The Political Economy of Citizenship and Civil Society in Africa
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Abstract
Since the 1990s, a debate concerning the meaning, use and relevance of civil society to Africa has ensued. The aim has been to clarify the experience of civil society in Africa, in the hope to adapt the concept or infuse it with experiences from the African continent. However, how the character and content of citizenship are implicated in the evolution and in the various manifestations of civil society is largely discountenanced in the effort. Rather, attempts to deal with this issue has related the contradictions of civil society to either the colonial structuration of civil society in terms of the primordial and civic publics or the primacy of African social formations in the appropriations and pathologies of the post-colonial (dis)order. The first explanation seems to strip postcolonial African elites of responsibility of failure to transform social order without providing insight on how to break away from the vicious circle. The second engage in name calling while theoretically undermining the possibility of change. Both fail to give adequate attention to the prevailing ideology and morality of governance and market and how these served to reinforce the pathologies of governance in Africa. This paper seeks to explain the contradictions and limitations of civil society as a ‘musculature of democracy’ by investigating how the ideology and morality of governance and market and the structure of citizenship affect civil society’s evolution and orientation in the context of reform in Africa.

Introduction
Civil society remains a central concept in governance reform in Africa. But the rise in the popularity of civil society organization has been within the context of the rise of neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism typically denounces the state, canvasses for a minimal state and supports civil society organization and private enterprises taking active part in or taking over some of the functions of the state. This perspective gained currency in Africa because states have been dictatorial, over centralized and typically riddled with inefficiencies and rent-seeking activities. Thus, the concept of civil society has been largely applied to Africa in the effort to capture and promote the democratic struggles that exploded in mid 1980s and the 1990s, especially with opposition movements under the impetus of market reforms and political liberalization. Later on civil society came to be seen as central to good governance. But after several years of disappointing achievements in democratic deepening and effective governance by the instrumentality of civil society, a debate concerning the meaning, use and relevance of civil society to Africa ensued. Efforts have subsequently been made to clarify the experience of civil society in Africa, in the hope to adapt the concept or infuse it with experiences from the African continent. Unfortunately, how the character and content of citizenship are implicated in the evolution and in the various manifestations of civil society is largely discountenanced in the effort. Specifically, the predatory basis of the exercise of political power and how this is propped up by a particular bifurcation (indigene vs settler) of citizenship is also not given adequate
recognition. Rather, attempts to deal with this issue has related the contradictions of civil society to either the colonial structuration of civil society in terms of the primordial and civic publics or the primacy of African social formations in the appropriations and pathologies of the post-colonial order. The first explanation seems to strip postcolonial Africa elites of responsibility of failure to transform social order without providing insight on how to break away from the vicious circle. The second engage in name calling while denying the possibility of change. Both fail to give adequate attention to the prevailing ideology and morality of the market and how these served to reinforce the pathologies of governance in Africa. In Africa, citizenship is not just bifurcated it is stripped of its essential welfare content, making civil society less cohesive and more vulnerable to the shenanigans of the struggle for power. This vulnerability is furthered by a market morality that upholds private profit and elevates meanness and selfishness whereas civil society underscores social networking, cooperation, law abidingness and commitment to a larger political community. A reconstructed citizenship can imbue civil society with a moral fabric that can hedge in political predation.

Civil Society, Social Capital and the State

The democratic struggles that characterized the African commitment in the 1990s represent an important moment in the evolution of the post colonial state. The significance of the event is not that it reflects the strain and stress that followed the fiscal crisis of the state, it is rather because it unearthed the contractions of state-society relations that underlay the fragility of the postcolonial authoritarian state. Given the prominence of professional associations, labour unions, human rights activists, churches and various associations in the unveiling of the contradictions in state-society relations, intellectual engagement with the developments have focused on civil society, a concept that has evolved from the European experience. The emphasis is that citizens press their challenge to autocracy not merely as individuals but as members of an organization or association. In its more recent application to the democratization and development processes, it is often linked to the concept of social capital.

Within the European context, the concept has undergone several mutations from Hegel to Rousseau and de Tocqueville before it was applied to Africa in the mid-80s. Civil society has been viewed as high society - the ruling groups concerned with the interests of king and country, as undesirable organizational forms that obstructs the relationship between state and citizen, and as a foil against the totalitarian tendencies of the state and thereby a guarantor of individual freedom. But its application to Africa has been drawn from Tocqueville’s theory. Here civil society is conceived as the catalyst of democratisation, pushing it to consolidation and sustaining it (Diamond, 1994, 1997, Bratton, 1994, Chazan 1994, Woods, 1992). According to Chazan (1996:282), the nurturing of civil society is widely perceived as the most effective means of controlling repeated abuses of state power, holding rulers accountable to their citizens and establishing the foundations for durable democratic government. Diamond defines the role of civil society as that of "containing the power of democratic governments, checking their potential for abuse and violation of the law, and subjecting them to public scrutiny". He believes that civil society organizations supplement political parties as schools for leadership training and fostering the development of democratic culture. Citizens learn political advocacy and contestation from participating in such organizations. As avenues for interest aggregation and representation, they serve to mitigate political conflicts (ibid., 7). The theory of social capital
also underscores the importance of civil society to the democratisation process. According to Putnam (1993:90), “participation in civic organisations inculcates skills of cooperation as well as a sense of shared responsibility for collective endeavours. Moreover, when individuals belong to “cross-cutting” groups with diverse goals and members, their attitudes will tend to moderate as a result of group interaction and cross pressures.” Thus, “a dense network of voluntary associations and citizens organisations help to sustain civil society and community relations in a way that generates trust and cooperation between citizens and a high level of civic engagement and participation...creates conditions for integration and participation”.

Thus, the revival and vibrancy of associational life generated a lot of optimism about the democratic possibilities in countries of sub-Saharan Africa as elsewhere in the world in the 1990s. But with the simmering momentum of democratisation and the sobering outcomes of political reforms in several countries, efforts have been made to explain how and why civil society may contribute or fail to contribute to democratic consolidation and stability in Africa and elsewhere.

Encarnacion (2000:13) has challenged the notion that civil society could serve as the engine of the democratic transformation of formerly authoritarian and totalitarian societies. For him, the idea that strong civil society is a requirement for democratic deepening is empirically flawed. He argues that it is improper to apply a Tocquevillian interpretation that is clearly American in character to developments in most democratising countries. The concept is lifted and applied without contemplating its compatibility with the socio-economic context of most of these transiting countries to which the term is applied. He maintained that in the context of "undeveloped political systems overburdened newly democratic governments and highly politicised populations" a vibrant civil society might supersede the ability of the government to respond to social demand and thus lead to "a crisis of governability and democracy."

Drawing on contrasting experiences from Brazil and Spain and alluding to other countries in the process of democratisation, he argues that the vibrancy of civil society has not been linked to widespread support for democracy. The proliferation of civil society organizations may in fact be inimical to democratic deepening. In some instances civil society organisations have become alternatives to strong political institutions (political parties) atomising society, dispersing political power and thereby complicating democratic consolidation (Encarnacion 2000).

More recent studies of several contexts however show that civil society may in fact harbour contradictory impulse as a heterogeneous category. It is an arena of conflict between organised interests of various kinds, political disputes among different political projects, and its constituents depend on “political entrepreneurs”, social leaders, or outside allies to represent them and depend on firms, donors and international organizations as sources of funds. These have implications for representation, accountability and the ability of the various groups in civil society to unite in a broad front which might be critical to propelling democratic change. The construction of democracy involves a complicated processes of state and civil society collaboration, requiring an analyses of the construction of citizenship, re-evaluation of citizenship and subjectivity, state fragmentation, and the position occupied by social actors especially within the context of neoliberal economic reforms((Brystk 2000, Aiyede 2005, Bhandari 2006, Avritzer 2008).
The debate over the role of civil society in promoting democracy was also followed by question about its role in generating social capital. Social capital refers to the social networks that cut across traditional cleavages and which promote trust and reciprocity that nourish wider cooperation, law abidingness and commitment to the larger political community (Putnam, 1993). In the words of Coleman (1990:304), social capital is “embodied in the relations among persons… a group whose members manifest trustworthiness, and place extensive trust in one another will be able to accomplish more than a comparable group lacking that trustworthiness and trust.” Social capital includes norms of reciprocity and trust available as resources to individuals who interact within a particular group. In this sense, civil society organisation whether, neighbourhood organisations, occupational groups, choral meetings, football clubs, human rights organisations or an ethnic group, or religious communities, by their functioning are capable of generating trust and cooperation which are useful for achieving collective goals. Civil society needs to simultaneously sustain intimate solidarity within groups as well as sustain connections to the larger political community, to increase the reserve of positive social capital. Fukuyama (1999) talks about the significance of the ‘radius of trust’ and Putnam follows Granovetter (1995) in emphasising ‘weak’ ties as against ‘strong’ ties as formative of social capital. Indeed, Woolcock (1998) argues that social capital requires that a balance be struck between ‘embeddedness’ and ‘autonomy.’

The very assumptions on which the effects of civil society and social capital are based have also been questioned on empirical grounds. Newton (2001) argues that social trust and political trust are not closely associated; both are not strongly associated with membership of voluntary association in survey research. For him, the relationship between social trust and civil society exist at the system level but in a complicated and indirect manner. The effectiveness of social and political institutions mediates the relationship between individual social trust and political trust. Social and political capital relates to the aggregate properties of societies and polities, not to their individual members.

The foregoing discourse shows very clearly the importance of the social foundation of state legitimacy on civil society, thereby rendering citizenship fundamental to civil society. But most theorizing of civil society assumes that citizenship is not problematic. This is not the case for post-colonial states, especially in Africa. Although the issue of citizenship is widely recognized in the literature on political instability and conflict in Africa, the way this problem relates to civil society has not been given sufficient attention. The next section argues that this failure account for the claim of the uniqueness of civil society in Africa.

The Specific Problematic of civil society in Africa

In the preceding section I have provided a broad outline of the trend of the global debate on the role of civil society in democracy and development. The essence is to show the global intellectual context under which the specific African discourse should be examined. This is important because of the tendency to attribute exceptionalism to the African situation or to assert, as Osaghae (2006) puts it, the uniqueness of civil society in Africa.

To begin, it must be noted that the usefulness of the Tocquevillian approach to actual realities in Africa has been questioned. Kasfir (1998) noted rightly that some of the organizations that have
been very crucial to the democratisation process in Africa do not seem to possess the ‘civic/civil’ character that supposedly differentiates civil society organisations from other organizations in society. He argues further that the importance of new civil society organizations to the democratisation project has been exaggerated, and that the conventional view idealizes the western practices from which elements of civil society are borrowed. He sees these problems as tied to the prescriptive nature of the definition such that it precludes most of the organizations that have been crucial to the democratic transition process. He therefore calls for the widening of the universe of organisations that can potentially contribute to democracy while recognising the challenges that it poses for state’s effectiveness and capacity to listen, balance and respond to issues.

For Chabal and Daloz (1999) to talk of the existence of civil society in Africa is misnomer because the state in Africa is poorly institutionalized, and weakly autonomous from society. Both state and civil society are integrated in vertical, infra-institutional and patrimonial networks which underpin politics. Social relations is conducted on personalized bonds of mutual beneficial reciprocity while civil society involves the establishment of social networks distinct from the state and capable of transcending primordial family, kin or even communal ties. Only when there is a strong and differentiated state will a counter-hegemonic civil society emerge (Chabal and Daloz 1999:19). Bayart, Ellis and Hibou (1999) go further to describe the ways kinship relations have been appropriated to construct a network of criminal activities to take advantage of globalisation and liberalisation as the “maturation of social capital” of the felonious or deceptive state.

For Ekeh (1992), especially if civil society is historicised and contextualized in the light of African experience. For him, using Nigeria as an example, there is a remarkable number and vitality of free institutions and associations that operate outside state control and that have in several instances posed challenges to the state dating back to the colonial times. The problem with civil society has to do with the social and political space occupied by civil society. According to him, Africa’s political spaces are segmented. The is because of the bifurcation of the public realm as distinct from those of the European nations where a single public realm effectively offer common platforms for the activities of the state and the public behaviour of individuals. In Africa, this segmentation of public realm limits the potential of civil society as an agent of reform. This segmentation has its origin in colonialism. Drawing on an earlier formulation of this dilemma in relation to the crisis of the state in Africa (Ekeh 1975), he explains that the forces of the colonial state alienated the individual and led to the emergence of two public domains: the primordial public domain, which is the domain of modern social formations associated with ancient structures of Kinship, and the civic public domain, which is the political space within which the formal state operates. Individuals are attached and committed to the primordial public domain against the civic public realm, while the civic realm is illegitimate. Morality holds sway in the primordial public realm, but the civic public realm is amoral. Civil society activities straddle these domains. Thus, the contradictory pulls of the two domains account for the conflictual character of civil society. For Osaghae (2006:244), the ethnicisation of civil society marks the “uniqueness” of Africa’s civil society and Ekeh’s theory of the two publics expressing the dialectical bifurcation of the public domain provides an explanation for the ineffectiveness of civil society in Africa.
Ekeh (1992) went on to advance a classification of the vast number of associations on the basis of the context from which they operate; the ends they seek to advance and the sources and means they apply in their operations. Emphasizing the primacy of the primordial public sphere, he argues that most associations operating in this domain are unable to foster democratic reform because they are not oriented towards common notions of liberty. Based on kinship, they are unable to transcend ethnic boundaries and crystallise generalized conceptions of the human person and individual liberty. The associations in the civil public domain, such as labour unions, professional associations and human rights groups who may have contributed to individual liberty are weak, though the most exposed. He therefore calls for policies that would reconcile these two public domains, identifying “federal character” or affirmative action as one of such policies.

The weakness of this perspective becomes obvious when it is applied to citizenship. In relations to citizenship, Ekeh (1994: 236) contrasts the evolution of the relationship between public finance and citizenship responsibility in the West with that in Africa. According to him, public finance in liberal democratic theory is “conceived and run as [an] aspect of the theory of citizenship and of the public domain. Individuals pay taxes as part of their duties to the state from which they will receive several benefits.” But this does not apply in Africa, where the state is alien and has not been owned by or embedded in society. Hence citizens find it hard to pay taxes and perform duties to the state. What is more, the alien nature of the state coupled with the bifurcated public realm make it legitimate in the eyes of the African to divert resources and funds of the inclusive civic public for the use of the more restricted primordial public by officials whose kinship origins are from smaller enclaves. In other words, the dialectic of the colonial experience has generated a morality that legitimizes the use of civic public office and funds for the benefit of the individual or his primordial group. Thus, public officers steal from the civic realm but will not steal from the primordial realm, which remains the preserve of moral obligations. As I have argued elsewhere (Aiyede 2009), the major weakness of this explanation of the colonial impact is that it fails to reckon with the human agency and policy decisions that establish arrangements within which political interactions occur, or with the evolution of values within society and how these values are sustained or changed over time.

Indeed, it discountenances the moral essence of man and its agency in society. Here we see a contrived moral dilemma when there is none. In the first place that individuals have behaved morally in the primordial public and behave amorally in the civic domain does not constitute the primordial public as moral and the civic public amoral. Otherwise, it will be equally logical to say that armed robbers who behave morally when at home with their families and behave amorally when in the site of robbery operations, make the home the domain of morality and the site of robbery the domain of amorality. What is in need of explanation is the inability of the post colonial leadership to humanize the post colonial state and transform its workings to serve broad welfare. It is this failure that account for civil society struggles of the 1980s and 1990s.

Furthermore, several arguments have been put forward to challenge the assumptions that under lay the foundations of Ekeh’s theory of the two publics (see Osaghae 2006: 240). These include the following: bribery and corruption in the civic public has little to do with constitutive primordial interests. If this were so, virtually all hometowns of Nigeria’s billionaire current and former military and civilian political leaders would have become models of cities and towns.
This has not been the case, rather funds looted from public treasury have made their way to individual accounts in foreign banks. Cases of corruption are not confined to state institutions alone. They occur even in religions houses and are reported regularly in Nigerian media. Besides, primordial identities are only one of the multiple identities that individuals adopt, reflecting the heterogeneity of civil society. From this perspective, ethnic and hometown associations are not as strong or deterministic as Ekeh’s theory assumes, nor is the implied view that development means “helping your home town” empirically tenable. Indeed, ethnic associations not only perform the function of shadow states, they act as urban-based support organization for migrants, providing security and avenues for ethno-linguistic identification (Okafor and Honey 1998:12). As Osaghae’s (1998) study of Igbos and Yorubas in Kano shows, such organizations are connected to their host government and traditional institutions in a variety of ways. They embark on projects that support their host government and on projects typical of conventional development non-governmental organizations to enhance wellbeing in their places of residence. But Osaghae (2006), does not consider these challenges strong enough to undermine the relevance and timelessness of the theory of the two publics, because of the increased fragility of the African state that followed the crisis of the 1980s and 1990s, witnessing the entry of primordial associations as shadow states, providing security for those exiting from the state and the civic public.

As I have argued elsewhere (Aiyede 2009), drawing on Mamdani’s (2001) alternative interpretation of the struggle for independence as a struggle of natives to be recognized as having transethnic identity, to gain admission to a world of rights, and to civil society, it is citizenship that has been reconstituted and bifurcated to serve predation by the postcolonial leadership. This is manifested in the indigene vs settler dichotomy that confounds the notion of a universal citizenship that upholds equality before the law. Citizenship in this universal sense does not stand in opposition to pluralism, just as multiple identity does not detract from allegiance to the state. But, as Adejumobi (2001:156) has argued, “it is when citizenship is more nominal than substantive, that is, when citizenship rights and benefits are largely denied and the state seems out of reach, that pluralism may be subversive of or a danger to the state”.

**Neoliberal Reforms, Citizenship, Civil Society and Political Participation**

The decolonization process in Africa carried the promise of development and the improvement of welfare for individuals. State politics in the first two and half decades after independence was defined by an ideology of development. The state did not only control the commanding heights of the economy, it was portrayed as the catalyst and mobiliser of the people, the source of empowerment of citizens. Various countries adopted several strategies of development partly influenced by the ideological preferences of the postcolonial political leadership and local realities in the context of the cold war. Performance of states in Africa in this regard varied across the countries. But as time wore on, the expected benefits of independence did not materialise according to the expectations of many citizens. However, for the elites, occupation of public office provided social and economic security by means of access to the resources of the state. Thus, public office was coveted and competition for public office became the major preoccupation of the elites. This distracted from the development objectives as the contrivance of means to sustain regimes by neutralizing or accommodating fractions of the non-ruling elite became the major preoccupation of the political leadership. For ordinary people, citizenship
began to lose its meaning and concreteness as authoritarian politics continued to assault political rights and economic mismanagement and corruption made the expected benefits of citizens increasingly an abstraction. Most African regimes became so alienated and so violently repressive that their citizens saw the state and its development agents as enemies to be evaded, cheated and defeated if possible, but never as partners. (Ake 1991:13). The situation became worse from the mid-1980s when most states fell into deep economic crisis.

The expected transition from colonial subjects to citizens was never achieved de jure neither were the consequences mollified by the achievement of economic prosperity. In fact, the consolidation of single parties, president-for-life, extensive security establishments, widespread inequalities, and personal rule necessarily involved the denying of the peoples’ right to participate in the decision-making process, and sometimes the suspension of the constitution which defined those rights. Hence, Ayoade(1988) described the situation as that of states without citizens.

The effort to implement economic liberalization and state retrenchment to address the crisis was met with stiff resistance because they had severe repercussions for well being of the population. But the political leadership had to respond to the demands of its creditors. They had to yield to the prescriptions exhortations of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) ‘to plunge into and persevere in market reforms that were certain to “make most people worse off for sometime” (Prezeworski, 1992:45). These involved the withdrawal of the state from the economy through cuts in subsidies on social services, across-the-board privatisation and commercialisation of public enterprises. The adverse effects these hard on living conditions of labour, the urban and rural poor provoked the upheavals that eventually engulfed many states. African leaders were urged to become ‘tougher with bureaucrats and social actors who are undermining public policies, more discipline, more probes, more policing’ (Bangura 1994:787). Such prescriptions failed to appreciate that people who live and/or work under poor and difficult conditions will sometimes struggle to improve their circumstances in ways that defy established patterns and institutions. In the end, Africa’s economic performance fell short of suggested expectations on the basis of market reforms. Many African states lost significant capacity for service delivery and social protection during this period. State legitimacy was eroded even as the struggle over the shrinking resources of the state intensified. Ethnic and other division in society deepened leading to the outbreaks of intergroup violence and civil wars in some states and pressures for political liberalisation and democratisation in others. Civil society organisations proliferated and many dictators were forced to conduct multiparty elections (Osaghae 2007, Carmody 1998, Adekanye 1995, Gibbon et al 1992). Some successfully retained power as elected civilian heads of state while others were removed from office through the ballot box.

Two effects of neoliberal policies on the state and social conditions in Africa that are very critical for citizenship and civil society in Africa requires restating. The first has to do with the promotion of the market as the most efficient allocator of resources and demonization of the state as incapable of inducing the necessary changes in institutions and cultural habits necessary to drive productivity. The second is the idea that the responsibility of the state to cater for basic needs of citizens is not a natural or essential responsibility of the state. The revolutionary effects of these on state-society relations can only be appreciated when it is realised that the opposite of this assumptions formed the basis for mobilising the populace for independence. The situation in
Africa was viewed beyond the question of the state failing in its responsibilities. The state should not have been responsible for welfare in the first place. This was a prescription for the abrogation of citizens’ right to public utilities and welfare. What is more, the cost of health and educational services skyrocketed as the process of privatisation and commercialisation unfolded, restricting access to these services by large portions of the population. Labour unions and professional associations which strove to protect rights, improve working conditions of their members were defined as obstacles to the functioning of the market. They became not just opponents of market reforms but targets of state repression. As these groups engage the state, others disengaged as the state became more vicious. Disengagement involved the “withdrawal from social power wherever it is exercised without consent and against one's best interest.” It involves “an escape from, or at least a mitigation of, unacceptable domination, largely without recourse to violence, and often without the need for organizing collective action. Those who disengage do not have within their sights the change of the system or the overthrow of the oppressors; rather they seek a readily available alleviation, or at least a means of protest that is invisible enough to avoid the wrath of authorities” (Baker 1997, 54). It is a withdrawal from the state, away from its channels as a hedge against its instability and dwindling resources. Forms of disengagement include moving away from the formal economy into the informal economy. Economic activities turn to outlets outside the purview or control of the state. State laws, ordinances, judicial processes and the judicial system lose their credibility and non-compliance with laws becomes commonplace. Popular religion and a whole array of popular art forms are also important outlets for disengagement. Traditional structures of authority regain force as narrower bases of communal solidarity (village, family, ethnic, religious or other) are reinvigorated leading to greater fragmentation of sub-sectors. In some cases people leave the country in search of greener pastures. The path of disengagement depends on the religion, ethnicity, education or occupation of the people involved (Azarya, 1988, 7-8).

Just like engagement, disengagement taxes the entrepreneurial ability of individuals with contradictory tendency towards group action. The moral fabric of society comes under severe strains as individual survival strategies trumps group solidarity. The drive for income generation supports a new morality of exploiting one’s own group members. In the words of Deb (2009:160), “the adoption of the new economic ‘rationality of pursuit of self-interest conflicts with traditional community interest, which is eventually subjugated by the new forces of the market. Thus, Claude Ake (1992) writes about the democratisation struggles as an “expression of the will to survive” rather than a conscious effort to open up the political space for liberal democracy. This is because neoliberal reforms hit at the very livelihood of citizens even as the state becomes more rampant in its oppressive character. Civil society in this context can hardly solidify as it becomes vulnerable to the overarching character of the state as the dominant employer, bearer of opportunities for upward social mobility, and manipulator (Agbaje 1990, Aiyede 2003, 2005). “Politics in general variously ‘instrumentalises civil society organizations as protagonists, victims and mediators” (Obadare 2004:5). Thus, under neoliberal reform citizenship is stripped of its moral fabric making civil society less cohesive and more vulnerable to the shenanigans of the struggle for power.

**Conclusion**

Popular struggles since the 1980s are a struggle to make citizenship meaningful and concrete. This process needs to be accelerated not only by individual agency, this is certainly important
given the role of strategic leadership, but more importantly at the level of civil society organizational agency. Civil society must be involved in creating citizens who are engaged in several publics. The real problem for civil society is not a bifurcated social space however construed but the existence of a bifurcated citizenship, in a context of multiple publics. The bifurcated citizenship divorces citizens’ obligations from duties. It creates representation without taxation and taxation without representation fuelling suspicion and distrust, disorganising civil society. This contradiction of the indigene vs settler divide for citizenship has been illustrated in a variety of contexts in the literature (see Mamdani 2001, Adejumobi 2001, Aiyede 2009). It undermines the moral fabric of the public sphere by making the equality of citizens mute and thereby constituting the state system as unjust and discriminatory. The resolution of the citizenship question by de-emphasizing ancestry and privileging residency is necessary to building state and civil society in Africa. Such a reconstructed citizenship can rejuvenate the moral fabric of civil society. It will be the basis for the emergence of mass society and facilitate the solidification of civil society, in the de Tocquevillian sense, with cross cutting networks, able to sustain action against state excesses and accumulate social capital that will serve as a hedge against predatory rule. Civil society requires effective citizens, especially those who are committed to government effectiveness and accountability.

References


