the ODA field;
  - more open and collaborative attitude of the government;
  - hopefully avoiding the dangers of co-optation such as the poison pill of CSO financial dependencies.
- What will change under new President Yoon Suk-yeol?

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The End