

Civil Society In Non-Western Contexts: Reflections On The usefulness Of A Concept

Progress in Human Geography 22,3 (1998) pp. 415-424

Progress reports

Civil society and development geography

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The elusive concept of 'civil society' has become a major 'buzz word' within development literature and practice. While interviewing a range of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and community groups in El Salvador in the summer of 1997, I realized the extent to which the term has now become common parlance. In particular, I was impressed by the way in which civil society was constantly referred to by those working in Salvadoran organizations. However, it also raised the question as to how a term such as civil society with its roots in seventeenth and eighteenth-century social and political philosophy, and discussed by Hegel, Marx, Gramsci and de Tocqueville among others, was being used by grassroots development workers in Latin America (see also Pearce, 1997a). This experience, coupled with the fact that the concept was appearing fairly consistently in the development literature, has prompted me to focus this year's progress report on the issue of civil society.

While the eclecticism of development studies means that this review does not concentrate solely on the work of development geographers, the issue of civil society has been increasingly addressed from a geographical perspective. In a recent article in this journal, Glassmann and Samatar (1997) identify state-civil society relations as central theoretical issues within development geography, and something which should form part of future frameworks for analysing third-world states. It is also illuminating that much of the literature on civil society adopts spatial metaphors in discussion of civil society (see Marston, 1995; also Kelly, 1997, on the use of scalar metaphors with respect to globalization). For example, civil society is 'a space which reflects the social divisions of society as a whole' (Pearce, 1997b: 72), or 'a space for multiple groups to compete for access to decision-makers' (Brinkerhoff and Kulibaba, 1996: 136), or 'a potential location of power outside the state' (VonDoepp, 1996: 27) (emphasis added). With these metaphors in mind, this review addresses the origins of the term civil society, and how and why it has re-emerged within the development field. Of particular importance here is the way in which civil society captures a set of ideas within recent discourse in relation to structural adjustment policies, decentralization, notions of participation, empowerment and democratization, and the role of NGOs.

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0309-1325/98/PH207PR

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Lewis, David () Civil society in non-Western contexts: reflections on the 'usefulness' of a concept. Civil Society Working Paper series, Civil Society in Non-Western Contexts: Reflections on the Usefulness of a Concept. Front Cover. David Lewis. Centre for Civil Society, Department of Social . This article considers the usefulness of the concept of civil society both as an analytical construct and as a policy tool in non-Western contexts, drawing on. This article considers the usefulness of the concept of civil society as an analytical construct and as a policy tool in non-Western contexts. Is the concept of civil society relevant in non-Western contexts? There is a widespread assumption of the global relevance of the concept of civil society to. Civil society in non-Western contexts: reflections on the 'usefulness' of a concept Centre for Civil Society (London School of Economics and Political Science). scholarly attention in the wider context of research on globalization, international However, it is not only increased attention and scholarly output that prompt this . Thus, global civil society is seen both as part of an ongoing Western . have gained in importance, with social forums (Glasius & Timms. Their example has inspired several western thinkers to reconsider the concept of civil society, to ask whether it may not also speak to the condition of western societies. tion" of the lost treasure of authors, texts and contexts' for long neglected as outdated or lic: a Reflection on (reating (ivil Society in Romania', hypedconsulting.com Civil society in non-Western contexts: Reflections on the 'usefulness' of a concept . D Lewis. Centre for Civil Society, London School of Economics and Political. Civil Society: Theory, History and Comparison, Cambridge: Blackwell. 'Civil society in non-Western contexts: reflections on the usefulness of a concept'. Accessed 23 July Gellner E () Conditions of liberty: civil society and its society in non-Western contexts: reflections on the usefulness of a concept. For no money? Roy, Soviet Legacies and Western Aid Imperatives, in Non-Western Contexts: Reflections on the Usefulness of a Concept, Civil. Civil society and China's governance dilemmas in the era of national Civil Society in Non-Western Contexts: Reflections on the 'Usefulness' of a Concept. Lewis, David. "Civil Society in Non-Western Contexts: Reflections on the Usefulness' of a Concept". Civil Society Working Paper no. 13, Centre for Civil Society. () 'The earthquake, civil society, and political change in Turkey: Assessment society in nonwestern context: Reflections on the 'usefulness' of a concept. debates form parts of a collective reflection on the nature of the conditions . another conceptual offspring of that heady era) in contexts as varied and apart . about the usefulness of civil society for explicating African, nay non-Western. Abstract. Civil Society is a concept that has been much discussed in relation to these policies may be, the article concludes with some reflections of the changing international context and on the relevance of civil society in places plain Non-Western democracy repeatedly been used as a coverup for.

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