

EMERGING POWERS IN AFRICA

A SIMPLE HANDBOOK FOR AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS

EMERGING POWERS
IN AFRICA INITIATIVE



2017

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Forward

Since its establishment in 1997, Fahamu has strived to strengthen and nurture progressive voices in Africa working towards the promotion of dignity, welfare and self-determination of African people. Over the years the strategic objective of Fahamu through its Emerging Powers in Africa project has been to amplify the voices of civil society actors contributing to the South-South Cooperation discourse in Africa. Since 2008, Fahamu has been examining the relationships that Africa crafts with the so called rising or emerging powers and the presumption that the South-South Cooperation is an exchange between equals and is 'win-win'.

In the course of our work with civil society actors, one important finding we have come to appreciate is that Africa's civil society is particularly silent or underrepresented in the South-South Cooperation discourse. We have further noted the apparent lack of an integrated overview of Africa's own responses to the whole discourse of South-South Cooperation. As a response to this gap, Fahamu through the Emerging Powers in Africa project has sought to create a platform where African civil society actors can engage and make their voices heard in relation to Africa's relations with emerging powers. Additionally, in line with the project's long-term goal, which is to strengthen the capacity of African civil society organisations and promote African scholarship in South-South Cooperation accountability and transparency, we have developed this short handbook as a preliminary guide for civil society actors keen to engage in the South-South Cooperation space in Africa.

We want to thank all Fahamu staff members who contributed to the development of this handbook as well as our various partners who provided their inputs in one way or the other.

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1. Introduction

In the recent past, the emerging economies and the rise of South-South Cooperation in trade and development has attracted much interest with an ever-growing body of literature on it. The discourse and analyses of South-South Cooperation, and especially the Emerging Powers in Africa, however remain restricted to State-State engagements with a striking silence on potential social arrangements that could either promote or curtail people's agency in their own development. In effect, the African civil society either marginally participates and contributes to the South-South development cooperation discourse or is altogether left out of it¹.

It is in this context that the discourse and analyses on South-South Cooperation is resoundingly bereft of the voice of African civil society organizations. The absence of clear African civil society frameworks in South-South Cooperation puts Africa at a risk of poor accountability mechanisms in resource governance, development management and human rights observance².

It is in this sense therefore that the potential reactions of Africa's civil society and its success in influencing the policy process will determine Africa's engagement with new development partners at the national, regional and continental levels. In this process a crucial role can be played by new empirical micro-studies, which examine and lay bare the actual impacts of the new emerging partners on African communities.

❖ About this handbook

This handbook has been put together as a resource to guide civil society actors keen on engaging and contributing to the South-South Cooperation discourse in Africa. The handbook seeks to highlight and promote the role of civil society actors in the democratization of South-South interactions at every level of engagement.

¹ Chris Alden, Yushan Wu, and Rudolf du Plessis, "China-Africa Factsheet" (Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2016), doi:10.1111/j.1471-4159.2011.07575.x; Tatiana Carayannis and Nathaniel Olin, "A Preliminary Mapping of China-Africa Knowledge Networks" (New York: The Social Science Research Council, 2012); Poskitt, Shankland, and Taela, "Civil Society from the BRICS: Emerging Roles in the New International Development Landscape"; Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 2000).

² Lysa John, "Engaging BRICS: Challenges and Opportunities for Civil Society," no. XII (2012), <https://www.oxfamindia.org/sites/default/files/Working paper 12.pdf>.



2. Who are civil society actors?

The concept civil society is highly contested being abstracted to express a varied number of political sociology traditions and contexts³. Wnuk-Lipinski & Bukowska⁴ broadly conceptualize civil society from a political sociology perspective to mean the kind of society whose members bear 'attitudinal capabilities', that is the ability for collective action in pursuit of common goals; and secondly the institutional frameworks within which the said members operate. It is from this understanding that they posit that any analysis of civil society is on either the grounds of the 'attitudinal' or 'institutional' arrangements. Citizenship is the central idea in the attitudinal definition of civil society. This definition emphasises the agency of an individual as a social actor in their society.

The institutional definition on the other hand emanates from the notion of social structure, thereby understanding civil society as "an arena of citizens' activity embedded in an institutional framework." It is in this second context of the sum total of "institutions, organizations and associations operating in the public sphere" that the modern understanding of civil society lies. Key attributes of this kind of civil society are: relative autonomy from state and market, and a voluntary basis of membership.

Wnuk-Lipinski & Bukowska however contend that civil society as a concept is profoundly tied to both the notions of "collective and individual autonomy and political sovereignty," at the core of which is a notion of how the society 'ought' to be organized – with the assumption that society is composed of free and equal citizens.

Shivji⁵ traces the rise of the contemporary 'institutional' movement of civil society in Africa with the neo-liberal era starting in the 1980s at which point Africa was democratizing whilst the Soviet Union was unravelling. With the rolling back of the state occasioned by the era, civil society organizations especially in the global South sought to fill in the social gaps and needs left by the neo-liberal state. Civil society in this sense expanded to include human rights organizations and

³ Jussi Laine, "Debating Civil Society: Contested Conceptualizations and Development Trajectories," *International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law* 16, no. 1 (2014): 59–77, <http://www.icnl.org/research/journal/vol16iss1/debating-civil-society.pdf>.

⁴ Wnuk-Lipinski and Bukowska, "Civil Society."

⁵ Shivji, *Silences in NGO Discourse*.



networks, grassroots and village organizations, professional unions, religious groups, and development non-governmental organizations⁶.

This contemporary usage of the term civil society in Africa goes hand in hand with the notions of 'good governance' policies, which gained currency in the 1990s. At this point civil society came to be associated with development donor agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) both of which were either direct or indirect agents of neo-liberal democratic values. This new emerging NGO sector attempted to arguably mitigate the distortions of the market mechanism that had neglected the provision of quality social services.⁷

Poskitt et al.⁸ in situating the role of the civil society in South-South Cooperation desist from defining it in the broad sense as merely the associations and socio-occupational bodies that make up the world of associational life. They narrowly define civil society as the formally structured social collectives and organizations "with a history of engagement in project implementation, policy dialogue and/or public debate in relation to issues of social and economic development." It is in this sense that this handbook sees civil society actors as organizations or associations acting as intermediaries between the citizenry and instruments of the state, seeking to promote public interests through public policy formulation and advocacy, and shaping of public opinion and awareness⁹. These could include, but not limited, to the following:

- Community based organization/grassroots organizations
- Think tanks and universities
- Non governmental organizations
- The media fraternity
- Faith-based groups
- Cultural organizations
- Trade and professional unions
- Social movements
- Human rights defenders

⁶ Ibid.; L. David Brown, Kumi Naidoo, and Sanjeev Khagram, "Introduction," in *Practice-Research Engagement and Civil Society in a Globalizing World*, ed. L. David Brown (Cambridge, MA: Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, 2011), 1–8.

⁷ David Lewis, "Civil Society in African Contexts: Reflections on the Usefulness of a Concept," *Development and Change* 33, no. 4 (2002): 569–86, doi:10.1111/1467-7660.00270.

⁸ Poskitt, Shankland, and Taela, "Civil Society from the BRICS: Emerging Roles in the New International Development Landscape."

⁹ Ibid.; UNESCO, "Civil Society in Africa: Definition and Role in the Process of the African Union Programme - NEPAD," *UNESCO*, 2009, doi:10.1353/jod.1996.0025.



3. Who are the Emerging Powers and why are they important?

The term *Emerging Powers* and *Rising Powers* are shorthands mostly associated with countries in the global South, and especially those in Asia, which “are thought to be in the process of increasing their economic (and political) power faster than the rest.”¹⁰ China, India, Mexico, Singapore, Brazil, and South Africa are examples of countries that are considered to be Emerging Powers of the South. These countries are argued to be new poles of politico-economic power and influence¹¹ in the global arena.¹²

❖ Civil Society and the Emerging Powers in Africa Discourse

Today, civil society actors are well represented in many aspects of public life in Africa. This is however not the case in South-South Cooperation narratives. There is a remarkable absence of particularly African civil society voices in the Emerging Powers in Africa discourse. The experience, expertise and stake that the African civil society could claim in South-South Cooperation processes is only too obvious, but is unfortunately under-registered, unsolicited, and at worst barely existing¹³.

Despite growing numbers of African public policy think tanks, Africa’s epistemic community remains restrained in its capacity and output. African universities, for example, draw and compete from a very limited resource pool thereby affecting their general research outputs and influence let alone having impact in what is seen as a niche sector – the Emerging Powers in Africa discourse¹⁴. Naidu¹⁵ additionally underscores civil society’s inadequate access to relevant technical resources needed in the analyses of and engagement with the Emerging Powers on the continent. It is on this basis that we therefore query whether the tried and tested social justice praxis of the African

¹⁰ Oliver Stuenkel, “Emerging Powers and BRICS,” 2016, <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199743292/obo-9780199743292-0187.xml>.

¹¹ Patricia Galves Derolle, “What Does It Mean to Be an Emerging Power?,” *Modern Diplomacy*, 2015, http://www.moderndiplomacy.eu/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=652:what-does-it-mean-to-be-an-emerging-power&Itemid=768.

¹² Renu Modi, *South–South Cooperation: Africa on the Centre Stage*, ed. Renu Modi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

¹³ Sarah Vaes and Huib Huyse, “New Voices on South-South Cooperation between Emerging Powers and Africa: African Civil Society Perspectives” (Leuven: HIVA Research Institute for Work and Society, 2013).

¹⁴ Oxfam, “Improving Global Governance through Engagement with Civil Society: The Case of BRICS” (Oxfam GB, 2016), <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/improving-global-governance-through-engagement-civil-society-case-brics>; John, “Engaging BRICS: Challenges and Opportunities for Civil Society”; Carayannis and Olin, “A Preliminary Mapping of China-Africa Knowledge Networks.”

¹⁵ Naidu, “Civil Society in Africa: Perspectives on the Expanding Engagement with Southern Partners.”



civil society, which includes different forms of social protest and organizing, are relevant and sufficient in designing and marshalling a cogent response to the Emerging Powers evolving presence in Africa.

4. What is South-South Cooperation and why is it important?

The idea of South-South Cooperation dates back to the post-war era at which point many global South and developing countries were gaining independence from colonialism. Many of these countries found themselves unfavourably linked to political economy structures precipitated by the colonial legacy. Sharing a history in liberation struggles and similar socio-economic challenges, these global South nations adopted South-South Cooperation as a philosophy of mutual, self-reliant and cooperative development among themselves in especially the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1960s, these countries constituted the so-called Third World, rallying together under the banner of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). In contemporary times, South-South Cooperation is often associated with evolving linkages between African economies, and Asian and Latin American economies.¹⁶ It is in this international political economy context that South-South Cooperation has today expanded into the realm of global and regional politics, trade and security.¹⁷ South-South Cooperation is seen as either an alternative or complementary paradigm to North-South development frameworks for the developing world. This paradigm promotes the transfer of financial¹⁸ and technical capacities, within the global South, that have been built and accumulated over time. Furthermore, this paradigm operates with the presumption of solidarity, mutuality, inclusivity, and equality in the management and pursuit of shared development aspirations.¹⁹

Appreciating the dynamisms of South-South Cooperation in the global arena, one is therefore forced to query the following: has Africa been presented with an opportunity to reform its own political economy by forming strategic partnerships with the new and rising powers of the South? Or is Africa getting entwined with evolving extractive 'imperial' configurations with the so-called rising powers?²⁰

¹⁶ Modi, *South-South Cooperation: Africa on the Centre Stage*.

¹⁷ Francisco Simplicio, "South-South Development Cooperation: A Contemporary Perspective," in *South-South Cooperation: Africa on the Centre Stage* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Naidu, "Civil Society in Africa: Perspectives on the Expanding Engagement with Southern Partners."



Whatever the case, the African civil society is forced to reflect on interactions between these new actors and Africa, and thereby design a relevant response to emergent issues of social justice.²¹

5. Relevant Civil Society actors and Networks

❖ Emerging Powers –Africa Knowledge Networks Based in Africa

i. Stellenbosch University: Centre for Chinese Studies (CCS) – South Africa

The Centre for Chinese Studies based at Stellenbosch University is a pioneer research institution in sub-Saharan Africa in all matters China and East Asia. The centre's core mandate is in the analysis of emerging trends in China-Africa engagements. The CCS was instituted as a collaborative initiative in 2004 following a bi-national commission between the governments of South Africa and China. Initially the centre housed the Confucius Institute at Stellenbosch, but later on fully dedicated itself to China-Africa policy-relevant research and analysis.²²

The CCS also publishes on a monthly basis the China Monitor, and the CCS Weekly briefing both capturing Sino-Africa engagements in development cooperation and assistance, environment policy, trade and investment.²³

ii. Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) – Senegal

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) traces its roots back to the early 1970s as the premiere pan-African social science organization committed to social science

²¹ Ibid.

²² CCS, "Centre for Chinese Studies," 2016, <http://www.ccs.org.za/?cat=17>; Carayannis and Olin, "A Preliminary Mapping of China-Africa Knowledge Networks."

²³ Ibid.



research analysis and cataloguing.²⁴ In its mandate to promote the holistic and multidisciplinary production of African knowledge through social science research, CODESRIA is committed to filling the knowledge gaps in the Sino-Africa discourse.²⁵

iii. African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) – Kenya

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) was founded in 1988 as a centre committed to promoting economic policy research and economic policy research capacities in Africa for better economic management in sub-Saharan Africa. The AERC has made analyses on the impact of China-Africa economic engagement on some East, West and Central African countries, which it has published as policy briefs.²⁶

iv. South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) – South Africa

Voted as the leading sub-Saharan think tank five consecutive times (2009-2013), the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) is a centre for research excellence on South Africa's and Africa's international relations along the themes of social development, foreign policy, governance and economic policy. SAIIA's research and analyses on South-South Cooperation on trade, development, politics and diplomacy, includes its China-in-Africa research project that has also generated the China-Africa fact sheet and the China-Africa toolkit, the later being a continental research catalogue of bilateral relationship between African countries and China. In collaboration with Global Economic Governance (GEG) Africa and Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) International, SAIIA has as well developed a BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) Guide which is an electronic resource tracking the evolution of the BRICS collective.²⁷

v. China-Africa Reporting Project – South Africa

²⁴ Abdalla Bujra, "Some Reflections on the Evolution CODESRIA, Critical Social Science, and the African Social Science Community," in *CODESRIA's 30th Anniversary Summit Conference* (Senegal: CODESRIA, 2003), 1–39; CODESRIA, "Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa," 2016, <http://www.codesria.org/spip.php?rubrique193>; Carayannis and Olin, "A Preliminary Mapping of China-Africa Knowledge Networks."

²⁵ Ibid.; CODESRIA, "Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa."

²⁶ AERC, "AERC Overview," 2016, <http://aercafrica.org/index.php/about-aerc/overview>; Carayannis and Olin, "A Preliminary Mapping of China-Africa Knowledge Networks."

²⁷ Alden, Wu, and Plessis, "China-Africa Factsheet"; SAIIA, "SAIIA China-Africa Toolkit: An Information Portal," 2016, <http://www.saiia.org.za/>; Carayannis and Olin, "A Preliminary Mapping of China-Africa Knowledge Networks."



University of the Witwatersrand's Department of Journalism hosts the Wits China Africa Reporting Project. The project was initiated in 2009 through a funding grant from the Open Society Foundations. The mandate of the project is to enhance both the quality and quantity of journalistic reporting on China in view of its rise and influence in Africa. The Project continues to address issues around the many myths, uncertainties and generally poor reporting on the role of China in Africa, not just in economic spheres but also in such other fields as politics, diplomacy, and the environment. The objective of the project is to promote objective and balanced reporting on China-Africa relations.

Furthermore, the project conducts African journalists capacity building workshops and offers research grants to African journalists covering China-Africa stories. The project has published and produced such resources as the 'Fair China-in-Africa Investigations', and a multimedia guide to covering the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) conference called 'Reporting FOCAC' – this is in collaboration with the multimedia resource programme *China Africa Project*.²⁸

vi. Sino Africa Centre for Excellence (SACE) Foundation – Kenya

The Sino Africa Centre of Excellence (SACE) Foundation is a Nairobi based Think Tank whose core mandate is to promote China-Africa economic exchanges through trade and investment. SACE operates as a one-stop advisory shop cum applied Think Tank for either Chinese business interests in Africa or African business interests in China. In line with this objective SACE also offers work placements for university graduates from China and Africa. SACE's flagship research publication was the "*China Business Perception Index: Survey on Chinese Companies' Perception of Doing Business in Kenya*," which sought to understand the attributes of Chinese companies in Kenya and how the business environment and culture impacted on their productivity.²⁹

❖ Africa-Based NGDOs in China-Africa engagement

i. China House – Kenya

²⁸ Wits Journalism, "Wits Africa-China Reporting Project," 2016, <http://china-africa-reporting.co.za/about/>.

²⁹ SACE, "About the Foundation," 2016, <http://www.sacefoundation.org/about/>; Carayannis and Olin, "A Preliminary Mapping of China-Africa Knowledge Networks."



China House is a relatively new start up NGO whose core mandate is to “integrate the Chinese into Africa.” China House as an organization is keen to harness African based Chinese business’ corporate social responsibility capacities for social integration in African communities.³⁰

ii. Oxfam International

Oxfam International is an international non-governmental development organization whose core mandate is poverty alleviation and promotion of equality across all aspects of life. As a non-governmental development organization, Oxfam International has a dedicated policy and research component, which informs the organization’s rights-based approach to development practice and campaigns.

Through their policy and research component and in collaboration with Oxfam International’s Liaison Office to the African Union based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Oxfam International in March of 2016 launched the Africa-China Dialogue Platform (ACDP). The objective of the ACDP is to promote and facilitate meaningful and constructive policy dialogue and partnership between Chinese and African citizens, policy researchers and stakeholders. The ACDP is keen to undertake policy research around the FOCAC along the themes of agriculture, sustainable development and climate change, and peace and security. Since its inception, the ACDP produces a monthly newsletter, The Africa China Dialogue Platform Newsletter, in line with the platform’s strategic objectives.³¹

Oxfam Novib and Oxfam India, as international affiliates of Oxfam International have over the years also demonstrated a keen interest in matters of China and Emerging Powers in Africa. Oxfam India is particularly keen to have the participation of civil society organizations in the proceedings and evolution of the BRICS collective.³²

³⁰ Yuebai Liu, “Moving to Africa for Fresh Air – Intriguing ‘Insider’ Insights into Nairobi’s Chinese Community, and What the Future Holds,” *Mail and Guardian Africa*, 2016; Hangwei Li, “China House, an Initiative to Help Chinese in Africa Integrate Better,” 2015, <http://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/article/1735859/china-house-initiative-help-chinese-africa-integrate-better>.

³¹ Oxfam, “Who We Are,” 2016, <https://www.oxfam.org/en/about>; ACDP, “About Africa-China Dialogue Platform (ACDP),” 2016, <https://oxfamafricachinadialogueplatform.wordpress.com/about/>.

³² Oxfam, “Improving Global Governance through Engagement with Civil Society: The Case of BRICS.”



iii. Heinrich Boll Foundation – East and Horn Africa (Kenya)

The Heinrich Boll Stiftung (HBS) is a governance international non-governmental organization keen to promote democracy and human rights. HBS is an affiliate of the Green Party, which is a German political party. The HBS East and Horn Africa office based in Nairobi has in the past hosted dialogue platforms between African civil society leaders, Chinese researcher and policy makers in the evolving discourse on China-Africa cooperation. The platform has in the past offered field visits to researchers and policy practitioners for learning and analysis on new and evolving development models emerging from China-Africa cooperation.³³

iv. Fahamu – Kenya

Fahamu is a pan-African organisation that collaborates with social movements and grassroots organizations to tackle the causes of social injustice in Africa. Fahamu supports and addresses the needs of economically oppressed communities and vulnerable and marginalised segments of the society for people-centred and democratised change. Fahamu further strengthens and nurtures movements for social justice by generating and sharing knowledge to serve activism; bridging the gap between theory and practice; capacity building for civil society actors; public policy advocacy and creating platforms for analysis and debate.

Through its Emerging Powers in Africa project, Fahamu has provided an analysis platform of coherent knowledge frameworks on Africa's engagement with actors such as India, China, Turkey, Brazil, among others. The project's objective is to promote rigorous knowledge production informing civil society engagement and advocacy in the Africa-Emerging Powers engagement.³⁴

³³ HBS China, "China-Africa Civil Society Dialogue," 2014, <https://cn.boell.org/en/2014/07/23/china-africa-civil-society-dialogue>.

³⁴ Fahamu Africa, "Emerging Powers in Africa," 2016, <http://www.fahamu.org/Emerging-Powers-in-Africa>.



v. *Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (South Africa)*

The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) is a constituting office of the Open Society Foundations. OSISA's core mandate is the promotion of democracy and good governance and human rights advocacy. OSISA's work on South Africa often is intertwined with the evolving Emerging Powers, especially China and the BRICS, in Africa.³⁵

6. Online Resources for Civil Society Actors

- a. Emerging Powers in Africa: a Civil Society Actors Directory – *Fahamu Africa*:
<http://www.fahamu.org/emerging-powers-2/#1487434165094-9a440472-002b>
- b. Pambazuka News: Global South – *Fahamu Africa*:
<https://www.pambazuka.org/taxonomy/term/3314>
- c. Rising Powers in International Development Programme – *IDS Sussex*:
<http://www.ids.ac.uk/risingpowers>
- d. Rising Powers in International Development – *Eldis*:
<http://www.eldis.org/search?theme=C1860>
- e. Journals – *Post Western World: How are the Emerging Powers changing the world?*:
<http://www.postwesternworld.com/academicjournalarticles/>
- f. BRICS from Below, Middle and Above! – *People's Forum on BRICS*:
https://peoplesbrics.org/civil_society/
- g. BRICS from Below – *UKZN Centre for Civil Society*:
<http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/default.asp?6,37>
- h. The Ultimate China-Africa twitter list – *Reporting Focac*:
<http://www.reporting-focac.com/the-china-africa-twitter-list.html>
- i. Developing a conceptual framework for South-South Cooperation – *NeSt and SAIIA*:

³⁵ Carayannis and Olin, “A Preliminary Mapping of China-Africa Knowledge Networks.”



<http://www.saiia.org.za/news/nest-dialogue-emerging-partners-in-africas-development>

- j. China-Africa Toolkit: An information portal – SAIIA:
<http://www.saiia.org.za/china?restcata=190&moduleId=534&Itemid=540>
- k. China-Africa Project: Resources – *China-Africa Project*:
<http://www.chinaafricaproject.com/category/resources/>
- l. Africa-China Reporting Project: How to apply for a grant:
<http://africachinareporting.co.za/how-to-apply-for-a-grant/>



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