Civil Society

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Abstract

Civil society is the arena, outside of the state and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organizations, and institutions to advance shared interests. The concept of 'shared interests' can be both for the common good of all society or the benefit of a minority group. History provides examples of social change as people organized movements against perceived injustice, and in favor of new ideas of development. The concept of "civic-driven change" counters an apolitical and technical understanding of development, to instead address the political barriers that perpetuate poverty and inequality. Civil society is motivated by a pluralistic "idea of justice" which challenging the assumed roles of governments, corporations and individuals. These roles are undergoing new scrutiny in the face of rising demands for accountability, in which civil society provides part of the checks and balances on political and economic power.

Keywords: civil society, social movement, civic-driven change, justice, governance

Introduction

Much of the thinking and practice of international development emanates beyond states and markets. It comes from the vibrant work of civil society and social movements strengthening citizen action throughout the world. It is particularly prominent in areas where participatory democracy and citizens' freedom of association are challenged, both highlighting the unintended consequences of development and offering alternative perspectives on how development may be practiced. The chapter examines definitions civil society, how it organizes for change, by challenging roles within society, and promoting transformative thinking about development.

As civil society includes a range of NGOs and social movements, it does not speak with one voice, but contains within it various ideological and power differences. History provides examples of social change as people organized movements against perceived injustice, and in favor of new ideas of development. The concept of "civic-driven change" counters an apolitical and technical understanding of development, to instead address the political barriers that perpetuate poverty and inequality. Civil society is motivated by a pluralistic "idea of justice" which challenges the assumed roles of governments, corporations, and individuals. These roles are undergoing new scrutiny in the face of rising demands for accountability, in which civil society provides part of the checks and balances on political and economic power.

Defining civil society

Keane (2009) notes that the term originated in Europe during the late eighteenth century, to describe the realm of social life separate from the state. This original definition included not only charitable groups, clubs, and voluntary association; but also market exchanges, independent churches, and publishing houses. Keane further notes that the ensemble of actors that constitute civil society tend to be self-organizing, and "permanently in tension, both with each other and with the governmental institutions that frame, constrict and enable their activities". During the twentieth century, civil society came to be seen as also separate and distinct of markets, corporations, and businesses. Thus, the World Alliance for Citizens Participation defines civil society as “the arena, outside of the family, the state and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organizations and institutions to advance shared interests” (CIVICUS 2012: 8). Under this definition, civil society embraces formal non-government and non-profit organizations, as well as more diffuse social movements, such La Via Campesina or the Occupy Movement. Diani and Bison (2004) define civil society as the “informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups, or associations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity.” The causes furthered through civil society range from those promoting sport and

culture, to those fostering an indigenous or religious identity, to those advocating for labor, youth, or human rights.

Glasius (2010) identifies three ways of describing civil society. First, civil society can be understood as social capital**,** drawing on insights from Alexis de Tocqueville and Robert Putnam. People meet and interact, forming networks to collectively solve problems and improve the well-being of their communities and fellow citizens. In one form or another, civil society instigated the abolition of slavery, the promulgation of human rights and women's rights, and environmental victories, such as a bans on whaling and on nuclear weapon testing. Second, civil society can be understood as public debate, drawing on insights from Habermas (Corchia 2010). Citizens are prepared to work for causes which increase their common good. Whether through in-person meetings, the formal media, or social media, civil society is active in building support to improve policy and inform politics. Problems such as child labor and violence against women are put on the political and public agenda by civil society actors. Third, civil society can be understood as counter-hegemony**,** drawing on insights from Antonio Gramsci. It can work to challenge the powerful and champion the marginalized through the media and movements either for (e.g. women's rights, civil rights) or against (e.g. anti-apartheid, anti-poverty) particular agendas. Civil society can prompt action by government, in its responsibility for the "rule of law," and for-

profit sector, which transmits pressures down the chain of operations and into the daily lives of workers and their families.

A commonly accepted aspiration of civil society is to pursue change through non-violence, inspiring collective action to resist perceived injustice. The example of Gandhi and peace movements was adopted within a host of human rights-, feminist-, anti-poverty, anti-nuclear as well as environmental movements. It is also the start of spontaneous uprisings such as the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement, and accountability movements, such as the Global Call to Action against Poverty and the Tax Justice Network.

Civil society is commonly associated with efforts to further the "common good," yet it is also affected by efforts toward "common evil." Popular understanding tends to ignore the so-called 'non-civic' part of civil society, such as the mafia and drugs cartels, terrorist organizations, and racist groups. The CIVICUS definition is neutral in that it does not carry a value judgment regarding the nature of the 'shared interests' pursued. By its very nature, civil society not only works toward the common good, but often seeks "club good" that favor a minority, or particular segment of society. Thus civil society, similar to governments and corporations, can work for the common good or evil depending on the goals and behaviors involved. Indeed in many jurisdictions, civil society faces a growing number of rules and regulations designed by governments to disrupt terrorist networks, control dissent, and

manage threats to state legitimacy (Sidel 2004; Monga 2009). Governments claim that they alone can act for the common good. Controls on civil society in some countries, from Ethiopia to Russia, seriously reduce access to information, create obstacles to funding, and limit the freedoms of speech and assembly. Measures intended to enhance public security can end up permitting the state tries to control public debate and civic space. This is a particularly dangerous in situations where human rights and citizen action are labeled as subversive to political or national interests.

Some thinkers suggest that the family also forms part of civil society. This argument is based on the connections between family and class, as well as caste in different civil society arrangements through history and in different countries (Keane 2006). Family law, tax systems, and welfare arrangements see the family as the cornerstone of society, suggesting it is conceptually useful to see "family" as part of civil society. Furthermore, feminist work on violence argues that the family is an important element in understanding power and gender relations, and the cultural practices that perpetuate inequalities (Pearce 2007). The family is the one place where human rights legislation does not apply fully. Children do not have direct access to legal redress unless their parents act on their behalf, which they are unlikely to do if they are exploiting their children. A person's sense of justice often stems from childhood situations which were perceived as unfair or unjust. Conversely, children who have suffered in their families may grow up to repeat patterns of oppression, violence,

discrimination, and cruelty which they learned at home. Unsurprisingly, many development interventions target families, or "households." Yet not all families are rooted in a single place, as migration and kinship ties can create complex family networks between rural and urban areas, and across countries.

As there are many definitions of "civil society," there are many civil society actors—including churches, community associations, trade unions, and NGOs—which do not offer a single voice or position, nor always act collectively among themselves. Instead the diverse constituents of civil society are analogous to the variety of political parties: each embody a different ideology, hold different values, and offer different visions. A better analogy is to consider the diversity of actors within the for-profit sector where most companies are in stringent competition with each other; even while business councils might further common goals and companies may cooperate on research and development (R&D) or corporate social responsibility (CSR). Arguably civil society is more diverse in practice than either the political or for-profit landscape, and this diversity is a strength that contributes to critical public debate and collective action. Civil society organizations and social movements can and do form alliances to broker change in the policies pursued by governments and corporations.

The problems of development can also be cultural, requiring civil society to face its own prejudices and injustices. The slow progress made by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual movements in the last four decades illustrates how transformation is needed within civil society to change attitudes and norms, as well as within government to change laws and jurisprudence. Patterns of power and privilege also affect civil society itself. National constitutions and international agreements embody a commitment to human rights, including those of children, women, migrants, and minorities. Yet the combined weight of poverty and culture shape a daily reality that is far from these aspirations, one in which the majority of women still deal with oppression and violence. It is interesting to note that interaction with business can be positive, as the purchasing power of consumers can demand ecological and labor justice when such considerations became part of choosing which products to buy.

In summary, civil society can be defined as the arena, outside the state and the market, which is created by individual and collective action to advance shared interests. This definition is quite broad and is not value-driven, the concept of "shared interests" can be both for the common good of all society or the benefit of a minority group. Civil society includes social movements and faith-based, as well as cultural, sport, or recreational institutions, and as wide a range of issue-based social activity as is imaginable. Civil society actors have their own ideological and power differences, and are influenced by different historical, political, and economic realities on the ground. It is therefore hardly surprising that civil society is in

constant internal debate and flux as different factions organize to affect local, national, and global forces for the greater common good, or for different forms of private goals or gain.

Organizing for change

The history of different countries and religions are full of dramatic stories of attempts by groups of people to fight for their own freedom of culture, language, and belief, and to live free from slavery, oppression, and abject poverty. Much of civil society has been born out of emotion, concepts of justice, and the urgently felt need for change. Much of what is now accepted as the responsibility of government was brought about by the initiatives of private citizens who rallied against perceived injustice and organized with others around them "to do something" about it, whether education, health, child-care, or other causes. Numerous charitable initiatives originated with a humane impulse: soup kitchens were run by the wives of the very land- or factory owners responsible for the living and working conditions of 'their subjects'. These early seeds later germinated into social security arrangements. Well-to-do elites set up projects to look after orphans, organize food banks, and provide aid during natural disaster. The same motivation is seen in corporate foundations today who, having made huge profits, plough some of this wealth back into social goals of their own choosing.

From a first phase of "reacting to needs" many civil society movements and organizations began to discover the structural patterns of power which fueled such injustice. There are historic examples of social change which began as a broad fight against injustice, and ended in long, tenacious and very precise social, legal, and sometimes physical battles. In the U.S., the anti-slavery movement would centuries later inspire the civil rights movement. In South Africa, the anti-colonialist battles for national freedom were in time followed by the heroic struggle against Apartheid. Trade unions, feminist, and fair trade movements have achieved enormous social improvements in the last six decades. The transition from dictatorship to democracy in Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s now inspires events in the Middle East. A partial list of contemporary causes includes human, women's, and sexual rights; environmental, indigenous, Dalit and youth movements; global networks such as *Avaaz*; and transparency initiatives in aid spending, extractive industries, and government information (e.g. Wikileaks). These and other efforts seek to make injustice more visible, revealing who gains and who loses in the present order of power and vested interests. As such, civil society often serves to highlight those disadvantaged by development, people who are threatened with loss of their land, rights, voice, and—all too often—their lives. Civil society thus plays a key function within democracy, providing checks and balances on the exercise of power.

There are also patterns of power within civil society itself. Many times women activists hear that gender justice will be dealt with after economic or ecological justice is won, instead of

seeing the intrinsic connection between these battles. Civil society is learning to manage the gap between the global north and the global south, without the former trying to manage the latter. Money, privilege, and power are carried by northern NGOs, which decide which actors in the global south receive attention, political support, and financial grants. Such divisions in power can split civil society and weaken its standing in, for instance in UN negotiations where the for-profit sector has increasing access to the corridors of decision making. The media also plays a role as it decides whose stories are told or ignored. For instance, there was hardly any global media attention in October 2009 when 173 million people from all walks of life in 130 countries joined demonstrations organized by the Stand Up and Take Action campaign. Happily there was press coverage in developing countries, where the campaign leveraged political action for improvements in child benefits, spending on health and education, and civil society consultation in national planning.

Fowler and Biekart (2008) argue that the theories and practice of international development tend to bring only incremental change, unable to upset the neo-liberal perspective on development. These authors call for civic-driven change to fight “for equity of political agency rather than equity of economic opportunity.” “Being civic” is understood as pro-social behavior that respects differences between people and shows concern for the whole of society. This is a value-driven definition, based on Confucian teachings, in which respect for diversity and concern for the common good are two pre-conditions for achieving “social

order." Such authors present a counter-dialogue that is critical of the theories and practices of development which pursue an apolitical and technical agenda. Yet such an approach to development invariably treats the symptoms rather than the cause, stopping short of challenging the political barriers that perpetuate poverty and inequality.

Edwards (2010) notes that, "any significant question in the development field takes us into disputed territory that is increasingly enveloped by the fog of ideology and interest group contestation." This means accepting that thinking about development invariable involves the politics of knowledge—how ideas are created, used, and disseminated. Edwards argues that these politics determine how thinking is translated into action of various kinds and which ideas are considered legitimate. Some NGOs and philanthropic foundations support initiatives that are critical of development, including the Global March against Child Labour, the World Social Forum, CIVICUS, and various other human rights, feminist, and indigenous initiatives. However a scarcity of funding following the financial crisis, combined with the political backlash against NGOs in some countries, is encouraging a simple focus on direct poverty alleviation. Worryingly, there appears to less tolerance of, and support for, those voices that are critical of how development is currently understood and pursued.

The insights of Amartya Sen are particularly relevant for civil society. In *Identity and Violence*, Sen (2006) argues that all people have multiple identities which are more or less relevant in different contexts,

> Our shared humanity gets savagely challenged when the manifold divisions in the world are unified into one allegedly dominant system of classification -in terms of religion, or community, or nation, or civilization … [We are all] diversely different . . . the hope of harmony in the contemporary world lies to a great extent in a clearer understanding of the pluralities of human identity, and in the appreciation that they cut across each other.

Sen's argument is helpful for understanding diversity and overcoming divides in civil society; here too a hierarchy of issues and identities can lead to conflict rather than cooperation. In *The Idea of Justice*, Sen (2009) argues that justice is not a monolithic ideal, but a pluralistic notion with many dimensions. For him what counts is real-life behavior, and the practical realization of justice for all. In his view, human rights are not merely a theory or principle, but rather the realization of rights is an empirical question. All actors, be it government, business, or civil society, each have their own responsibility to work toward the idea of justice.

Sen's insights are highly relevant for civil society and citizens today, as humanity faces a 'perfect storm' of economic and ecological disaster of its own making. The growing worldwide discontent of "the people" is visible in various social uprisings around food prices, sexual violence, and equality. Global civil society is struggling to find a common voice, initiating global dialogue around, and as alternatives to, UN climate negotiations and the post-2015 development goals. There are attempts to forge broad coalitions including trade unions and faith-based organisation working toward new and renewed ideas of international development. But there is also doubt and disappointment. Processes at the UN, G20 and World Economic Forum seem to have little more than token, or symbolic, interest in civic voices, human rights experience, gender realities, and youth initiatives.

There are plenty of transformative concepts and real-life practice that offer economic, environmental, and social alternatives for "the world we want" emanating from trade unions, citizens, activists, philosophers, indigenous peoples, feminists and ecologists and many others. There are indeed real and practical alternatives to international development as practiced in the current economic model. The biggest problem in any process of change is not the lack of new visions or practical ways forward, but it is how to deal with the vested interests of privilege and the simple fear of change.

History provides us with many inspirational stories of social change mostly propelled by civil leaders motivated by a deep sense of outrage at the injustices they saw, which in their time were considered "normal." They organized movements against slavery, colonialism, apartheid, child labor, sexual violence, and human trafficking; and they organized for sexual- and reproductive rights, equal educational opportunities, social protection, and labor laws. Leaders and movements need to be both inspirational and practical. Civic-driven change is value-based in that their concept of "civic" is based on Confucian philosophy. Respect for difference and concern for the whole society, instead of self, is a prerequisite for social order. The question facing humanity today is whether it can muster enough civic-driven change at local, national and global level to solve the present "perfect storm" of multiple economic and ecological crises. Can it overcome identity or issue-driven divides within civil society, and harness Sen's plural, but moral and practical, notion of justice in order to shift the powerful actors and short-term interests that block such change?

Challenging roles within society

It is common assumed that the corporate sector can only be driven by the need to make financial profit, regardless of the consequences to people or planet; that civil society is or should be intrinsically "good"; and that government has the job to balance or mediate

between these different demands and interests. In this thinking, governments organize the "rule of law" and the process of compromise, thus achieving a more or less just balance. National constitutions usually define fundamental rights and responsibilities, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent international laws and conventions. Yet the demands for accountability of corporations are often less stringent than those of most governments and organized civil society. Sometimes the corporate sector is talked about as though they are not (nor need to be) party to the UN universal declaration of human rights or the various conventions ratified by their countries.

These assumptions are undergoing new scrutiny. The recent global economic crisis, caused by highly irresponsible behavior of certain banks and corporate leaders, raised new questions about roles and responsibilities. For example, Unilever is proud of its track record on social corporate responsibility, yet has been critiqued for its compliance with labor rights in African countries. Analysing the total financial picture, shareholders appear to gain between five to ten percent dividends per year, while production and labor costs vary between just one and three percent of product price. This difference begs the question of what constitutes a fair division of profits, as well as new demands for public scrutiny.

Recent research from the Tax Justice Network has calculated that US $21 trillion dollar is lost annually through tax havens and tax exemptions for the most powerful corporations and

individuals (Henry 2012). To cite Adam Smith (2009, 1759), "the disposition to admire, and almost worship, the rich and the powerful and to despise, or at least to neglect persons of poor and mean condition is the great and most universal cause of corruption of our moral sentiments." Build into this equation the realities of poverty, and one gains an insight into the drivers of semi-slavery that continue to exist today: human trafficking, enforced prostitution, and child labor. But happily, time and again, history has witnessed the emerged civil, government, and corporate leaders who have pushed back discrimination and injustice. This kind of leadership is urgently needed to ensure a sustainable future of life on the planet.

Demands for accountability are on the rise. While the Arab Spring is unfolding, in India an "accountability battle" speaks to a society no longer willing to tolerate corruption or violence against women. With developed countries, civil society is suspicious of their governments' closed-door negotiations with African countries, and agreements that are not shared until they are already signed and sealed. Political campaigning is increasingly about personalities and the amount of money they can muster for their campaign. The exposure and the debating qualities of the candidates are more important than their past or future ability to govern. Election promises are made, but most of the population has come to accept that these will not be kept. The result is that voters begin to disengage from the formal political process. In the Netherlands, a number of NGOs—including Oxfam Novib, Greenpeace, and World Life Fund—have considerably more financial supporters than all the Dutch political parties

combined. Yet NGOs are often challenged about their democratic base and who they claim to represent.

The lack of accountability is worse at the global level. Diplomats and leaders attend UN, IMF, and World Bank meetings, and G8 and G20 summits without direct accountability to voters regarding the positions taken. Civil society is kept at bay from such international negotiations, resulting in little expectation of keeping to promises and commitments made, and seriously undermining the confidence of citizens. Since the Social Summit in 1995, a global civil network called Social Watch has prepared an annual report tracking the progress (or lack thereof) between the UN human rights agreements, conventions, development goals, and the reality on the ground. With 140 indicators, it provides a measurement of basic capabilities and of the gender gap in each country, including the progress and regression over time in realizing the promises made to citizens.

Pressure to be accountable and coherent has been brought to bear on civil society. Within organizations, this not only means an accounting for resources and actions, but also their relationships with others. Do NGOs respond adequately to the aspirations of civil society actors in the developing countries? For individual consumers, do they ensure that the products they buy do not involve child labor or excessive environmental costs? This is where

responsibility becomes concrete and actionable, the extent to which organisations and citizens contribute to achieving Sen's "idea of justice."

Individuals do have multiple identities: as citizens, family members, as employees in government, business, or civil society. They may be activists, travellers, and religious practitioners. They are consumers, voters, and participants in local civic life. So coherence and accountability can also be asked of individuals in their own behavior within their different roles and walks of life. How is any one person affecting labor standards, the environment, and developing countries through her or his daily behavior? The sum of small decisions matters, such as whether or not to eat meat, take public transport, purchase fair trade products, advocate for CSR in the workplace, or cast an informed vote in elections. The concept of "global citizenship" can manifest itself in our daily behavior. Promoting justice is not an abstract ideal, nor can it be left only to governments, corporations or civil society. The principle of "do no harm" is applicable in our own daily lifestyles.

Accountability for the agreed principles of human rights involves government (local, national, regional, global), corporations (from small businesses to multinationals), civil society and individual citizens. In this sense, the responsibility to respect diversity and to look out for the common good, above self-interest, can apply equally to all actors within

society. Everyone has a role in causing, or solving, the problems that face humanity and the planet.

All members of society contribute to implementing international agreements and conventions, whether they are active within government, business, or civil society. Governments, corporations, and NGOs carry a large share of this responsibility; but individuals also to work toward a just and sustainable future through our families, place of work, and as consumers and voters. The responsibility of organising for change does not only lie only with civil society. It lies equally with governments, corporations, and individuals to work toward Sen's "idea of justice." Together there is no global problem which we cannot help to solve to create a better common future.

Transformative thinking about development

The concepts of democracy and civil society are interconnected; the latter contributes to the former to form a "system in which the exercise of power is subject to public monitoring, compromise and agreement" (Keane 2009). Democracy is more than political parties, elections and concepts of majority rule. It requires respect and space for the rights of minorities. It requires that people are empowered to speak, act, and control their own lives.

Various institutions—including religions, trade unions, development and women's organisations—face a crisis of trust as diverse groups of citizens, including young people, do not recognize themselves in the established civil society. As new grassroots movements emerge and discontent spreads through social media, existing structures and organizations need to change and transform. NGOs make diverse contributions to civil society and democracy. Mercer (2002) argues that the role of NGOs in the politics of development is far more complex than commonly assumed, and requires a more contextualized and less value-laden understanding of these politics.

The concept of governance, instead of government, recognizes the need for an interactive and inclusive dialogue in which multiple stakeholders negotiate a common future. Democracy becomes an interactive process in which majorities and minorities with different ideologies, beliefs, and lifestyles try to find a way out of present stalemates. The environment is an area that urgently needs broader agency and new solutions, by and for all stakeholders. Renewable energy sources can replace fossil fuel and nuclear power, oceans and forests can be preserved without overfishing or overexploitation. Production methods in the clothing industry are now subject to greater scrutiny, and new standards reduce its use of toxic materials. One in seven people populating our planet today suffer from chronic hunger, mostly women and their dependents, while a similar number suffer from obesity and related health problems.

Development as pursued in recent decades has continued to encourage economic growth through overconsumption and short-term financial gain that drives overexploitation of people and the planet. New and transformational thinking and practice is urgently needed. Edwards (2008) argues for that there is a need to learn rigorously from history, to lever deeper transformations that change society forever, including the economic system that has generated wealth. Imagine first the stimulation of local solutions within the frameworks of global agreements. Vibrant local communities can be strengthened through finding local renewable energy solutions and green jobs, clarifying land rights for farmers and investing in sustainable food production, organizing fair financing and favoring local trade over international trade, and accounting for the full price of products including their use of fossil fuels and environmental impact.

There are some examples of multi-stakeholder platforms that pursue new models of development: for instance on soya or palm oil production which does not destroy forests or local food production, or advances in agriculture and food security that empower women farmers and their access to land (see White et al. and Swaminathan et al., this volume). New global connections enable consumers to trace the origin and history (or chain of custody) of products, including how far a product has traveled, and the ecological and labor conditions under which it was produced. There are instances of interaction between the governments,

businesses, and indigenous communities where citizens determine their own route of development (Lâm, this volume). Some countries have made the rights of the planet a part of their constitutions. Others have established minimum levels of women candidates in elections or of women directors in a start-up company before it can become publicly traded.

The challenge to be faced here is that local interactive democracy has to be stimulated, enabling citizens to take the responsibility for organizing their own future, including public services for energy, water, social security, education, health, and local economy. There are already examples of this working in communities around the world, including "human rights cities" and "child-friendly villages." Other cities foster local food production and a concept of work that balances economic enterprise, living conditions, child care, health and education. Communities need the means to build their common future and to defend themselves against development they do *not* want: be it unsustainable fisheries, buying up land for industrialized farming, or flooding the local market with cheap plastic products.

National governments support local efforts to build vital economic and ecological communities. Interactive democracy occurs where multiple stakeholders are informed enough to engage in a debate about the choices of their own future. Development can occur through dialogue with citizens at home, and not merely as negotiations among nations at multilateral fora, ranging from world trade to climate change. If so, then business can follow, rather than

determine, local and national governance. The greatest challenge for those wanting to organize civic-driven change, and realize Sen's "idea of justice," is to ask governments and corporations to broaden beyond incremental change and move into transformational practice.

The balance of power still lies with those who stand to gain from short-term economic exploitation, including common evil such as violence and environmental exploitation. This power imbalance is not coherent with the "idea of justice" and responsibility to respect, and to act for, the common good above self. The idea of justice must become part of our thinking and practice. The direction of change needed is clear: development can do much more to benefit the common good of people and the planet. Herein lies the challenge for those trying to achieve civic-driven change: to design local inclusive governance that creates checks and balances, supported by national democratic process.

The urgent need to design more inclusive, democratic, and just development is an enormous task for transformation. How to convince those that stand to gain by the status quo and those who fear change? It was once difficult to convince slave-owners and apartheid-supporters, men attached to their presumed dominance over the lives of others. In the past, such change required the passage of generations, for a slow evolution in social norms, yet development today does not allow for this privilege of time. Each individual faces a choice, to engage or

not, in forming a new idea of development. Ultimately, civil society is part of the checks and balances on political and economic power.

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