

Role of Civil Society in Protection and Promotion of Human Rights

HUMSEC Summer Academy

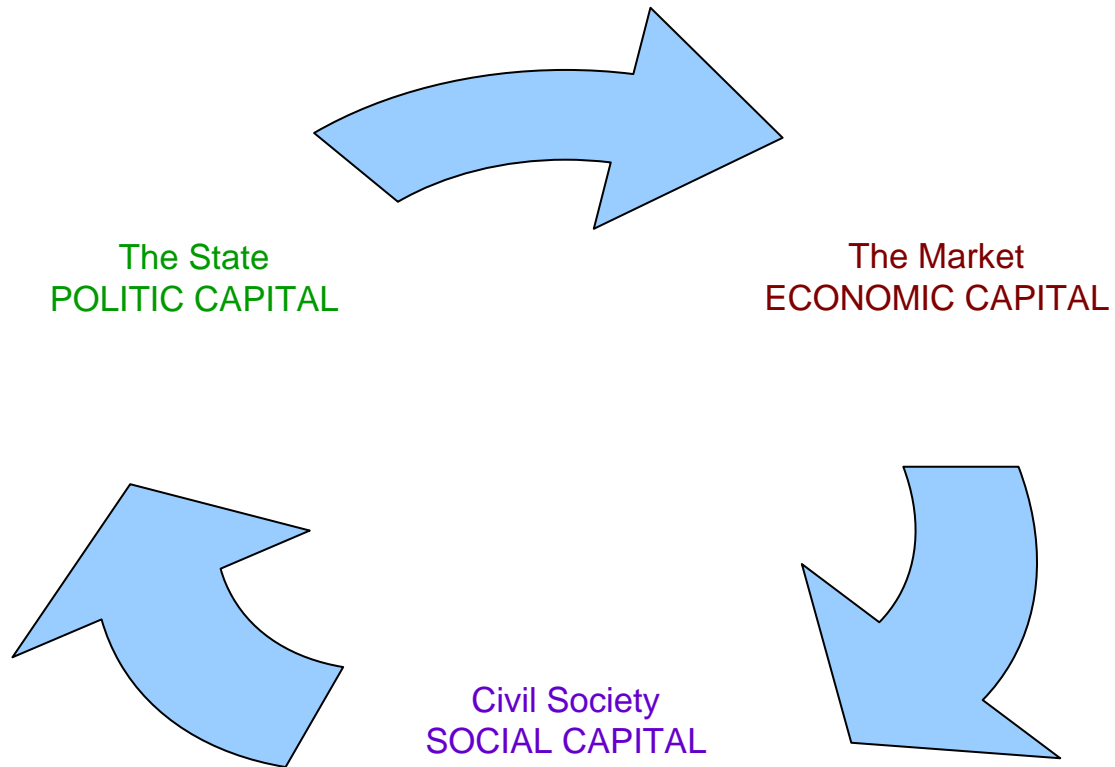
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Definition of Civil Society

- the set of institutions, organisations and behaviour situated between the state, the business world, and the family
- includes voluntary and non-profit organisations of many different kinds, philanthropic institutions, social and political movements, other forms of social participation and engagement and the values and cultural patterns associated with them

Triangular model



Threefold conditions for the existence of civil society

- Determined by the features of political system
- Organizational factors
- Presumptions on the personal level

Twofold role

- Controlling activities of public administration
- Source of initiatives that result in new social practice and legislature

Activities

- Advocacy, representation
- Media campaigns
- Assistance providing
- Raising of public awareness, sensibilisation of public for vulnerable social groups
- Monitoring of human rights situation

Three component parts of civil society

- Associations of Citizens
- Professionalized NGOs
- Politicised NGOs

Role of NGOs in Promotion of HR at the Global Level

- NGOs have assumed an increasingly important role in promoting international legal principles to further sustainable development.

Role of NGOs in Promotion of HR at the Global Level

- NGOs play an increasingly vocal role in promoting ethical globalization.
 - Monitoring the World Economic Forum or WTO Ministerial Meetings

Role of NGOs in Promotion of HR at the Global Level

- the role of NGOs in promoting governance and development of international law can be considerable.
 - NGO's can apply for, and are granted, consultative status and accordingly can make their voice heard directly in the international arena

Role of NGOs in Promotion of HR at the Global Level

- NGOs promote the use of international legal principles and invoke international or regional human rights standards in international bodies

Activities at National Level

- stimulating and informing the public debate on human rights issues;
- assisting the government in setting and observing appropriate standards for protecting human rights;

Activities at National Level

- focusing attention on the needs of particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (e.g. minorities, immigrants, children, the intellectually disadvantaged, the mentally ill, those with physical disabilities and the elderly);
- assuming the role of observer of the government and the parliament in the process of adopting legislation.

Activities at National Level

- protection of human rights free from biased political propaganda and political overtones;
- tendency to be selective while choosing facts, opinions and aspects to fit pre-determined concepts must be avoided. This is the minimum imperative to establish their credibility.

Conclusions

- Civil society's focus of public debate on human rights in each particular country is restricted to the most important (political, social) issues for that country
- NGOs have a role to play in advancing welfare of groups they represent
- Contributing to the removal of prejudices and stereotypes