

The Future of Global Civil Society in Our Contemporary World

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Abstract: This paper assesses global civil society, how global civil society was emerged from historical point of view. The paper explains the linkages between governance and global civil society, the institutions, functions/roles and the challenges of global civil society. The paper argues that global civil society operates beyond state territories and the reach of sovereign national government. The findings shows that global civil society plays a very important role in molding our daily lives, from how we relate to the policies that guide laws and regulations in the society, authoritarian regimes in third countries give little room for global civil society to growth and developed independently, there is a distrust between the globally civil societies and government in power and is fueled by rivalry and antagonism, religion has an impact on the development, functions and growth global of civil society, colonialism in third world countries also retard the development of global civil society. Finally the paper offers recommendations and suggestions that could help to maximize the benefits of global civil society.

Keywords: Global, Civil Society, Governance, Roles, Challenges.

I. INTRODUCTION

Historically, the concept civil society is both ambiguous and debatable; the real meaning of civil society has changed twice from its real, traditional version. The first changed occurred after the French Revolution, the second during the fall of Communism in Europe. In the traditional period the concept was used as the same with the state. The political thinkers in the traditional period did not differentiate between the state and the society. Rather they opined that the state represented the civil form of society and “civility” represented the requirement of the good citizenship. Moreover, they were of the opinion that, human beings are inherently sensible so that they can collectively mold and decide the nature of their human community they belong to, in addition, human beings are able and competent to maintain peace in their own community or society. By holding this view, we can say that traditional political thinkers laid the foundation of civil society in its real sense. Due to the special political arrangement of Feudalism in the middle ages, the concept of civil society was gone underground; instead discussion was dominated by the problems of civil conflict, a preoccupation that would last until the end of Renaissance and the emergence of the sovereign nation-states in the world.

The Enlightenment thinkers argued that human beings are sensible and can mold or decide their own future. Hence, no need of legitimate authority to control them,[1,2], both argued that citizens are peace lovers and that conflict are the creation of despotic regimes [3]. Considered civil society as a different sector, a system of needs, that is the difference which intervenes between the family and the state.

Civil society was the “base” where productive forces and social relations were taking place, where as political society was the “super structure”. The postmodern way of understanding civil society was first developed by political opposition in the former Soviet bloc of Eastern European countries in the 1980s. In 1989, communist propaganda had the most important influence on the development and popularization civil society [4].

By the end of the 1990s, civil society was seen as an antidote amid the growth of the anti-globalization movement and the transition of many countries to democracy, civil society was increasingly called on to justify its legitimacy and democratic credentials. This led to the creation by the UN of a high level panel on civil society. In the 1990s, with the emergence of the Nongovernmental organizations and new social movement on a global scale, civil society as a third factor treated as a terrain of strategic action to construct an alternative and world order. But there is marked difference between the study of civil societies in developed countries and third world countries.

Therefore, this paper was divided into the following subheadings; introduction, methodology, literature review, conceptual clarification, governance of global civil society, functions/roles of global civil society, problems/challenges of global civil society, conclusion and recommendations.

II. METHODOLOGY

The method adopted in the course of this research is content analysis using mainly secondary data. The secondary data include existing literature on the topic such as books, journals, conference papers, publications and newspapers and other related documents.

III. THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The concept has been understood differently across different time, periods, places, theoretical postulations and political persuasions. Civil society is not state; it is non-official, nongovernmental, civil society organizations are not formally part of the state apparatus; nor do they seek to gain control of the state office, therefore, civil society lies outside the “public sector” of the official governance. Civil society organizations are not companies or firms, nor do they seek to make profits, it is a non-commercial organization. Though, for example, sometimes, companies often organize and fund non-profit bodies including Foundations or Charity organizations, civil society lies outside the “private sector” of the market economy, activities are considered to be part of civil society when they are involve from outside the state and the market and in an organized form to shape policies, norms and deeper social structures [5]. Therefore, civil societies exist when people make concerted efforts through voluntary organizations or associations to mold rules, both official, formal, legal arrangements and informal social constructs. In terms of organization, civil society organized itself formally officially registered associations or groups, it depends on peoples culture and orientation, some civil society are unitary and centralized entities. So civil society is refers to as “third sector” of the society.

In industrialized societies, civil society organizations are more organized, generous and resourced, richly endowed with members, funds, trained staff, office accommodation, communication technology and data bank ,in third world countries, most of the civil society organizations are struggling for survival, lack of many things including an effective leadership and finance, sometimes they have corrupt tendency. Generally, civil society use different tactics or techniques to pursue their goal and objectives, including petitions, demonstrations, letter writing campaigns to sensitize and mobilize support from the public and government. Civil society exists whenever people mobilize support through voluntary associations to initiate and shape the social order. Civil societies are essentially a species of polity- a law governed state- to a view which saw civil society as the organizations and practices standing between the family and the state, civil society came to have a largely domestic connotation. It related to the public sphere within states and societies.

To take the real meaning of civil society, it has global in its connotation in Marxist perspective in which the market and economic relations generally have always laid at the heart of civil society under capitalism [3]. “Held the view that market and economic life were part of the civil society, he also pointed out that the important role of non-economic institutions, such as civic associations, welfare institutions, religious and educational bodies, civil society can also be differentiated from the coercive instrument of the state but also from the economic institutions of society. Therefore, civil society is the arena, outside the family, the state, and the political parties and the market where people associate to advance common interest” “civil society refers to the set of institutions, organizations, and behavior situated between the state, the business world, and the family [7]. Specifically, this would include voluntary and non-profit organizations of many different kinds, philanthropic institutions, social and political movements, forms of social participation and engagement, the public sphere and the values and cultural patterns associated with them.

Mary Kaldor, (2003), suggested that “It is not straightforward to transpose the concept of civil society into the concept of global civil society, since the key to understanding what is new about contemporary meanings is precisely their global character”. Civil society implies social movements, non-governmental organizations, non-profit associations, private voluntary organizations and independent advocacy groups that have the interest of the society socially, economically and politically [8]. Civil society activities include operational, educational and advocacy roles, they are active in migration and disaster relief management issues.

IV. GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY

The concept of global civil society is ambiguous and debatable, as mentioned earlier, and thus [9]. “In order to find global civil society, we have to look for political activities other than those surrounded by the parameters of the non-state system [10].

“Global civil society is known for its distinctiveness from the assumed features of the traditional state system; it has become clear that the term global civil society refers to nongovernmental organizations and activities [10].”

Global civil society “Refers to the vast assemblage of groups operating across borders and beyond the reach of government” [12]. He further argues that “a global civil society is taking shape but that its character and implications for the older states system remain and still unclear”. The sheer heterogeneity of groups, activities and Networks that make up global civil society-nonprofit, social movement, tourist, academies artists, and cultural performers, ethnic and linguistic groups constitute what global civil society. Global civil societies are INGOs, social movements or global advocacy networks as well as voluntary nonprofit organization or charity organization or Foundations.

So, global civil societies are international nongovernmental organizations, transnational advocacy networks, and global social movements. Global relations are social connections in which territorial locations, territorial distance and territorial borders do not have a determining influence. In global space, ‘place’ is not territorially fixed, territorial distance is covered in effectively no time, and territorial frontiers present no particular impediment or barrier. Thus, global relations have what could be called a ‘supra territorial’, ‘trans border’, or ‘trans world’ character. CNN broadcast, Visa credits cards, Internet connection are little restricted by territorial places, distances or borders. This is to say that territorial geography has lost relevance today. Global civil society address trans- world issues, involved trans-border communications, has a global organization and works on a premise of supra territorial solidarity. Trans- world diseases like AIDS have also stimulate notable global civic activity.

Civil society organizations become global if they use supra-territorial modes of communication, Air travel, telecommunications, computer networks and electronic mass media allow civic groups to collect and disseminate information related to their causes more or less instantaneously between any locations on earth. Civil society is global when its activities adopt trans-border organization. In 1988, according to the union of international associations, there were some 16,500 active civil society bodies where members are spread across the globe civil society organizations can be global in so far as voluntary associations are influenced by sentiments of trans-world solidarity .e.g. civic groups may build on a sense of collective identity and destiny that transcends territorial borders.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent movements dates back to 1863, Pan- Africans’ all held global meetings. The spread of global civil society has been attributed to globalization in general. Some of the forces behind growing trans-border civil activity are the same as those that have propelled globalization in general. The rise of supra territoriality has resulted mainly from the mutually reinforcing impulses of global thinking, certain turns in capitalist development, or ‘tubor capitalism’, technological innovations and enabling regulations. According to UNDP (1996), report “many governments have rewritten laws in ways that facilitate civic organizations and states reduce provision of social security and multilateral agencies like the World Bank and the UN Commission for refugees have contracted trans-border civic associations e.g. development aid humanitarian relief” [13].

On the other hand, the central actor in global civil society is the non-governmental international organizations. “It is equally obvious that the ways in which this kind of actors is differentiated from other actors in world politics are disqualifying some organizations which fulfill the formal requirements but which lack the essential moral attributes” [14]. On the other hand, it is also obvious that however contested the normative foundation of global civil society appear to be the ethically unifying element in global civil society seems to be all the good causes propagated by those organizations and their members. Five typologies of the concept of global civil society they are [5]:

- Classical or Traditional type-is the oldest and is concern about societies in which violence and arbitrary rules and regulations has been eliminated or abolished and the ability to create a cosmopolitan order or world state in which international criminal justice and international peace keeping operations expanded, without these global civil society is seen as incomplete, ineffective and inoperative.
- Bourgeois society- is identified with the market, business and commercial aspect of civil society supported by the Enlightenment thinkers such as Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson and John Kean, to them, civil society, is equated with ‘Globalization from below’, some aspect of global development like international political institutions, transnational corporations, foreign investment, migration, environmental issues and global culture are all part of global civil society.
- The Activist Vision – they are more related to contemporary developments, and they focus essentially on ‘Transnational Advocacy Networks’ such as Green peace, Transparency International, Amnesty International, Global social movements like protesters, demonstrators, human rights activity and environmental activities.
- The Neo-Liberal type- Is the opposite of the bourgeois society, it is less critical of contemporary capitalist globalization ,free trade, minimal regulated economic activities as the best way of promoting civil society. It is considered of the political or social counterpart of the process of globalization like economic globalization, liberalization, privatization, deregulation and growing mobility of capital and goods. Francis Fukuyama sees an emerging global civil society in the worldwide

triumph of liberal capitalism as 'end of history'. It is criticized as reactionary of the activities and other more radical type of global civil society.

- The postmodern 'global civil society'-emphases plurality, the massive movement of people to Europe, the interpenetration of cultures, the destabilizing of nation-states are producing world of human understanding and acceptance of difference, common culture promoted by international tourism and travel, communication networks/internet, globally organized networks such as global Islam, nationalist diasporas' networks and human rights networks, each has its own features, but they are all visions of global and global civil society, so, globalization increases postmodern tendencies.

Out of the five versions of global civil society mentioned above, the neo liberal type is concern with deregulation and privatization of the economy supported by the World Bank, MNCS, WTO, and global power players like USA, Britain ,France and civil society think tanks and advocacy groups.

There are also proliferation of civil society with ideology and funding with secret agenda of promoting the neoliberal version of the civil society. For example, Global warming is supported and funded by the 'center for the study of carbon dioxide and global change.

There are some 'good' civil societies that promote the goals of 'civility', democracy, equality and fair minded debate and there are 'bad' civil society groups that promote hatred, bigotry and ignorance, so, there is the need to differentiate between the two in order to promote the good and suppress the bad.

The international civil society center helps international civil society organizations improve their roles on sustainable and equitable world. The center is nonprofit organization. International decision making process seek legitimacy through the involvement of civil society, yet formal mechanisms for NGOs participation within the UN system remain limited. Ad hoc civil society participation should be replaced by a strengthened more formalized institutional structure for engagement. Therefore, Global civil society should be involved in wider use of the commission model for long term, substantive involvement of civil society in global policy making process and development of standard for civil society participation and engagement in international decision making process and support for knowledge generating institutions in developing countries.

V. GOVERNANCE OF GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY

According to, Rosenau, (1992), sees "Civil society as the public space between the state, the market and the realm of family relation; it is an associational realm within society, based on voluntary and non-profit affiliation". The concept of "governance can be the capacity of states, social actors and economic operators to guarantee the systematic management between democracy, market and equity" [1]. UNESCO: (2001). Arator, (2000), defined Global governance as "the *de jure* mechanisms intended for the organization of international relations, as they concern the executive system in charge of stating and applying international rules as well as public and private actors" [18]. So, global governance of global civil society is based on voluntary interchange between actors. Global governance of global civil society is a transnational system of rules, principles, norms and practices, oriented around a very large number of often dissimilar actors, focused on sustainability of governance, [9].

On the basis of this, he redefines the notion of governance; rather than the state or international institutions, for him, it is global civil society itself that can modify the underlying constitutive rule basin on modern civilization and develop new modes of local as well as transnational governance. It thereby lays the basis for broad institutional, social and political change. In that sense, governance becomes quite different proposition than 'global management'. While global civil society can be complementary to the state in some ways states and civil society interact dialectically, recreating and legitimating each other over and over, the state is engaged in government, civil society in governance. "The growth of institutions of governance at the civil society level of analysis, with concomitant implications for state and system subsumed within the system of global governance", he sees "Institutionalized regulatory arrangement"-some of which he calls "regimes"-and less formalized norms, rules and procedures that pattern behavior without the presence of written constitutions or material power [2].

The activities of global civil society are to help to change the ideational framework that support one set of constructions of social reality by replacing old inter subjective rationalities and ethics with new ones. In other terms, global civil society's role is to create new bodies of knowledge that are the basis for changes in beliefs and practices, the emphasis on global civil society should not displace states, their role is to implement changes in the society. Global civil society can modify the set of ideational frameworks of states; it remains that the material embodiments of ideational frameworks will be significantly determined by states, so that global civil society should not be seen as divorced from the latter.

Governance remains shared. Global civil society cannot be seen as a replacement of states nor institutions. The linkages between national governance, global governance and global civil society can be regarded as globalization of governance.

Global governance should take local issues to the global level and fulfill local request in the global arena through indirect state channels or through direct local ones. The state is an intermediary between local and global. Global governance should invest local units with decision making authority on issues that have global consequences, if they are endowed with a particular capability/expertise/knowledge to the best deal with the issue. In this case, global governance must give way to local governance.

Therefore, local autonomy in decision making has to be combined with the need to promote the common goods, which requires information flows through networks from the local to the global. Governance in global civil society refers to different ways, manners and method in which they manage their affairs which involve the act of governing and the application of laws and regulations, but also of customs, ethical standards and norms.

“Global governance as systems of rule at all levels of human activity- from the family to the international organizations in which the pursuit of goals through the exercise of control has transnational repercussions” [21]. He goes on to broaden the definition even further by saying that “rule” means “control” or “steering” which requires only that “the controllers”...seek to modify the behavior... of other actors. Global governance, thus, is any purposeful activity intended to “control” or “influence” someone else that either occurs in the arena occupied by nations or occurring at other levels, projects influence into that arena [2].

International decision making process seek legitimacy through the involvement of civil society, yet formal mechanisms for NGO Participation within the UN system remains limited. Ad-hoc civil society participation should be replaced by a strengthened, more formalized institutional structure for engagement. Therefore, global civil society should be involved in wider use of the “commission” model for long term, substantive involvement of civil society in global policy making process and development of standards for civil society participation and engagement in international decision making process and support for knowledge-generating institutions in developing countries. “NGOs, and other civil society groups are not only stake holders in governance, but also a driving force behind greater international cooperation through the active mobilization of public support for international agreement [18].

The rubric of “global governance” is akin to “post-cold war” which signifies that one period has ended and new epoch has start, the international system is undergoing radical and fundamental transformation rapidly, the proliferation of non-state actors and their growing importance and power is a distinctive feature of contemporary world affairs. Global governance invokes shifting the location of authority in the context of integration and fragmentation. Kean, John; et al.(2003), describes “the process as a pervasive tendency in which major shifts in the location of authority and the site of control mechanisms are under way on every continent, shifts that are pronounced in economic and social system as they are in political systems. Relationship between global civil society and government includes- some global civil society hope to change governmental policies and programmers’ e.g. from non-democratic to democratic, host government regulate the activities global civil society through domestic legislation, policy or administrative procedures, donor agencies or host government sometimes hire global civil society to execute projects, programmers’ or policies, some global civil society lobby and influenced government for an increased in their budgetary allocations for their own work .Global governance is governing, without sovereign authority, relationship that transcends national frontiers. Global governance is doing internationally what governments do at home countries.

Leon, Gordenker; et al.(1995), defined “global governance as efforts to bring more orderly and reliable responses to social and political issues, global governance implies an absence of central authority, and the need for collaboration or cooperation among governments and others who seek to encourage common practices and goals in addressing global issues. This means to achieve global governance also include activities of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and standing cooperative arrangement among nation states” [10].

The contributions/ impact of global civil society in global governance are numerous, the salient ones are:

- Global civil society managed to influence public policy and political decision makers by giving voice to the voiceless and framing issues.
- Global civil society managed to pressurize global governance institutions so that transparency, consultation, outside evaluation, efficiency and probity.
- Global civil society had an impact on global issues like e. g. AIDS, Corruption, Women and children.
- Holding the nation-states and private corporations accountable, empowering, informing and educating citizens, resolving problems, lobbying for state service provision, meeting societal needs directly e.g. charity organization/donations, shelters, food donations and free counseling.

Characteristics of global civil society are non-profit and voluntary institutions, their membership might sign up a charter with specific duties and responsibilities, they also come together as coalitions in order to change practice, policy and laws at global level, the leadership of global civil society is guide the policy and planning of the coalition and help facilitate the activities of the membership. The funding of global civil society comes from the UN, Nation states, Individuals, regional organizations, Individuals, Foundations e. g. Bill gate or Ford foundations. Some global civil societies are conformist, Reformist or Radicals in their approach to societal issues or problems.

The institutions of global civil society are Academia, Activist group, Sports (FIFA), Cultural groups, Environmental groups, Foundations, Professional associations, Trade unions(ILO), Cooperative societies, Consumer organizations, Policy Institutions, Action Aid international, Amnesty International, Green Peace International ,The International save the Children, Transparency International and Support group e.g. like 'Bring Back Our Girls' in Nigeria, Is an organization of private individuals who believe in certain basic principles, their activities is to bring back abducted' Chibok Girls' by the' Boko Haram' terrorist, it is a voluntary, service oriented and grass root organization and development. They organized rallies, peaceful demonstration, and public lectures as their tactics for the release of the school girls so that they can return to their parents and continue with their schooling.

VI. FUNCTIONS/ROLES OF GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY ARE

- Civil society actors including NGOs, ILO, Human right organization, Humanitarian organization, there role/functions are to sensitize, facilitate and challenge other sectors to adapt to the rapidly shifting context of a technologically-driven and uncertain world, other role of global civil society is building and strengthening democracy and societal development.
- Civil society actors are demonstrating their value as facilitators, conveners and advocates and tackling societal challenges or problems Never the less, global civil societies perform the following global roles/functions:
- Global civil society are watchdog of the society, they are supposed to hold institutions to account, promoting transparency and accountability, voice of the voiceless.
- Global civil society served the role of advocacy by raising awareness of societal issues and challenges for change. E, g; global warming.
- Global civil society are service providers, delivering services to meet societal needs such as education, health, food and security, implementing disaster management preparedness and emergency response.
- Global civil society served as an expert I. e bringing unique knowledge and experience to sharpen policy and strategy and identifying and building solutions.
- Global civil society served as capacity builder-they provide education, training, awareness and other capacity building.
- Global civil society served as incubators, developing solutions that may require a long gestation or payback period.
- Global civil society served as representative of the people by giving power to the voice of the marginalized or underrepresented, civil society was to play a vital role as promoters of democracy social justice and human rights.
- Global civil society served as citizenship champion, by encouraging citizen participation, engagement and supporting the rights of the citizens.
- Solidarity supporter-promoting fundamental and universal values.
- Global civil society served as definer of standards by creating norms, values that shape market and state activity.
- Global civil society served as the voice of the voiceless.

VII. PROBLEMS/CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY ARE

- Authoritarians political control – authoritarian regimes in third countries give little room for global civil society to growth and developed independently, there is a distrust between the globally civil societies and government in power and is fueled by rivalry and antagonism.
- Religion- religion has an impact on the development, functions and growth global of civil society, for example, in Nigeria, sometimes in the year 2000, polio vaccines was rejected by the Muslim population because of the suspicion that the vaccines was to control birth rate, the vaccines was administered by the civil society organization.
- Colonialism-the history of colonialism in third world countries also retard the development of global civil society.
- Low income/lack of fund/finance constrained the development and growth of global civil society

VIII. CONCLUSION

Global civil societies play a very important role in shaping our daily lives, from how we interact to the policies that guides laws and regulations in the society, in playing these roles, global civil society actors need to ensured that they retain their core missions, values, integrity, purposefulness and high level of trust .The world will always need independent organizations and individuals to act as watchdogs, ethical guardians and advocates of the marginalized or under-represented. Civil society in all its forms has an important role in holding all stakeholders, including itself, to the highest levels or sense of accountability.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Global civil society needs to have adequate capacities in terms of human and material resources to execute their aims and objectives.
- Global civil society should promote democratic principles and values in the society.
- Global civil society is to provide welfare services, enlighten citizens, represent their voices to public and government, encourage debate on issues affecting the public and promote social order and cohesion.
- Stake holders should be given oppportunities to take part in making decisions actively.
- Global civil society leaders should not abuse their privileged positions to promote their personal interest.
- Global civil society leaders should use dialogue to settle and resolves conflicting problems in the society.

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