

CIVIL SOCIETY DEBATE IN TURKEY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

CIVIL SOCIETY DEBATE IN TURKEY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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This thesis analyzes the debate revolving around the concept of civil society in Turkey with reference to academic literature. It argues that despite the seeming variety of approaches to the concept of civil society, there is an underlying commonality among the widespread usages of the concept. These seemingly different approaches in the end become the versions of the same hegemonic view. This, in turn, causes a vicious circle in the civil society debate in Turkey. The basis upon which this hegemonic view is built are the central premises of the liberal idea of civil society. With its constant reference to the strong state-weak civil society dichotomy; to the 'ideal' of civil society as a checking mechanism over the state; and to a particular understanding of pluralism without antagonism and with an emphasis on consensus, this view underlies the majority of scholarly works in Turkey. However, important aspects of civil society are ignored by this hegemonic position. In order to render the concept of civil society a useful analytical tool there is a need to underline that state and civil society do not exist as distinct entities and that the relations characterizing civil society are not characterized by the liberal idea of harmonious pluralism but by uneven power relations resulting in inequalities as well as marginalization, exclusion, and silencing of some in the

society. Thus, the Marxist conception of civil society can open the gate for a more fruitful usage of the concept of civil society for socio-political analysis.

Keywords: Civil society, state-civil society dichotomy, antagonism, power.

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE'DE SİVİL TOPLUM TARTIŞMALARI: ELEŞTİREL BİR ANALİZ

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Doktora, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

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Bu tez Türkiye’de sivil toplum kavramı etrafındaki tartışmaları akademik literature atıfla incelemektedir. Temel iddiası görünürdeki farklılığa rağmen sivil toplum kavramına olan yaygın yaklaşımların çok temel bazı noktalarda aynı paydada birleştikleridir. Böylelikle bu görünürde farklı yaklaşımlar biraz derine inildiğinde aynı hakim görüşün varyasyonları olmaktan fazla öteye gidememektedir. Bu ise Türkiye’deki sivil toplum tartışmalarının bir kısır döngü içine girmesinin arkasındaki en önemli neden olarak görünmektedir. Bu hakim görüşün temelinde aslında liberal sivil toplum düşüncesinin temel ilkeleri yatmaktadır. Güçlü devlet-zayıf sivil toplum ikiliğine sürekli yapılmakta olan vurgu, sivil toplumun devlet üzerinde bir kontrol mekanizması olarak idealleştirilmesi, ve ahenk ve konsensus vurgularıyla şekillenen belli bir çoğulculuk anlayışı ile bu hakim görüş Türkiye’deki birçok çalışmanın özünde yatmaktadır. Ancak, bu hakim görüşün sivil toplumla ilgili olarak gözardı ettiği önemli noktalar bulunmaktadır. Kavramın faydalı bir analitik araç olabilmesi için devlet ve toplumun iki ayrı varlık olmadıklarının ve sivil toplumdaki ilişkilerin liberal ahenkli çoğulculuk anlayışı ile karakterize olmadığını, tersine güç ilişkileri ve bunlardan kaynaklanan türlü eşitsizlikler, marjinalleştirmeler, dışlamalar ve sessizleştirmelerle şekillendiğinin

altı çizilmelidir. Bu noktalarda da Marxist sivil toplum kavramsallařtırması önemli bir kapı aralayabilir ve sivil toplum kavramını herhangi bir bağlamda sosyal-siyasal hayatı analiz edebilmek için elverişli bir kavram olarak kullanmaya devam etmemizi mümkün kılabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sivil toplum, devlet-sivil toplum ikiliğı, antagonizma, güç.

In memory of my father, Selâhattin Gençoğlu

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. RISING POPULARITY OF THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY

As Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato put it back in 1990, “we are on the threshold of yet another great transformation of the *self-understanding of modern societies*”.¹ There are certain reasons why we have found ourselves on such a threshold all of which have been challenging the traditional ways of self-understanding. Among those one can cite the process of globalization, the tension between the global and the local, the particular and the universal, the tension between difference and equality, rising importance of identity politics, the questioning of certain traditional categories such as national identity, citizenship, democracy, participation, equality together with a concomitant effort to redefine them.

It can be argued that all the issues cited above can be viewed as just another manifestation of a centuries-old question that the humanity has been tackling with since antiquity: the relationship between the individual and the community (small or larger) in which s/he lives. It is possible to read the entire history of social and political thought from Aristotle to today’s important theoreticians from this perspective. The Ancient Greek thinkers, the social contract theorists, the Enlightenment writers, the historical figures behind the French Revolution in declaring the ideals of humanity as “*liberté, égalité, and fraternité*”, the theorists of

¹ Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 1.

the nation-state and national identity of the 20th century, the theories of globalization and contemporary theories of democracy (including communitarians, pluralists and radical democrats) have all been concerned with this big issue of how to find the best way of relating the individual human being to the community surrounding him/her.

Recently, such efforts in the contemporary social and political thought began to focus upon the notion of civil society. It has been under examination by different ideological positions in order to see whether it carries a potential within itself to offer an answer to the major question. It can easily be observed that during the recent years, civil society has established itself as a dominant theme lying at the core of many theoretical debates as well as the discourses of political activists, especially political parties. We repeatedly hear phrases involving the *resurrection*, *re-emergence*, *reconstruction*, or *renaissance* of civil society.² It has become a significant, even “paradigmatic concept”³. Moreover, today many people talk about civil society and its role in “eradicating poverty, in promoting democracy and good governance, and in resolving social conflict and protecting human rights”⁴. In Michael Edwards’s words “(t)oday civil society seems to be the ‘big idea’ on everyone’s lips –government officials, journalists, funding agencies, writers and academics.”⁵ In addition to its dominance in political discourses, the number of civil societal organizations (CSOs) has also been steadily increasing.⁶ This increase at

² Cohen and Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, 29.

³ Jude Howell and Jenny Pearce, *Civil Society and Development: A Critical Exploration*, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 1.

⁴ Kumi Naidoo and Rajesh Tandon. “The Promise of Civil Society” in CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation. *Civil Society at the Millenium*. Westhartford: Kumarian Press, 1999.

⁵ Michael Edwards, *Civil Society*, (Oxford, Cambridge: Polity, 2004), 2.

⁶ See Edwards for the increasing numbers of the CSOs at a global level. He gives recent statistical data from several countries.

both the discourse and practical levels can be observed as a global phenomenon and Turkey constitutes no exception to this general trend. As will be seen in the following pages, especially during the post-1980 period “civil society” has entered the core terminology of Turkish politics. Since then it is a central theme in academic literature as well as in the discourse of the activists and, parallel to the global developments, the number of CSOs has also been increasing in Turkey during the recent decades.

1.2. PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY DEBATE

Despite the proliferation of ‘the discourse of civil society’ as a global phenomenon, it is the contention of this thesis that the current debate on civil society seems to have reached a point of impasse in general and that it is in need of a new opening through articulation of fresh ideas and concepts. Without these, it seems quite probable that the debate will remain locked in a vicious circle. There are two major reasons for this deadlock that the debate finds itself in. First, there is the “*division of the contemporary world of social theory between “skeptics and the faithful”*”: “those who reject the concept of ‘civil society’ as a fraud, illusion or as analytically too imprecise to be useful; and those who privilege it as the normative ideal and theoretical pivot of contemporary political philosophy.”⁷ In most cases the analysts tend to choose one of these opposing attitudes. However, this situation puts a ceiling on the debate by limiting the choices to either of these positions and curbs the development and/or enrichment of a critical literature on the concept of civil society. This polarization has stemmed mainly from the increasing popularity of the concept that was mentioned above. Both the over-use of the concept and the variety in the approaches and meanings attached to civil society has diminished its

⁷ Robert Fine, “Civil Society Theory, Enlightenment and Critique” in *Civil Society Democratic Perspectives*, ed. Robert Fine and Shirin Rai, (London: Frank Cass., 1997), 7.

explanatory potential since by this way it “has become a notoriously slippery concept used to justify radically different ideological agendas, supported by deeply ambiguous evidence and suffused with many questionable assumptions.”⁸ Consequently, as Neera Chandoke expresses, “although it has become popular across societies of very different levels and across all ideological hues, the notion of civil society has become *confused and confusing*.”⁹

As a result of this kind of a discontent with the concept of civil society, a parallel but opposite trend has appeared regarding the attitudes toward its increasing popularity. Adapting a rather intimidating position, this approach rejects giving any credit to the explanatory potential of the concept. For instance Colas claims that,

[g]ushing out of everyone’s mouth at once, “civil society” acceded at the end of the 1980s to a sort of empty universality ... it has become a label for all sorts of goods, and in certain cases even a mask for intellectual emptiness, “civil society” allows people to speak without knowing what they are saying, which in turn helps them to avoid arguing with each other.¹⁰

Hence, the end result of these two opposing trends has been the “*division of the contemporary world of social theory between “skeptics and the faithful”*” as was mentioned above. In Edwards’s terms, then, it has become inevitable for those who are interested in the concept of civil society to tackle with the question: “Is civil society the ‘big idea’ for the twenty-first century or will the idea of civil society – confused, corrupted or captured by the elites- prove another false horizon in the

⁸ Edwards, *Civil Society*, vi.

⁹ Neera Chandoke, “What the Hell is “Civil Society”?”, www.openDemocracy.net. Retrieved on 25.01.2007. Emphasis added.

¹⁰ Dominique Colas, *Civil Society and Fanaticism*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 4.

search for a better world?"¹¹ However, as will be explained below this thesis rejects the view that it is necessary to make a choice between these two opposing camps; it is also possible that one can find both sides unsatisfactory and can choose trying to develop a critical view by still continuing to use the concept as an analytical tool. Moreover, this kind of an approach, limiting the alternative ways of handling the concept of civil society with only those two, has had an unproductive effect on the literature and hence constitutes the major reason for the vicious circle that seems to be characterizing civil society debate for a while.

The second reason underlying the deadlock that the literature on civil society has found itself in is the dominance of the liberal perspective on the concept. It would not be wrong to argue that despite the variety of usages and conceptions of the term "civil society", there is an obvious *dominance of the liberal perspective on the use of the concept* and this has been the case in Turkey as well as in the world. As will be discussed in the latter parts of this thesis, however, this approach suffers from very crucial shortcomings that increase the frustration and dissatisfaction with the concept. To mention briefly here, by overemphasizing the confrontation between state and civil society; concentrating upon the civil society as a checking mechanism over state's actions; by depicting civil society as the realm of 'harmonious collective action' and as the 'living space of pluralism and active citizenship', in short with its emphasis on civil society in association with the notion of consensus and resolution of conflicts, this approach has the danger of turning a deaf ear to the power relations and the consequent inequalities, domination, marginalization and exclusion of certain voices within the civil society. Consequently, the dominance of the liberal conception has played the most important role in rendering the literature increasingly infertile.

¹¹ Edwards, *Civil Society*, vi.

1.3. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

There are two important points that characterize the general attitude of the current study toward the concept of civil society. First, although “civil society” is a western-oriented concept and also it has appeared as a certain phrase of the history of the western world,¹² this does not mean that it can be useful only for the analysis of the contexts limited with the West. Throughout its lifespan, the concept has spread over the other parts of the world and is “very much alive and kicking in the worlds of politics, activism and foreign aid”¹³ in many countries. It may have gained different meanings and may have been articulated to contesting ideological and/or political agendas in different contexts. It is the claim of this study that it can serve as a useful analytical tool for a better understanding of and reaching greater clarity about the political debates in a certain polity. This being the central claim, the current study is concerned with the way in which this can be done for the Turkish case. While doing this, this study is not concerned with such essential questions as “is there a civil society in Turkey?” The underlying assumption behind such a question would be a disposition to view civil society as a category which has a fixed, absolute, universal content/definition as it has appeared in the historical conditions peculiar to the West. So, while taking the approaches towards the concept of civil society this study aims neither to answer this type of a question nor it aims to pinpoint the differences between Turkey and other contexts with an essentialist perspective. Consequently, it is not among the objectives of this study to work upon an answer to the question “what is civil society?” To the contrary, its basic contention is that, adopting Jenny Pearce’s argument, there is no “correct” view of civil society, but there are certain essential points to make “*about the way*

¹² Şerif Mardin, “Civil Society and Islam” in *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison* ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge : Polity Press, 1995).

¹³ Edwards, *Civil Society*, 5.

the concept is used."¹⁴ When it comes to the ways in which the concept is used, it is argued in this thesis that it is not necessary to make a choice between seeing civil society as "the big idea", "normative ideal" and "theoretical pivot"; and degrading it as a "fraud" and a "false horizon". This either/or type of attitude is rejected in this study on the grounds that neither side seems satisfactory and this in turn is the second principle that constitutes the approach of this study towards the concept of civil society. In accordance with such approach it is claimed that there is a need for another alternative view *"that recognizes the validity of the concept of civil society without romanticizing it, without idealizing it, and without abstracting it from its social and historical ground."*¹⁵ Consequently, this kind of an approach, rather than trying to find a way of joining into one of the two camps, is thought to be more useful since *it enables one to concentrate on the dominant usage(s) of the concept and put this usage(s) under scrutiny.* This is exactly what this study tries to do with regard to the Turkish case. In other words, this thesis is interested in the way(s) the concept has been employed as part and parcel of a number of academic works aiming at understanding and explaining certain crucial questions of Turkish politics. This amounts to drawing a map showing the usages of the concept of civil society which displays a diversity in terms of the meanings attached to the term and the context in relation to which the concept has been used. However, despite this variety, there is one dominant and/or prevailing perspective on civil society that one often comes across. Hence, the ultimate aim of such kind of an analysis is to find out the dominant and/or prevailing conception of civil society in order to put it under close scrutiny which happens to be the liberal view not unlike the case in the world. However, it is not sufficient by itself to highlight the dominant conception, it is also required to present by whom, in relation to which questions

¹⁴ Jenny Pearce, "NGOs and Social Change: Agents or Facilitators?", *Development in Practice*, Vol. 3. No.3 (October 1993), quoted in Jody Jensen and Ferenc Mészlivetz, "The Languages of Civil Society – Europe and Beyond", European University Institute Working Paper SPS No. 2005/2, May 2005. www.iue.it. Retrieved on 24.04.2006.

¹⁵ Fine, "Civil Society Theory, Enlightenment and Critique", 7-8. Emphasis added

and with what purpose this dominant conception is employed. As can be seen, then, this is indeed an endeavor that amounts to *face the ambiguities of the concept in its currently prevailing usage and thereby subjecting it to a rigorous critique*.¹⁶ As a former step of this kind of an analysis it is necessary in the first place to demonstrate *in concrete terms* the main tenets of the dominant approach and the ways in which it makes its appearance in various analyses on Turkish political and social life. This is what the ‘map’ described above tries to display.

This being its general approach towards the concept of civil society and its usage as an analytical tool, this thesis undertakes its major task: a critical –in the sense explained above- analysis of the literature revolving around the concept of civil society in Turkey. Indeed, this is a three-dimensional venture: first, it includes an effort to highlight various approaches in terms of *in what context* and *why* the concept of civil society is made the focus of attention in Turkey; second, it aims at seeing various approaches in terms of the meanings associated with the term civil society; in other words, various approaches in terms of *different conceptualizations* of civil society that one comes across in the literature in Turkey; third, on the basis of the first two, it tries to highlight the dominant trend –which is the liberal perspective as was explained above- with an aim of facing the ambiguities of the concept in its currently prevailing usage.

It is in accordance with this three-dimensional aspiration that a number of scholars and their works on the concept of civil society will be analyzed *as representatives of these different approaches*. In the last instance, this study, as was mentioned before, tries to draw a map of these different approaches and hence these academicians

¹⁶ Adopting such a critical position regarding the current literature on the topic does not necessarily imply a venture to develop “a brand new alternative” conception of civil society. Nevertheless, it is thought to be able to provide a new opening to the current debate because it also includes an effort to articulate certain theoretical considerations with the use of the concept of civil society.

and their works cited in this study are selected since they constitute explicit examples of these different approaches. It is possible to determine certain trends that unite scholars from different political standpoints and backgrounds. What is aimed in this study is to carve out these basic trends. *So, since the focus of attention is not on the particular names, their various areas of interest and their political-ideological backgrounds, not all works by these scholars are referred in this thesis.* Rather, the works referred in this thesis have been selected by having the virtue of constituting an example of a particular approach (in terms of the why and in what context the concept of civil society is used and which conception is employed).

1.4. A SYNOPSIS OF THE VARIOUS APPROACHES WITHIN THE LITERATURE ON 'CIVIL SOCIETY IN TURKEY'

Regarding the question of '*in what context is the concept of civil society focus of attention*', it can easily be observed that the concept of civil society is at the centre of analyses which are concerned with the question of the 'confrontation between strong state and weak civil society in Turkey'. *So, in a great majority of cases, the context within which the concept of civil society is discussed is this dichotomy of strong state-weak civil society.* The dominant trend in those analyses is to view this confrontation as a 'fact of life' of Turkish political-social life and to elaborate on the concept of civil society within the framework of this problematique. Indeed, it is interesting to see that this is a common attitude shared by a number of analysts with different political standpoints and backgrounds.

Considering this dominance of the view that takes the strong state-weak civil society dichotomy as a 'fact' and more importantly as *the major question* to be handled in relation to the concept of civil society, it is not surprising that it is the liberal perspective that has been dominant in the literature in Turkey. In other words, civil society has usually been conceptualized in accordance with the basic

liberal premises on the state-society-individual relationship. As was mentioned above, this is mainly due to the overemphasis on the 'problems associated with a strong state dominating (civil) society' and on the need to delimit the state's sphere of activity and its dominance over the society. A discussion on civil society is considered as essential since the existence of civil society as an autonomous sphere of activity, as the realm of freedoms, voluntariness, activeness, free competition of pluralities is deemed crucial as a checking mechanism over the strong state which has always had a desire to control and dominate every sphere of socio-political life and subjugate the demands coming from the society for effective levels of participation. Consequently, it would not be wrong to argue that this occupation with the strong state-weak civil society dichotomy and the problems stemming from it is the main determinant of the liberal stance in Turkey.

This hegemony of the liberal perspective characterized by a stress on the particular 'strong state tradition' accompanied by a weak civil society is directly reflected in different conceptions of the term employed by scholars in the literature. First of all, the most widely used conception of civil society is the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception.¹⁷ It is interesting to see that being the most widely used conception, this view is shared by a considerable number of scholars with different political-philosophical standpoints. For instance, there are cases in which the scholar may be a declared socialist and yet he/she may be employing the same liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of the term 'civil society' in his/her analysis of the confrontation between strong state and weak civil society in Turkey. Second, the liberal perspective puts its blueprint on other alternative conceptions that can be carved out in the literature. More specifically, besides the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception one also comes across the Hegelian, liberal- conservative and liberal-republican conceptions of civil society in Turkey.

¹⁷ This conception as well as the other conceptions of civil society will be examined in a detailed manner in the following chapter.

There are two important points that need to be highlighted regarding all of these liberal-oriented conceptions. First, all of them unite in *the way they contextualize the question of civil society in Turkey* which means that they all focus on the concept of civil society with an ultimate aim of discussing the problems of the confrontation between a strong state and a weak civil society. A tendency to see the state and civil society as two distinct entities, to view the confrontation between the two (indeed the dominance of the former) as 'the major conflict' at the expense of underestimating the conflicts and power struggles *within* the civil society as well as the reflections of these conflicts and struggles in the state, emphasizing civil society as a means to limit and control the state's power and its sphere of activity all comprise the common ground that unite these liberal-oriented approaches and conceptions of civil society. As can be seen, then, at the most basic level all these liberal-oriented conceptions of civil society share a consensus-oriented perspective regarding the notion of civil society. They share the presumption that the conflicts and struggles stemming from differences in terms of interests and identities can be handled through the liberal idea of 'pluralism' and of 'rights and liberties' which amounts removing the hold of the state on the society. This is the way that liberalism manifests itself in these different conceptions.

There is a second point to be highlighted regarding the varieties of liberal-oriented conception of civil society: despite this liberal common ground they share, these conceptions of civil society are distinguished from each other in terms of their different responses to the question *why* would the 'strong state-weak civil society dichotomy' be a major problem for the political life in Turkey. In other words, although they jointly conceive the weakness of the civil society (or the dominance of the state) as the foremost problem to be handled, they are at variance when it comes to explain the underlying reasons for such an argument. Hence, it would be inaccurate to categorize them under the same title of 'liberal conception of civil

society'. In that respect it seems possible to distinguish four approaches from each other: the liberal democratic-consolidation-oriented perspective that sees the strong state-weak civil society as a barrier for the (liberal) 'democratic consolidation' in the country; the liberal-conservatism-oriented perspective that views the existence of over empowered state as harming and/or curbing the natural path of development of the society; liberal-republican-citizenship-oriented perspective according to which the domination of the state over civil society has been an obstacle on the emergence and development of republican notion of 'active citizenship; and liberal-socialism-oriented perspective that blames the strong state-weak civil society dichotomy as an impediment for the growth of a socialist movement at the grassroots level.

To sum up, the main aim of this thesis is to see the ways the concept of civil society is used with regard to the Turkish case and to highlight the dominant trends in terms of these approaches. These dominant trends in these approaches can be carved out in relation to three questions: i) in what context the concept of civil society is made the focus of attention; ii) why such a discussion around the concept of civil society is deemed crucial; and iii) how the term 'civil society' is conceptualized in Turkey. The general outlook of the(se) dominant approach(es) will be demonstrated with the help of the concrete examples in the third chapter.

Especially the last question necessitates an effort to understand and to discover in what ways the literature in Turkey is in connection with the adventure of the concept in the Western political thought. Hence, that should also be considered as a part of the major objective of this thesis. In order to be able to succeed in this task, a comprehensive account of this adventure is laid down in Chapter 2. This is an account of the alternative conceptions of civil society in the seminal texts of the classical and modern Western political thought. What it points out is that there are seven alternative roots of the conceptualization of civil society: Hegelian

conception, liberal pluralist-individualist conception (classical liberal and conservative liberal versions), liberal republican, communitarian republican, Marxist and Gramscian conceptions. These are the conceptions which at the same time make their appearances in the literature in Turkey.

As has been mentioned above, the literature on civil society in Turkey has been dominated by the liberalism-inspired approaches and this is most evident in the fact that the most discussed theme in the literature on civil society in Turkey is the question of the confrontation between a dominant state and a weak civil society. It has also been explained that the characteristics of the dominant approach will inevitably be the focus of this study; and that these tenets will be pointed out in the following pages with an ultimate aim of demonstrating the missing points of that approach. This is due mainly to the fact that this approach suffers from certain shortcomings that are responsible for the fact that the literature seems to have reached a bottleneck. So, it should be stated at this point that although the demonstration of the basic tenets of the dominant approach, its surprisingly widespread usage, and its reflections in a variety of works will be at the centre, in order to be able to ‘face the ambiguities’ of this dominant approach, this study also reflects on alternative conceptions of civil society which are characterized by a critical attitude toward this dominant perspective. These critical approaches are inspired mainly by Marx’s and Gramsci’s elaborations on the concept of civil society and hence follow the line of thinking that emphasizes the uneven relations of power characterizing socio-political life. However, the number of such critical works has, at least so far, been limited compared to those inspired by liberalism. Nevertheless, it is vital to take these critical studies into consideration in order to be able to demonstrate truly the missing points in the dominant view. At the heart of these critical studies that follow Marx and Gramsci’s elaborations on the concept of civil society rests a challenge to the conventional distinction between state and civil society. They rather view the state in relation with not outside and/or above the

struggles and conflicts stemming from the uneven power relationships within the civil society. Hence, they urge for an analysis of those webs of power relations manifesting themselves in inequalities, exclusions, dominations, marginalizations of various kinds and their reflections at the state level. This thesis also follows this line of thinking and wants to articulate this critical approach developed by Marx and Gramsci with more recent theoretical considerations. It argues that without an emphasis on these crucial aspects the concept of civil society falls short of being an effective tool to analyze the current socio-political life in Turkey. So, the last part of the thesis will be interested in these critical approaches and their offerings in terms of a “rigorous critique” of the concept. It becomes clear with the help of these critical approaches that the concept of civil society in its currently prevailing (liberal) usage ignores a lot in terms of webs of power in socio-cultural, political and economic relationships shaping the state-society relation in Turkey as in anywhere in the world. Examples from this critical approach inspired by Marx and Gramsci will be given in order to substantiate the main argument of this critical approach. Besides, this Marxian-Gramscian perspective on civil society will be articulated with some recent theoretical works which also are characterized by emphasis on power relations, conflicts, and antagonisms in social relations. Namely, Foucault’s elaboration on the notion of ‘power’ and Mouffe’s elaboration of the concept of ‘antagonism’ will be brought to the forefront as complements of the Marxian-Gramscian approach to civil society. These latter works have not so far been considered as part of the debate revolving around the concept of civil society either by these theoreticians themselves or by other scholars interested in the concept. It is argued in this thesis however that these theoretical arguments are indeed closely related with the concept of civil society and that together with the Marxian-Gramscian conception of civil society they constitute a meticulous criticism of the dominant liberal conception. And it is such a critique that the recent literature on civil society in Turkey as well as in the world seems to be in need of. With the help of these critical approaches, then, the flaws of the versions of the dominant conception of civil society will be revealed more clearly. Lastly, it is

argued in this chapter that the analysis of the relationship between civil society and democracy needs to shift from a perspective that focuses on a 'democracy-friendly-civil society' to a perspective that focuses on 'democratic civil society'. This in turn, it is argued, is closely related with a change in the way 'democracy' is conceptualized. More specifically, it necessitates a view on democracy that sees it as something "fugitive" not as something to be consolidated. All these issues are explored in the fourth chapter.

This kind of a critical attitude toward the dominant (liberal-oriented) usage(s) of the concept of civil society is deemed necessary in this thesis in order to be able to increase the explanatory potential of the concept in dealing with the question of what kind of a democratic political community can respond to the needs of an age characterized mostly by the coexistence of difference and inequality?

1.5. THE POST-1980 PERIOD AND THE RISING IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN TURKEY

The post-1980 period has witnessed a rise in the popularity and importance of the concept of civil society in Turkey and it has become an inseparable part of political debates and analysis. Hence it is necessary to go over the analysis of the political conditions within which a talk of civil society has become meaningful in that polity with a special reference to this period of time. As can be expected, there are external and internal factors that have led to the increasing popularity that the concept of civil society has been enjoying in the public and the academic discourses. This popularity at the discourse level is also accompanied by the quantitative increase in the number of the civil society organizations in the country.¹⁸ Although the global

¹⁸ The latest statistical data about the CSOs, their categorization on the basis of their areas of interest, membership profiles and numbers has been recently provided by the Ministry of Interior in 2006 in the form of a report called Research on Organizations (Dernekler Araştırması).

and local contexts are interlinked, for analytical purposes it can make sense to outline the former before going into the details of internal developments.

As will be shown in the next chapter, the idea of civil society has been in existence for quite a long time in one way or another. Hence it would be inaccurate to contend that the concept is entirely new making its appearance in the 1980s and 1990s. However, it is commonly agreed that the concept of civil society was “forgotten” in the sense that it has ceased to be a central theme in the political debates and literature in the twentieth century until the 1980s. One can easily observe through a brief look at the literature on civil society that it was in the last quarter of the twentieth century that an interest in civil society has re-surfaced. As a result, the phrases involving the *resurrection*, *reemergence*, *reconstruction*, or *renaissance* of civil society started to be heard.

The modern concept of civil society was revived first and foremost in the struggles of the democratic oppositions in Eastern Europe and Latin America against authoritarian political regimes in the late 1980s and 1990s. In Ehrenberg’s words “the contemporary obsession with “civil society” began with the attempt of dissident East European intellectuals to develop a credible theoretical grounding in the early 1980s.”¹⁹ By the mid-1990s many political systems were crumbling in the face of popular opposition, systemic dysfunction and international pressures.²⁰ The demise of real socialism was the most dramatic development changing the political scene of the world drastically. It was not unexpected that this episode in world history brought with it certain distinctive trends in subsequent political discourse. The 1980s are known as the period during which neo-liberalism started to spread all over the world as the hegemonic political ideology. As a result, the end of the

¹⁹ John Ehrenberg, “Beyond Civil Society” *New Politics* Vol.6 no.4 1998, 1.

²⁰ Robert Fine and Shirin Rai, “Understanding Civil Society: A Preface” in *Civil Society: Democratic Perspectives*, eds. R. Fine and S. Rai, (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 1.

Cold War was evaluated as the end of the ideological struggle between East and West in favor of the latter. Some analysts like Francis Fukuyama went further and announced that it was not just the end of an epoch in history but the “End of History”.²¹ This was a kind of celebration of the ultimate victory of the liberal democracy as *the ideal* form of government.

Related to these developments, challenging the role of the state and its relation to the society/individual became the central question around which the political debates were shaped in these contexts. As the “third wave”²² democratic movements spread throughout East and Central Europe, Latin America, Southeast Asia and Africa so too did the debates about the ‘rebirth’ of civil society. It began to be widely argued that “regardless of the form of government from which these newly democratizing states were emerging ... the construction (or reconstruction) of civil society is one of the cornerstones of liberal democracy.”²³ It is upon such a background that during the 1990s the concept of civil society has penetrated into the policy language of international development agencies and subsequently has traveled to all corners of the world through intellectual exchange, activist discourse and the official policies of development donors and politicians.²⁴

²¹ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2002).

²² Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

²³ Brett Bowden, “Civil Society, the State, and the Limits to Global Civil Society”, *Global Society*, Vol.20, No.2, April 2006.

²⁴ Marlies Glosius, David Lewis and Hakan Seckinelgin, “Exploring Civil Society Internationally” in Marlies Glosius, David Lewis and Hakan Seckinelgin, eds. *Exploring Civil Society: Political and Cultural Contexts*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 3.



Figure 1. Increasing Popularity of Civil Society. (Source: Murat Belge. "Sivil Toplum Nedir?", Sivil Toplum ve Demokrasi Konferans Yazıları No:1, 2003, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları Eğitim ve Araştırma Birimi http://stk.bilgi.edu.tr/docs/belge_std_1.pdf.)

Starting with the 1980s, then, the time period in question has witnessed the rise of neo-liberalism in a global scale. The most prominent representatives of this political trend were the Reagan and Thatcher governments in the U.S.A and in England, respectively, but it then became a global phenomenon. That has been followed by the transitions in the Eastern Europe from authoritarian to liberal democratic regimes.

Concomitant to those cited developments, the international system has continuously moved towards ever increasing levels of economic integration since the early 1980s. Turkey also chose to adapt itself to those developments by implementing a structural adjustment program. The economic policies were put

into effect with a purpose to liberalize the economy. However, in the 1990s economic integration had to be complemented by political integration with the international system. So, the economic liberalism espoused by post-1980 governments proved to be a major catalyst in starting discussions on political liberalism.²⁵ Those arguments favoring economic and political liberalism, aroused within a conjuncture characterized by the hegemony of neo-liberalism, were by nature aiming at limiting the realm of state action in every sphere of life. Minimizing the role of the state and degrading its activities went hand in hand with a concomitant appraisal of civil society at a global level. Thus, the global conjuncture has been an important impetus for the entry of 'civil society' into the political discourses of the 1980s and 1990s in Turkey.

Apart from the global context and the hegemony of neo-liberalism as a worldwide phenomenon, political conditions peculiar to the Turkey of the 1980s should also be taken into account when there is a talk of the rising importance of civil society. The repeated involvement of the military in politics and its last direct intervention in September 1980 had created a reaction among different social groups. With this intervention, the dominance of the state over society which is usually accepted as a general characteristic of the Ottoman-Turkish polity, had made itself felt strongly – and violently- once more, and that in turn gave rise to the voices arguing that the state should be minimized.²⁶ In other words, the rise of liberalism in Turkey was related with the fact that the liberal outlook was epitomizing a reaction to the particular conception of the society that the military leaders adhered to.²⁷ The

²⁵ Binnaz Toprak, "Civil Society in Turkey" in A.R. Norton ed. *Civil Society in the Middle East*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 100.

²⁶ Toprak, "Civil Society in Turkey", 95; Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, "Türkiye'de Demokrasive Sivil Toplum" in A.Y. Sarıbay and F. Keyman eds. *Global Yerel Eksende Türkiye* (İstanbul: Alfa Basım Yayım Ltd. Şti., 2000), 111.

²⁷ Ahmet İnsel, *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, 6th ed. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005), 62.

Motherland Party that came to power after the 1983 general elections turned those voices into a discourse whose central theme was the argument that the individual does not exist for the state, but the state exists for the individual.²⁸ Sarıbay calls this whole process as a process of “demystification of the state” and argues that demystification in question has led to a spontaneous rise of a new discourse that has civil society at its core.²⁹

Another factor that led to an increase in the popularity of the concept of civil society has been the rise of Islamist groups and Kurdish nationalism during the post-1980 period.³⁰ These groups started to challenge the official ideology of the state and its definition of citizenship which has a strong emphasis on the notion of “unity of the state with its country and nation” (*devletin ülkesi ve milleti ile bölünmez bütünlüğü*) and hence which has a tendency to see “the nation” as a homogeneous entity at the expense of remaining blind to the differences, exclusions and marginalizations of certain voices. In addition to these two groups the influence of women’s movement in Turkey should also be mentioned as an important factor in the rising importance of the notion of civil society in Turkey. This movement has also gained a momentum during the post 1980 period. These movements have begun to employ the language of civil society to make their identities and differences acknowledged publicly and to politicize their discourses on their subordination by the status quo.

Three events deserve to be specifically mentioned as having an influence on the adventure of the concept of civil society in Turkey: the Susurluk accident of 1996; the two major earthquakes of 1999 and the economic crisis of 2001. These three events have subsequently led to important discussions on the structure of the state-

²⁸ Sarıbay, “Türkiye’de Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum”, 111.

²⁹ Sarıbay, “Türkiye’de Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum”, 111.

³⁰ Toprak, “Civil Society in Turkey”, 95

society relations in Turkey and consequently have brought the concept of civil society to the forefront. What they all have in common is that they constituted a challenge to the image of the “strong state” and the “papa state” (*Devlet Baba*) and gave rise to the heated debates on the question of the capabilities, the competency and the so-called “strength” of the state which has been stoutly imposed by the official ideology. The car accident at Susurluk brought to the day light the illegal relations between the state officials, mafia and the politicians; the earthquakes of 1999 made it evident the incompetence and ineffectiveness of the state mechanism to deal successfully with emergencies like natural disasters; and the 2001 economic crisis was crucial in demonstrating its ineptitude and the level of corruption that has become an endemic problem of Turkish politics. In time, these events led to a questioning of “the strength of the Turkish state” in a way that would add fuel to the increasing popularity of the concept of civil society in the liberal sense.

Another milestone in the adventure of the concept of civil society in Turkey is the 28 February Process that has influenced discourse on it in a rather different way. The so-called post-modern *coup d'état* of 28 February 1997 took place as a response to the perception on the part of the military of a threat of Islamic radicalism in the country. Acting upon this perceived threat to the secular character of the political regime the military followed a different path from the previous military interventions. The difference was that the military tried to ground its intervention upon a public opinion that is supportive of its course of action and this support was being given by a certain group of CSOs. These were largely the Kemalist organizations utilizing a discourse that complements the official ideology represented by the military. While this state of affairs put the concept of civil society and civil societal practice under the spots one more time, it also caused a shift in the meaning that conventionally used to be attached to the term i.e. epitomizing a sphere of life outside the state.

A last factor that should be mentioned with reference to its influence on the concept of civil society in Turkey is the process of Turkey's integration with European Union (EU) and especially the period of adaptation to the requirements for membership to the EU. This process has opened up new discussion about the state-society relations. Throughout the proceedings a major criticism regarding the political system in Turkey has been that the "acceptable" levels of social and political participation from below is quite low. The justification for such a criticism has been the observation that political activity and participation at the grassroots level has been under severe control and regulation of the state through strict laws until the late 1990s. During the second half of the 1990s the legal framework has begun to change associated with the 'democratization packages' that have been put in effect during the EU membership proceedings. The latter has been especially influential in the radical amendments in certain laws that have been passed by the Turkish Grand National Assembly within a considerably short period of time. In accordance with these developments, there have been revisions and adjustments in the legal framework regulating non-governmental activity in Turkey.³¹

So, on such a background of internal and external conditions, the concept of civil society has entered into the post-1980 political discourse in Turkey. Since the early 1980s, it has been an inseparable part of the discourses of the state officials,

³¹ The following quote from the "Council of the European Union Decision on the Accession Partnership with Turkey" (17 January 2006) is illustrative of the EU's approach to the issue: "- Facilitate and encourage the domestic development of civil society and its involvement in the shaping of public policies.

- Facilitate and encourage open communication and cooperation between all sectors of Turkish civil society and European partners."

It should also be noted that these principles are cited under the title of "Priorities" and the sub-title of "Civil and Political Rights" in the document.

For a detailed examination of the amendments in the law on the non-governmental activity see, "AB Uyum Sürecinde Medeni Kanun, Dernekler Kanunu ve Vakıflar Kanununda Getirilen Değişiklikler", www.stgp.org.tr/mevzuat.php

For the general approach of the EU to the concept of civil society see "Sivil Toplum İş Başında", www.deltur.cec.eu.int/sivil.rtf

journalists, funding agencies, business groups, writers, academics and political parties.³² This thesis is interested in the academic literature on the concept, and as was explained above, attempts at a critical analysis of various approaches that one comes across in the literature.

³² It is also interesting to see that with all these global and local developments starting with the 1980s, there has been some kind of a 'paradigm shift' in terms of the discourses of political intellectuals. This is in the sense that even those intellectuals who had previously preferred to use a language shaped with such terms as 'mode of production' and/or 'forces of production' began to build their arguments on the very concept of civil society.

CHAPTER 2

CIVIL SOCIETY IN WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT: ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTUALIZATIONS

As has been explained in the previous chapter, the main goal of this thesis is to make a critical analysis of the civil society debate in Turkey. It is a part of this main goal to point out the different meanings and alternative conceptions of civil society in that context. Hence, it is useful for the main aim of this thesis to begin with an overview of different conceptualizations of the concept of civil society in the history of Western political thought tradition. As it is often pointed out, the idea of civil society has many different routes in that tradition and these alternative conceptualizations have been influencing the way the concept is being thought and discussed today. The contemporary revival of civil society in social and political thought, in a sense, has been going hand in hand with what John Keane calls “remembering the dead.”³³ Hence, this chapter goes over the seminal texts of classical and modern political thought that concentrate upon the concept of civil society in relation to each other and it will serve as the theoretical frame to carve out different approaches in the contemporary research on civil society in Turkey.

It is a widespread tendency to take the original roots of the concept of civil society to Antiquity. *However, this thesis moves from the contention that there is a change in the usage of the concept since the 18th century which is too important to be ignored.* Actually it seems more illuminating to make a distinction between pre-modern and modern usages of the term since there is a radical difference between these two usages. This

³³ Quoted in Robert Fine, “Civil Society Theory, Enlightenment and Critique” in *Civil Society Democratic Perspectives*, ed. Robert Fine and Shirin Rai, (London: Frank Cass., 1997), 8.

difference lies in large part in the fact that in the former usages of the term no distinction is assumed between society and state (or between civil society and political society) and the concept of civil society is not used to denote a confrontation between state and civil society. Both terms acquire the same meaning in this usage according to which political society connotes a homogenous, organized, united social structure. Hence, as Colas argues,

“... it is often forgotten that the distinction between civil society and the state, so widely and readily accepted since Hegel and Marx, was not always evident, and that translated back into the idiom of Aristotle or that of Rousseau it would result in the “oppositions” state/state or civil society/civil society!”³⁴

So, the attribution of the origins of the concept of civil society to the ancient times, and to Aristotle more specifically, should be taken into consideration with this distinction in mind. It is commonly accepted that behind this attribution of the origins of the concept of civil society to Aristotle lies the term *koinonia politike*. Aristotle starts his book Politics by explaining the *koinonia politike*, a term that can be translated with 'political society' or 'community of citizens'. For Aristotle the *koinonia politike*, an association of free and equal men, is the most important community of all communities; it is analogous to the *polis*, the polity or city-state. The *polis* is the place in which free and equal men as “political animals” act politically. Aristotle explains:

... every community is established with a view to some good; for mankind always act in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community (*koinonia politike*), which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good.³⁵

Hence, “for Aristotle “civil society” (*politike koinonia*) was synonymous with “state” (*polis*) and designated the highest form of community or association, surpassing

³⁴ Colas, *Civil Society and Fanaticism*, 32.

³⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, Book One, Translated by Benjamin Jowett, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.1.one.html> Retrieved on 24.01.2007.

namely the “household” (*oikos*) and “peoples” (*ethne*) a people being defined negatively as a human grouping without political institutions.”³⁶ Civil or political society was thus superior to all other associations in two ways: first its purpose was higher and more general; second it was itself the widest association because it included all partial associations.³⁷ Aristotle wrote that “all societies would seem to be parts of civil society [*koninonia politike*].”³⁸ Considering the fact that he established an opposition between a civil society and an *ethnos* i.e. a society without an institution it becomes clear that for Aristotle civil society was the equivalent of what we today call the law-governed state.³⁹ Through the intermediary of Latin this term passed to other vernacular languages. It is widely accepted that among other possible translations of the term, Cicero’s translation as *societas civitas* became the most commonly accepted one during the middle ages in Europe especially by the specialists of Roman law which was central as the organizing principle of the European societies in that era. Colas points out that the term could also be translated into French as *Cité* or *Etat* and into English as “polity”, “commonwealth” or “state”.⁴⁰

“The conceptual and lexical identification of civil society with the state”⁴¹ remained unchanged for a long period of time in which the crucial opposition was between civil (or political) society and the “state of nature” so that “civil society” continued to be the expression that enabled political thinkers to “establish a distinction between an organized political community and the state of nature.”⁴² Other leading classical

³⁶ Colas, 23.

³⁷ Colas, 46.

³⁸ Quoted in Colas, 46-47.

³⁹ Colas, 48.

⁴⁰ Colas, 23.

⁴¹ Colas, 23.

⁴² Colas, 23. Emphasis added.

thinkers whose names are cited within the framework of this earlier adventure of the concept in the Western political thought tradition are Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. However, it is again apt to take these social contract theorists as representatives of the pre-modern usages of the concept of civil society because they also did not perceive it in a way that points at a distinction between political and civil society but rather between the state of nature and civil (political) society. This being the major common point among them, these social contract theorists differ from each other in the way they depict each side of the pair state of nature/civil (political) society. For instance for Hobbes the transition from the state of nature to civil or political society (society with a state) is necessary for the full realization of the natural rights of the individuals. These rights cannot be enjoyed within the state of nature because of the complete equality between individuals in terms of their faculties of body and mind:

Nature hath made men so equal in the faculties of body and mind as that, though there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body or of quicker mind than another, yet when all is reckoned together the difference between man and man is not so considerable as that one man can thereupon claim to himself any benefit to which another may not pretend as well as he. For as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination or by confederacy with others that are in the same danger with himself. And as to the faculties of the mind, I find yet a greater equality amongst men than that of strength.⁴³

Hence, this is an equality in terms of having the same “right of nature” which Hobbes defines as the “liberty each man hath to use his own power as he will himself or the preservation of his own nature; that is to say, of his own life; and consequently, of doing anything which, in his own judgment and reason, he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto.”⁴⁴ Consequently, Hobbes argues that, “if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy,

⁴³Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter 13, web source.
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/hobbes-lev13.html>

⁴⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter 14.

they become enemies; and in the way to their end (which is principally their own conservation, and sometimes their delectation only) endeavour to destroy or subdue one another.”⁴⁵

It is this “war of every man against every man” that characterizes state of nature and for Hobbes in this state of affairs

...nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law; where no law, no injustice. Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues. Justice and injustice are none of the faculties neither of the body nor mind.⁴⁶

So, there is no security in the state of nature. Hobbes uses this depiction of the state of nature as the basis for his argumentation in favor of transition to the society with a state i.e. civil or political society. He argues that as long as all individuals continue to hold the same right of nature no one can feel himself secure. Thus, Hobbes argues that all individuals, knowing that everybody is doing the same thing, transfer their rights to a common authority. “The mutual transferring of right is that which men call contract” and as a result of this, *the society with a state* (i.e. civil society) comes into existence.

Locke’s writings on the concept of civil society also exemplify the use of the concept to denote *the society with state* i.e. the emergence of the law-governed state. For example, he writes in his *Second Treatise of Government* that,

Where-ever therefore any number of men are so united into one society, as to quit every one his executive power of the law of nature, and to resign it to the public, there and there only is a *political*, or *civil society*. And this is done, where-ever any number of men, in the state of nature, enter into society to make one people, one body politic, under one supreme government; or else when any one joins himself to, and incorporates with any government already made ... And this *puts men* out of a state of nature *into* that of a *common-wealth*, by setting up a judge on earth, with

⁴⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter 13.

⁴⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chp.13.

authority to determine all the controversies, and redress the injuries that may happen to any member of the commonwealth; which judge is the legislative, or magistrates appointed by it. And where-ever there are any number of men, however associated, that have no such decisive power to appeal to, there they are still in *the state of nature*.⁴⁷

The dichotomy between political or civil society i.e. the emergence of the state as the common public authority on the one hand and the state of nature in which there is no such a public authority on the other can be observed quite clearly in this quotation. So for both Hobbes and Locke it is the existence of the state that makes a society civil. This is a particular/peculiar usage of the term “civil society” different from the way in which the concept is being employed in modern world and hence this peculiarity needs to be highlighted. Parallel to this convergence between Hobbes and Locke in the employment of the term “civil society” as an analytical tool to compare and contrast a society with a common political authority (civil society) and with the one without such an authority, there is an important difference between the two in terms of the way they depict the state of nature. Where Locke differs from Hobbes is that Locke does not envisage the state of nature as a constant state of war of all against all. On the contrary he describes the state of nature as a condition of “peace, good will, mutual assistance and preservation.”⁴⁸ However, there is a major “inconvenience” of the state of nature: since there is no common authority to obey, every single individual is the judge having the right to punish every other individual in cases of disputes.⁴⁹ But Locke doubts about the ability of individuals to stay impartial in the disputes in which they themselves are involved: “it is unreasonable for men to be judges in their own cases, that self-love will make men partial to themselves and their friends: and on the other side, that ill nature, passion and revenge will carry them too far in punishing others; and hence nothing but

⁴⁷ John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, sect. 89. Web source. <http://www.constitution.org/jl>

⁴⁸ Locke quoted in Ehrenberg, 85.

⁴⁹ Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, Chapter 2, Sec.8.

confusion and disorder will follow.”⁵⁰ Thus, this inconvenience makes civil society necessary:

The end of civil society [is] to avoid, and remedy those inconveniences of the state of nature...⁵¹ The only way whereby anyone divests himself of his natural liberty and puts on the bonds of civil society is by agreeing with other man to join together and unite into a community, for their comfortable, safe and peaceful living one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties, and a greater security against any that are not of it...⁵²

There is an important parallelism between Hobbes and Locke and their views on the transition from the state of nature to civil (political) society: In both cases the aim of civil society is the protection of particular interests of individuals in the society. In other words, it is suggested that “state power and the rule of law make possible the pursuit of interest in conditions of individual liberty and mutual security.”⁵³ An inseparable part of individual liberty is of course, private property as Locke himself points out. Indeed, one can see the seeds of the classical liberal separation between state and civil society in the writings of Hobbes and Locke. Moreover, their stress upon the natural rights of individuals to property, liberty and on the notion or rule of law well put them in the terrain of the liberal-individualist conception of civil society. However, since this chapter is concerned with the different meanings attached to the term “civil society” *per se* in the Western political thought tradition and since these theorists of social contract tradition thought of civil society as identical with the society with a state, it serves better to the aim of this chapter to analyze the views of these social contract theorists under a separate category to distinguish it from the modern usage of the concept.

⁵⁰ Locke, chapter 2, sec. 13.

⁵¹ Locke, sect.90

⁵² Locke, sect.95.

⁵³ Ehrenberg, 87.

The third representative of the social contract tradition is Rousseau who also tackled with the concept of civil society within the framework of a comparison between “civil society” and “the state of nature.” However, Rousseau’s way of thinking and his comparison between these two phenomena is very different from Hobbes and Locke in several important respects. To put it very briefly, firstly, Rousseau views the emergence of civil society as associated with the emergence of private property; not with the emergence of the state or a political community with a common public authority to obey. Rousseau famously claims that

The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying *This is mine*, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. Humanity would have been spared infinite crimes, wars, homicides, murders, if only someone had ripped the fences or filled in the ditches and said, “Do not listen to this pretender! You are eternally lost if you do not remember that the fruits of the earth are everyone’s property and that the land is no-one’s property!”⁵⁴

Secondly, unlike the other two social contract theorists, he considers the transition to civil society a negative development within human history. What he refers with that term is the emergence of property, inequality, subjection of individuals to one another, rivalry, competition and the vanishing of self-sufficiency and independence. So, it is not that humans begin to have something positive (like individual freedom and equality under the protection of the law-governed state) that they did not previously have. To the contrary, it is in the state of nature that they have these values (freedom and equality) which are to be lost and be replaced by negative developments in civil society. In order to make this point more clear it would be apt to consider the way Rousseau depicts the state of nature. For Rousseau the main principle characterizing the state of nature is the self-sufficiency of the individuals: “so long as they undertook only what a single person could accomplish, and confined themselves to such arts as did not require the joint labor of several hands, they lived free, healthy, honest and happy lives...”⁵⁵ This self-

⁵⁴ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *A Dissertation on the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality of Mankind*, Part II. Web source. <http://www.constitution.org/jjr>

⁵⁵ Rousseau, *Origin and Foundation of the Inequality*, Part II.

sufficiency of each individual is at the same time what makes the complete equality among them possible. "But from the moment one man began to stand in need of the help of another; from the moment it *appeared advantageous to any one man to have enough provisions for two, equality disappeared, property was introduced, work became indispensable...*"⁵⁶ Consequently,

free and independent as men were before, they were now, in consequence of a multiplicity of new wants, brought into subjection, as it were, to all nature and particularly to one another; and each became in some degree a slave even in becoming the master of other men: if rich, they stood in need of the services of others; if poor, of their assistance; and even a middle condition did not enable them to do without one another. ... In a word, there arose rivalry and competition on the one hand, and conflicting interests on the other, together with a secret desire on both of profiting at the expense of others. All these evils were the first effects of property, and the inseparable attendants of growing inequality.⁵⁷

Because of these differences, Rousseau's employment of the concept of "civil society" is radically different from the social contract tradition as epitomized in Hobbes and Locke. Moreover, Rousseau dwells on the possibilities/chances to bring "civil society", as it emerged in the way he describes, closer to the freedom and equality that humans used to enjoy in the state of nature. Thus, although the reason why Rousseau sees the transition to civil society as a negative development is related to the private property, the vanishing of the self-sufficiency and independence of each individual and hence losing of equality Rousseau also thinks that personal dependence between individuals that emerges with this transition to civil society can at the same time be thought of as a potential:

The passage from the state of nature to the civil state produces a very remarkable change in man, by ... giving his actions the morality they had formerly lacked. ... What man loses by the social contract is his natural liberty and an unlimited right to everything he tries to get and succeeds in

⁵⁶ Rousseau, *Origin and Foundation of the Inequality*, Part II. Emphasis added.

⁵⁷ Rousseau, *Origin and Foundation of the Inequality*, Part II.

getting; what he gains is civil liberty and the proprietorship of all he possesses...⁵⁸

It is interesting that Rousseau uses the term “civil state” here to denote the transition from the state of nature and formulates the basic question to be concerned with in this civil state as follows:

The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and good of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone and remain as free as before. This is the fundamental problem of which the Social Contract provides the solution.⁵⁹

Following this, he summarizes the basic principle of the Social Contract: “Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.”⁶⁰ These references to the “general will” and to individuals as indivisible part of the whole, put Rousseau another place than the Hobbes and Locke and their focus upon the individual self-interest and individual liberty. This is the main reason why Rousseau is usually considered as the cornerstone of the republican tradition in political thought. However, since there is no further blatant/explicit connection of these arguments to the concept of “civil society” as such in his writings, he is not included under the title of the republican conception of civil society in this study. It is more convenient in terms of the structure of this thesis to suffice here by underlining Rousseau’s significance for the republican tradition in general.

It is generally accepted that in its modern usage “civil society” was first developed in the Scottish Enlightenment.⁶¹ Adam Ferguson is one of its leading thinkers with

⁵⁸ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Book 1.

⁵⁹ Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Book 1.

⁶⁰ Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Book 1.

⁶¹ See, Chandhoke, “What the Hell is Civil Society?”, www.opendemocracy.net;

his classic text *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* and he links the notion to the emergence of the market economy. Another key figure in the theory of civil society, the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel also held that civil society is a defining feature of the modern world. The Scottish enlightenment thinker Adam Ferguson views civil society as “a socially desirable alternative both to the state of nature and the heightened individualism of emergent capitalism.”⁶² On the contrary, Hegel saw civil society as the realm of particularism of individuals. As David Lewis points out, “both approaches shaped the concept’s early evolution.”⁶³ It is with these approaches that the shift in the usage of the concept of civil society began to take place. As John Keane points out, “*the language of civil society (societas civilis) traditionally used to speak of a peaceful political order governed by law came instead to refer to a realm of life institutionally separated from the state institutions.*”⁶⁴

The following section will try to highlight the alternative “modern” conceptions of civil society through an investigation of the influential texts by leading thinkers of the West. It can be stated from the very outset that it is possible to differentiate four major approaches: Hegel’s conception; liberal conception (with pluralist-individualist and conservative versions of it); republican conception (with liberal republican and communitarian republican versions of it); and the conception

⁶² David Lewis, “Civil Society in non-Western Contexts: Reflections on the ‘Usefulness’ of a Concept”, Civil Society Working Paper 13, Center for Civil Society, London School of Economics, 2001.
http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/publications/cswp/civil_society_wp.htm.
 Retrieved on 24.07.2006.

⁶³ Lewis, “Civil Society in non-Western Contexts”.

⁶⁴ John Keane, *Civil Society: Old Images, New Visions* (Polity Press: Cambridge, 1998), 6. Emphasis added. In the majority of the academic works on civil society in Turkey, however, this shift in the usage of the concept in Western political thought is generally overlooked. Rather, in most cases analysts move from the presumption that civil society has always referred to such a sphere of life institutionally separated from the state institutions in the Western political thought as well as from a contention that modern Western socio-political history has always been characterized by such institutional separation between state and civil society; and these assumptions are made at the expense of overlooking the different routes of the concept of civil society in the Western world.

developed by Marx and Gramsci. The scheme drawn in this section will be useful to unearth the alternative conceptions of the term within the civil society debate in Turkey. As will be clearer in the next chapter, various meanings attached to the term within the literature on Turkey are deeply rooted in these founding texts.

2.1. HEGEL'S CONCEPTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel defined civil society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) in distinction to *der staat* (the strictly political state). In his thought, civil society is a “supremely modern concept, one that comes into being alongside the development of capitalism” because “modernity is restless, self-seeking and self-preserving searching endlessly for gratification.”⁶⁵ This is why what he thinks to be central to civil society is self-interested action and particularities of the individuals:

The concrete person, who is himself the object of his particular aims, as a totality of wants and a mixture of caprice and physical necessity, is one principle of civil society.⁶⁶... In [abstract] right, what we had before us was the person; in the sphere of morality, the subject; in the family, the family-member; in civil society as a whole, the burgher or *bourgeois*. Here at the standpoint of needs ... what we have before us is the composite idea which we call *man*.⁶⁷

The distinguishing characteristic of this *man*, as a *totality of wants and mixture of caprice and physical necessity* is the infiniteness of his needs and means of satisfying them:

An animal's needs and its ways and means of satisfying them are both alike restricted in scope. Though man is subject to this restriction too, ... he [transcends it] ... first by the multiplication of needs and means of satisfying them, and secondly by the differentiation and division of concrete need into

⁶⁵ Chandhoke, “What the Hell is Civil Society?”, 2.

⁶⁶ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 122.

⁶⁷ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 127. Emphases original.

single parts and aspects which in turn become different needs... This multiplication goes on *ad infinitum*.⁶⁸

Another important component of Hegel's conception of civil society besides this particularity of self-seeking individuals with endless needs and desires is the phenomenon of differences and the consequent inequality among those individuals. In other words, he points out that differences and inequalities are also contained within the principle of particularity. As for differences Hegel claims that the complex interdependence of each on all produces a "universal permanent capital *which gives each the opportunity, by the exercise of his education and skill, to draw a share from it* and so be assured of his livelihood."⁶⁹ Consequently,

A particular man's resources, or in other words, his opportunity of sharing in the general resources are conditioned, partly by his own unearned principal (his capital) and partly by his skill; this in turn is itself dependent not only on his capital but also on accidental circumstances whose multiplicity introduces differences in the development of natural, bodily and mental characteristics which were already dissimilar. In this sphere of particularity these differences are conspicuous in every direction and on every level, and together with the arbitrariness and accident which this sphere contains as well, they have as their inevitable consequence disparities of individual resources and ability.⁷⁰

So, Hegel does not ignore the inequalities within civil society but takes them for granted or as inevitable outcomes of differences in terms of skills, education, accidental circumstances etc. He believes that "Men are made unequal by nature, where inequality is in its element, and in civil society *the right of particularity is so far from annulling this natural inequality ...* and raises it to an inequality of skill and resources, and even one of moral and intellectual attainment."⁷¹ Consequently,

...the question of the particular class to which an individual is to belong is one on which natural capacity, birth and other circumstances have their

⁶⁸ Hegel, 127.

⁶⁹ Hegel, 130.

⁷⁰ Hegel, 130.

⁷¹ Hegel, 130.

influence, though the essential and final determining factors are subjective opinion and individual's arbitrary will, which win in this sphere their right, their merit and their dignity.⁷²

This is the way, then, Hegel envisions the constitutive principles of civil society. He argues regarding this "subjective self-seeking"⁷³ of these particular individuals that "particularity by itself given free rein in every direction to satisfy needs, accidental caprices, and subjective desires, destroys itself, ... civil society affords a spectacle of extravagance and want as well as of the physical and ethical degeneration common to them both."⁷⁴ Consequently, it is generally agreed that, Hegel detects "a profound tension between the individualistic ethos that creates civil society and the reproduction of the community as an ethical entity."⁷⁵

It is a common tendency among the analysts of Hegel's approach to civil society to claim that moving from this tension Hegel turns to the state as *the only* possible solution to this conflict. For instance Chandhoke believes that Hegel is of the opinion that "civil society –despite being one of the "moments" of ethical life- has ultimately to be controlled; it has to be *tamed* by the state."⁷⁶ Similarly, as another example of this widespread interpretation of Hegel, Keane argues that Hegel perceives civil society as a self-crippling entity in constant need of state supervision and control.⁷⁷ *However, this is only a part of the story and indeed this kind of reading of Hegel seems too simplistic.* A closer look at his writings shows that Hegel thinks that it is not utterly impossible to resolve this tension within the civil society itself. What

⁷² Hegel, 132.

⁷³ Hegel, 129.

⁷⁴ Hegel, 123.

⁷⁵ Chandhoke, "What the Hell is Civil Society?", 3.

⁷⁶ Chandhoke, "What the Hell is Civil Society?", 3. Emphasis original.

⁷⁷ John Keane, "Despotism and Democracy" in *Civil Society and State* ed. John Keane, (London: Verso, 1988), 50.

he is asserting is in fact related with the question of *what happens when "particularity is given free rein in every direction."* In that respect he stresses that this does not have to be the case all the time, in other words he suggests that particularity is not given free rein in every direction. What is needed to succeed in this, in turn, is consciousness about the "complex interdependence of each on all"⁷⁸ in civil society and hence about the principle of universality.

This complex interdependence is a natural outcome of the division and multiplication of the needs and means as explained above: "the subdivision of needs and means ... subdivides production and brings about division of labor ... [which in turn] makes necessary everywhere the dependence of men one another and their reciprocal relation in the satisfaction of their other needs."⁷⁹ He argues that "men are dependent on one another and reciprocally related to one another in their work and the satisfaction of their needs."⁸⁰ Through this complete interconnectedness, "the principle of particularity passes over into universality and only there does it attain its truth and the right to which its positive actuality is entitled." Without such a passage between the two, "it [particularity] breeds new desires without end and is in thoroughgoing dependence on caprice and external accident."⁸¹ Indeed, "[the interest of private persons] is *mediated* through the universal which thus *appears* as a *means* to its realization."

What is required, according to Hegel, then, that individuals make a connection between the principle of particularity and universality: "Individuals can attain their ends only in so far as they themselves determine their knowing, willing and acting

⁷⁸ Hegel, 130.

⁷⁹ Hegel, 129.

⁸⁰ Hegel, 129.

⁸¹ Hegel, 123.

in a universal way and make themselves links in this chain of social connexions”⁸², in other words when particularity of the self-interested individuals “is held in check by the power of universality”.⁸³ He refers to this process as “the process whereby their singularity and their natural condition are raised ... to formal freedom and formal universality of knowing and willing –*the process whereby their particularity is educated up to subjectivity.*”⁸⁴

Hegel does not seem utterly hopeless about the realization of this situation. It is not out of any possibility that individuals would *make themselves links in the chain of social connections. At this point what he calls for is a radical change in the views on “education”, “the nature of mind” and “the end of reason.”* Hegel criticizes “the feeling that needs, their satisfaction, the pleasures and comforts of private life and so forth, are absolute ends” since it “implies treating education as a mere means to these ends.”⁸⁵ This view for him is not able to capture the nature of mind and the end of reason. He argues that,

[mind] attains its actuality only by creating a dualism within itself, by submitting itself to physical needs and the chain of these external necessities and so imposing on itself this barrier ... ; and by maturing itself inwardly even when under this barrier until it overcomes it and attains its objective reality in the finite.⁸⁶

This view of the nature of mind, in turn, implies that “the end of reason” is not “the pleasure for pleasure’s sake.” Hegel claims that “on the contrary, its end is to banish natural simplicity” by which he refers specifically to overcoming “the crude type of knowing and willing, i.e. *immediacy and singularity, in which mind is absorbed.*” He adds:

⁸² Hegel, 124.

⁸³ Hegel, 123.

⁸⁴ Hegel, 125. Emphasis added.

⁸⁵ Hegel, 125.

⁸⁶ Hegel, 125.

it aims in the first instance at securing ... *the rationality of which it is capable*, i.e. the form of universality or the Understanding. By this means alone does mind become at home with itself... There, then, mind's freedom is existent... It is in this way then that the form of universality comes explicitly into existence in thought..."⁸⁷

As can be observed clearly in these quotations, Hegel thinks mind and reason are *capable* of securing the principle or rationality of universality. This necessitates a 'maturation' of the mind so that it is rescued from 'simplicity and immediacy'. This, in turn, is closely related with his ideas on the aim of education as mentioned above. According to Hegel, then,

The final purpose of education, therefore, is liberation and the struggle for a higher liberation still ... In the individual subject, this liberation is the hard struggle against pure subjectivity of demeanor, against the immediacy of desire, against the empty subjectivity of feeling and the caprice of inclination.⁸⁸

Hegel identifies education with this struggle: "The disfavor showered on education is due in part to its being this hard struggle; but it is through this educational struggle that the subjective will itself attains objectivity within, an objectivity in which alone it is capable and worthy of being the actuality of the Idea."⁸⁹

What the term "the Idea" refers to in this quotation is the idea of freedom which he places at the center of his approach to ethical life. He claims that "ethical life is the concept of freedom developed into the existing world and the nature of self-consciousness."⁹⁰ His definition of freedom, in turn, is closely associated with the principle of universality that has been examined above: "The right of individuals to be subjectively destined to freedom is fulfilled when they belong to an ethical

⁸⁷ Hegel, 125. Emphases added.

⁸⁸ Hegel, 125.

⁸⁹ Hegel, 125-126.

⁹⁰ Hegel, 105.

order, and it is in an ethical order that they are actually in possession of their own essence or their own inner universality.”⁹¹

Considered together, Hegel’s views on the nature of mind, the end of reason, the purpose of education and the coalescence of right and duty in freedom as the essence of an ethical order all imply an *ideal* of civil society and an *ideal* of civil society-state relationship. In ideal terms, Hegel suggests that individuals with all their particularities, selfishness, subjective self-seeking, and endless needs and desires etc. *are capable* of making a connection between particular and universal, once they become conscious about the meaning of freedom, the end of reason and education, the nature of human mind and complex interdependence of each on all – all has been explained above.⁹² However, Hegel seems to evaluate the real situation as being far from this ideal and his views on the state should be evaluated against this distinction between the ideal and real. Thus, it seems too simplistic to argue that Hegel views the modern state *per se* as the best, the highest and the most developed institution ever without which it is impossible to attain the universal interests of the community and that he views civil society as being deprived of the ability to solve internal disputes and hence if not controlled and regulated by the state it could not stay “civil”.⁹³ Such conceptualization of the state stems from his observations regarding the actually existing situation in civil society not from the ideal civil society.

So, his views on the state should be considered against this background. Hegel conceptualized the state as the higher institution that embodied the highest ethical ideals of society and hence where contradictions could be resolved. It is true that Hegel said “[t]he state is the actuality of the ethical idea.”⁹⁴ However, in accordance

⁹¹ Hegel, 109.

⁹² Hegel, 130.

⁹³ See, for such an interpretation of Hegel, Keane “Despotism and Democracy”, 52.

with the argumentation presented in the previous paragraphs, Hegel insists on the importance of the *unity* of the universal end and aim of the state with the particular interest of individuals and views this unity as the source of the strength of the state.⁹⁵ He sees both sides of this pair as feeding each other. In his words:

In contrast with the spheres of private rights and private welfare (the family and civil society) the state is from one point of view an external necessity and their higher authority; its nature is such that their laws and interests are subordinate to it and dependent on it. On the other hand, however, it is the end immanent within them, *and its strength lies in the unity of its own universal end and aim with the particular interest of individuals*, in the fact that individuals have duties to the state in proportion as they have rights against it.⁹⁶

So, it is clear that as the individuals in civil society are expected in Hegel's thought to make a connection between their particularity and the universal, it is also what the state is expected to do. Thus, Hegel reaches the conclusion:

The result is that the universal does not prevail or achieve completion except along with particular interests and through the cooperation of particular knowing and willing and individuals likewise do not live as private persons for their own ends alone, but in the very act of willing these they will the universal and their activity is consciously aimed at none but the universal end.⁹⁷

This analysis of the Hegel's approach toward the concept of civil society shows that Hegel views the realm of civil society as the realm of particularism whereas the state as the representative of the long-term interests of the society. However, it should also be stressed that a consensus can indeed be created *within* civil society among those particularities through a particular way of thinking i.e. with an eye on the principle of universality; but since the existing situation is not in proximity to this ideal condition, it is the state that is thought of as the culmination point of the

⁹⁴ Hegel, 155.

⁹⁵ Hegel, 161.

⁹⁶ Hegel, 161.

⁹⁷ Hegel, 160-161. Also see the last paragraph of the section 261 on page 162.

principle of universalism. In that sense, in Hegel's view state and civil society are not two mutually exclusive categories but they are relational.

2.2. LIBERAL-INDIVIDUALIST-PLURALIST CONCEPTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

As has been mentioned before, liberal understanding of civil society is the dominant view that characterizes the majority of the academic literature in Turkey, and in the world as well. It is possible, however, to distinguish variations within this perspective. This section will particularly be concerned with the difference between classical liberal and conservative liberal conceptions of civil society. As will be shown below, despite the significance of the common ground they share, there are significant nuances that make conservative liberal stance different from the mainstream liberal tradition and hence that should be taken into consideration.⁹⁸ Before such a consideration, however, it is convenient to have a brief look at the central premises of the liberal disposition in general in order to lay the background of these two approaches to the concept of civil society.

As John Gray argues, "common to all variants of the liberal tradition is a definite conception ... of man and society." Gray cites the distinctive elements of this conception as follows:

It is *individualist*, in that it asserts the moral primacy of the person against the claims of any social collectivity; *egalitarian*, inasmuch as it confers on all men the same moral status and denies the relevance to legal or political order of differences in moral worth among human beings; *universalist*, affirming the moral unity of the human species and according a secondary importance to specific historic associations and cultural forms; and *meliorist* in its affirmation of the corrigibility and improvability of all social institutions and political arrangements. It is this conception of man and society which gives liberalism a definite identity which transcends its vast internal variety and complexity.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ These differences are elaborated on pp.66-67.

⁹⁹ John Gray, *Liberalism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), xii.

It would be illustrative to go over Friederich A. Hayek's work on the determining features of liberalism in which he also explains the general characteristics of liberalism in a parallel line of thinking with Gray.¹⁰⁰ With regard to individualism, Hayek argues that the most important thing upon which there is an apparent agreement is the "demand for freedom of the individual and the respect for the individual personality."¹⁰¹ Second, he also relates this kind of individualism with a particular type of egalitarianism in liberalism:

while the protection of the law was to assist all in the pursuit of their aims, government was not supposed to guarantee to the individuals particular results of their efforts. *To enable the individual to use his knowledge and abilities in the pursuit of his self-chosen aims* was regarded both as the greatest benefit government could secure to all, as well as the best way of inducing these individuals to make the greatest contribution to the welfare of the others.¹⁰²

As a consequence of such an understanding of equality before the law, Hayek defines the necessary attributes of the "products of legislation": "they must be general rules of individual conduct, applicable to all alike in an unknown number of future instances, defining the protected domain of the individuals, and therefore essentially of the nature of prohibitions rather than of specific commands."¹⁰³ This in turn corresponds to what Gray has termed as the principle of universality.

This stress on equality before the law is closely related with the liberal idea of freedom. Hayek states that "the liberal conception of freedom has often been described as a merely negative conception, and rightly so. Like peace and justice, it

¹⁰⁰ It should be pointed out here that due to the parallelisms between his thought and Oakeshott, Hayek is referred as a representative of conservative liberalism, rather than classical liberalism in this thesis. Here, his work on liberalism is referred since it provides a brief and compact introduction to liberalism as a political philosophy and its central premises.

¹⁰¹ Frederik A. Hayek, "Liberalism" in *New Studies in Philosophy, Politics and the History of Ideas*, (London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1982), internet version. <http://www.angelfire.com/rebellion/oldwhig4ever>

¹⁰² Hayek, "Liberalism", web source.

¹⁰³ Hayek, "Liberalism", web source. Emphasis added.

refers to the absence of an evil, to *a condition opening opportunities* but not assuring particular benefits..."¹⁰⁴ With its emphasis on individual freedom and rights and respect for individual personality a central theme of liberalism is its stress on limiting the state power and controlling the state actions:

The coercive powers of government [are] supposed to be limited to the enforcement of those rules of just conduct. ... [w]hatever other services government might be called upon to provide, it could for such purposes use only the resources placed at its disposal; but could not coerce the private citizen; or in other words, the person and the property of the citizen could not be used by government as a means for the achievement of its particular purposes.¹⁰⁵

This concern with limiting and controlling the powers of the state is closely associated with liberalism's deep belief in the superiority of the "self-generating or spontaneous order" on the part of the society:

The importance which liberal theory attached to the rules of just conduct is based on insight that they are an essential condition for the maintenance of a self-generating or spontaneous order of the actions of the different individuals and groups, each of which pursues his own ends on the basis of his own knowledge.¹⁰⁶

All these tenets of liberalism directly influences the way the concept of civil society is handled within this tradition. This is true for classical and conservative liberal conceptions of civil society and also for the liberal-republican conception which will be examined later.¹⁰⁷ As was already pointed out, it is the liberal approach to the concept of civil society that has been dominant in the literature both in Turkey and in the world alike. As the following chapter will illustrate, there are important differences among the scholars in Turkey in terms of their motivations underlying their concern with the concept of civil society; in terms of what particularly makes

¹⁰⁴ Hayek, "Liberalism", web source. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁵ Hayek, "Liberalism".

¹⁰⁶ Hayek, "Liberalism".

¹⁰⁷Below, in the section on the republican conception of civil society, these tenets of liberalism are discussed in a comparative perspective with those of the republican tradition.

them see civil society as a 'question' of the political life of Turkey; in terms of the way they handle this question and also the conclusions they draw from their work on civil society. Despite these important differences between them, however, it is interesting to see that at the background of those various analyses with various political-philosophical standpoints, the majority of the works converge in employing the same conception of civil society as their analytical tool. It is quite interesting to find out that this is the conception embedded in the liberal tradition of political thought. In large part, this dominance of the liberal perspective on the works on civil society is related with the fact that the concept of civil society has always been part and parcel of the scholars' larger concerns regarding the Turkish political life as it has acquired its particular form within the modernization process of the country. This process, in turn, is most of the time discussed with reference to the determining role of the state and its dominance over the society and the individuals. Hence, as will be shown in the following chapter, the concept of civil society has been employed as a tool to critically discuss this dominance of the state and to challenge it with a reference to such notions as individual rights and liberties, delimitation of the state, autonomy of the society from the state, and guaranteeing autonomous spheres of activity outside the direct interference of the state. Not surprisingly, then, these notions consolidated the dominance of the liberal perspective over the usage of the concept of civil society. The following sections will explore two variants of the civil society conception within liberalism each of which has direct influence on the literature on civil society in Turkey.

2.2.1. Classical Liberal-Individualist-Pluralist Perspective

The work of Alexis de Tocqueville *Democracy in America* (first published in 1835) is generally taken as the classical formulation of the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society. This is due to his positive account of nineteenth century associationalism in the United States and his *stress on voluntarism and independent associational life as protections against the domination of society by the state, and hence on civil society as a counterforce which helped keep the state accountable and effective.*

Although he does not specifically use the concept of “civil society” his analysis is usually referred as the analysis of civil society as associational life because, as will be seen in the following pages, he investigates “associations which are formed in civil life” with direct reference to the notions of pluralism, equality and individualism.

Tocqueville’s account is especially concerned with the *danger of despotism and the factors that give rise and consolidate despotism*. So he is especially interested in the possible ways of preventing the emergence and consolidation of an over-powered state –which is still the dominant theme in the contemporary literature on civil society, especially in Turkey. Tocqueville argues that a despotic political regime is most secure of continuance when it can keep man asunder.¹⁰⁸ It is egoism of human beings, he thinks, that feeds despotic governance:

A despot easily forgives his subjects for not loving him provided they do not love each other. He does not ask them to assist him in governing the State; it is enough that they do not aspire to govern it themselves. He stigmatizes as turbulent and unruly spirits those who would combine their exertions to promote the prosperity of community.¹⁰⁹

An interesting claim of Tocqueville is related with the connection between political equality and despotism. In that respect he argues that “these two things mutually and perniciously complete and assist each other.”¹¹⁰ His explanation for this seemingly contradictory pair is also remarkable. In his view, “equality places man side by side, unconnected by any common tie; despotism raises barriers to keep them asunder; the former predisposes them not to consider their fellow creatures, the latter makes general indifference a sort of public virtue.”¹¹¹ Hence, he thinks of

¹⁰⁸ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, The Complete and Unabridged Volumes I and II, (New York, Toronto: Bantam Books, 2000), 625.

¹⁰⁹ Tocqueville, 625.

¹¹⁰ Tocqueville, 625.

¹¹¹ Tocqueville, 625.

equality as making humans independent and hence distant towards each other. In that he makes an interesting contrast between “aristocratic communities” and “democratic nations.” According to this, “in aristocratic societies men do not need to combine in order to act because they are strongly held together.”¹¹² This, in turn, is due to the fact that “in aristocratic communities all the citizens occupy fixed positions, one above the other [so that] the result is that each of them always sees a man above himself whose patronage is necessary to him, and below himself another man whose cooperation he may claim.”¹¹³ There is considerable difference between this type of social organization and a democratic society according to Tocqueville and at the source of this radical difference there is a “novel expression”, a new “feeling” that he calls as “individualism”.¹¹⁴ In that respect, Tocqueville argues that a novel idea has given birth to this novel expression and it is a feeling and expression different from egotism:

Egotism is a passionate and exaggerated love of self which leads a man to connect everything with his own person, and to prefer himself to everything in the world. Individualism is a mature and calm feeling which disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his fellow-creatures; and to draw apart with his family and his friends; so that after he thus formed a little circle of his own, he willingly leaves society at large to itself.¹¹⁵

According to Tocqueville this novel idea and expression of individualism, together with its consequences as described by him, is a by product of democracy and it is closely related with the development of the principle of equality in democratic communities. Tocqueville claims that equality has certain bitter consequences which, as mentioned above, serve to despotism. The main reason underlying “the evils which equality may produce”¹¹⁶ is that equality gives an individual the feeling

¹¹² Tocqueville, 631.

¹¹³ Tocqueville, 621.

¹¹⁴ Tocqueville, 620.

¹¹⁵ Tocqueville, 620.

¹¹⁶ Tocqueville, 629.

that he can do everything by himself without any help or cooperation of others. It is necessary at this point to quote him at length in order to comprehend the way he explains:

Aristocracy had made a chain of all the members of the community from the peasant to the king; democracy breaks that chain and severs every link of it. As social conditions become more equal the number of persons increases who, although they are neither rich enough nor powerful enough to exercise any great influence over their fellow-creatures have nevertheless acquired or retained sufficient education and fortune to satisfy their own wants. They owe nothing to any man; they acquire the habit of always considering themselves as standing alone, and they are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands.¹¹⁷

Consequently, individuals “entertain a presumptuous confidence in their strength” and since they do not suppose that they will one day have to ask for the assistance of other individuals they do not refrain from showing that “they care for nobody but themselves.”¹¹⁸ This is the way, then, “separation of men from one another”¹¹⁹ takes place and hence Tocqueville comes to claim that “it is commonly at the outset of democratic society that citizens are most disposed to live apart.”¹²⁰ In his words,

Amongst democratic nations, ... all the citizens are independent and feeble; they can do hardly anything by themselves, and none of them can oblige his fellow-men to lend him their assistance. They all, therefore, fall into a state of incapacity, if they did not learn voluntarily to help each other.¹²¹

The separation/distance concomitant to individualism that comes out of equality is a great danger for a democratic way of life in Tocqueville’s analysis and at the end it has the potential to give rise to a despotic political regime. It is at this point that

¹¹⁷ Tocqueville, 622.

¹¹⁸ Tocqueville, 623.

¹¹⁹ Tocqueville, 623.

¹²⁰ Tocqueville, 623.

¹²¹ Tocqueville, 631.

he puts forward the importance of "*associations which are formed in civil life*"¹²² and hence he is seen as the founding father of the most dominant usage of the term civil society as voluntary activity through associations with the purpose of having an influence upon the political decision-making processes. In other words, he sees those associations as barriers to ward off the coming of despotism. The reason for his belief in those associations is his conviction that those associations will contribute to closer relations with other individuals in the society contrary to the expectations of a possible despotic regime that would naturally prefer indifference: "As soon as a man begins to treat of public affairs in public he begins to perceive that he is not so independent of his fellow-men as he had first imagined, and that in order to obtain their support, he must often lend them his co-operation."¹²³ This close relation and cooperation among individuals is the most important tool that they can use in their endeavor to defend themselves against despotism because,

[i]f each citizen did not learn, in proportion as he individually becomes more feeble and consequently more incapable of preserving his freedom single-handed, to combine with his fellow-citizens for the purpose of defending it, it is clear that tyranny would unavoidably increase together with equality.¹²⁴

Tocqueville clearly expresses his view that these associations are necessary for democratic nations¹²⁵ and summarizes his explanation by writing:

Feelings and opinions are recruited, the heart is enlarged and the human mind is developed by no other means than by the reciprocal influence of men upon each other... these influences are almost null in democratic countries; they must therefore be artificially created, and this can only be accomplished by associations.¹²⁶

¹²² Tocqueville, 630.

¹²³ Tocqueville, 625-626.

¹²⁴ Tocqueville, 630.

¹²⁵ Tocqueville, 632.

¹²⁶ Tocqueville, 633.

As an end result of his analysis based upon i) the connections between equality in democratic communities; ii) the resulting sense of individualism and distance of individuals from each other; iii) the consequent threat of despotism that is fed by this indifference; iv) the despot's preference to keep individuals asunder and to preserve that indifference on the part of the society, Tocqueville reaches the conclusion that "governments therefore should not be the only active powers; associations ought, in democratic nations, to stand in lieu of those powerful private individuals whom the equality of conditions swept away."¹²⁷ In addition to that it is also important to highlight that he links the level of development of associationalism to the level of progress of a society and the state of civilization of the people living in that society:

In democratic countries, the science of association is the mother of science; the progress of all the rest depends upon the progress it has made. Amongst the laws which rule human societies there is one which seems to be more precise and clear than all others. If men are to remain civilized or to become so, the art of associating together must grow and improve in the same ratio in which the equality of conditions is increased.¹²⁸

So, Tocqueville's approach to associations as necessary requirements for democracy is influenced by the possible threat of despotism rather than seeing political action and interest in public affairs as virtues in themselves. He sees coming together and co-operation of individuals essential for democracy because unless this happens, "it is easy to foresee that the time is drawing near when man will be less and less able to produce of himself alone, the commonest necessities of life."¹²⁹ This, in turn, will bring the result that "the task of the governing power will therefore perpetually increase and its very efforts will extend it every day."¹³⁰ Consequently, "the more it stands in the place of associations, the more will individuals losing their notion of

¹²⁷ Tocqueville, 634.

¹²⁸ Tocqueville, 635.

¹²⁹ Tocqueville, 632.

¹³⁰ Tocqueville, 632.

combining together require its assistance: these are causes and effects which unceasingly engender each other.”¹³¹ So, *his emphasis on associational life is related with his concern with obscuring the increase and extension of “the task of the governing power” rather than focusing upon these activities as the virtues characterizing humans.*

Moreover, he explains his stress upon co-operation among humans and increasing their ability to do certain things by themselves, *in terms of “the principle of interest rightly understood.”*¹³² According to this, Tocqueville argues that it is not the right time anymore for “talking of the beauties of virtue” , “entertaining the lofty idea of the duties of man”, and “professing that is praiseworthy to forget one’s self” because all of these were “the standard opinions” of morals of the time “when the world was managed by a few rich and powerful individuals.”¹³³ He adds that the time that he was writing was different due to the extension of the principle of equality and individualism –as was explained above. Hence, Tocqueville argues, it is of no use anymore to hang upon such ideas any more in an age when “man is brought home to himself by an irresistible force.”¹³⁴ He is of the opinion that

[n]o power upon earth can prevent the increasing equality of conditions from inclining the human mind to seek out what is useful, or from leading every member of the community to be wrapped up in himself. It must therefore be expected that personal interest will become more than ever the principal, if not the sole, spring of men’s actions...¹³⁵

Consequently, Tocqueville expresses his agreement with the “American moralists” who “do not profess that men ought to sacrifice themselves for their fellow-creatures because it is noble to make such sacrifices but endeavor to prove that

¹³¹ Tocqueville, 632-633.

¹³² Tocqueville, 646-649. Emphasis added.

¹³³ Tocqueville, 646.

¹³⁴ Tocqueville, 647.

¹³⁵ Tocqueville, 649.

it is the interest of every man to be virtuous."¹³⁶ According to him, this is the only way of thinking appropriate for the times of equality and individualism. Hence, this view of interest is also valid in understanding his approach to coming together and cooperation of the individuals within associations since he also explains them to be in the interest of those individuals since they could prevent a despotic regime with excessive governmental powers. It is in the interest of the individuals to get together through associations and protect their freedom.

"The antistatist core of Tocqueville's preference for voluntary activity rests at the heart of much contemporary fascination with civil society."¹³⁷ As Ehrenberg points out, what most appealed Tocqueville about America was the weakness of the state and "his explanation made one of the first distinctions between a "strong society, weak state" America and "strong state, weak society" Europe that has had such a powerful influence on contemporary theorizing."¹³⁸ Consequently, his views should be considered as the original roots of the dominant use of the term "civil society" as implying the spontaneously evolved realm of voluntary activity outside the state and the institutions and movements in this realm.

Needless to say, Tocqueville's fear of a despotic state and his warnings against the extension of the task of the governing power epitomizes the central principle of the liberal conception of state-society relationship. As John Gray explains, "[t]he *sine qua non* of the liberal state in all its varieties is that governmental power and authority be limited by a system of constitutional rules and practices in which individual liberty and the equality of persons under the rule of law are respected."¹³⁹ The distinction between state

¹³⁶ Tocqueville, 647.

¹³⁷ Ehrenberg, 166. See also Edwards, ... and Chris Hann, "Introduction: Political Society and Civil Anthropology" in *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*, (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), 5.

¹³⁸ Ehrenberg, 161.

¹³⁹ John Gray, *Liberalism*, 2nd Edition, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 71-72.

and society as well as the preference for assigning a narrow scope to the former and a wide scope to the latter, which are so crucial for the liberal tradition, were written earlier by Thomas Paine, another forerunner of the liberal tradition. As to the distinction between the state and society and their scopes, origins and roles Paine argues in his *Common Sense* (1776):

Some writers have so confounded government with society as to leave little or no distinction between them; whereas they are not only different but have different origins. Society is produced by our wants and governments by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively by uniting our affections, the latter negatively by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions...¹⁴⁰

Similarly, in *Rights of Man* (1791-1792) Paine argues that,

Great part of that order which reigns among mankind is not the effect of government. It has its origins in the principles of society and the natural constitution of man. It has existed prior to government was abolished. The mutual dependence and reciprocal interest which man has upon man, and all the parts of a civilized community upon each other, create that great chain of connection which holds it together... In fine, society performs for itself almost everything which is ascribed to government.¹⁴¹

As can be seen the major reason for Paine's belief in limited government was that he had "a profound faith in civil society as the sphere of society in which individuals could largely govern themselves. Thus, ... Paine separated out the state and civil society."¹⁴² This distinction, in turn, implies that,

if citizens could reach suitable arrangements within their own communities Paine believed there was little reason for state interference. It is clear, then, that he believed that humans had a large capacity for self government, and that individually and collectively they should be able to exercise that capacity as widely as possible.

¹⁴⁰ Thomas Paine, *Rights of Men, Common Sense, and Other Political Writings*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 5.

¹⁴¹ Paine, 214.

¹⁴² Adrian Little, John Gingell and Christopher Winch, "Thomas Paine" in *Modern Political Thought A Reader*, eds. Adrian Little, John Gingell and Christopher Winch, (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), 195.

So, at the heart of the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society rests the desire to delimit the state's sphere of activity and its interference into society. This is considered possible by enhancing society's control over state's doings which, in turn, could be succeeded through an organized society i.e. through an active associational life. Hence, as classically formulated in Tocqueville's writings, the emphasis in this understanding is upon the voluntary activity of the individuals and groups within the society, their coming together on the basis of the plurality of their particularities. The relationship between the state and civil society is formulated in a way that the former acknowledges and respects the latter's right and ability to participate in public affairs and its plurality. At the background of the liberal pluralist-individualist understanding of civil society there is a constant reference to the possibility of the emergence of despotic tendencies on the part of the state. It is thought to be possible for the society to manage the life by itself. It is presupposed that the recognition of those particularities, plurality and diversity provides that "the diversity [of men's] wants and the diversity of talents in different men reciprocally accommodat[e] the wants of each other..."¹⁴³ In other words, harmony is expected once the control of the state by the society is ensured and once the pluralism of civil society is guaranteed through the principle of equality before the law.

Such views on state–society relationship are clearly reflected in more recent liberal studies on the concept of civil society. The most prominent representative of this approach is Larry Diamond who at the same time seems to be the author of the most quoted definition of civil society. He defines it as the

realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules. It is distinct from "society" in general in that it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passions, and ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state,

¹⁴³ Paine, 215.

and hold state officials accountable. Civil society is an intermediary entity standing between the private sphere and the state.¹⁴⁴

The parallelism between this definition and Tocqueville's approach is quite clear. Similar to Tocqueville's formulation, Diamond also considers civil society as serving the development and consolidation of democracy by containing the power of governments. He explains "the first and most basic democratic function of civil society", with reference to Samuel Huntington, as that of providing "the basis for the limitation of state power, hence for the control of the state by society, and hence for democratic political institutions as the most effective means of exercising that control."¹⁴⁵ According to Diamond, "this function has two dimensions: to monitor and restrain the exercise of power by democratic states, and to democratize authoritarian states."¹⁴⁶ Apart from this basic function, there are several other functions that comprise Diamond's conception of civil society. These include "stimulating political participation, increasing the political efficacy and skill of democratic citizens"; "development of other democratic attributes such as tolerance, moderation, a willingness to compromise, and a respect for opposing viewpoints"; "creating channels other than political parties for the articulation, aggregation and representation of interests"; "generating a wide range of interests that may cross-cut and so mitigate the principal polarities of political conflict"; "recruiting and training new political leaders"; "dissemination of information"; "achievement of economic reform in a democracy by creating support through political coalitions in society and legislature."¹⁴⁷ Finally, Diamond argues that "by enhancing the accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness, effectiveness, and

¹⁴⁴ Larry Diamond, "Rethinking Civil Society: Toward Democratic Consolidation", *Journal of Democracy*. Vol.5. No.3, 1994, 5. Emphases original.

¹⁴⁵ Samuel Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?" *Political Science Quarterly* 99 (Summer 1984), quoted in Diamond, 7.

¹⁴⁶ Diamond, 7.

¹⁴⁷ Diamond, 7-11.

hence legitimacy of the political system a vigorous civil society gives citizens respect for the state and positive engagement with it” and “it may also multiply the capacities of groups to improve their own welfare independently of the state.”¹⁴⁸

Apart from the functions of civil society for the development and consolidation of democracy, Diamond also cites several “features of a democratic civil society”. The potential of a civil society to perform these functions depend on these features related with its internal structure and character. According to this, first, civil society should not be including “maximalist, uncompromising interest groups or groups with antidemocratic goals and methods.”¹⁴⁹ Second, the “level of organizational institutionalization” should be high because “as with political parties, institutionalized interest groups contribute to the stability, predictability, and governability of a democratic regime.”¹⁵⁰ Third, “if the groups and organizations that make up civil society are to function as “large free schools” for democracy, they must function democratically in their internal processes of decision-making and leadership selection.” Fourth, “the more pluralistic civil society can become without fragmenting, the more democracy will benefit... pluralism help groups in civil society to survive and encourages them to learn to cooperate and negotiate with one another.”¹⁵¹ The final feature of a democratic civil society, according to Diamond, is the density i.e. the number of associations in civil society. He argues that as the multiple associations increase in civil society “the more likely it is that they will develop specialized agendas and purposes that do not seek to swallow the lives of their members in one all-encompassing organizational framework.”¹⁵² Diamond also adds that

¹⁴⁸ Diamond, 11.

¹⁴⁹ Diamond, 11.

¹⁵⁰ Diamond, 12.

¹⁵¹ Diamond, 12.

¹⁵² Diamond, 12-13.

... associations and mass media can perform their democracy-building roles only if they have at least some autonomy from the state in their financing, operations and legal standing... Pluralist systems encompass multiple, voluntary, competitive, non-hierarchically ordered and self-determined interest associations which are not licensed, recognized, subsidized, created or otherwise controlled by the state.¹⁵³

To sum up, there are three distinguishing features of the liberal pluralist-individualist conception of civil society. As has been explained in great detail above, this conception is characterized mostly by a distinction and confrontation between state and civil society. There is a constant warning against state's reluctance to recognize the rights of the individuals and against its disposition to suppress the participation of plural particular interests and their cooperation among themselves. There is emphasis upon a civil society (composed of groups and associations) that is autonomous, self-supporting, self-generating but is under the protection of law. This is the major difference between the Hegelian approach to the relationship between state and civil society. As was explained above, Hegel refers to the state as the representative of the universal interests of the community as a whole rather than viewing it as a possible threat to the well-being of the community. It should be remembered at this point that the conception of civil society within the liberal tradition was not always characterized by a state-civil society distinction. As was explained at the beginning of this chapter, the concept of civil society for a long time continued to be the expression of a distinction between the 'state of nature' and an organized political community. In other words, the term civil society denoted the society with a state. So, the concepts of civil society and state were used in a relational perspective rather than in a mutually exclusive manner.

The second distinctive feature of liberal understanding of civil society is at the same time what makes it different from the republican conception of the term. As will be clarified in the following pages, participation in the civil associations and interest in public affairs are encouraged in the liberal conception with a concern to function i)

¹⁵³ Diamond, 13.

as a checking mechanism upon state and ii) as a means to protect and enhance individual rights but not with a concern with the virtue of being a social or political animal i.e. a virtue through which humans *realize* themselves which is the case in the republican tradition. Hence the liberal conception of civil society suggests that once its boundaries are enlarged and becomes independent from the domination of the state Individuals with different interests and with different talents and capabilities are supposed to balance or “accommodate” each other. This is the way, it assumed, through which everyone can get what is best for himself/herself. Since individuals are reasonable beings they know what is best for themselves and the best ways of achieving those ends. Civil society is approached in instrumental terms in that respect. It is the medium through which they can try to reach these ends. Hence, neither the state is supposed to intervene or to have a role in the process of attaining the common good (which is the case in Hegel); nor are the individuals expected to prioritize the common good and the required sacrifices from themselves rather than their own considerations (which is the case in the republican tradition).

Thirdly, the liberal pluralist conception presupposes an equality of conditions among various elements of civil society. This equality is considered in the form of *equality before the law*. The state is supposed ideally in the liberal tradition to guarantee the impartiality of these rules, laws etc. It is in this sense that the plurality, seen as a necessary requirement of civil society, is celebrated. There is no questioning about whether or not there are certain factors that cause differences in the ability and potential of the groups and associations within civil society to make their voices heard by the public at large. This is related with liberalism’s approach to equality. As Gray points out, it is a central premise of liberalism to take it for granted that “*power cannot by its nature be distributed equally*”¹⁵⁴ so that equality

¹⁵⁴ Gray, *Liberalism*, 57. Emphasis added. Far from such questioning, Diamond for instance suggests that civil society “provides traditionally excluded groups –such as women and racial or ethnic minorities- access to power that has been denied them in the “upper institutional echelons” of formal politics.” Diamond, 8.

beyond the “equality before the law” is not a crucial question to be tackled with. Hence, it is in this context that the liberal view approaches to the phenomenon of the competitiveness of civil society and so it is thought of as an autonomous sphere of voluntary activity where the citizens (individuals and groups) exercise their political freedoms within the framework of legal equality that the state ensures. To turn once again to Hayek’s description of the main tenets of liberalism conception of justice in liberal tradition should be mentioned here:

it [liberal conception of justice] is founded on a belief in the possibility of discovering objective rules of just conduct independent of particular interests; and *it concerns itself only with the justice of human conduct, or the rules governing it, and not with the particular results of such conduct on the position of the different individuals and groups.*¹⁵⁵

Liberalism does not assume a natural harmony of interests but rather contends that “the divergent interests of the different individuals could be reconciled by the observance of appropriate rules of conduct” so it “[leaves] the individuals free to pursue their own purposes whether these were egoistic or altruistic.”¹⁵⁶

2.2. 2. Conservative Liberal-Individualist-Pluralist Perspective

As has been explained before, the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society has two variants: on the one hand, there is the classical liberal approach which was analyzed above with reference to Tocqueville’s views on the associational life in America. The second variant is the conservative-liberal approach which will be analyzed with reference to Michael Oakeshott and Friedrich A. von Hayek. Though this approach has considerable common ground with classical liberal perspective, it is noticeably distinguished by the significance it attaches to the notion of “spontaneity” and hence to the “spontaneous order” and natural development of society. Although these two thinkers do not directly use the

¹⁵⁵ Hayek, “Liberalism”, web source.

¹⁵⁶ Hayek, “Liberalism”, web source. Emphasis added.

term “civil society” their views on the state-society relations provide a perfect example of the conservative liberal conception of the term. It should also be pointed out at this point that though Hayek rejects the label “conservative” and declares that he has all his life described himself as a liberal,¹⁵⁷ there is considerable parallelism between his views and those of Oakeshott that makes it possible to bring them together under the title of conservative liberalism in this study.

As will be explained in detail below, Hayek’s and Oakeshott’s views on *the state as a referee* with its role being limited to that of “only ruling”; their emphasis on the inevitable diversity among the individuals due in large part to their reason; and hence on the inevitable plurality within the society in terms of interests, values and “plans”; and the impossibility of reaching a common good place both of these approaches within the liberal tradition. At the same time, however, their concern with and emphasis on the spontaneous development of society is what gives their formulation the conservative tone. For a thorough understanding of all these cited precepts of conservative liberal perspective, it is illuminating to start with critique of rationalism on which especially Oakeshott spends considerable effort.

In a letter to Karl Popper Oakeshott says, “When I argue against *rationalism* I do not argue against *reason*. Rationalism in my sense is... thoroughly *unreasonable*.”¹⁵⁸ This is an interesting sentence that deserves attention. Oakeshott characterizes rationalism as “the most remarkable intellectual fashion of post-Renaissance Europe” and argues that though it is not the only or the most fruitful fashion in modern European political thinking, rationalism in politics is strong and it has

¹⁵⁷ Friedrich A. von Hayek, “Why I Am Not a Conservative”, web source, http://www.fahayek.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46

¹⁵⁸ www.michaeloakeshottassociation.org Emphasis original.

come to colour the ideas of all political persuasions.¹⁵⁹ Oakeshott defines the Rationalist's "mental attitude" as "at once sceptical and optimistic":

Skeptical because there is no opinion, no habit, no belief, nothing so firmly rooted or so widely believed that he hesitates to question it and to judge by what he calls his 'reason'; optimistic because the Rationalist never doubts the power of his reason.... to determine the worth of a thing, the truth of an opinion or the propriety of an action. Moreover, he is fortified by a belief in a 'reason' common to all mankind, a common power of rational consideration which is the ground and inspiration of argument.¹⁶⁰

According to the rationalist, "the unhindered human reason" is an "infallible guide in political activity":

Consequently, much of his political activity consists in bringing the social, political, legal and institutional inheritance of his society before the tribunal of his intellect; and the rest is rational administration, 'reason' exercising an uncontrolled jurisdiction over the circumstances of the case.¹⁶¹

It becomes clear from those quotations that Oakeshott defines rationalism as a doctrine that takes reason as the pipeline to the universal truth and certainty. It is the idea that through the guidance of reason, which is common to all humanity, it is possible to reach general abstract principles about 'the ideal' or about 'the best' for all. Oakeshott strongly rejects this formulation of reason and the consequent understanding of rational politics. The main reason for his rejection is his claim that such an understanding results in "the assimilation of politics to engineering": "The conduct of affairs for the Rationalist, is a matter of solving problems... political life is resolved into a succession of crises each to be surmounted by the application of 'reason'.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Michael Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics", in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, (London and New York: Methuen, 1962), 1.

¹⁶⁰ Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics", 1-2.

¹⁶¹ Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics", 4.

¹⁶² Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics", 4.

Oakeshott argues that rationalist politics has two characteristics: one of them is the *politics of perfection* and the other is the *politics of uniformity*. He says “the essence of rationalism is their combination.”¹⁶³ For the Rationalist, Oakeshott claims, politics can consist only in solving problems and there can be no problem without a ‘rational’ solution. And the rational solution of any problem is, in its nature, ‘the perfect solution’. There is no place in the rationalist scheme for a ‘best in circumstances’, only a place for ‘the best’; because the function of reason is precisely to surmount circumstances. In other words, in rationalism there is the belief that reason is supposed to point out “the best” irrespective of the circumstances, meaning irrespective of social, political, legal and institutional inheritance of any society. There is the view that “all rational preferences necessarily coincide”. This is how, in Oakeshott’s view, the politics of perfection leads to the politics of uniformity. As a result, “political activity is recognized as the imposition of a uniform condition of perfection upon human conduct.”

As Shirley Letwin points out, rationalism takes it for granted “reason is the power to discover a system of laws... Reasoning is identified with starting from a universal truth and deducing from it a particular conclusion.”¹⁶⁴ Our world, it is argued, presents us a picture of confusing variety and frequent, irregular change; it is difficult for us to cope with it. Only by using reason this ‘chaos’ can be reduced to order. Rationalism supposes to “allow us to hope that by exercising our reason we can put everything into a clearly defined place in a single system.”¹⁶⁵ Oakeshott opposes to such an understanding of the world around us and develops instead, “a

¹⁶³ Oakeshott, “Rationalism in Politics”, 5.

¹⁶⁴ Shirley Robin Letwin, “On Conservative Individualism” in M. Cowling ed. *Conservative Essays*, (1978), 53.

¹⁶⁵ Letwin, “On Conservative Individualism”, 53.

thesis of the primacy of practice.”¹⁶⁶ In that respect Oakeshott thinks that such a claim is a result of a mistaken conception of knowledge. He states, “every human activity whatsoever involves knowledge. And universally, this knowledge is of two sorts”¹⁶⁷ which are “technical knowledge” and “practical knowledge”. Technical knowledge is the knowledge that can be “formulated into rules which are or may be deliberately learned, remembered and... put into practice... its chief characteristic is that it is susceptible of precise formulation”. Therefore, it “can be learned from a book and “can be applied mechanically” whereas the second sort of knowledge, practical knowledge, “exists only in use” and cannot be formulated in rules. Therefore, says Oakeshott, it can also be called as “traditional knowledge.” According to Oakeshott, these two sorts of knowledge are inseparable; they are “the twin components of the knowledge involved in every concrete human activity.” He criticizes rationalism for underestimating practical or traditional knowledge; for considering only the technical knowledge as *the* knowledge and argues instead that these two are inseparable, they cannot be considered identical with one another; and none of them is able to take the place of the other.¹⁶⁸

This emphasis on practice (practical life, practical knowledge etc.) brings with it a radically different conception of ‘reason’ from the rationalist conception of the term. In this conception “reason has to be understood not as a pipeline to universal truths, but rather as a creative capacity to transform whatever is experienced into a variety of interpretations, responses, and reflections.”¹⁶⁹ It is at this point that the emphasis on circumstances comes into the scene. Human beings find themselves in a variety of experiences none of them reducible to one another. There are different modes of experience in human life. According to this second definition of reason, a

¹⁶⁶ John Gray, *Beyond the New Right*, (1993), 202.

¹⁶⁷ Oakeshott, “Rationalism in Politics”, 7.

¹⁶⁸ Oakeshott, “Rationalism in Politics”, 7-13.

¹⁶⁹ Letwin, “On Conservative Individualism”, 56.

human being is always interpreting his experience and responding in the manner he selects; hence he can give different meanings to events.¹⁷⁰ Circumstances are important but not in the sense of automatically causing desires or determining the interests. "A man's circumstances are only conditions which he interprets and takes into account in making choices." So, the conception of reason as a creative capacity implies that human beings make sense of the world around themselves not only through technical knowledge, but also through practical knowledge that in turn is inseparable from the circumstances in which a human being finds himself. Here the importance of individuality and contingency comes out. In Letwin's terms,

We are obliged to recognize that human beings may disagree for many reasons, not because some are less wise and good than others, but because being rational they can always notice or emphasize different aspects of what they perceive, or pursue different purposes. We are obliged, in short, to renounce the dream of achieving unity by common recognition of one universal truth.¹⁷¹

As can be seen, Oakeshott draws a picture of the human world "not as a chaos being reduced to systematic unity by reason but as a web of responses that are constantly being created by intelligent individuals."¹⁷² In that picture, "each human being possesses individuality *not in spite of but because of* his rationality... to say that human beings possesses individuality means that each is the maker of his own thoughts, that he is capable of shaping a personality, and that he is responsible for what he becomes."¹⁷³ Oakeshott also underlines this notion of individuality in his depiction of the "image of ourselves as we have come to be" according to which

We are apt to entertain a multiplicity of opinions on every conceivable subject and are disposed to change these beliefs as we grow tired of them or as they prove serviceable. Each of us is pursuing a course of his own...We

¹⁷⁰ Letwin, 57.

¹⁷¹ Letwin, 59.

¹⁷² Letwin, 58.

¹⁷³ Letwin, "On Conservative Individualism", 59. Emphasis added.

are all inclined to be passionate about our own concerns... Each of us has preferences of his own... ¹⁷⁴

In sum, then, by evaluating their circumstances human beings reach different views about what is good, bad, true, and false; besides, these considerations are not constant; they are open to be reformulated; they are contingent upon the circumstances, they are constantly made and remade. Such a conception of rational human conduct is very different from the rationalist understanding. As was mentioned before, rationalism assumed the possibility of a knowledge that is completely freed from the particular circumstances, prejudices, and previous experiences, whereas Oakeshott rejects this understanding. Through this rejection he reaches a criticism of the relationship between individual, society and the state as it has been formulated by the rationalist perspective. And at this point the parallelism between him and Hayek becomes most evident. Hayek also emphasizes that “the boundless variety of human nature –the wide range of differences in individual capacities and potentialities- is one of the most distinctive facts about the human species.”¹⁷⁵ He urges for “unchaining of individual energies” which indeed is a process that started with the Renaissance and “creat[ed] among men a new sense of power over their own fate, the belief in the unbounded possibilities of improving their own lot”.¹⁷⁶

According to Oakeshott, the rationalist politics, with its emphasis on reason, politics of perfection and politics of uniformity, has led to a certain understanding of the state, which is “state as an enterprise association”. This association is not the ideal condition in his view, but it has somehow (and unfortunately for Oakeshott)

¹⁷⁴ Michael Oakeshott, “On Being Conservative” in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, 184-185.

¹⁷⁵ Friedrich A. von Hayek, “Equality, Value, and Merit”, in *The Essence of Hayek*, eds. Chiaki Nishiyama and Kurt R. Leube, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1984), 332.

¹⁷⁶ Friedrich A. von Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, Reader’s Digest Condensed Version, (London: IEA Health and Welfare Unit, 1999), 3-4.

become the most widespread. He defines enterprise association as "...relationship in terms of the pursuit of some common purpose, some substantive condition of things to be jointly procured, or some common interest to be continuously satisfied."¹⁷⁷ What is most important in such a scheme for Oakeshott is the reduction of individuals to mere 'role players'. He also strongly rejects the view that identifies enterprise association with civil relationship: "Some writers takes this view of the matter, because they mistakenly think there is no alternative to it... they find it impossible to imagine association except in terms of a common purpose."¹⁷⁸ Consequently, he proposes the concept of "civil association" as an alternative way of conceptualizing the state. Since he defines reason as a creative force leading to a variety of interpretations, reflections and responses whereby emphasizing the significance of individuality and contingency, it becomes impossible for him to accept the enterprise association as the ideal condition. The main reason for this is that enterprise association is built upon the idea of a collective good, common purpose. However, in Oakeshott's formulation since all individuals have reason, all have different goals, purposes, and enterprises none of them can impose these upon others; the individuals choose and formulate them out of their different interpretations of the world around themselves. As Noel O'Sullivan puts it,

What he is saying is that we always look at the world from a particular standpoint-scientific, historical or practical. We can become aware what that standpoint is, but we can never have a view from nowhere... we always wear conceptual spectacles when we look at the world. Although we can never get rid of them, we can become aware of them and the assumptions they make.¹⁷⁹

Moreover, again due to our reason as a creative power and/or as an intelligent capacity, we always tend to change or reformulate them on the face of our

¹⁷⁷ Michael Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 114.

¹⁷⁸ Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct*, 118.

¹⁷⁹ Noel O'Sullivan, "Why Read Oakeshott?", *Society*, Mar/Apr 2002, vol. 39 Iss.3.

conditions. So, in short, there can be no common good to pursue, in Oakeshott's own words there can be nothing common to all. As was mentioned above, this kind of an approach is also at the heart of Hayek's thought. Oakeshott's distinction between the enterprise association and the civic association corresponds in large part to Hayek's "distinction between a *spontaneous order* based on abstract rules which leave individuals free to use their own knowledge for their own purposes, and an *organization or arrangement* based on commands."¹⁸⁰

Letwin uses the term "metaphysical skepticism" to denote this kind of approach. "Metaphysical skepticism rejects the possibility of achieving knowledge which will remove uncertainty and reveal the purpose and destiny of human life."¹⁸¹ As to the main characteristic of a civil association i.e. the ideal condition and the function of the state in that ideal condition, Letwin points out that the government, as a ruler of a civil association does not organize life for the members of the community. In other words, the object of the rules of the political community, for both Oakeshott and Hayek, is not to overcome rifts, to give men a purpose in life, or to create national unity, but to allow individuals to make their own lives as they choose.

Oakeshott deals with the general character of rules of a civil association in his *On Human Conduct*. It is a system of law (*lex*) "which prescribes not satisfactions to be sought or actions to be performed, but moral conditions to be subscribed to in seeking self chosen satisfactions and in performing self-chosen actions"¹⁸². His distinction between civil obedience and civil obligation is important to understand the role that he prescribes for the rules of conduct in civil association.¹⁸³ Our

¹⁸⁰ Friedrich von A. Hayek, "Principles of a Liberal Social Order" in *The Essence of Hayek*, eds. Chiaki Nishiyama and Kurt R. Leube, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1984), 365-366.

¹⁸¹ Letwin, 60-61.

¹⁸² Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct*, 158.

¹⁸³ As Gerencser rightly points out, Oakeshott uses a series of terms that carry with them similar meanings. The central theoretical distinction in *On Human Conduct* is between civil association and enterprise association. However, Oakeshott uses a series of Latin terms to

obligation does not stem from a fear of penalty for not following those rules, and also it does not stem from a view that those rules should be obliged to because they serve some common purpose. We feel obliged to the rules of the civil association because we have the respect for their authority. We feel obliged to them even if we may have questions about their desirability. In other words, we have to acknowledge their authority no matter we approve or disapprove. As Letwin states, what rules are most desirable cannot be decided in the abstract or for all times". It can be decided only by living through those rules, if there is a need for change it will be revealed by the practice, that is, in the course of the spontaneous development of the society.

These points about the rules of a civil association are in direct relationship with Oakeshott's conservatism, and that of Hayek alike. He attributes a special importance to the historical, political, legal and institutional heritage of a society, in short to the circumstances that human beings find themselves within. It is not possible, for him to ignore them by engaging in grand change programs shaped according to the some abstract generalizations or universal truth claims. He believes that we can only think of 'a best in circumstances' not 'the best'. And what is best for a society cannot be determined only by technical knowledge; traditional practical knowledge is also required. And this knowledge exists only in use, that knowledge can be acquired only through practice. So, if there is a need for change, it will be influenced by the direction of the movement of the society. In a very similar manner Hayek also claims that the major question should be regarding "how we can make the best use of the *spontaneous forces found in a free society*."¹⁸⁴

explore this distinction. Thus, discussing civil association, he uses *civitas* for this ideal condition, and *respublica* for the comprehensive conditions of association. However, in the third essay of *On Human Conduct*, he introduces the terms *societas* and *universitas* for the historical expressions of civil and enterprise association respectively. Thus, we see **civil association**, *civitas*, *respublica* and *societas* on the one side; and **enterprise association** and *universitas* on the other. See, Gerencser, "Oakeshott, Authority and Civil Disobedience", footnote 3.

¹⁸⁴ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, 4. Emphasis added.

Not surprisingly, then, both Oakeshott and Hayek are against radical change programs imposed upon society with the presupposition that “some over-all scheme of mechanized control is possible” to administer the practice.¹⁸⁵ On the notion of change, Oakeshott insists that “the consciously planned and deliberately executed” is not better than “what has grown up and established itself unselfconsciously over a period of time.”¹⁸⁶ Similarly, Hayek -embedded with his emphasis on spontaneity- argues that “the question is whether we should create conditions under which the knowledge and initiative of individuals are given the best scope so that *they* can plan most successfully”.¹⁸⁷ According to him,

Liberalism thus derives from the discovery of a self-generating or spontaneous order in social affairs ..., an order which made it possible to utilize the knowledge and skill of all members of society to a much greater extent than would be possible in any order created by central direction and the consequent desire to make as full use of these powerful spontaneous ordering forces as possible.¹⁸⁸

This desired condition of spontaneity, in turn, can be satisfied only through the principle of competition, rather than through planning. Accordingly, Hayek argues in favor of “making the best possible use of the forces of competition as a means of coordinating human efforts” since this is “a better way of guiding individual efforts than any other.”¹⁸⁹

This kind of an emphasis on spontaneity and the rejection of the idea of a planned and imposed change rather than a change initiated by the spontaneous forces of the society, also affect the way Oakeshott and Hayek elaborate on the legal framework

¹⁸⁵ Oakeshott, “Rationalism in Politics”, 23.

¹⁸⁶ Oakeshott, “Rationalism in Politics”, 21.

¹⁸⁷ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, 6. Emphasis original.

¹⁸⁸ Hayek, “Principles of a Liberal Social Order”, 365.

¹⁸⁹ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, 6.

of the ideal form of state-society relationship. It is in this respect that the notion of rule of law has a central place in their approach. Hayek emphasizes that “in order to make competition work beneficially a carefully thought-out legal framework is required.”¹⁹⁰ For Oakeshott the desirability of the laws can be a matter of discussion among the *cives*. There is always room for such notions as desirability of laws (he defines politics around this notion) approval, disapproval. Oakeshott states “where these conditions are understood to be alterable, and where there are known procedures in which they may be deliberately enacted, changed, or terminated, *cives* are invited to think of them in terms of approval or disapproval.” However, it should always be kept in mind that what is asked of the *cives* is their acknowledgement of the authority of these rules not their approval. Once those rules are in force they are considered to have an authority which is not open to be questioned and/or challenged. What can be said about the criterion of desirability is that “the rules should be such as to maintain the character of a civil association and not to convert it into an enterprise which will compel everyone to do what those in power consider desirable.”¹⁹¹ According to Oakeshott “the rules of civil association are not to be understood as demanding associates to take certain actions in order to achieve a particular, substantive common purpose. Instead, such rules are to be understood as formal considerations to be subscribed to in pursuing one’s own ends.”¹⁹² In Oakeshott’s terms,

the office of government is not to impose other beliefs and activities upon its subjects, nor to tutor or to educate them, not to make them happier in another way, not to direct them, to galvanize them into action, to lead them or to coordinate their activities... the office of government is merely to rule. ¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, 6.

¹⁹¹ Letwin, “On Conservative Individualism”, 66.

¹⁹² Steven Anthony Gerencser, *The Skeptic’s Oakeshott*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 132.

¹⁹³ Oakeshott, “On Being Conservative”, 187.

Hayek summarizes this approach as that of “planning for competition” and defines the role of the state in accordance with this principle: “to create conditions in which competition will be as effective as possible, to prevent fraud and deception, to break up monopolies” and he adds that “these tasks provide a wide and unquestioned field for state activity.”¹⁹⁴ Accordingly, he defines the “Rule of Law” as follows:

Stripped of technicalities, this means that government in all its actions is bound by rules fixed and announced beforehand –rules that make it possible to foresee with fair certainty how the authority will use its coercive powers in given circumstances and to plan one’s individual affairs on the basis of this knowledge. Thus, within the known rules of the game, the individual is free to pursue his personal ends, certain that the powers of government will not be used deliberately to frustrate his efforts.¹⁹⁵

As the above analysis shows, for the conservative liberal approach reason as defined by Oakeshott, i.e. as a creative intellectual capacity, which transforms whatever experienced into a variety of interpretations, responses, and reflections (in Hayek’s words, boundless variety of individuals) naturally causes that there can be nothing common to all and hence there is no way of eliminating plurality within the society. This is the basic principle an ideal type of political community should be built upon. *This centrality of the plurality of the society and the stress upon individualism are at the same time the most important points of convergence between the classical liberal and conservative liberal approaches to the concept of civil society. Moreover, both dispositions agree upon the principle that this plurality as a fact of social and political life is expected to be handled through the rules that are made by the society or by the spontaneous forces of the society.* These rules, which are made by the society, should be emerging as a part of the practical life of the community in question. This practical life, in turn, is to be governed by the principle of competition rather than by the act of planning aiming to reach the common good of the individuals in the society. The state is expected to stay outside and above of this competition but it is

¹⁹⁴ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, 7.

¹⁹⁵ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, 15.

expected to create and protect the conditions that will make the competition effective; it will merely rule. In that respect, as can easily be observed, there is no challenge or questioning of the inequalities stemming from social, cultural, economic, and gender differences that leads to considerable gap between an individual's or a group's capacity to make their voices heard during the process in which those rules that the society governs itself are made and/or re-made. These differences are taken for granted as is the case in classical liberalism. Hence, the conservative disposition within the liberal tradition "agree[s] with classical liberals that there is nothing untoward about undeserved inequality *per se*."¹⁹⁶ The practical life, or the spontaneous order that has a central place on conservative liberal thought, in its turn, is shaped and colored by the historical heritage of the society and its traditions that should be left to their spontaneous path of evolution. The only thing that can be done is to "release the creative energy of individuals" and "create conditions favorable to progress rather than 'planning progress'."¹⁹⁷ Hence, it is this significance attached to the traditions as well as social and political institutions that Neo-mostly distinguishes conservative liberalism from classical liberalism as defined in this study. Consequently, although they differ in terms of their motivation and incentives, it can nevertheless be argued that the conservative liberal conception of civil society shares almost the same conception with the classical liberal conception of the term as the *sphere of activity autonomous from the direct control of the state where the individuals exercise their rights and freedoms through their voluntary acts; which is open to the pluralities as long as this openness remains within the limits of legal equality; which is outside the state but is under the protection of the authority of the state through rule of law executed by the latter.*

¹⁹⁶ David Conway, *Classical Liberalism The Unvanquished Ideal*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998), 102.

¹⁹⁷ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, 26.

2.3. (NEO) REPUBLICAN CONCEPTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Apart from the Hegelian and liberal approaches toward the concept of civil society it is possible to differentiate a third approach within the tradition of Western political thought. This third conception is shaped by the republican tradition that differs from the liberal tradition on certain important points. Previous pages have shown that the liberal tradition has given shape to two conceptions of civil society. Likewise, it is possible to talk about two other conceptions which take their inspiration from the republican tradition in the broadest sense of the term. These are the liberal-oriented republican conception of civil society on the one hand and the communitarian-oriented republican conception of civil society on the other.

Such categorization is due to the fact that although there are important differences between liberalism and republicanism and between republicanism and communitarianism alike, there are also certain points at which the distinctions become blurred. In other words, the boundaries are not so impermeable. As Brugger points out, *“the formulation of contemporary republicanism has been influenced by the recent heated debate between scholars identified as liberals and communitarians.”*¹⁹⁸ Thus, it is more meaningful to focus on the degree of *“republican thinkers’ proximity to a liberal or a communitarian standpoint.”*¹⁹⁹ This permeability between liberalism and republicanism as well as between republicanism and communitarianism is clearly observed in case of the approaches to the concept of civil society within each tradition. Consequently, it is quite helpful to distinguish between these two variations of the republican approach to the concept of civil society. Before going into the details of these two understandings of civil society, however, as in the case of the analysis of the approaches within the liberal tradition, it would be

¹⁹⁸ Bill Brugger, *Republican Theory in Political Thought: Virtuous or Virtual?*, (London: Macmillan Ltd., 1999), 2. Emphasis added.

¹⁹⁹ Brugger, 2. Emphasis added.

illuminating to have a very brief outline of the general distinguishing characteristics of the republican tradition in general -i.e. ignoring at this moment the differences between liberal and communitarian republicanism.

It can be revealing at the first place to focus upon the central premises of republicanism that distinguishes it from liberalism. The paramount republican value in that sense is *liberty understood as non-domination* which is different from liberal view of *liberty as non-interference*.²⁰⁰ The latter is summed up by J.S. Mill in his well-known words: "the only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs."²⁰¹ This understanding of liberty as non-interference has been called as "negative liberty" by Isaiah Berlin in his famous lecture on "Two Concepts of Liberty" (1969) in which he contrasted it with "positive liberty." Philip Pettit, as a forerunner of contemporary republicanism, sees republican liberty as a third form of liberty which is not typically positive or negative and formulates republican view of liberty as "non-domination by others."²⁰² According to this formulation, "domination might still exist in the absence of interference ... Liberty, moreover, might be lost even where there is no interference."²⁰³ So, this distinction between non-interference and non-discrimination is of great importance in understanding the difference between liberalism and republicanism:

Republicans, therefore, condemn domination even if actual interference does not take place whereas liberals tend to believe that only actual interference matters. ... That view of liberty should not be seen simply in terms of the positive view of liberty as self-mastery through political

²⁰⁰ See Frank Lowett, "Republicanism", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/republicanism/>, retrieved on 23 February 2007; Brugger, 5-8.

²⁰¹ Quoted in Lowett, 2.

²⁰² Quoted in Brugger, 6.

²⁰³ Brugger, 6.

participation but should be considered as the absence of mastery by others.²⁰⁴

This does not mean to dismiss the notion of freedom as personal self-mastery through political participation and active citizenship. It is known that it is also an important difference between republicanism and liberalism that republicanism attaches a great significance to “a conception of politics in which government is in principle the common business of the citizens” and which “provides the environment –a public space- for human fulfillment.”²⁰⁵ Hence, instead of dismissing the notion of freedom as personal self-mastery through political participation and active citizenship, Pettit suggests a view that tries to combine the principles of personal self-mastery and of non-domination. This is a necessary move since,

while there certainly can be non-domination without personal self-mastery ... there can hardly be any meaningful form of self-mastery without non-domination.”²⁰⁶ Interference, on the other hand, might exist without domination, as in the case of non-arbitrary interference to further one’s interests or law based on the common good. Such interference, rather than an infringement of liberty, actually creates it.²⁰⁷

So, in short, it is very illuminating to consider Pettit’s insistence that the old dichotomy of positive and negative liberty is misleading. Instead, the difference between liberalism and republicanism lies in the emphasis that republicanism places on non-domination and liberalism’s indifference to power or domination and its adherence to:

²⁰⁴ Brugger, 6.

²⁰⁵ “Civic Humanism”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/republicanism/>, retrieved on 23 February 2007.

²⁰⁶ Pettit quoted in Brugger, 6.

²⁰⁷ Pettit quoted in Brugger, 6-7.

the assumption that there is nothing inherently oppressive about some people having dominating power over others, provided they do not exercise that power and are not likely to exercise it. This relative indifference to power or domination has made liberalism tolerant of relationships in the home, in the workplace, in the electorate, and elsewhere, that the republican must denounce as paradigms of domination and unfreedom.²⁰⁸

Republican view of liberty as non-domination has three dimensions closely interrelated with each other: The first dimension is the *role of active citizenship for human fulfillment* i.e. as a virtue.

....[The republic] differs from the liberal model in which the constitution provides a formal frame that embraces citizens of diverse moral character and with varied individual pursuits. The republic rests rather on the virtues of its citizens and is oriented toward the common good. The virtues of citizenship are in turn developed and enhanced by being exercised in upholding republican political and legal institutions and making them work by being involved in their operation. Republican life is then thought to be formative of the public spirit on which it rests... The purpose of the common wealth is not so much peace and ensuring the rights of the individuals, as the realization of human potentiality, which is taken to be essentially political. The republic is the necessary medium of self-realization, not merely the condition of possibility of private endeavors.²⁰⁹

The second dimension of the republican view of liberty as non-domination is related with its approach towards the notion of rights and the related public-private distinction different from that of liberals. "For many liberals the notion of natural rights is important in the affirmation of a private sphere into which the state cannot intrude."²¹⁰ For a republican, on the other hand, a private sphere defined by the public sphere tends to increase domination.²¹¹ This is due to the fact that,

...by demarcating a specifically private sphere a government might remove irresolvable questions from the public agenda in the hope of furthering the

²⁰⁸ Brugger, 10.

²⁰⁹ "Civic Humanism", 1-2.

²¹⁰ Brugger, 8.

²¹¹ Iris Young quoted in Brugger, 8.

better functioning of public life; but the result of such action can be domination, as many feminists have observed... the result may be marginalization, which can occur in the absence of domination, and might be more debilitating.²¹²

The third dimension of the republican liberty, then, very closely related with the first two, is its approach to the state action and law. Republicanism maintains that “non-domination depends on a strong constitutional state because affirming the principle of non-domination in a state which cannot guarantee it may result in either civil war or a culture of perpetual deterrence”.²¹³ To the contrary, “on the view of negative liberty as non-interference, any sort of public law or policy intervention counts by definition as an interference and, ergo, a reduction in freedom. Being committed to received view of negative liberty, liberals thus tend to be overly hostile to government action.”²¹⁴ According to Pettit, the crux of the matter “is the argument that whereas the liberal sees liberty as essentially pre-social, the republican sees liberty as constituted by the law which transforms customs and creates citizens.”²¹⁵ From the republican point of view, “if the law or policy ameliorates dependency, or curtails the arbitrary power’s some exercise over others in the community, the freedom of citizens may be enhanced.”²¹⁶

This brief look at the main principles of republicanism in general, considered within a comparative perspective with liberalism will shed light on the differences between liberal-oriented and communitarian-oriented versions of republicanism and the conception of “civil society” by each of these two positions. The following

²¹² Brugger, 8.

²¹³ Pettit quoted in Brugger, 7.

²¹⁴ Lowett, 7.

²¹⁵ Pettit quoted in Brugger, 7.

²¹⁶ Lowett, 7.

two sections will show how these two variants of republicanism are epitomized in two different conception of civil society. While Adam Ferguson, Michael Walzer and Charles Taylor will be taken as representatives of the communitarian-oriented republican conception of civil society, Jürgen Habermas will be referred as the representative of liberal republican conception.

2.3.1. Liberal Republican Conception of Civil Society

Liberal republicanism is in close proximity to liberalism mostly in its approach toward the question of handling and struggling against domination. Although it differs from the classical liberal position in recognizing the inequalities and differences in the society as potential cases for domination and/or conflict (and this is the main point where it acquires its republican character), there is the underlying belief that the conflicts originating from such differences/inequalities can be resolved through increased levels of dialogue, interaction among these differences (and this is the point where it acquires its liberal character). This is why, again dissimilar to the classical liberal view, the liberal republicanism challenges the liberal distinction between private and public realms and calls for the opening up of the public-political realm to the representation of differences that are conventionally defined as private concerns by liberalism. This is the point at which the republican value of political participation and active citizenship becomes crucial. In other words, it calls for the acknowledgement of the relational nature of all kinds of identities, world-views, lifestyles, social and cultural affiliations; hence it calls for opening up of the public sphere to all of these differences that have previously defined as belonging to private sphere; it calls for enhanced dialogue among them, and finally it maintains that this increased level of interaction through the active participation of all citizens in the public political realm will resolve the conflicts between them which in turn will result in the emergence of social harmony or consensus. Such a view of consensus, in turn, is associated with a particular approach to the active political participation of citizens. Differently from

the communitarian-oriented republicanism, which will be examined later, liberal republicanism has a rather instrumental approach to the values of active citizenship and political participation rather than viewing them as virtues in themselves necessary for reaching the common good of the community. More specifically, at the end of the process in which social consensus is created through the maximum levels of participation of and interaction between all citizens with all their differences, the citizens involved in this process will have succeeded in maximizing their own private ends. So, liberal republicanism “far from calling for the subjection of individual to collective aims”, sees republican values of active citizenship, political participation (republican liberty) as desirable in part because it enables citizens to pursue their private aims with assurances of security.”²¹⁷ As will be explained below, for the communitarian view, on the other hand, such civic virtues are deemed important for having everybody to do his/her part in supporting the public good. Hence, what makes the communitarian-oriented republicanism different from both liberalism and liberal republicanism is that it argues that the goods of active political participation, civic virtue and so on should be understood as *intrinsically valuable components of human flourishing*.²¹⁸

Jürgen Habermas, a very influential thinker of the last few decades, is the most prominent representative of the liberal republican approach to the concept of civil society. His contribution to contemporary theories of civil society is associated with his “historical account of the rise of a discursive public sphere that enabled people to talk about common concerns in conditions of freedom and equality.”²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Lowett, 10.

²¹⁸ Lowett, 6.

²¹⁹ Ehrenberg, 219. Habermas does this in his *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), originally written in German in 1962. However, in a more recent work, he reconsidered the analysis he made in that book and made important revisions as a result of which he reached at “a modified theoretical framework” upon which he has been continuing to work. See his “Further Reflections on the Public Sphere” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992). Thus,

Habermas refers to civil society in relation with the concept of “political public sphere”²²⁰ and places it at the heart of his theoretical framework to deal with “the high level of complexity of functionally differentiated societies.”²²¹ According to him, “citizens act as a public when they deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion; thus with the guarantee that they may assemble and unite freely and express and publicize their opinions freely.”²²² He also points out that his discussion in *Structural Transformation* “is nowadays discussed under the rubric of the “rediscovery of civil society”.”²²³ According to him,

the mass democracies ...can claim to continue the principles of the liberal constitutional state only as long as they seriously try to live up to the mandate of a public sphere that fulfills political functions. Accordingly, it is necessary to demonstrate how it may be possible, in our type of society for the public to set in motion a *critical* process of public communication through the very organizations that mediatize it.²²⁴

Although refraining from giving a clear-cut definition for the concept of civil society, Habermas argues that what is meant by civil society today is different from both the liberal and the Marxist tradition:

The expression “civil society” has in the meantime taken on a meaning different from that of the “bourgeois society” of the liberal tradition, which Hegel conceptualized as a “system of needs” that is as a market system involving social labor and commodity exchange. What is meant by civil society today, in contrast to its usage in the Marxist tradition, no longer

the analysis made in this section depends in the greatest part upon those more recent works rather than *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.

²²⁰ Jürgen Habermas, “Further Reflections on the Public Sphere” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 452.

²²¹ Habermas, “Further Reflections on the Public Sphere”, 443.

²²² Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere” in *Contemporary Political Philosophy An Anthology*, Second edition eds. Rober E. Goodin and Philip Pettit Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 103.

²²³ Habermas, “Further Reflections ...”, 453.

²²⁴ Habermas, “Further Reflections ...”, 441. Emphasis in the original.

includes the economy as constituted by private law and steered through markets in labor, capital and commodities. Rather, its institutional core comprises those nongovernmental and noneconomic connections and voluntary associations that anchor the communication structures of the public sphere in the society component of the lifeworld. Civil society is composed of those more or less spontaneously emergent associations, organizations and movements that attuned to how societal problems resonate in the private life spheres, distill and transmit such reactions in amplified form to the public sphere.²²⁵

Defines as such the “institutional core of “civil society”” as being constituted by

voluntary unions outside the realm of the state and the economy and ranging ... from churches, cultural associations, and academies to independent media, sport and leisure clubs, debating societies, groups of concerned citizens, and grass-roots petitioning drives all the way to occupational associations, political parties, labor unions and “alternative associations.”²²⁶

What Habermas tackles with in relation to the concept of civil society is indeed a familiar question: on the one hand he recognizes the uneasiness with the phrases “the society that administers itself” or “society and its self-organization”: “the presumption that society as a whole can be conceived as an association writ large, directing itself via the media of law and political power, has become entirely implausible in view of the high level of complexity of functionally differentiated societies.”²²⁷ He also finds “ill suited” “the holistic notion of a social totality in which the associated individuals participate like the members of an encompassing organization.”²²⁸ At the same time, however, *he believes that the “plurality of competing interests” characterizing today’s differentiated societies is to be resolved in a*

²²⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. Willian Rehg, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996), 366-367.

²²⁶ Habermas, “Further Reflections ...”, 453-454.

²²⁷ Habermas, “Further Reflections ...”, 443.

²²⁸ Habermas, “Further Reflections ...”, 443.

certain manner especially with a view to the “general interest”: “The contribution of *Structural Transformation* to a contemporary theory of democracy had to come under a cloud if the unresolved plurality of competing interests makes it doubtful whether there can ever emerge a general interest of the kind to which a public opinion could refer as a criterion.”²²⁹ According to him, “[t]he core of civil society comprises a network of associations that institutionalizes problem solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres.”²³⁰

The theoretical framework that Habermas proposes a possible solution to this central question is framed with what he calls as discourse ethics together with communicative action theory both of which rest at the heart of his conception of civil society. In that respect he refers to “*the social integrative power of communicative action*”.²³¹ It is within this framework that he finds the concept of civil society or political public sphere significant:

This is why “political public sphere” is appropriate as the quintessential concept denoting all those conditions of communication under which there can come into being a discursive formation of opinion and will on the part of a public composed of the citizens of a state. This is why it is suitable as the fundamental concept of a theory of democracy whose intent is normative.²³²

Habermas argues that he has “developed a discourse-centered approach to ethics that views the exchange of arguments and counter-arguments as the most suitable procedure for resolving moral-practical questions” and through this discourse-centered approach to ethics he reaches a “discourse-centered concept of democracy [which] places its faith in the political mobilization and utilization of the

²²⁹ Habermas, “Further Reflections ...”, 441.

²³⁰ Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 367.

²³¹ Habermas, “Further Reflections ...”, 444. Emphasis added.

²³² Habermas, “Further Reflections ...”, 446.

communicative force of production..."²³³ Habermas's moral philosophy posits a distinction between monological and dialogical moral theories."²³⁴ This distinction depends upon whether a theory affirms that the identification of the correct principles of morality is a project that must be carried out collectively (dialogical) or not (monological).²³⁵ A dialogical theory affirms that the true principles of morality are essentially collective acts; they can be revealed only after a certain kind of interaction in which everyone participates. In order to better understand this distinction and its significance we have to be familiar with another basic distinction that Habermas makes between "consent-oriented" (or communicative) and success-oriented (or purposive-rational actions).²³⁶ Communicative action "constitutes an independent and distinct type of social action", because "the goal or the 'telos' of communicative action is not ... to influence others, but ... to reach an agreement or mutual understanding."²³⁷ Baynes points out that "Habermas sometimes refers to communicative action as any social interaction in which the coordinating mechanism is action oriented to reaching understanding or agreement."²³⁸ These two concepts, dialogy and communicative action are crucial for the theory of discourse ethics and relatedly the concept of reason all which are crucial in understanding Habermas's theory of civil society.

To explicate the issue at stake, a brief comparison between Habermas and Rawls may be helpful. It can be argued very briefly that Habermas, by placing the greatest emphasis upon the social interaction among individuals and he uses a different

²³³ Habermas, "Further Reflections ...", 447.

²³⁴ Christopher McMohan, "Why There is No Issue Between Habermas and Rawls", *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XCIX, No.3 March 2002, 112.

²³⁵ McMohan, 112.

²³⁶ Baynes, 80.

²³⁷ Baynes, 80.

²³⁸ Baynes, 81.

framework from the infamous 'original position' of John Rawls, in which people are asked to speak behind a 'veil of ignorance'. As is well known, what is crucial for Rawls is that the individuals use a method of avoidance and a strategy of self-restraint before deciding what concerns could be brought to the public discussion. According to him individuals can bring to public political forum only those concerns that they think will seem acceptable to the others. Habermas rejects this and argues instead that any question can be brought to public discussion and must be submitted to the views of others within an argumentative process. He insists that whether a concern is reasonable to all, or acceptable by everyone can only be decided as a result of (not prior to) an open discursive practice: "... as long as we apply this more exacting test (categorical imperative) in a monological fashion, it still remains individually isolated perspectives from which each of us considers privately what all could will. This is inadequate."²³⁹ The reason why he finds this approach inadequate is because he employs an interactive mode of reasoning: "The justification of norms and commands requires that a real discourse be carried out and thus cannot occur in a strictly monological form, i.e. in the form of a hypothetical process of argumentation occurring in the individual mind."²⁴⁰ He explains this by contrasting this view with Rawls's original position:

Rawls imposes a common perspective on the parties in the original position through informational constraints and thereby neutralizes the multiplicity of particular interpretative perspectives from the outset. Discourse ethics, by contrast, views the moral point of view as embodied in an intersubjective practice of argumentation which enjoins those involved to an idealizing *enlargement* of their interpretative perspectives.²⁴¹

²³⁹ Jürgen Habermas, "Reconciliation Through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls's Political Liberalism", *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XCII, No.3, March 1995, p.117 reprinted in P.Weithman, *Reasonable Pluralism*, 318.

²⁴⁰ Habermas quoted in Fred D'Agostino, *Free Public Reason: Making It Up As We Go*, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 47-48.

²⁴¹ Habermas, "Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason", 117 (319).

Habermas puts forward three rules regarding the formal conditions necessary for reaching understanding or communicative agreement: i) every speaker with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in a discourse; ii) everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatever; iii) everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion whatever into the discourse; iv) everyone is allowed to express his attitudes, desires and needs; iv) no speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion, from exercising his rights as laid down in i, ii, and iii.²⁴²

It can be seen clearly especially from rule 2 that, in principle nothing (no interests, needs, desires, interpretations etc.) can be excluded from a public discussion at least from the outset. The important thing here is that the process of discourse, the process of argumentation will determine whether they are generalizable, whether they are relevant for the public or whether they are acceptable to everyone in the society. Their status must be submitted to the will and opinion formation process in which all take part actively.

In argumentation, proponents and opponents engage in a *competition with arguments* in order to convince one another, that is, in order to reach a consensus... In discourse what is called the *force* of the better argument is wholly unforced. Here convictions change internally via a process of rationally motivated attitude change.²⁴³

As can be seen, this conception leaves the task of finding common ground to the participants themselves and the word 'finding' in this sentence can be changed with creating, expanding, contracting, shifting, challenging, and deconstructing common ground.²⁴⁴ It should be noted regarding Habermas's argumentation process that "he envisages a process of collective *reasoning* rather than

²⁴² Baynes, 113.

²⁴³ Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. C. Lenhardt and S.W. Nicholsen, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991), 160. Emphasis original.

²⁴⁴ McCarthy, 61.

bargaining.”²⁴⁵ Reason, in turn, “is defined procedurally in terms of the structure of argumentation and process of communication” and the important thing becomes what interpretations, which views can withstand the challenge of opposition and the threat of defeat:

I have in mind the more open procedure of an argumentative practice that proceeds under the demanding presuppositions of “the public use of reason” and does not bracket the pluralism of convictions and worldviews from the outset.²⁴⁶

Here again we see the importance that Habermas attributes to social action that we mentioned above. In his words:

Creatures that are individuated only through socialization are vulnerable and morally in need of considerateness. Linguistically and behaviorally competent subjects are constituted as individuals by growing into an intersubjectively shared lifeworld, and the lifeworld of a language community is reproduced in turn through the communicative actions of its members. This explains why the identity of the individual and that of the collective are interdependent; they form and maintain themselves together.²⁴⁷

In relation to this emphasis on communicative actions he stresses the importance of civil society:

The communication structures of the public sphere must rather be kept intact by an energetic civil society. That the political public sphere must in a certain sense reproduce and stabilize itself from its own resources and stabilize itself from its own resources is shown by the odd self-referential character of the practice of communication in civil society.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ McMohan, 118.

²⁴⁶ Habermas, “Reconciliation Through the Public Use of Reason”, 117 (319).

²⁴⁷ Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, 199.

²⁴⁸ Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 369.

It is also argued that Habermas welcomes the situations of conflict.²⁴⁹ According to this interpretation, Habermas sees those situations as contributions to the integrative capacity of the identity: when a change in social environment creates a situation in which one's identity is no longer in equilibrium with that environment, self-identification stabilizes itself. Consequently, situations of conflict are not seen as a threat but a contribution in psychological terms. Nevertheless, he calls for bridging the gap between self-interest and orientation to the common good²⁵⁰ and he proposes two preconditions for such a bridging: one is the "presumption of impartiality" and the other is the expectation that the participants question and transcend whatever their initial preferences may have been."²⁵¹ Moreover, he argues that the actors of political communication interpret, defend, and radicalize the normative content of the institutions and legal guarantees of free and open opinion-formation in making use of them because they know they are involved in the *common* enterprise of reconstituting and maintaining structures of the public sphere.²⁵²

There are two important consequences of this participant-centered conception of public reason. One of them is the emphasis that Habermas places upon the formal rules regarding "the procedures of a discursive process of opinion and will formation in which the public use of reason is manifested".²⁵³ Habermas prefers to develop a theory of public reason in "a strictly procedural manner" and criticizes Rawls for failing to do the same thing.²⁵⁴ Rather than dealing in a very detailed way

²⁴⁹ Stephen K. White, *The Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas: Reason, Justice and Modernity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 80.

²⁵⁰ Habermas, "Further Reflections ...", 449.

²⁵¹ Habermas, "Further Reflections ...", 449.

²⁵² Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 369.

²⁵³ Habermas, "Reconciliation Through the Public Use of Reason", 130.

²⁵⁴ Habermas, "Reconciliation Through the Public Use of Reason", 116.

with the use of public reason to determine what is relevant for public discussion his procedural and legal theory

... focuses exclusively on the procedural aspects of the public use of reason and derives the system of rights from the idea of its legal institutionalization. It can leave more questions open because it entrusts more to the *process* of rational opinion and will formation... It leaves substantial questions that must be answered here and now to the more or less enlightened engagement of participants...²⁵⁵

Habermas argues that “negotiations must rely on the exchange of arguments, and whether they lead to compromises that are *fair* depends essentially on procedural conditions subject to moral judgment.”²⁵⁶ This in turn takes us to the importance that Habermas gives to legislation and its legitimacy. According to him, the legitimacy of legislation “is accounted for by a democratic procedure that secures the autonomy of citizens” and “citizens are politically autonomous only if they can view themselves jointly as authors of the laws to which they are subject as individual addressees.”²⁵⁷ Moreover, “the democratic principle states that only those statutes may claim legitimacy that can meet with the assent of all citizens in a discursive process of legislation that in turn has been legally constituted.”²⁵⁸ As McCarthy observes, in Habermas’s thinking “the constitution is viewed as a

²⁵⁵ Habermas, “Reconciliation Through the Public Use of Reason”, 131.

²⁵⁶ Habermas, “Further Reflections on the Public Sphere”, 448. See also Christina Lafont, “Procedural Justice? Implications of the Rawls-Habermas Debate for Discourse Ethics, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, Vol 29, No.2, March 2003, 172.

²⁵⁷ Habermas, “Reconciliation Through the Public Use of Reason”, 130.

²⁵⁸ Habermas quoted in Lafont, 174. Lafont in that article deals with the question of whether to meet the procedural conditions can guarantee the moral rightness of a norm. her answer to that question is negative: “such a procedure cannot *guarantee* the moral rightness of a norm- nothing can. But it *can entitle us* to claim moral rightness for the norm, as long as no counterarguments appear (whether on the basis of new experiences, consequences, side-effects or learning process in general).”

“project” that is always incomplete and subject to the ongoing exercise of political autonomy...”²⁵⁹

Besides the importance that Habermas gives to the procedure and therefore to the process of legislation, the second important consequence of his formulation of public reason is his questioning of “the rigid boundary between the political and the nonpublic identities of the citizens.”²⁶⁰ Habermas criticizes Rawls for engaging with such a distinction by splitting “the moral person into the public identity of a citizen and the nonpublic identity of a private person shaped by her individual conception of the good.”²⁶¹ As was shown above, Habermas sees the development of the individual and collective identity as an interdependent process. Moreover, he thinks that

such an a priori boundary between private and public autonomy not only contradicts the republican intuition that popular sovereignty and human rights are nourished by the same root. It also conflicts with historical experience; above all with the fact that the historically shifting boundary between the private and public spheres has always been problematic from a normative point of view...such differentiations must be subjected to the political will formation of the citizens...”²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Thomas McCharthy, “Kantian Constructivism and Reconstructivism: Rawls and Habermas in Dialogue”, 49. Bonnie Honig, in her essay concerning the relationship between democracy and constitutionalism, points out the importance of Habermas’s concern with participation in the law making process. She says “For Habermas, a great deal depends upon how democratic citizens relate to their role as ongoing constitution-makers and cites him as saying that we should conceive “of the constitution as a project that makes a founding act into an ongoing process of constitution-making that continues across generations” where we understand generational time as a self correcting learning process. See her “On Two Paradoxes in Democratic Theory: Rousseau, Habermas, and the Politics of Legitimation” May 2002, internet version.

²⁶⁰ Habermas, “Reconciliation Through the Public Use of Reason”, 128.

²⁶¹ Habermas, “Reconciliation Through the Public Use of Reason”, 129.

²⁶² Habermas, “Reconciliation...”, 129

This analysis shows that there are both liberal and republican elements in Habermas's approach to the concept of civil society. It is liberal because of the fact that Habermas presupposes that everybody can participate equally in the public political life; he envisages this sphere of activity as being cleaned off from the manifestations of the relations of power and inequality. Again, parallel to the classical liberal standpoint, for Habermas, "democracy is a set of procedures and a discourse ethic can make it possible for private individuals to justify their claims rationally and to renounce self-interest in the face of superior arguments."²⁶³ The effects of 'domination' which, as was shown above, is a key concept of republicanism, is considered as 'removable' or 'erasable'. However, republican view of liberty insists that this domination may be in the form of non-interference as well as interference; they can lead to exclusions as well as marginalization. Although Habermas recognizes that "a public sphere that functions politically [i.e. civil society] requires more than the institutional guarantees of the constitutional state" but what he suggests as a solution is limited with the following: "it also needs the *supportive spirit of cultural traditions and patterns of socialization, of the political culture, of a populace accustomed to freedom.*"²⁶⁴ These points embody the proximity of his approach to liberalism. Hence, due to its proximity to liberal conception of civil society the liberal republican approach too suffers from the same drawbacks as the classical and conservative liberal conceptions of the term. For instance, Nancy Fraser criticizes that Habermas's model of discourse because it "requires bracketing inequalities of status" so that "interlocutors would set aside such characteristics as differences in birth and fortune and speak to one another as if they were social and economic peers. The operative phrase here is "as if"."²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Ehrenberg, 222.

²⁶⁴ Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere", 453.

²⁶⁵ Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy", in *Habermas and the Public Sphere* ed. Craig Calhoun, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 118.

Communicating as if we were all equal when in fact we are not, she argues, can amplify the effects of inequality.²⁶⁶

Ehrenberg also criticizes Habermas with similar concerns and he stresses especially the role of economics in those inequalities:

Habermas wants integration and legitimacy by way of communication instead of domination, but it remains to be seen if the market's structural inequalities can sustain a public sphere from which relations of power and inequality are purged and within which all actors move in conditions of equality. Private rights, formal equality, and the rule of law are probably not enough to constitute a sphere of rational-critical discourse in an environment of pervasive material inequality. All communications are inevitably constrained and there is no reason to expect that better argument can prevail in civil societies that are so penetrated by the market. ... Discourse ethics cannot constitute a democratic public life in an environment marked by political conflict, class struggle, violence, and the structural inequalities of capitalism.²⁶⁷

Habermas responds to such criticisms by comparing his views on the concept of discourse with those of Foucault. When reminded about Foucault's claim that there is no such thing as a neutral discourse, that all discourses have built in them some kind of hierarchy and power relations he replies with the following argumentation:

It is a good guess to suppose that most discourses are of that kind, that they do imply power structures that are not only hidden but systematically latent, that is structurally concealed from their participants. In spite of this, I think that there are several types of discourses that are self corrective in terms of being sensitive to a critique of systematic exclusionary mechanisms built into them.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ Chandhoke, "What the Hell is "Civil Society"", 4.

²⁶⁷ Ehrenberg, 223-224.

²⁶⁸ See the concluding part of the *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), which covers the discussion between Habermas and his critics, 478.

Within the same context he also adds that “there are problems that are inescapable and can be solved only in concert.”²⁶⁹ What adds the adjective ‘republican’ to Habermas’s liberal republican approach, in turn, is threefold: first, there is his concern with active participation of all individual citizens in the political public sphere; second, there is his concern with the protection of “the welfare of the whole from the divisive pull of particular interests”; and third, there is his challenge toward the liberal distinction between the public and the private i.e. his insistence that the public political realm should be open to all kinds of individual and group concerns which has conventionally taken to belong to the private realm. He criticizes the way that classical liberalism conceptualizes “equal treatment” and “human dignity” by arguing that

classical liberalism threatened to reduce the meaning of equal liberties to a possessive-individualist reading of subjective rights... in so doing, it missed an important normative intuition ... an intuition about forms of solidarity that link not only relatives, friends and neighbors within private spheres of life, but also unite citizens as members of a political community beyond merely legal relations.²⁷⁰

This is a “different, intersubjectively expanded understanding of freedom, tied to the role of the democratic citizen.” This is done with “recourse to civic republicanism” which is a tradition in which “the equal rights to communication and participation are not just important for the elaboration of subjective private rights; rather they make possible a practice carried out by citizens jointly, and valued as an end in itself.”²⁷¹ Hence, Habermas calls for a “*third reading which mediates between liberalism and republicanism*” with the claim that

Citizens can make an appropriate use of their political rights only if in virtues of an equally protected private sphere of autonomy in conducting their lives, they are in a position to judge and act independently. On the

²⁶⁹ “Concluding Remarks” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, 467.

²⁷⁰ Jürgen Habermas, “Equal Treatment of Cultures and the Limits of Postmodern Liberalism”, *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Volume 13, No.1, 2005, 2.

²⁷¹ Habermas, “Equal Treatment of Cultures...”, 2.

other hand, members of society can actually enjoy undiminished private autonomy to an equal extent only if they make use of their political rights as citizens appropriately; not solely with regard to self-interest, but also oriented toward the common good.²⁷²

In short, then, hoping that “free and unrestrained communication can produce the best argument and protect the welfare of the whole from the divisive pull of particular interests” and “insist[ing] that discourse be open to all [and] respect be accorded to each...” he tries to bring together liberalism and republicanism.²⁷³ Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato are among the most prominent followers of Habermas’s views on “political public sphere” and “civil society” by elaborating on the concept of deliberative democracy. As will be analyzed in the following chapter, Fuat Keyman, Ahmet İçduygu and İlhan Tekeli are the leading scholars engaged in the civil society debate in Turkey whose views on civil society can be associated with Habermas. They are both the representatives of an effort to bridge the central premises of the liberal and republican traditions of thought and reflect upon the concept of civil society with such an effort being at the center.

2.3.2. Communitarian Republican Conception of Civil Society

As has been explained above communitarianism differs from liberalism and liberal republicanism in its emphasis on the values of active citizenship and political participation as values in themselves. These values are deemed important not as a means to achieve particular subjective interests and aims, but as end and as the virtues of being human.

A communitarian perspective recognizes that the preservation of individual liberty depends on the active maintenance of the institutions of civil society where citizens learn respect for others as well as self-respect; where we acquire a lively sense of our personal and civic responsibilities, along with

²⁷² Habermas, “Equal Treatment of Cultures...”, 2.

²⁷³ Ehrenberg, 222.

an appreciation of our own rights and the rights of others; where we develop the skills of self-government as well as the habit of governing ourselves, and learn to serve others-- not just self... While mindful of human tendencies to act in self-interested ways, Communitarians believe that it is possible to build a good society based on the desire of human beings to cooperate to achieve community goals that are based on positive values.²⁷⁴

Brugger argues that a distinction between a “virtue-centered approach” and an “act-centered approach” clarifies what separates communitarianism and liberalism and also liberal-republicanism and communitarian-republicanism from each other. According to this distinction, for communitarianism it is virtue that constitutes individual personality and the community; whereas liberalism as an act-oriented approach is concerned with what to do; it is not concerned with motivations but merely rules which shape behavior. For a communitarian point of view “there must of course be rules which give rise to virtues but virtue-centered theory insists that cardinal virtues have a life of their own and may not be reduced to rules.”²⁷⁵ Consequently, as already mentioned, this causes the communitarian standpoint is to have a peculiar view on active political participation. “[F]reedom is seen consisting in an active participation in the political process of self-determination... That is to say, to enjoy political freedom is to share in the good life, understood as active citizenship and civic virtue.”²⁷⁶ The ultimate aim of these values, in turn, should be the achievement and enhancement of the common good of the community. Consequently, there is the call here for the subjection of the pursuit of private ends to the public good and this subjection is seen as the highest virtue. It is important at this point to mention how communitarians conceive of community. A leading communitarian thinker Alasdair MacIntyre’s definition sheds light on this issue: “A community is any form of human association in which every member

²⁷⁴ The George Washington University Institute for Communitarian Policy, <http://www.gwu.edu/~icps/civil.html>. Retrieved on 06.03.2007.

²⁷⁵ Brugger,

²⁷⁶ Lowett, 7.

experiences concern for and pursues the good of every other member as well as their own.”²⁷⁷ This claim suggests that in order for some form of human association to count as a community “every member must share with every other member a concern for goods which are the goods of every other member.”²⁷⁸ In this formulation, political community is a common project for its members and the members are bound to one another in a form of friendship. MacIntyre argues that the Greek polis was a perfect example of this type of community. So, the communitarian understanding of a community possesses two features: first every member is bound to one another through a tie of friendship and second, creating and sustaining the life of the city is a project in which every member participates.²⁷⁹ MacIntyre and communitarians in general criticize and reject liberal view of community:

The notion of the political community as a common project is alien to the modern liberal individualist world.... We have no conception of such a form of concerned, as Aristotle says the polis is concerned with the whole of life, not with this or that good, but with man’s good as such. ... From an Aristotelian point of view a modern liberal political society can appear only as a collection of citizens of nowhere who have banded together for their common protection. They possess at best that inferior form of friendship which is founded on mutual advantage...²⁸⁰

The Scottish Enlightenment thinker Adam Ferguson with his *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767) can be analyzed as the representative of the communitarian-oriented republican approach to the concept.²⁸¹ As was mentioned at the beginning

²⁷⁷ Quoted in Conway, 67.

²⁷⁸ Conway, 68.

²⁷⁹ Conway, 68.

²⁸⁰ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Second Edition (London: Duckworth, 1985) quoted in Conway, 70.

²⁸¹ Adam Ferguson, “An Essay on the History of Civil Society”, Internet version. <http://www.constitution.org/af/civil.htm>

of this chapter Ferguson's analysis is usually considered –together with Hegel– the foundation stone of the long-lived debate on the concept of civil society. Even though Ferguson's writings pre-date the distinction between "state" and "civil society" and are thus often considered as part of the pre-history rather than modern history of the concept, as will become clear in the following pages, "he works with an idea of the workings of society on the one hand, and the institutionalization of rules on the other."²⁸² On these grounds, Ferguson can be included as part of the analysis in this chapter.

According to Ehrenberg, the most distinguishing aspect of Ferguson's analysis is that "Ferguson wanted to limit the arbitrary political power and attenuate the impact of private interest by basing civil society on a set of moral sentiments."²⁸³ So his work was a theorization of civil society as "*a natural condition for moral development and intellectual progress instead of an artificial device for survival.*"²⁸⁴ Referring to the "social disposition of man" Ferguson's reasoning starts out from a reformulation of Aristotle's classical statement concerning the *zoon politikon*. On the basis of historical evidence Ferguson argued that individuals have a natural tendency to cohere in broad associations in which they could enjoy the company of others.²⁸⁵ He insists that the emphasis on private strivings cannot by itself explain social ties since people are often driven by altruism, solidarity, and generosity.²⁸⁶

Ferguson articulated a *moralist rebellion* against the logic of individual interest. He rooted civil society in "love of mankind", a quality that was dramatically different from the commercial interest some thinkers were

²⁸² Shin Jong-Hwa, Jean Terrier and Peter Wagner, "The Languages of Civil Society: Varieties of Interpretation", European University Institute Department of Political and Social Sciences Working Paper No. 2005/3, 3. www.iue.it/SPS. Retrieved 25.04.2006.

²⁸³ Ehrenberg, 91.

²⁸⁴ Ehrenberg, 91. Emphasis added.

²⁸⁵ S. Jong-Hwa, J. Terrier and P. Wagner, 6.

²⁸⁶ Ehrenberg, 91.

placing at the center of human organization.... Humans are moral creatures above all and instrumental reason and individual advancement cannot provide a civilized life.²⁸⁷

This is related with Ferguson's ideas regarding human nature since "all the actions of men are the result of their nature"²⁸⁸ with regard to which he argues that

...both the earliest and the latest accounts collected from every quarter of the world represent mankind as assembled in troops and companies and the individual always joined by affection to one party while he is possibly opposed to another... inclined to communicate his own sentiments and to be made acquainted with those of others. ... Mankind are to be taken in groups as they have always subsisted.²⁸⁹

Against this background, he claims that "these facts must be admitted as the foundation of all our reasoning relative to man"²⁹⁰ and hence he does not speculate about a "presocial or prepolitical state of nature" since in his opinion it is

"senseless to look back to a time when humans were without social bonds, for without these we were not human... Civil society is the mode of human existence ... Our moral development and material welfare are realized in intimate connection with others, and there is no contradiction between individual self-interest and the moral welfare of the community."²⁹¹

Thus, although he accepts that "the care of subsistence is the principal spring of human actions" Ferguson refuses to consider the "history of our species" as that of man "consider[ing] his fellow-creatures merely as they affected his interest, profit

²⁸⁷ Ehrenberg, 91.

²⁸⁸ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 25.

²⁸⁹ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 2.

²⁹⁰ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 2.

²⁹¹ Ehrenberg, 92.

or loss serv[ing] to mark the event of every transaction; epithets useful or detrimental would serve to distinguish his mates in society.”²⁹²

It is obvious that he refuses to view man’s life in community in instrumental terms. Instead, he sees this as an inseparable part of human nature which, regrettably for him, has been forgotten or neglected. According to him, “a good understanding, a resolute and generous mind [are] as much parts of man as either his stomach or his palate.”²⁹³ However, Ferguson argues,

we generally exclude from among the objects of our personal cares many of the happier and more respectable qualities of human nature. We consider affection and courage as mere follies that lead us to neglect or expose ourselves; we make wisdom consist in regard to our interest; and without explaining what interest means, we would have it understood as the only reasonable motive of action with mankind.²⁹⁴

This way of thinking, or in Ferguson’s terms “system of philosophy founded upon tenets of this sort” has a “tendency very dangerous to virtue.”²⁹⁵ In that respect, Ferguson argues that “they are sentiments of generosity and self-denial that animate the warrior in defense of his country; and they are dispositions most favourable to mankind, that become the principles of apparent hostility to men.”²⁹⁶ Consequently,

To act in the view of his fellow-creatures, to produce his mind in public, to give it all the exercise of sentiment and thought, which pertain to man as a member of society, as a friend, or an enemy seems to be the principal calling and occupation of his nature... he can subsist for no better purpose than the

²⁹² Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 15-16.

²⁹³ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 7.

²⁹⁴ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 7.

²⁹⁵ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 7.

²⁹⁶ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 11.

good of mankind.; nor can he have better talents than those which qualify to act with men.²⁹⁷

Against this background Ferguson talks about “felicity of conduct in human affairs” in which “promptitude of the head” is united with “ardor and sensibility of the heart.” These together constitute the “superiority of mind” and it is the latter that “should determine the rate of the genius and assign distinction and honour” to “men in particular ages and nations” rather than the “progress they have made in speculation, or in the practice of mechanic and liberal arts.”²⁹⁸ For him, “virtue is a necessary constituent of national strength: capacity and a vigorous understanding, are nor less necessary to sustain the fortune of states. Both are improved buy discipline and by the exercises in which men are engaged.”²⁹⁹

Consequently, what Ferguson calls as the “principle of affection to mankind” requires two things closely interrelated with each other: on the one hand it requires “the virtues of candor, friendship, generosity and public spirit”, “promot[ion] of the welfare of mankind”. As a result, Ferguson argues “*we must cease to esteem ourselves.*” It is obvious here that as a communitarian he condemns the instrumental, utilitarian viewpoints against which he suggests that an individual who understands that “he himself as an individual, is no more than a part of the whole that demands his regard [finds] a sufficient foundation for all the virtues.”³⁰⁰ The second dimension of the “principle of affection to mankind” is the requirement of active interest in public matters: the virtuous should be engaged to promote the good of mankind: “if virtue be the supreme good, its best and most signal effect, is

²⁹⁷ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 14.

²⁹⁸ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 14.

²⁹⁹ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 5, 11.

³⁰⁰ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 18.

to communicate and diffuse itself."³⁰¹ Fergudson argues that "man is not made for repose. In him, every amiable and respectable quality is an active power."³⁰²

Consequently, he sees "growing indifference to objects of a public nature" as the main source of moral corruption. He welcomes public discussion and hence "disputes of party" and "noise of dissension" and sees them as accompanying the exercise of freedom.³⁰³ He refers to the ancient Greeks and the Romans for such a sprit of active citizenship: "to the ancient Greek or the Roman, the individual was nothing and the public every thing. To the modern, in too many nations of Europe, the individual is every thing and the public nothing."³⁰⁴ So he regrets that "so much we are accustomed to consider personal fortune as the sole object of care"³⁰⁵ and that "the care of mere fortune is supposed to constitute wisdom; retirement from public affairs and real indifference to mankind receive the applauses of moderation and virtues."³⁰⁶ However, for Ferguson "the disinterested love of the public is a principle without which some constitutions of government cannot subsist"³⁰⁷ and the fact that this appears seldom is a symptom of weakness and corruption.³⁰⁸

³⁰¹ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 18.

³⁰² Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 5, 3.

³⁰³ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 6, 18.

³⁰⁴ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 27.

³⁰⁵ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 27.

³⁰⁶ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 11.

³⁰⁷ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 6, 12.

³⁰⁸ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 6, 12. He makes a detailed analysis of such corruption in the Section 1 of Part 6 of the *Essay*, titled "Of Corruption in General".

Moreover, Ferguson argues that such active concern with public, or love of the public should be considered as a mere necessity that individuals should be meeting without any enthusiasm. On the contrary, for him,

Every act of kindness, or of care, every emotion of the heart in friendship or in love, in public zeal or general humanity, are so many acts of enjoyment and satisfaction. ... It should seem therefore, to be the happiness of man to make his social dispositions the ruling spring of his occupations; to state himself as the member of a community, for whose general good his heart may glow with an ardent zeal, to the suppression of those personal cares which are the foundation of painful anxieties, fear, jealousy and envy... ³⁰⁹

As this analysis shows, Ferguson has a lot to offer a communitarian perspective of civil society in that “he was concerned with developing a model of citizenship which posited an alternative to market relations as the basis of moral community and a politics that was not simply reducible to individual or sectional interests.”³¹⁰ Ferguson criticized utilitarian theories of motivation, the liberal principle of pluralism with an emphasis on individual and sectional interests and also he insisted that institutional defences such as the rule of law are not in themselves sufficient as defences of liberty.³¹¹ Hence what the idea of civil society meant to him was primarily “a realm of solidarity held together by the force of moral sentiments and natural affections.”³¹²

More recent examples of a moralist communitarian perspective on the concept of civil society can be found in the writings of scholars like Michael Sandel, Robert Putnam, Charles Taylor, Amitai Etzioni, Robert Bellah, and William Sullivan

³⁰⁹ Ferguson, *An Essay...*, Part 1, 26.

³¹⁰ John Varty, Adam Ferguson’s Concept of Civil Society: Civic or Commercial?” in *Civil Society Democratic Perspectives* ed. Robert Fine and Shirin Rai, (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 46.

³¹¹ Varty, 46.

³¹² Adam B. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society*, (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 33.

among others.³¹³ Bellah can be quoted here as a representative of this approach in the western political thought. In a similar line of thinking with Ferguson, he criticizes the classical liberal view for it “elevated one virtue, autonomy, as almost the only good but... it has forgotten that autonomy valuable as it is in itself is only one virtue among others and that without such virtues as responsibility and care, ... autonomy itself becomes, ... an empty form without substance.”³¹⁴ Moreover, he argues that “democracy means paying attention”³¹⁵ and cites responsibility together with attention as the key term of his “moral vocabulary”³¹⁶ since he believes that “our actions are not isolated encounters with persons or things with whom we have no continuing relation but rather occur in contexts that are already patterned and partake of an element of *social solidarity*.”³¹⁷ This kind of morality, thus, calls for active participation in the public life as a virtue in itself:

... for none of us it is easy to override our mistrust and act responsibly in the universal community. Such a possibility is a gift; and when it comes, our response should be gratitude and celebration. ... if we are fortunate enough to have the gift of faith through which we see ourselves as members of the universal community of all being, then we bear *a special responsibility to bring whatever insights we have to the common discussion of new problems, not because we have any superior wisdom but because we can be ... ambassadors of trust in a*

³¹³ For a selective collection of texts written with a communitarian approach to the concept of civil society see, Don Eberly, ed. *The Essential Civil Society Reader The Classic Essays*, (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000); especially Robert Bellah, “The Good Society: We Live Through Our Institutions”; Amitai Etzioni, “Communitarianism and the Moral Dimension”; Michael Sandel, “Democracy’s Discontent: The Procedural Republic” in that book. For an overview of some of these writers see Ehrenberg, pp. 225-250. See also Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) and Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone...* and William Sullivan, “Re-Inventing Community: Prospects for Politics” in *Reinventing Collective Action* eds. Colin Crouch and David Marquand, (Oxford, Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995).

³¹⁴ Robert Bellah, “The Good Society: We Live Through Our Institutions” in *The Essential Civil Society Reader The Classic Essays*, Don Eberly, ed. (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 77.

³¹⁵ Bellah, 77.

³¹⁶ Bellah, 88.

³¹⁷ Bellah, 88. Emphasis original.

fearful world. When enough of us have sufficient trust to act responsibly, there is a chance to achieve, at least in part, *a good society*. ... To participate in it is to know something of *what human happiness really is*.³¹⁸

Putnam also comes to the conclusion in his study that “happiness is living in a civic community.”³¹⁹ Similarly, Sullivan argues that “since individuals become who they are in important measure through their relationships, the upbuilding and nurture of as rich a network of relationships as possible is *the best means towards improving the quality of individual life*.”³²⁰ Hence, this kind of an emphasis on being a part of a community and identification of it with the real human happiness and with the highest virtue are the main pillars of a communitarian republican approach to the concept of civil society. They are also, as was explained before, what distinguishes this approach from a liberal-republican approach.

2.4. MARXIST CONCEPTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY (MARX AND GRAMSCI):

The most distinguishing contribution of Karl Marx to the adventure of the concept of civil society within political thought is his articulation of political economy perspective to the state-civil society relationship. It is his “On the Jewish Question” that one can find Marx’s most telling critique of civil society in its distinction from the state.³²¹ He builds his argument mainly upon a criticism of Hegel’s views on the relationship between state and civil society. This criticism is two-dimensional. As was explained in the section on Hegel above, one can observe a distinction between ideal and real in Hegel’s work. Briefly, Hegel believed that although in the existing

³¹⁸ Bellah, 90-91. Emphases added.

³¹⁹ Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, 112.

³²⁰ William Sullivan, “Re-Inventing Community: Prospects for Politics” in *Reinventing Collective Action* eds. Colin Crouch and David Marquand, (Oxford, Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995), 32.

³²¹ Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society*, 54.

(real) situation civil society is characterized by conflicts among self-seeking individuals and their particular ends, ideally it is possible for the principle of universalism to develop in the civil society. This depends on the condition that a change occurs in the way “the end of reason” and “the ultimate of education” are understood.³²² So, the first dimension of Marx’s criticism of Hegel is related with a questioning of this possibility of reaching or realizing the principle of universality *within* civil society. This is concomitant with the way Marx himself defines civil society which will be examined below. The second dimension of Marx’s criticism of Hegel is related with the latter’s belief that since the real situation is far away from the ideal in the civil society it is the state that will resolve the tensions, the conflicts between particularities of civil society in accordance with the universal interests of the society. So he conceptualized the modern state as the representative of the common good of the society which is not expected to arise in civil society. Marx, however, rejects such a conception of the state due to the fact that although formally the distinctions and conflicts characterizing civil society are defined as non-political and tried to be left out of the sphere of the state, in reality the state is a reflection of those form of relations.

It should be stated from the outset that what underlies both aspects of Marx’s challenge/ criticism is the integration of political economy to the civil society debate. As will be cleared in the following paragraphs for Marx “*the anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy.*”³²³ As can be recalled, although for Hegel too “civil society was constituted by necessity, competition, the division of labor, property, class, pauperism and the like Hegel had never brought political economy to bear on the production of social life.”³²⁴ Marx sees this as a weakness of Hegel

³²² See section on Hegel above for a detailed examination of what Hegel means by these changes.

³²³ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, (London: Elecbook, 2001). <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/baskent>. Emphasis added.

³²⁴ Ehrenberg, 132.

and his criticism against it yielded a materialist orientation which is grounded in the material processes of civil society³²⁵ as well as their reflections on the state. In what follows these two dimensions of Marx's criticism of Hegel will be analyzed in a more detailed manner since it is thought to be quite illustrative of how Marx himself conceptualized civil society. Needless to say these two aspects are closely interrelated and are just distinguished for the sake of simplicity in this thesis.

To begin with the first dimension, Marx does not believe in the ideal possibility of reaching the principle of universality within civil society. As mentioned above, for him, an analysis of civil society is a "materialist critique of social conditions."³²⁶ Actually this is related with Marx's approach toward history which he calls as the "materialist conception of history" and to which he integrates the concept of civil society.³²⁷ According to this,

[t]he form of intercourse determined by the existing productive forces at all historical stages, and in its turn determining these, is civil society.... *we see how this civil society is the true source and theatre of all history*, and how absurd is the conception of history held hitherto, which neglects the real relationships and confines itself to high sounding dramas of princes and states. *Civil society embraces the whole material intercourse of individuals within a definite stage of the development of productive forces*. It embraces the whole commercial and industrial life of a given stage and, insofar, transcends the State and the nation...³²⁸

So, since Marx associates civil society with the "whole material intercourse of individuals" he sees it as "the basis of all history" and underlines the importance of developing

³²⁵ Ehrenberg, 132.

³²⁶ Ehrenberg, 132.

³²⁷ Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, web source, 1. <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01b.htm>

³²⁸ Marx, *The German Ideology*, 1. Emphases added.

...our ability to expound the real process of production, starting from the material production of life itself, and to comprehend the form of intercourse connected with this and created by this mode of production (i.e. civil society in its various stages) as the basis of all history; and to show it in its action as State, to explain all the different theoretical products and forms of consciousness, religion, philosophy, ethics etc. etc. and trace their origins and growth from that basis ...³²⁹

As can be seen, these passages are illuminating both for an understanding of Marx's conception of civil society and also for his analysis of the state-civil society relationship which will be examined in the following paragraphs. Marx also comes to the conclusion through his placing of civil society as the totality of material conditions as the basis of all history that "it shows that circumstances make men just as much as men make circumstances."³³⁰ When it comes to a more concrete analysis of those circumstances Marx clarifies that in his analysis he takes "modern bourgeois production" as his "real subject matter."³³¹ An examination of Marx's analysis and critique of the capitalist mode of production exceeds the limits of this thesis.³³² What is especially important from the perspective of this study is to highlight that it is related with this analysis that Marx comes to associate civil society, in the sense of material conditions of intercourse between individuals, with egoism, conflict and distinctions. This is most evident in his depicting "*the man's life in civil society* [as that] in which he acts as a private individual, regards other men as a means, degrades himself into a means, and becomes the plaything of alien powers."³³³ Similarly, he argues that the "*spirit of civil society* express[es] the

³²⁹ Marx, *The German Ideology*, 2. Emphasis added.

³³⁰ Marx, *The German Ideology*, 3.

³³¹ Marx, *The German Ideology*, 173.

³³² Marx engages with this issue in both the *German Ideology* and in the *Capital*.

³³³ Marx, "On the Jewish Question", web source, 8.
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/>

separation and remoteness of man from man.”³³⁴ The way Marx depicts the spirit of and life in civil society becomes even more evident in his critical analysis of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* with which he deals at length in his *On the Jewish Question*.

In order for a better understanding of this critique of *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, however, it is necessary to be familiar with the “dualism between individual life and species life, between the life of civil society and political life” that has a central place in Marx’s analysis of civil society. According to this, Marx argues that this distinction or dualism is an outcome of the political structure of the modern state. This is due to the principle of equality before the law which he calls as “political emancipation” and differentiates from “human emancipation.”³³⁵ This discussion, in its turn, is directly connected with Marx’s views on the state. The following quotation is a very enlightening summary of the whole debate:

The state abolishes, in its own way, distinctions of birth, social rank, education, occupation when it declares that birth, social rank, education, occupation are non-political distinctions, when it proclaims without regard to these distinctions, that every member of the nation is an equal participant in national sovereignty, when it treats all elements of the real life of the nation from the standpoint of the state. Nevertheless, the state allows private property, education, occupation to *act in their way* – i.e. as private property, as education, as occupation and to exert the influence of their *special* nature. Far from abolishing these real distinctions, the state only exists on the presupposition of their existence; it feels itself to be a political state and asserts its universality only in opposition to these elements of its being. ... All the preconditions of this egoistic life continue to exist in civil society outside the sphere of the state but as qualities of civil society.³³⁶

As Ehrenberg points out, even before Marx, It was becoming increasingly apparent that “as powerful as it was the French Revolution had not touched the foundations

³³⁴ Marx, “On the Jewish Question”, 12.

³³⁵ Marx, “On the Jewish Question”, *passim*.

³³⁶ Marx, “On the Jewish Question”, 7-8. Emphases original.

of bourgeois civil society” in the sense of eliminating economic inequality.³³⁷ So, Marx was also pointing out that “political emancipation” did not go as far as to remedy the distinctions among individuals and hence what this situation presented to the individuals was an egoistic life in civil society. Civil society as the material conditions of social life was the real basis of their lives. According to Marx, The principle of political emancipation tried to handle this issue by “the division of the human being into a public man and a private man.”³³⁸ Through this division, the distinctions are declared as non-political but they continued to dominate civil society which for him constitutes the real basis of individuals’ lives. Moreover, Marx argues that, apart from continuing to exist and shape civil society, despite the seeming separation of the political state from them, these distinctions are acknowledged and taken for granted by the state. It is at this point that his criticism of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* becomes especially illustrative. He points out that there is a distinction made between man and citizen in these declarations

The *droits de l’homme*, the rights of man, are, as such, distinct from the *droits du citoyen*, the rights of the citizen. Who is *homme* as distinct from *citoyen*? None other than the *member of civil society*. Why is the member of civil society called “man”, simply man; why are his rights called the *rights of man*? How is this fact to be explained? From the relationship between the political state and civil society, from the nature of political emancipation. Above all, we note the fact that the so-called rights of man, the *droits de l’homme* as distinct from the *droits du citoyen*, are nothing but the rights of a member of civil society –i.e. the rights of egoistic man, of man separated from other men and from community.³³⁹

He gives examples from different articles of, in his own words, “the most radical Constitution, the Constitution of 1793” and pays special attention to the definition of liberty there: “Liberty is the power which man has to do everything that does not harm the rights of others”. Marx paraphrases this as follows:

³³⁷ Ehrenberg, 134.

³³⁸ Marx, “On the Jewish Question”, 9.

³³⁹ Marx, “On the Jewish Question”, 15.

Liberty, therefore, is the right to do everything that harms no one else. The limits within which anyone can act *without harming* someone else are defined by law, just as the boundary between two fields is determined by a boundary post. It is a question of the liberty of man as an isolated monad, withdrawn into himself. ... the right of man to liberty is based not on the association of man with man, but on the separation of man from man. It is the *right* of this separation, the right of the *restricted* individual,...³⁴⁰

Marx thinks that this understanding is inherently related with private property. For him, “the practical application of man’s rights to liberty is man’s right to *private property*” and hence, the latter implies “the right to enjoy one’s property and to dispose of it at one’s discretion (*à son gré*) without regard to other men, independently of society, the right of self-interest.” Marx sees the same understanding in the other rights of man: “*égalité* and *sûreté*” as he calls them. For him, “equality, used here in its non-political sense, is nothing but the equality of the *liberté* described above – namely: each man is to the same extent regarded as such a self-sufficient monad” which is described in the Article 3 of Constitution of 1795: “Equality consists in the law being the same for all, whether it protects or punishes.”³⁴¹ With regard to security, Marx defines it as “the highest social concept of civil society, ... expressing the fact that the whole of society exists only in order to guarantee to each of its members the preservation of his person, his rights, his property.” As a consequence, Marx argues, “the concept of security does not raise civil society above its egoism. On the contrary, security is the *insurance* of egoism.”³⁴²

As can be observed, what Marx aims with this analysis of “rights of man” is to show that “none of the so-called rights of man, therefore, go beyond egoistic man, beyond man as member of civil society – that is an individual withdrawn into

³⁴⁰ Marx, “On the Jewish Question”, 15-16. Emphases original.

³⁴¹ Marx, “On the Jewish Question”, 16.

³⁴² Marx, “On the Jewish Question”, 17.

himself into the confines of his private interests and private caprice..."³⁴³ As was mentioned above, it is also important for Marx to show that the state is also a part of this structure of civil society. Marx's materialist analysis of civil society "led him to criticize the state as part of a more general criticism of civil society."³⁴⁴ Thus, he rejects "Hegel's belief in the universal interests of the state (and the bureaucratic class of civil servants) and in the embodiment of freedom in such organized (and for Marx class) corporate bodies as estates."³⁴⁵ In other words, the conflicting interests of civil society are neither overcome nor resolved in the State. So, unlike Hegel, Marx sees the possibility of reaching the principle of universality in neither the civil society nor the state both of which are raised upon the material realities of capitalist mode of production. He again quotes the Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1791 and 1793): "The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man." (Declaration 1791, Article 2); and "Government is instituted in order to guarantee man the enjoyment of his natural and imprescriptible rights." (Declaration 1793, Article 1).³⁴⁶

As a result of these principles, Marx argues, that "the sphere in which man acts as a communal being is degraded to a level below the sphere in which he acts as a partial being."³⁴⁷ So, the separation that is made between civil society and the state through "political emancipation" did result only in "the dissolution of civil society into independent individuals". *It neither abolished the working of the distinctions within civil society nor did it really placed the state at a level where it can be aloof from them.*

³⁴³ Marx, "On the Jewish Question", 17.

³⁴⁴ Ehrenberg, 134.

³⁴⁵ Seligman, 53.

³⁴⁶ Quoted in Marx, ""On the Jewish Question"", 17.

³⁴⁷ Marx, "On the Jewish Question", 17.

Hence, man was not freed from religion, he received religious freedom. He was not freed from property, he received freedom to own property. He was not freed from the egoism of business, he received freedom to engage in business.

Marx's analysis, then, is a reverse of Hegel's views on state and civil society since what he sees lying at the basis of both is political economy. Hence, he became increasingly convinced that the state could not be comprehended apart from the material organization of civil society. Thus, he explains:

My inquiries led me to the conclusion that *neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind but that on the contrary they originate in the material conditions of life*, the totality of which are summed up by Hegel after the fashion of the English and French of the eighteenth century under the name of 'civil society'; that the anatomy of this civil society, however, has to be sought in political economy.³⁴⁸

It can be said, then, that civil society, whose anatomy is conditioned by political economy, determines in its turn the anatomy of the state. In an interesting paragraph Marx explains that "the relation of the political state to civil society just as spiritual as the relations of heaven to earth. The political state stands in the same opposition to civil society... *i.e.- by likewise having to acknowledge it, to restore it, and allow itself to be dominated by it.*" ³⁴⁹

Through its dualism between life in civil society and political life which has gone hand-in-hand with declaring the distinctions of the former as non-political; political emancipation involved the constitution of the elements of civil society as "discrete

³⁴⁸ Karl Marx, "Preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy", Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels Extracts, web source, <http://www.mdx.ac.uk/WWW/STUDY/xmarx.htm>. Retrieved on 12.03.2007. Emphasis added.

³⁴⁹ Marx, "On the Jewish Question", 8. Emphasis added.

societies within society.”³⁵⁰ According to this, “feudal society was resolved into its basic element –man, but man as he really formed its basis- egoistic man. This is why, in the final analysis, Marx claims that the political emancipation is something far and away from the real “human emancipation” which is to be reached through the revolution. Marx also deals with the characteristics of this revolution that would lead to general human emancipation as well as the agent of this real, human emancipation. As to the nature of this revolution he argued that “*socialism* cannot be realized without *revolution*. It needs this political act insofar as it needs *destruction* and *dissolution*.”³⁵¹ Then, for Marx, this will include the “negation” or “abolition” of civil society.”³⁵² This is a controversial issue that goes beyond the scope of this thesis. It will suffice here to quote Marx with regard to his views on the beginning and the proceeding of the proletarian revolution in order just to give some idea about what he envisaged:

The first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy. The working class will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class... of course in the beginning this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property and on the conditions of bourgeois production [which] are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production.³⁵³

However, as the proletarian revolution proceeds, it will take a different form and will have a different objective than the seizure and use of state power:

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association

³⁵⁰ Marx, “On the Jewish Question”, 18.

³⁵¹ Karl Marx, “Critical Marginal Notes on the Article ‘the King of Prussia and Social Reform. By a Prussian’”, quoted in Ehrenberg, 142. Emphases original.

³⁵² Ehrenberg, 136-137 and 139.

³⁵³ Karl Marx and Friederick Engels, “Communist Manifesto”.

of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize itself as a class, if by means of revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and as such sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class. In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.³⁵⁴

It can be summed up that Marx introduced the perspective of political economy into the concept of civil society. He viewed civil society as the realm of material conditions that shape the other spheres of life including the state. What gives these material conditions their form is the mode of production i.e. the capitalist mode of production. This perspective on the concept of civil society has been given voice within the civil society debate in Turkey too.

Marx's elaborations on the concept of civil society had a significant influence on the way that another leading political thinker conceptualized civil society. As a prominent representative of the Marxist tradition, Antonio Gramsci's writings on the concept signify another cornerstone in the adventure of the concept in the Western political thought tradition. Although it is true that there are significant parallelisms between the approaches of Marx and Gramsci towards the concept of civil society, it would be wrong to believe that Gramsci's dichotomy between civil society and state is a reproduction of that of Marx.³⁵⁵ As was explained above, Marx sees civil society as the complex of economic relations constituting the material base which in turn is the "basis of all history". He argues on the one hand that the anatomy of civil society is political economy, and on the other that the anatomy of the state is civil society. In other words, the state is a reflection of the unequal

³⁵⁴ Karl Marx and Friederick Engels, "Communist Manifesto".

³⁵⁵ Bobbio, "Civil Society", 29.

economic relations making up the civil society. Thus, it can be argued that, “in Marx, the moment of civil society coincides with the material base (as opposed to the superstructure of ideologies and institutions) for Gramsci the moment of civil society is itself superstructural.”³⁵⁶ Gramsci talks about

fix[ing] two major superstructural “levels”: the one that can be called “civil society”, that is the ensemble of organisms called “private” and that of “political society” or “the State.” These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of “hegemony” which the dominant group exercised through the State and “juridical” government. The functions in question are precisely organizational and connective.³⁵⁷

As Bobbio rightly points out, “this is not to argue, however, that Gramsci abandons the base/superstructure dichotomy and replaces it with the civil society/state dichotomy. He adds the second to the first, thereby making his conceptual scheme more complex.”³⁵⁸ In order to understand how and why Gramsci does this, it is necessary first to examine the reasons why he is interested in the concept of civil society; second, to investigate Gramsci’s notion of the State; and third, to explore the concept of “hegemony” which is central in his conception of civil society and the his explanation of the state-civil society relationship.

To start with the first of these points, it is known that the main impulse behind his concern with the concept of civil society is to dwell on the ways for the proletariat to have “hegemony” over other social classes in the society.”³⁵⁹ Related to this, he also wanted to know why the classes, which are in a subordinate position as a

³⁵⁶ Bobbio, “Civil Society”, 29.

³⁵⁷ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 12. All subsequent references are to the same edition.

³⁵⁸ Bobbio, “Civil Society”, 30.

³⁵⁹ Before proceeding further it needs to be clarified that Gramsci defines class as essentially “an economic fact”. See, Gramsci, *Selections From Prison Notebooks*, 269.

result of the workings of capitalist relations, still do conform instead of overthrowing the existing system that works to their disadvantage. So, as part and parcel of this endeavor to understand that state of affairs in terms of the relations between classes, Gramsci introduces the concept of hegemony and his particular conception of “the State” both of which closely associated with his views on the concept of civil society. Gramsci’s definition of state is a necessary starting point for a through understanding of his views on civil society. According to him, “*the state is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules...*”³⁶⁰ This short definition includes more than one clues about Gramsci’s political thought: first it can be clearly observed in this definition that he never thinks of the state as an external entity to the existing classes in the society. Indeed, he removes any doubts on this with his phrase “fundamental economic group which *really* is the State.”³⁶¹ Second, this definition shows the way in which Gramsci thinks dominance and consent are closely interrelated; and hence it shows why the concept of hegemony is so central in his conception of civil society. Thus, there are important implications of such a definition of the state. It should also be stated at this point that Gramsci sees an “error” in understanding of what the state is: “In politics the error occurs as a result of an *inaccurate understanding of what the state (in its integral meaning: dictatorship + hegemony) really is.* ... The error is related to ... an underestimation of the adversary and his fighting organization.”³⁶² What Gramsci tries to draw attention is that the state should not be viewed as simply the reflection or manifestation of the economic power of the ruling class. The latter, perhaps, can constitute only the “dominance” of the ruling class and refers to the state in the narrow sense rather than the integral state. He grants, by arguing that the class is “an economic fact”, the role of economic power and he sees it as the

³⁶⁰ Gramsci, 244. Emphasis added.

³⁶¹ Gramsci, 16. Emphasis original.

³⁶² Gramsci, 239. Emphasis added.

basis of the “dominance” of the ruling class. However, his recognition that it would be erroneous to conceptualize the state within the terms of “dominance” only i.e. as a tool of coercion and repression, leads him to focus on the phenomenon of “active consent” of those over whom the ruling class “rules.” Then, it is at this point that Gramsci introduces the distinction between dominance and hegemony and associates the notion of active consent, which he attaches an utmost significance, with the latter. As was mentioned above, civil society as one of the two superstructural levels, is associated in Gramsci’s thought with the function of hegemony.

Consequently, Gramsci criticizes “the identification of State and government” and this is why he insists on dwelling on a different conception of the state. Similarly, he also harshly criticizes the view of state as “*veilleur de nuit*” (night-watchman) “whose functions are limited to the safeguarding of public order and of respect for the laws”, “as the guardian of “fair play” and of the rules of the game” since this form of regime “has never existed except on paper, as a limiting hypothesis.”³⁶³ Gramsci explains his conception of the state that was summarized in the quotation above as follows:

..every state is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development and hence to the interests of the ruling classes. The school as a positive educative function and the courts as a repressive and

³⁶³ Gramsci, 261-262. He argues that “the ideas of Free Trade movement are based on [this] theoretical error” built upon an organic -instead of methodological- distinction between state and civil society. Since he does not believe in the possibility of such a distinction between the two he criticizes *laissez faire* liberalism very harshly: “...it is asserted that economic activity belongs to civil society and that the state must not intervene to regulate it. But since in actual reality civil society and the State are one and the same, it must be made clear that *laissez faire* too is a form of State “regulation” introduced and maintained by legislative and coercive means. It is deliberate policy, conscious of its ends, and not the spontaneous, automatic expression of economic facts. Consequently, *laissez faire* liberalism is a political programme designed to change – in so far as it is victorious – a state’s leading personell and to change the economic programme of the State itself- in other words the distribution of national income.” Gramsci, 160.

negative educative function, are the most important State activities in this sense: but in reality, a multitude of other so-called private initiatives and activities tend to the same end- initiatives and activities which form the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of ruling classes. ... in reality, only the social group that poses the end of the state and its own end as the target to be achieved can create an ethical state – i.e. one which tends to put an end to the internal divisions of the ruled etc. and to create a technically and morally unitary social organism.³⁶⁴

It is against such a background, then, that Gramsci argues: “it should be remarked that the general notion of State includes elements which need to be referred back to the notion of civil society (in the sense that one might say that State= political society + civil society, in other words, hegemony protected by the armor of coercion.”³⁶⁵ Consequently, it is in civil society that the hegemony of the dominant class is built up by means of political and ideological struggles i.e. consent of the masses and as a result of this, the state is founded. Gramsci argues that “*the state does not have and request consent but it also “educates” this consent* by means of the political and syndical associations; these however, are private organisms, left to the private initiative of the ruling class.”³⁶⁶ He explains that “the domain of civil society ... operates without “sanctions” or compulsory “obligations”, but nevertheless exerts a collective pressure and obtains objective results in the form of an evolution of customs, ways of thinking and acting, morality etc.”³⁶⁷

Through this analysis Gramsci links state and civil society: the leadership in the civil society is required as the prerequisite to be able to found a state:

A social group manifests itself in two ways, as “domination” and as “intellectual and moral leadership.” A social group can and indeed must,

³⁶⁴ Gramsci, 258-259.

³⁶⁵ Gramsci, 262-263.

³⁶⁶ Gramsci, 259.

³⁶⁷ Gramsci, 242.

already exercise “leadership” before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principal conditions for the winning of such power; it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to “lead” as well. ... It seems clear that there can and indeed must be hegemonic activity even before the rise to power, and that one should not count only on the material force which power gives in order to exercise an effective leadership.³⁶⁸

The social class winning the hegemony in the civil society would at the same time be the State and it is to continue to struggle for holding this hegemony even after winning the governmental power. So, since Gramsci takes *the State in its integral sense* rather than in the narrow sense he stresses the importance of hegemony as well as material force in order for a social class to be the State. Hence, then, when these aspects of his thoughts on state and civil society are revealed, there is absolutely nothing contradictory in the fact that Gramsci refers to the state somewhere as “the ruling class itself”; elsewhere as “political society + civil society” or that he stresses elsewhere that state and civil society are the same thing³⁶⁹; or that he talks about “the two forms in which state presents itself... i.e. as civil society and as political society.”³⁷⁰ These variations all point at the same thing in essence.

What is even more clear is that Gramsci sees civil society as the realm of ideological and political struggle between social classes in order to win the intellectual and moral leadership and hence the active consent of the great masses, (in short “hegemony”) which in turn, is the necessary condition for a social class to found the state. This can be observed clearly where Gramsci talks about a possibility in which a class “might not enjoy any intellectual or moral prestige i.e. might be

³⁶⁸ Gramsci, 57-58, 59. It is in this context that Gramsci criticizes the Italian bourgeoisie by claiming “The Italian bourgeoisie was incapable of uniting the people around itself and this was the cause of its defeats and the interruptions in its development.” *Prison Notebooks*, 53.

³⁶⁹ Gramsci, 261.

³⁷⁰ Gramsci, 268.

incapable of establishing its hegemony hence of founding a state.”³⁷¹ As was explained before, when a class succeeds in this, on the other hand, i.e. when it enjoys the hegemony, this at the same time means that it is able to present “the end of the state and its own end as the target to be achieved” and hence “put[s] an end to the internal divisions of the ruled” thereby “create[ing] a technically and morally unitary social organism.” So, although Gramsci sees the state “as the organ of one particular group, destined to create favorable conditions for the latter’s maximum expansion” he at the same time highlights that “the development and expansion of the particular group are conceived of, and presented, as being the motor force of a universal expansion, of a development of all the “national” energies.”³⁷² This is why, then, Gramsci refers to the “educative and formative role of the state” that he relates with answering a crucial question like “how will educative pressure be applied to single individuals so as to obtain their consent and their collaboration, *turning necessity and coercion into “freedom”?*”³⁷³

So as was mentioned at the very beginning, this particular conception of state and civil society puts Gramsci in a rather different place than Marx. They converge in their stress on material forces and economic power. However, whereas Marx conceptualizes civil society as the realm of material conditions shaped by economic relations, Gramsci refers to civil society as the realm of hegemony which, together with economic power, constitutes the basis of the rule of the ruling class. Hence, civil society is one of the two superstructural levels none of which Gramsci thinks to be independent of economic factors:

Because one is acting essentially on economic forces reorganizing and developing the apparatus of economic production creating new structure, the conclusion must not be drawn that superstructural factors should be left to themselves, to develop simultaneously, to a haphazard and sporadic

³⁷¹ Gramsci, 269.

³⁷² Gramsci, 182.

³⁷³ Gramsci, 242. Emphasis added.

germination. The state in this field too, is an instrument of “rationalization”... It operates according to a plan, urges, incites, solicits, and “punishes”...³⁷⁴

As was explained above, what he mainly tries to do is to eliminate the “error” in understanding the State because according to him “*little understanding of the State means little class consciousness*.”³⁷⁵ It is in this context that Gramsci points out “a theoretical error” in the distinction between state and civil society and argues regarding this error that this distinction “is made into and presented as an organic one whereas in fact it is merely methodological” because of the fact that “in actual reality civil society and the state are one and the same.”³⁷⁶

To sum up it must be reiterated that for Gramsci the concept of civil society implies the realm of ideological struggle taking place among the social classes (class being an economic fact) to reach hegemony over other classes in the society. In his words, civil society is “the hegemonic apparatus of one social group over the rest of the population: the basis for the State in the narrow sense of the governmental-coercive apparatus.”³⁷⁷ It must also be added, however, that he thinks of this struggle as a continuous process and contrasts it with the idea of “Permanent Revolution”: “the formula of “Permanent Revolution” is expanded and transcended in political science by the formula of “civil hegemony.”³⁷⁸ So it is evident that he conceives that something like a permanent hegemony is not possible to attain. What is inherent in

³⁷⁴ Gramsci, 247.

³⁷⁵ Gramsci, 275. Emphasis added. Gramsci is disturbed by his observation that “the only form in which the State is perceived [is] officialdom. The peasant and even the small farmer hates the civil servants; he does not hate the State, for he does not understand it.” Gramsci, 272.

³⁷⁶ Gramsci, 160.

³⁷⁷ Gramsci, 264-265.

³⁷⁸ Gramsci, 243.

hegemony is a never ending struggle not to loose it. There is always the possibility that the ruling class may loose its hegemony and another class can win the hegemony in civil society so that that class can found the state. Gramsci calls for “moral resistance, cohesion and patient and obstinate perseverance” even in the case that the subaltern class “[does] not have the initiative in the struggle and the struggle itself comes eventually to be identified with a series of defeats” by envisioning the possibility of a future victory: “ I have been defeated for the moment, but the tide of history is working for me in the long term.”³⁷⁹ it is precisely this prospect for the birth of the new that renders the struggle of the proletariat continuous:

If the ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e. is no longer “leading” but only dominant, exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies and no longer believe what they used to believe previously etc. The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born.³⁸⁰

It is obvious, then, that at the heart of Gramsci’s conception of civil society rests his insistence on the organic relations between state and civil society. Hence, his conception is crucial for analyses which are concerned with the ways in which the state “educates” in Gramsci’s sense of the term the consent of the masses.

As a conclusion to this chapter it can be argued that these different approaches to the concept of civil society are distinguished from each other mostly by the themes in relation to which they conceptualize civil society. In that respect, **two themes** seem to be illuminating: First, these conceptions depart from each other in terms of their approach toward the state-civil society dichotomy. Second, they diverge in terms of their approach toward the power relations in the (civil) society, in the sense that whether they have a consensus-oriented approach or an antagonistic approach towards these power relations. These two categorizations will serve as an

³⁷⁹ Gramsci, 336.

³⁸⁰ Gramsci, 275-276.

effective analytical tool for making sense of the literature in Turkey on civil society. They will be informative to make the connections between the question in relation to which the concept of civil society is used on the one hand, and the way civil society is conceptualized on the other hand.

In terms of the first theme, it is obvious that *what characterizes all liberal-oriented conceptions of civil society and differentiates them from other conceptions is the emphasis on the need to control the state thereby guaranteeing a larger space for individual rights and liberties autonomous from state interference*. As was mentioned before, “[t]he *sine qua non* of the liberal state in all its varieties is that governmental power and authority be limited by a system of constitutional rules and practices in which individual liberty and the equality of persons under the rule of law are respected.³⁸¹ *Civil society as it has been conceptualized within the liberal tradition is deemed important and/or functional for a ‘limited state’*. What liberal-individualist-pluralist, liberal-conservative and liberal-republican conceptions of civil society share in common is this dichotomy established between state and civil society and the emphasis on narrowing the borders of the state while widening the ‘rights and liberties’ which are identified with a notion of civil society as the ‘autonomous’ sphere of voluntary activity of the individuals and groups. So, in that respect, all these liberal-oriented conceptions of civil society together stand separately in that sense from Hegelian, communitarian-republican and Marxian-Gramscian conceptions.

This common ground characterizing the liberal perspective on the concept of civil society (“the antistatist core”) is also mirrored in the way(s) the concept is employed in Turkey. In other words, it offers an answer to the question why it is the liberal-oriented conceptualizations of ‘civil society’ that has been dominant in Turkey being shared even by scholars with opposing political positions: As was mentioned before, the most discussed theme in relation to civil society in Turkey is

³⁸¹ John Gray, *Liberalism*, 2nd Edition, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 71-72.

the 'reality' of a strong state dominating the society leaving little or no room for individual autonomy. In most cases, the concept of civil society is brought to the forefront with the purpose of discussing this reality and the problems associated with it, meaning the prevalence of a 'weak' civil society. Consequently, this 'liberal nucleus' rests at the center of the majority of scholarly works on civil society in Turkey. As a result, the conceptions that one comes across in this literature on civil society most often emanate from this same origin (i.e. the concern with the reality of strong state whose dominance over the society needs to be controlled) and hence it is not surprising that the hegemonic way of conceptualizing civil society has been the liberal perspective. In other words, not unexpectedly, those analyses focusing on the problematique of the delimitation of the (strong) state in Turkey tend to be accompanied by one of the liberal-oriented conceptions of civil society (i.e. liberal-individualist-pluralist, liberal-conservative, liberal-republican conceptions).

As was mentioned before, the analysis made in this chapter has also shown that the Western political thought tradition comprises alternative conceptions of civil society apart from the ones developed within the liberal perspective. The most plain difference between liberal-oriented conceptions of civil society and other conceptions is that the latter do not revolve around the problem of 'limiting the state' and its control over the civil society. Indeed, to underline once again, the idea of civil society in the Western liberal tradition has not always been used in a mutually exclusive manner. As was exemplified in the works of Locke and Hobbes, within the early liberal literature on the concept, civil society and state were thought in association with each other. In fact, civil society was to denote an organized political community which was to mean the society with a state as opposed to the state of nature where no political authority exists. But especially with the 18th century the concept of civil society began to have a different connotation according to which it denoted a realm as distinct from the state. Indeed the state and civil society come to denote mutually exclusive categories. As a consequence of this shift in the meaning of the civil society within the liberal tradition, a differentiation is observed between the liberal-oriented conceptions of

civil society on the one hand; and *Hegel's conception, communitarian-republican conception and Marx and Gramsci's conceptions on the other hand*. This differentiation is with respect to the state- civil society dichotomy. The conceptualization of civil society in this second category is built upon other priorities than the state-civil society confrontation and/or dichotomy. For instance, Hegel's emphasis is on the need to reach the ideal of universality among the particularities constituting the civil society and he is of the opinion that the individuals (as a "totality" of particular aims, wants, caprice, and necessity) in the civil society are indeed capable of educating themselves in a way that unites them with the principle of universality. As long as this can not be succeeded within civil society, the state appears as the embodiment of the highest ethical ideals of society and hence the moment where the contradictions between particularities are resolved. As can be seen, unlike the liberal-oriented conceptions Hegel does not view the state as a possible source of infringement on the individuals in the society and hence does not tackle with the state-civil society dichotomy in the sense of the liberal obsession with the question of 'limiting the state'. In the communitarian-republican conception the stress is on the notions of active citizenship, political participation, personal and civic responsibilities, cooperation to achieve community goals as values in themselves and the concept of civil society is employed within such a framework. Again, the stress is not on the state-civil society duality; rather it is on love of mankind, public spirit, friendship; and civil society is rather conceptualized as the place where these values can be experienced to lead a 'humanly' life.

When it comes to the way Marx and Gramsci elaborate on the concept of civil society, a different picture emerges. They think of civil society in close association with class structure and the consequent uneven power relations; moreover, they tend to conceptualize the state not as above and outside but in direct connection with these class struggles and power relations characterizing civil society. In other words, the configuration of the uneven power relations is reflected in the way the state is structured. The focus of attention of this second group of conceptualizations of civil society (Hegel, communitarian-republican and Marx-Gramsci) tend to

employ the concept of civil society in order to underline something different from the distinction and confrontation between state and civil society and the stress on controlling the state. So, in terms of the theme of state-civil society dichotomy, the alternative conceptions of civil society can be classified under two broad categories. Despite these different perspectives on the relationship between civil society and state, the literature in Turkey has been dominated by the theme of (strong) state-(weak) civil society dichotomy. The studies challenging the reality or the centrality of this dichotomy are in real scarcity. The versions of the hegemonic view approach the concept from this point of view by neglecting the shift in the way civil society had been conceptualized within the Western liberal tradition.

As was mentioned above, the alternative conceptualizations of civil society can also be categorized by employing the criteria of their approach toward *the particularities, differences, inequalities and conflicts in the (civil) society*; it is possible to *distinguish the approaches highlighting the notion of consensus on the one hand; and those stressing the centrality of power relations, struggle and antagonism on the other hand*. A different picture emerges as a result of this categorization because this time Hegel's conception, the liberal-oriented conceptions (the two versions of liberal-individualist-pluralist conception and the liberal-republican conception) and the communitarian-republican conception of civil society fall under the same title. On the other side, the conception developed by Marx and Gramsci stands as a distinct category. This is due to the fact that in case of Hegel's, classical-liberal, conservative-liberal, and liberal-republican approaches, the concept of civil society is elaborated with an emphasis on the notion of 'consensus' and the 'resolution of conflicts'. Albeit from different points of view and with varying priorities, all these approaches are concerned with these notions.

In the case of liberal-individualist-pluralist conceptions (classical liberal and conservative liberal), there is the underlying assumption that as long as state power and its despotic tendencies are under close scrutiny and as long as there is larger spaces for individual and group autonomy the particularities constituting civil

society will “accommodate” each other through the working of the principle of pluralism. Under the guarantee of the ‘rule of law’ providing everyone with equal legal status, the state plays the role of the “referee” watching over “the game”. At the end of this “fair competition” taking place within the civil society to influence and/or determine the course of political decision making process a consensus emerges to which everyone is supposed to adhere since everyone and every group are given the same equal right to participate and express themselves in the society. This consensus at the same time connotes that individual rights and liberties are preserved during the process. The approach of the liberal-republican conception is shaped by the belief that increased levels of interaction, communication and deliberation among individuals will help the creation of a consensus in the political public sphere. This sphere is to be opened up to the differences and particularities of all kind and these differences will be deliberated within the principle of active citizenship, public argument and public reasoning. There is a strong belief in “the social integrative power of communicative action”. The other variant of the republican approach to the concept of civil society, the communitarian-oriented conception, in its turn, tries to handle the particularity, differences and the resulting conflicts within civil society with recourse to the concepts of virtue, realization of the individual within and through the community, civic “friendship” and ethics of civil society. It is argued in this conception that such a concern with these notions will enable the creation of consensus within the civil society. At the center of Hegel’s consensus-oriented approach there is the argument that individuals in civil society are ideally able to deal with and resolve the tensions stemming from those particularities and egoism within and by themselves. However, this requires a particular consciousness, a particular use of reason and educating the mind in a way that will grasp the inter-connection between particularity and universality. Individuals and groups within the civil society can succeed in this in so far as they determine their knowing, willing and acting in a universal way and make themselves “links in this chain of social connexions”, they educate themselves to break away with the trap of “immediacy and singularity”.

As can be seen, the conceptualization of civil society by Marx and Gramsci diverges from all these consensus-oriented conceptualizations in that theirs is concerned with the uneven power relations and antagonisms characterizing the relations between individuals and groups in the society. Considering their different attitude toward the state-civil society dichotomy as explained above, it can be stated from the outset that this approach considers the most thorough critique of the dominant approach. Their challenge becomes even more meaningful when considered in relation to the Turkish case, since as the following chapter will explore deeply, the dominance of the liberal perspective in the ways civil society is conceptualized and the inclination towards a consensus and resolution-of-conflicts oriented analysis has caused a serious deadlock in the literature on civil society in Turkey. An incessant recurrence of the same themes (the problems related with 'the reality' of strong state-weak civil society', conceiving civil society as a means to put the state under scrutiny of the society, and depicting the civil society as the sphere of harmony in the sense of peaceful co-existence and competition of pluralities) lies behind this deadlock. The dominant view -with its preoccupation with the problem of the 'reality' of a strong state, and the uneven power relationship between state and civil society- tends to overlook the centrality of the uneven power relationships *within* civil society and to conceptualize the state as an outsider to these relations. Hence it is argued in this thesis that there is a need for a critical approach toward the concept of civil society that could challenge such presumptions of the dominant approach. In this respect, the gate opened by Marx and Gramsci's elaborations on the concept of civil society can be the guide for a "rigorous critique of the concept" and for a reconsideration of it as an effective analytical tool.

As can be seen, both categorizations have the capacity to reveal much about the contemporary literature on civil society in Turkey. The first one (the categorization on the basis of their attitude toward state-civil society dichotomy, meaning whether this is the core 'problem' or not) explains in large part the dominance of the liberal perspective in the way(s) civil society is conceptualized. It makes clear that this situation is a predictable outcome of the fact that in most cases the concept of civil

society is elaborated on within the context of a discussion about 'limiting the state'. The second categorization in its part provides an explanation for the background of the deadlock that has been characterizing the literature on civil society in Turkey. It shows that the dominance of the consensus-oriented approach of various conceptions of civil society inevitably leaves certain questions about the nature of the socio-political relations unanswered.

In the fourth chapter of this study a much more detailed analysis and a critical assessment of the different conceptualizations of civil society and their connection with various approaches toward the civil society in Turkey are presented. Besides, the critical approach of Marx and Gramsci is tied to more recent theoretical works on the notions of power and antagonism. However, since the main aim of this thesis is to depict the ways the concept of civil society is used in Turkey and to carve out the dominant trend(s) in this sense it is apt to continue with this task of mapping out these usages and dominant trends.

CHAPTER 3

CIVIL SOCIETY DEBATE IN TURKEY: DOMINANT THEMES AND APPROACHES

The preceding parts of this study (Chapters 1 and 2) have served two important purposes: Chapter 1 presented a portrayal of the conditions both in the Turkish and the world context in parallel to which the practice of civil society has evolved. In other words, it has revealed the important turning points that have changed the landscape of political life at local and global levels in a way that made civil society an inseparable part of it. Chapter 2, in its turn, has depicted the adventure of the concept of civil society within different traditions of political thought, classical and modern. It has shown that the expression “civil society” has received rich and complex meanings that have varied according to the political-philosophical systems of which it has been a part. It is indispensable to have such an analysis of “the denotations and connotations” of civil society in order to understand “the widespread even inflationist use of the term today” and its relevance for the acts of various political actors, and its presence in a variety of texts.³⁸² It is on such a background, then, the current chapter will go over a detailed analysis of the civil society debate in Turkey.³⁸³

Three points need to be highlighted regarding the analysis made in this chapter: First, as can be expected, the participants of the debates revolving around the concept of civil society in Turkey are not limited to the academic circles. The

³⁸² Colas, *Civil Society and Fanaticism*, xv.

³⁸³ The greatest part of the literature surveyed in this chapter is composed of the works written in Turkish. Unless otherwise stated, the quotations from those works are the translations of the author.

concept of civil society is also discussed seriously among other important groups in the country. However, the current study limits itself with the academic literature and thus it does not include an analysis of other dimensions of the debate. Nevertheless, it is important to underline here that the discourse on civil society in the Turkish media; discourses of the political parties on civil society and that of the civil society organizations all warrant scholarly attention by virtue of being other key partakers of the civil society debate in Turkey.

The second important point about the analysis in this chapter is that since the writings on civil society in Turkey are most of the time products of a 'discontent' of some kind, it will be built upon a discussion of these points of uneasiness. This is to say that there is almost always a problematic side of the concept of civil society for the scholars in the literature and it is meaningful to take them into account. These problem areas pointed out in those works, in turn, can be classified under two categories: First, there are those regarding the functioning and the character of civil society that has been in existence, or *the 'deficiencies' of the current structure of civil society in Turkey* that impedes its contribution to a democratic way of life. The second category of problem areas indicated in the academic literature are those related with a challenge towards the *conventional and/or hegemonic use of the concept of civil society*. What is problematized in the latter is its use in an essentialist way, meaning its use within a distinction between the state and civil society. This group of studies tries to show on the one hand the invalidity of this distinction in the empirical world; and on the other hand they try to reveal that this distinction curbs the usefulness of the debate on civil society. Essentially, this thesis moves from the contention that an analysis of those problem areas has the greatest capacity to unearth the fault lines and cornerstones of the debate; focusing upon the problem areas is functional in highlighting the major, underlying concerns that motivate a scholar to focus upon civil society as a research topic. An overview of the academic literature on civil society in Turkey reveals that there are five issues/questions in the first category of questions frequently coming into sight: First, and foremost among the others, dominating the debate as a whole, is the question of "strong

state-weak civil society". The second issue is the characteristics of the CSOs in Turkey, the relations among them and their role in the democratization of the political system. The third question is the problematic relationship between Islamic identity and civil society and contains a discussion about whether or not Islam and 'civil society' is compatible with each other. The impact of nationalism and nationalist discourses over the theory and practice of civil society is a fourth question that has attracted scholarly attention during the recent years. And finally, the question of the relationship between political culture and civil society is a hot issue in the literature.

The third important point about the analysis made in this chapter is that it is mainly concerned with revealing the dominant and/or mainstream trends in the literature. This is to say that it will try to demonstrate the hegemonic perspective regarding the context within which the concept of civil society is discussed on the one hand, and, the ways it is conceptualized on the other hand. This chapter will mainly be concerned with these dominant trends and it will try *to highlight the questions and answers characterizing the hegemonic discourse and/or perspectives* which come out as the common ground shared by many scholars with different political backgrounds. Consequently, the critical and/or non-conventional studies on the subject following a different line of thinking from the mainstream in one way or another will not be the focus of attention in this chapter. It will be the task of the following chapter to bring them to light with an aim of facing the ambiguities of the concept of civil society in its currently prevailing usage.

3.1. CARVING OUT THE HEGEMONIC/NON-HEGEMONIC TRENDS AND THEMES IN THE LITERATURE: A FOUR-STEP ANALYSIS

The traces précis of the dominant approach can be determined through an analysis of the literature on the basis of four key questions. A careful look at the answers

given to each of these questions helps to make clear the distinction between a hegemonic view on the one hand and a critical attitude on the other hand:

- i) What is the matter with civil society in Turkey? In *what context* and in relation to which problem/question is the concept of civil society made the focus of attention in Turkey?
- ii) *How* is that problem/question explained?
- iii) *Why and/or with which orientation* is this problem/question associated with the concept of civil society is elaborated on?
- iv) What are the meanings associated with the term civil society; in other words, what are the *different conceptualizations* of civil society that one comes across in the literature in Turkey?

An analysis of the answers given to these crucial questions will reveal the facets of the hegemonic view on the concept of civil society as well as those of more critical and non-conventional approaches. Each of these questions is important in itself, but especially when considered together, they have the potential to carve out a detailed map of the civil society debate in Turkey. Such a multi-dimensional analysis is necessary in order to grasp the discussion in its complexity. In some cases different scholars converge in seeing the same phenomenon as a major problem (which in most cases is the 'strong state') but there is considerable variety in terms of their explanations for the "background" of that problem and in terms of the reasons *why* they perceive that phenomenon as a problem. In other words, in most cases, *what* is seen as a problem becomes less important than *how and why* it is perceived and picked out as matter of concern. It may seem at first sight that they question/problematize the same thing but a closer look would easily discover that there is a crucial difference in the reason *why* that issue is seen as a problem. As can be recalled, the main aim of this thesis is to make an analysis of *the way the concept is used*. Since it takes this analysis to be multidimensional, it regards the four questions as its dimensions. Consequently, the categorization in this chapter does not take these conceptualizations as its starting point. Rather, the conceptualization

that a scholar adheres to is thought to come out of an analysis of the questions of what, how and why as explained above. The answers given to these questions should be viewed as the aspects of a multidimensional analysis. For instance, as will be shown below, the question what is the matter with civil society in Turkey radically differentiates between the versions of the hegemonic view on the one hand, and alternative/critical approaches on the other hand. Likewise, among the versions of the hegemonic view, the question of why the reality of strong state/weak civil society dichotomy would be a problem is a crucial criteria to differentiate between conservative liberal, liberal republican, or classical liberal conceptions of civil society.

Step 1: What is the Matter with Civil Society in Turkey?

As was already pointed out, in most cases the works on civil society in Turkey are the products of a certain discontent. What attracts attention in the first place is the scholar's concern with a problematical side of the issue and it is meaningful to start with finding out what it is. From this point of view, even an epigrammatic inquiry into the literature makes it evident that most of the time the concept of civil society is at the centre of analyses which are concerned with the question of the 'confrontation between strong state and weak civil society in Turkey'. Indeed, *the 'building block' that makes it possible to talk about a dominant perspective shared by many, is the centrality of the state-civil society dichotomy in the literature on civil society in Turkey. So, the dominant trend is to contextualize the scholarly interest in the concept within this dichotomy of strong state-weak civil society, which is viewed as 'the' question.* Consequently, the studies concerned with other four questions that were cited above (the characteristics, relations and functions of the CSOs in Turkey; the problematic relationship between Islamic identity and civil society; the impact of nationalism and nationalist discourses over the theory and practice of civil society; and the question of the relationship between political culture and civil society) remain as the minority or as non-conventional. Inevitably, then, this chapter in particular, and the thesis in general, is constituted by the discussions revolving

around the strong state-weak civil society dichotomy, the dominant theme in the literature at the expense of neglecting the works on other themes.³⁸⁴

³⁸⁴ This is not to say that an analysis of these questions/themes would be of no use for an understanding of the civil society debate in Turkey. However, considering the marginality of these studies on the face of the hegemony of the question of strong state-weak civil society it does not seem unacceptable that the latter inevitably 'dominates' this thesis too. To mention very briefly, the studies concerned with CSOs usually agree that there is an established associational life in the country. However, there is also a general agreement that the quantitative data with regard to CSOs in Turkey does not mean much by itself and that other criteria should be taken into account when there is an effort to evaluate the contribution of civil society to the democratization of the country. Hence the literature on CSOs, generally revolves around such notions as lack of solidarity and cooperation among these organizations due in large part to the lack of dialogue/communication and interaction; scarcity of active members; lack of internal democracy and high levels of professionalization within these organizations. Among the studies concerned with the CSOs see Kalaycıoğlu, "State and Civil Society in Turkey..."; Sefa Şimşek, "The Transformation of Civil Society in Turkey: From Quantity to Quality", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 5 No.3, Autumn 2004; Harald Schöler, "Aleviler ve Sosyal Demokratların İttifak Arayışı: Dilsel ve Dinsel Olarak Tanımlanmış Grupların Sosyal Demokrat-Laik Ortam ve Partilerdeki Rolü" in *Türkiye'de Sivil Toplum ve Milliyetçilik*, ed. Stefanos Yerasimos, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000; Kemal Can, "Radikal Milliyetçiliğin En Büyük Örgütü: Ülkü Ocakları" in *Türkiye'de Sivil Toplum ve Milliyetçilik* ed. S. Yerasimos, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000); Tanıl Bora, "Türkiye'de Meslek Kuruluşları: "Kamu", "Sivil" ve "Milli"nin Muğlak Kesişim Alanı" in *Türkiye'de Sivil Toplum ve Milliyetçilik* ed. Stefanos Yerasimos, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000). The question of the relationship between Islam and civil society in Turkey is also tackled in the works of Çaha, Mustafa Erdoğan, Yayla, Sarıbay that are cited in this thesis. This is at the same time a central theme dealt with by the Islamist groups themselves. Actually this can be seen as a part of a general question of whether or not religiously oriented groups can be counted as civil societal elements. See also Barbara Pusch, "Kamusalığa Doğru: Türkiye'de İslamcı ve Sünni Muhafazakar Kadın Sivil Toplum Kuruluşlarının Yükselişi" in *Türkiye'de Sivil Toplum ve Milliyetçilik* ed. Stefanos Yerasimos (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000). There is also a tendency within the literature to problematize certain elements in political culture in Turkey for being detrimental to the development of a strong civil society such as 'interpersonal distrust', "lack of social tolerance of dissent", "lack of an individualistic culture". See Kalaycıoğlu, "State and Civil Society in Turkey...", 257 and Sefa Şimşek, "The Transformation of Civil Society in Turkey...". Reference to civil society embedded within the nationalist discourse is also considered as a problem within the literature on civil society in Turkey. Nuray Mert, for instance, in her study on center-right shows the way in which nationalism has been integrated into the political discourses of the center-right parties and the way they define the concepts of civil society and democracy. She explains that these discourses have managed to build a bridge between the concept of civil society on the one hand and glorification of the state and nation on the other. Nuray Mert, "Türkiye'de Merkez Sağ Siyaset: Merkez Sağ Politikaların Oluşumu" in *Türkiye'de Sivil Toplum ve Milliyetçilik* ed. Stefanos Yerasimos, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000).

When it comes to find out how this dichotomy is discussed, the divergence between the hegemonic view and the non-conventional view is quite obvious once again. The hegemonic approach is to take this confrontation as a 'fact of life' of Turkish political-social life and to elaborate on the concept of civil society within the framework of this problematique. Indeed, it is interesting to see that this is a common attitude shared by a number of analysts with different political standpoints and backgrounds.

Step 2: How is the Strong State-Weak Civil Society Dichotomy Conceived: 'Fact' or 'Fake'?

It can be argued with regard to the academic literature on civil society in Turkey that there is one single topic problematized in both ways described at the beginning: the confrontation between a strong state and a weak civil society. On the one hand, this dichotomy is taken as a deficit, *a deep problem of the existing structure of civil society*, in other words, *"as a fact of life"* of Turkish politics and criticized as such; on the other hand, the employment of such a dichotomy is taken as an example of the "misuse" or even an abuse of the concept of civil society. Naturally, while the strong state tradition and hence the duality between a strong state and a weak civil society is taken as a given, as a "fact" in the first category of studies, in the latter category of studies it is viewed as a discourse that serves either to distort the reality or to divert the attention from questions that should be taken with at least the same level of concern, hence a 'fake'. In other words, the latter challenges this 'reality' per se, questions the validity of the approach that is built upon a distinction between state and civil society. For instance, the studies inspired by the way Marx and Gramsci conceptualized civil society are rather interested in stressing the interconnections and interrelationships between state and civil society. In a similar line of thinking, a communitarian-republican approach tries to draw attention to such notions as "civic friendship" and a sense of community rather than the state-civil society dichotomy. *These critical approaches constitute examples for non-conventional/non-hegemonic usage of the term and, by virtue of following a different*

route than the mainstream, they comprise the basis for the argumentation made in the fourth chapter. In other words, they play a crucial role in highlighting the missing points in the hegemonic usage of the concept of civil society and on the basis of these approaches that the critical assessment in that chapter will be built.

As has been argued above, taking this question as a “fact of life” is a point of convergence among the majority of studies on civil society in Turkey with different (sometimes rival) political-philosophical dispositions. The analysis in this section will show in detail the ways in which a significant group of the leading social scientists in Turkey -despite their different political standpoints- base their analyses upon this “fact”. Since the starting point of these analyses is commonly the importance of the reality of this duality, they are brought together under the same title in this study. However, as was mentioned previously, despite these points of convergence within different political-philosophical affiliations, it is also important to figure out that those analyses may differ from each other in important respects. One such important distinction is the one regarding *the explanations* they put forward for the background of this “fact”.

Step 3: How is the ‘Reality’ of Strong State-Weak Civil Society Dichotomy Explained: Socio-Historical Explanation versus State-Centric Explanation

A sub-categorization needs to be employed to distinguish the approach that adapts a state-centric explanation to the background of the strong state-weak civil society dichotomy and the approach that adapts a social-history-centric explanation to this duality. This is a significant distinction to make because it is also interesting to find out that the latter type of analysis is in scarcity whereas there is abundance of the state-centric explanations that explain the current weakness of civil society –which is taken for granted- as the consequence of the particular state tradition characterizing Turkish polity. In other words, the explanations which start with an investigation of the state structure (as the explanatory variable) and then move on to explain the structure of civil society on the basis of this explanation constitute the

dominant trend in this aspect. As will be shown below, Şerif Mardin seems to be the sole representative of an approach that focuses on the socio-historical factors to explain 'the reality' of a weak civil society dominated by a strong state. His starting point, unlike the mainstream, is the social history of various contexts.

This distinction between socio-historical approach and the state-centric approach to this duality also falls short, however, of grasping the details of the debate. The category of state-centric explanation category is too general since it includes a considerable number of academics with varying political standpoints. Although it is important to underline this synchronization between them, it is equally important to highlight the differences in terms of the reasons *why* they consider this duality as a problem from the point of view of "civil society in Turkey" that needs to be solved. Indeed, this is the point where the differences between political-philosophical positions become most evident. Hence, another sub-categorization on the basis of *their orientations and priorities* -in the sense of why/with which priority/as part of which major concern- they focus upon the concept of civil society- is necessarily employed in order to distinguish those different points of view from each other.

Step 4: Why is the 'Reality' of Strong State-Weak Civil Society Dichotomy Conceived as a Problem to be Solved? Different Orientations, Priorities and Civil Society Conceptualizations

Five perspectives can be distinguished from each other within the category of state-centric explanation: rational democracy/universality-oriented perspective; liberal-democratic consolidation oriented perspective; liberal conservatism-oriented perspective; liberal socialism-oriented perspective; and liberal republican citizenship-oriented perspective. The four perspectives that are cited above are differentiated from each other by their orientations, meaning their inferences as to the question of why the "reality" of strong state-weak civil society dichotomy is seen as a problem. For the *liberal democratic consolidation-oriented perspective* this

dichotomy is a problem mostly because it constitutes an obstacle for the consolidation of a liberal-democratic political regime in the country. For the *liberal conservatism-oriented perspective* the existence of a strong state dominating civil society is a problem because it is a signification that the 'spontaneous/natural path of development of the society' has been curbed. For the *liberal socialism-oriented perspective* the existence of a weak civil society faced by a dominant state has been an impediment for the development of a socialist movement at the grassroots level. For the *liberal republican citizenship-oriented perspective* this duality is a problem since it has not allowed the rise and development of the notion of active citizenship as it has been formulated within the republican tradition. As the following analysis will show, *different conceptualizations of civil society can easily be found out in association with these perspectives.*

As was already pointed out, the dominance of the approach that takes the strong state-weak civil society dichotomy as a 'fact of life' and as the most important problem to tackle with is closely related with the fact that there is the hegemony of liberalism over the ways the concept is used. This hegemony of liberalism is felt in the widespread usage of the classical liberal-individualist-pluralist, conservative liberal-individualist-pluralist and liberal-republican conceptualizations of civil society. In that respect it is not surprising that the most widely employed conceptualization of civil society in Turkey is the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception. What is particularly interesting is that this conceptualization is employed not only within the liberal-democratic consolidation oriented perspective but also by intellectuals who are self-declared socialists. The latter uses the concept of civil society to denote a sphere of pluralism, voluntary activity within which individuals and groups enjoy their rights and freedoms outside the direct interference of the state. They are as preoccupied as the liberal-democratic consolidation oriented perspective with the problems associated with a weak civil society defined in this way. They also see this state-civil society dualism as *the primary confrontation* that has to be dealt in the first place and with utmost priority.

What separates them from the other category is that they view the dichotomy as a major problem for the fortune of the socialist movement in Turkey.

A more detailed discussion on these conceptualizations is presented at the end of this chapter.³⁸⁵ Before moving to that level of analysis, it is appropriate to go two steps back and elaborate on the difference between a social-history centric approach and a state-centric explanation to the “reality” of strong state-weak civil society dichotomy. Hence, the following section will focus upon Mardin and his social-history centric perspective which will be followed by an analysis of the state-centric approach with all its variations and the conceptualizations of civil society employed by those varieties.

3.2. SOCIO-HISTORICAL APPROACH TO THE ‘REALITY’ OF STRONG STATE-WEAK CIVIL SOCIETY AND LIBERAL-INDIVIDUALIST-PLURALIST CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

An overview of the literature focusing on *the reality* of strong state-weak civil as the main problem in Turkey reveals that most often this *reality* is conceived as the outcome of a peculiar state structure. In other words, the explanatory variable is *the state* as an entity in and of itself. The state is a dominant and overpowered state imposing its will over the society in way that conditions its evolution. Hence, it is argued, this state structure has thwarted the emergence and development of the civil society. In other words, this kind of an approach takes the weak civil society as the end result of the strong state. Despite the hegemony of this state-centric explanation, there is an alternative approach that goes beyond this position and takes the peculiarities of social history and social evolution as its starting point. The conditions of social development in the sense of values, relations, objectives and priorities of a society is put in this approach as the first step of analysis and the state structure is conceived as being erected on these conditions. In other words, the

³⁸⁵ See also the concluding part of Chapter 2.

pair of strong state-weak civil society is viewed as the end result of certain socio-historical conditions in this case. As already mentioned, Mardin's works constitute an example to this kind of a social-history-centric approach to the reality of strong state-weak civil society dichotomy. His works on the subject are constantly referred by the scholars who are also interested in this confrontation regarding the concept of civil society. Although his line of thinking *seems to be* followed by those analysts, as will become clearer in the following pages, *there are important differences between the way Mardin and those scholars approach the topic*. One can cite among those scholars such names as Metin Heper, Ergun Özbudun, Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, Binnaz Toprak, İlder Turan, Mustafa Erdoğan, Ömer Çaha, Nilüfer Göle, Gülgün Erdoğan Tosun, Fuat Keyman among others. What is common in all those approaches is that the state-civil society relationship is described as the one in which we see a "dominant state faced by an ill-organized and politically subordinated periphery."³⁸⁶ So, a "civil society" as it has developed in the West has not developed in this country which, in turn, constitutes an impediment on the way to democracy. However as will be detailed in what follows Mardin's analysis is different from them in his stress upon the social history. Due to this important difference it is appropriate to consider Mardin under a separate category despite the fact that, like many other scholars in the literature, he also employs the classical liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society and has a liberal-democratic consolidation oriented perspective.

Although the roots of his arguments on this topic can be found in his very influential essay "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?", Mardin's ideas upon civil society in Turkey and his own conceptualization can be examined more directly in his more recent essays.³⁸⁷ Mardin's position is different from many

³⁸⁶ Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, (Northgate, Walkington, Beverly: The Eothen Press, 1985), 98

³⁸⁷ Especially see his "Sivil Toplum" and "Türk Toplumunu İnceleme Aracı Olarak "Sivil Toplum"" in Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye'de Toplum ve Siyaset*, (İstanbul: İletişim: 1994), and "Civil

of the recent studies on the topic in an important way: he starts with an analysis of the long process of social evolution that in time has given way to a particular state structure in different contexts as well as in Turkey while in many other studies it has become conventional to take this state tradition for granted. Mardin's name is most of the time recalled with regard to a comparison between Ottoman- Turkish and the Western contexts from the point of view of existence or non-existence of civil society and the resultant particularity and/or uniqueness of the former. However, it is indeed a mistake to think that this is the end point of his analysis. It is usually ignored that he himself clearly declares that this kind of a compare-and-contrast analysis cannot be sufficient by itself if one wants to use the concept of civil society as an analytical tool in examining the Ottoman-Turkish context:

We fall into a weak position in methodological terms from the very beginning whenever we try to use the concept [civil society] in historical-sociological analyses with a purpose to determine a defect (*eksik*): determining a defect is a *superficial method* to be used in exploring how a particular society works. Such kind of an approach can only provide just an introductory account, a beginning for an analysis of the Ottoman Empire.³⁸⁸

What Mardin suggests as a proper way of investigating the Ottoman Empire in particular, and also of exploring "how a society works" in general, is quite clear: "I propose that we leave aside talking about the differences and direct our attention instead to understand how the mainspring of the society (*toplum zembereği*) worked in the Ottoman Empire."³⁸⁹ Hence, it would not be fair to criticize his studies for remaining within the confines of a "what has been present there vs. what has been absent here" type of analysis. Moreover, he argues that when we define civil society in a way that takes into account its development as a part of the social history of

Society and Islam" in *Civil Society : Theory, History, Comparison* ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge : Polity Press, 1995).

³⁸⁸ Mardin, "Türk Toplumunu İnceleme Aracı Olarak "Sivil Toplum"", 20-21. Emphasis added.

³⁸⁹ Mardin, "Türk Toplumunu İnceleme Aracı Olarak "Sivil Toplum"", 22.

Western Europe it is possible to see that certain elements of that “civil society” as it has developed in the Western world were existent in the Ottoman world too.³⁹⁰ Hence the answer to the question of “was there a civil society in the Ottoman Empire” would be yes and no.³⁹¹ As expected, however, this answer does not have much explanatory power and hence it would be more fruitful to go a step further.

By going a step further Mardin develops a different perspective that takes into account the problem of “the comparability of the *telos* –or ‘dream’- of each society”.³⁹² According to this, every society has a different *telos*/dream that gains a particular structural dimension throughout the history of that society. This is the underlying idea behind Mardin’s argument that “[c]ivil society is a Western dream, a historical aspiration; it is also, in the concrete form this dream has taken, part of the social history of Western Europe.”³⁹³ Stating this at the very beginning he goes on to show that “the dream of Western societies has not become the dream of Muslim societies.”³⁹⁴ He adds, however, that Muslim societies are characterized by a different dream which is also valuable in itself. He, in that sense, tries to step outside of a perspective that only sees the ‘defects’ in the sense of what is absent in the East compared with the West.

By emphasizing that every society has a dream that is different from others, Mardin tries to illustrate how different have been these dreams from each other in Western Europe and Muslim societies. In the case of the former, the core “postulate is the *idea that social relations are both sustained and energized by autonomous, secular*

³⁹⁰ Mardin, , “Türk Toplumunu İnceleme Aracı Olarak “Sivil Toplum””, 28.

³⁹¹ Mardin, , “Türk Toplumunu İnceleme Aracı Olarak “Sivil Toplum””, 28.

³⁹² Mardin, “Civil Society and Islam”, 279.

³⁹³ Mardin, “Civil Society and Islam”, 279.

³⁹⁴ Mardin, “Civil Society and Islam”, 295.

collectives with legal personality operating within a frame of rationalized self-referential law."³⁹⁵ Moreover, he explains that "*by 'dream' [he means] that there exists, buried in the background of Western social history, a view of human agency to which the modern history of Western Europe added a structural dimension*".³⁹⁶ This particular view of human agency is associated with "*a pragmatism which sees man as an active manipulator advancing new hypotheses, actively testing them, always open to ongoing criticism and reconstructing himself and his environment.*" So, these compile the hard-core of the dream of the Western societies. Then Mardin starts to explain how this dream, this *telos*, has gained a structural dimension. In that respect, he gives a historical account of the "transformation of the Western dream into a reality" and argues that "a characteristic of the history of [this transformation] is that this metamorphosis is limited to the West."³⁹⁷

Within his historical account Mardin emphasizes the rise of the towns as the most important step playing an important role in this metamorphosis of the dream into a reality "since each one of the thresholds of this [Western urban] history adds another characteristic layer to our present understanding of civil society as a concept."³⁹⁸ These thresholds are the acquisition by the towns and the merchants of "*special legally legitimated protection* that enabled the medieval town as an entity to become a field of power", enabling city governments to develop within city walls.³⁹⁹ These developments show, according to Mardin "the early development of a certain fixity in the understanding of the very concept of law as early as the Middle

³⁹⁵ Mardin, "Civil Society and Islam", 278.

³⁹⁶ Mardin, "Civil Society and Islam", 278. Emphasis added.

³⁹⁷ Mardin, "Civil Society and Islam", 279.

³⁹⁸ Mardin "Civil Society and Islam", 280.

³⁹⁹ Mardin "Civil Society and Islam", 280; Mardin, "Sivil Toplum", 10-11.

Ages.⁴⁰⁰ This understanding of the concept of law established “limitations of the will of the sovereign in a somewhat more extensive and intensive sense than that encountered in the Islamic area.”⁴⁰¹

The concept of law and the “acceptance ... of a political rule of law”, and the idea that “law was the touchstone of politics”, the fact that there was a “commit[ment] to a legal standard in the conduct of political affairs” and that “the common law provided a constant conceptual framework for political action” were all of utmost importance in the sense of providing a structural dimension to the core postulate and the view of human agency in the Western world in Mardin’s analysis. Moreover, “European law provided the added advantage of corporate personality which allowed the commercial firm a special level of survival.”⁴⁰² An inseparable part of the rights, whose development is associated with the rise of the towns, were related with the evolution of an ability of the groups matured in the towns to act as a “legal personality” (*hükmi şahsiyet*) distinct from the individuals comprising the group.⁴⁰³

These *rights and liberties* that were “all legally enforceable structures” in the Western context are viewed by Mardin as the core of the concept of civil society as we understand the term today. The most emphasized characteristic of civil society is its being the first social system to be released, to be saved from the authority of the centers of political power.⁴⁰⁴ This idea of being released from the political authority

⁴⁰⁰ Mardin “Civil Society and Islam”, 280.

⁴⁰¹ Mardin “Civil Society and Islam”, 280.

⁴⁰² Mardin “Civil Society and Islam”, 280.

⁴⁰³ Mardin, “Sivil Toplum”, 11.

⁴⁰⁴ Mardin, “Sivil Toplum”, 14.

is at the same time the nucleus of the understanding of “freedom” in the West.⁴⁰⁵ Hence, the idea of rights and liberties are coupled with the notions of *individual and group autonomy* in that context.⁴⁰⁶ The notion of freedom was associated with an autonomous sphere of activity at both individual and group level and this freedom was legally enforceable.

To concretize his arguments regarding the question of the comparability of the dream of each society Mardin lays down the characteristics of the dream of the Islamic societies and links those arguments with the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. He identifies the Muslim dream of society and hence the underlying view of human agency as appearing at three levels:

The most profound level of the dream was the idea that the Muslim would only bow to the political obligations set by the Qur’an. The second level was that he would accept as an equivalent the Qur’anic verisimilitude of the Qur’an’s commentators. Third, because neither of these systems were able to assert themselves unequivocally, the Muslim dream shifted to the ideal of social equilibrium created under the aegis of a just prince.⁴⁰⁷

This dream has two distinguishing characteristics: “First it relied on the charismatic authority of a leader to fill the cracks of a compromised, unrealized system of justice” rather than “rationalization of legal practice and the self-referential aspect of law” that minimized this kind of reliance in Europe.⁴⁰⁸ The second distinguishing characteristic is that “though it was filled with its own rich, humanistic content, the dream” *prevented* the adoption and development of “a

⁴⁰⁵ Mardin, “Sivil Toplum”, 14.

⁴⁰⁶ Mardin, “Sivil Toplum”, 14.

⁴⁰⁷ Mardin, “Civil Society and Islam”, 285. Emphasis added.

⁴⁰⁸ Mardin, “Civil Society and Islam”, 286.

concept concerning the gradual perfectibility of man through man's making of his own history."⁴⁰⁹

As can be seen, this dream has a quite different view of human agency and the central postulate that Mardin mentions with regard to the West. Consequently, the values associated with this dream have also been different from those we see in the Western history. For instance, "compassion, respect for the individual as an emanation from one of the divine attributes, and respect for justice seen as the harmonizing of rival claims were elements of Islamic/Ottoman civilization; 'freedom' was not."⁴¹⁰ This was why, Mardin argues, "when the concept of freedom was introduced into the Ottoman Empire in the first half of the nineteenth century no Turkish equivalent was found" and "a neologism *serbestiyet* had therefore to be invented."⁴¹¹ Moreover, he claims that the roots of the idea of being autonomous, or in his own term, of "being released from" the political authority never go too far when the Ottoman Empire and also the modern Turkey are compared with the West.⁴¹²

When it comes to the concrete form that this dream has taken, i.e. the structural component, Mardin underlines certain structural characteristics that made the two societies dissimilar in that respect too. He points out that the development of the towns has followed a very different path in both the Ottoman Empire and the Republican Turkey:

Possibly the most important difference between the West and the Ottoman Empire consisted in the Ottoman sultan's wide ranging policies of forced deportation partly a means of enriching the professional and economic

⁴⁰⁹ Mardin, "Civil Society and Islam", 286. Emphasis added.

⁴¹⁰ Mardin, "Civil Society and Islam", 286.

⁴¹¹ Mardin, "Civil Society and Islam", 286

⁴¹² Mardin "Sivil Toplum", 14.

demographic 'mix' of the towns but which towns did not have much choice in accepting or rejecting. Local notables might have established de facto control over towns at the time when the Ottoman central control was weakening but the state lay in wait to re-establish its grip over urban centers.⁴¹³

In addition, Mardin mentions, as an important aspect of the structural aspect, the fact that "Islam only recognized the physical person –not corporations as endowed with legal personality and rights" hence it is not much possible to talk about a collective organization of interests unlike the case in Western towns.⁴¹⁴ The notion of *hükmi şahsiyet* (corporate personality) has had to be faced with the state which perceived this notion as a regulatory authority "stolen from the state".⁴¹⁵ This is why, Mardin argues, when there is a talk of "national interest" what comes to mind would be personal/individual (kişi) and "group" autonomy in the West, while in Turkey "national interest" has a collective meaning that is unrelated with those categories.⁴¹⁶

Mardin gives the comparison of status of the *ulema* and the priests in terms of their links with the central political authorities as another example regarding the differences in terms of the structural components of Western society and the Muslim society.⁴¹⁷ He argues that although "it is true that the ulema were often leaders of populist outbreaks against the unjust ruler" and in that sense the ulema

⁴¹³ Mardin, "Civil Society and Islam", 291-292.

⁴¹⁴ Mardin, "Civil Society and Islam", 288.

⁴¹⁵ Mardin "Sivil Toplum", 15-16.

⁴¹⁶ Mardin, "Sivil Toplum", 17.

⁴¹⁷ Mardin, "Civil Society and Islam", 287

can be described as “a possible equivalent ... similar to those created by Western civil society... these outbreaks were episodic [and] diffuse.”⁴¹⁸

Şerif Mardin’s views on civil society are closely related to his analysis of center-periphery relations in the Ottoman-Turkish context. Hence, it is more fruitful to think of the two analyses as complements to each other. In his famous essay on center-periphery relations, Mardin states that “society has a center” and this center’s relations with the periphery take on various forms in different social contexts. His main purpose is to explain that “the forces that shaped the state in the West seem to vary significantly from those that shaped the Ottoman state before modernization set in.”⁴¹⁹ In his argument, in the former, “the process of centralization that created the modern state included a series of confrontations leading to compromises with what may be called the forces of the periphery: the feudal nobility, the cities, the burghers, and later industrial labor.”⁴²⁰ Those confrontations and the resulting compromises, in turn, led to the integration of the peripheral forces into the center, and obtaining of some recognition of their autonomous status.⁴²¹ As a result, “the center existed within a system of linkages with peripheral elements.”⁴²²

The form that this relationship between the center and the periphery had taken was different in the Ottoman Empire where “these characteristics of multiple confrontations and integration seem to be missing”. Mardin argues that “rather, the *major* confrontation was unidimensional, always a clash between the center and the

⁴¹⁸ Mardin, “Civil Society and Islam”, 287

⁴¹⁹ Mardin, “Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?”, 292.

⁴²⁰ Mardin, “Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?”, 292.

⁴²¹ Mardin, “Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?”, 292.

⁴²² Mardin, “Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?”, 292.

periphery. In addition the autonomy of the peripheral social forces was more than anything de facto an important difference from the institutional recognition accorded, for example, to estates in Western Europe."⁴²³ According to Mardin, the main reason behind this opposition of center and periphery was the heterogeneity of the periphery and the consequent difficulty in dealing with it. The strategy that the state adopted was "a system of decentralized accommodation toward ethnic, religious and regional particularisms" and hence "no attempt was made for a more complete integration when loose ties proved workable."⁴²⁴ This is why, Mardin argues, "in the more general, ecological sense, the center and the periphery were two very loosely related worlds."⁴²⁵ It is against such a background that the state made use of certain strategies to underline its distance and/or distinction from the rest of the society. The officials, as representatives of the center were distinguished from other groups in the society through their social status, their different economic rights, their education and culture. Moreover, the "operation of the bureaucratic core of the state" and

its arrogation of the major control of the economy and society, its control of the commerce of foodstuffs, the limitations it placed on land ownership, and the strictness with which it tried to enforce social stratification through sumptuary regulations were all designed to maintain the state's authority over the nodal points of society and to build a corresponding image of paramountcy..... [As a result], the courts, officials, and politics were grim things from which the populace kept apart. ⁴²⁶

The analysis summarized above is a result of Mardin's concern to show that each society has a dream and this dream may not become the dream of another society. Mardin *defines these dreams mostly with reference to their view of human agency and his capacity to make his own history*. So, the differences that were cited above all are

⁴²³ Mardin, "'Center-Periphery Relations'", 292.

⁴²⁴ Mardin, "Center-Periphery Relations", 293.

⁴²⁵ Mardin, "Center-Periphery Relations", 293.

⁴²⁶ Mardin, "Center-Periphery Relations", 294.

related to this claim. In other words, he tries to show that the dreams and the concomitant structural components are closely related with each other in each society; they mutually affect each other. This is why Mardin argues that it is important to pay attention to the “**differences in terms of social evolution.**”⁴²⁷ The dream of the Islamic/Ottoman and also modern Turkish society does not have in its roots strong references to the notions of rights and liberties (individual and group), autonomous sphere of activity outside the grip of political authority (all of course should be legally enforceable which brings a certain level of fixity), because of its own dream characterized by the *ideal of social equilibrium created under the aegis of a just prince*. This is why, in Mardin’s view, that the relationship between the center and the periphery has taken on its *sui generis* character in that context. According to Mardin, however, those principles cited above are the most important products of the concept of civil society. He clearly expresses that the notion of individual rights as formulated by Kant and J. S. Mill lies at the heart of his civil society understanding and argues that to oppose this view means at the same time an opposition to what is called as “civilization.”⁴²⁸ In the absence of a tradition characterized by a strong commitment to these ideas and principles the dream of the Western society cannot be turned into real in another society. This is why, according to Mardin, although “many modern Muslim states are beginning to acquire a skeleton of institutions similar to those in the West.... the *dream* of Western societies has not become the dream of Muslim societies.”⁴²⁹ Those institutions, features of Western society “are in reality part of the Western dream of civil society.”⁴³⁰ It should be mentioned here, however, that Mardin is aware of the trap of Orientalism in putting forward such arguments. In accordance, he claims that the analysts do not have to make a choice between “simple-minded defenses or

⁴²⁷ Mardin, “Sivil Toplum”, 17.

⁴²⁸ Mardin, “Türk Toplumunu İnceleme Aracı Olarak “Sivil Toplum””, 28-29.

⁴²⁹ Mardin, “Civil Society and Islam”, 295. Emphasis original.

⁴³⁰ Mardin, “Civil Society and Islam”, 295

Orientalist disparagement of Muslim culture” and suggests as an alternative that *“seemingly incommensurable dimensions of social life can be bridged but only by studying the ‘other’ with the same depth as one studies one’s self.”*⁴³¹ In other words, if the Western dream of civil society is to become the dream of another society that does not have the “Western historical background of civil society”, an inseparable part of this undertaking has to be a through understanding of both this background and the background of the social history of the other context. Once the essence and the constitutive elements of the Western dream of civil society are explored truly and once it is accepted that the countries in the Islamic culture area “operate with the collective memory of a total culture which once provided a ‘civilized’ life of a tone different from that of the West but sufficiently attractive in its own terms to have left a positive trace”⁴³² it would not be impossible to bridge the two.⁴³³

The above analysis clearly shows that Mardin conceptualizes civil society on the basis of the notions of rights and liberties which have always been legally legitimized and thereby have given rise to a sphere of autonomous activity to the individuals and the corporate personalities alike in the West. As was already explained, at the roots of these principles we see a peculiar view of human agency which sees man as an active manipulator constantly reconstructing himself and his environment. This is the main reason why individualism, the idea of group autonomy, the significance of the concept of law for protecting the rights and liberties of the social actors other than the state are central to his conceptualization of civil society. All of these, in turn, would be possible by being liberated from the grip of the political authority and by preventing the emergence of an over-powered state. Consequently, his conception of civil society is the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception which was developed classically by Tocqueville as was

⁴³¹ Mardin, “Civil Society and Islam”, 295-296. Emphasis added.

⁴³² Mardin, “Civil Society and Islam”, 297.

⁴³³ Mardin, “Civil Society and Islam”, 295.

explained in the previous chapter. To sum up, then, Mardin takes the dualism of the strong state/weak civil society as a fact of life of Turkish political structure and he sees it as the major question to be tackled when at stake is a concern with “civil society in Turkey”; unlike many other scholars who also follow this line of argumentation he puts forward an explanation that tries to deduce the peculiar characteristics of the state tradition from the particularities of the social history of each society.⁴³⁴ As to the reasons why he brings to the forefront this question, he tries to show the ways in which the two different contexts can be “abridged” and this amounts to a concern with the consolidation of a liberal democratic political system in the country.

3.3. STATE TRADITION-ORIENTED APPROACH TO THE “REALITY” OF STRONG STATE-WEAK CIVIL SOCIETY AND ITS VARIETIES

As it was explained previously in a more detailed manner, the great majority of the studies that take the dichotomy of strong state-weak civil society as a fact, as a “reality” of the Turkish political life converge in proposing a state-centric

⁴³⁴ This is why it does not seem fair to judge Mardin with “adapting a composite model ignoring the society-specific characteristics and the different trajectories of the development of state-society relations in the West” as is done in some criticisms of Mardin’s studies. See, for instance, Ali Rıza Güngen and Safak Erten, “Approaches of Şerif Mardin and Metin Heper on State and Civil Society in Turkey”, *Journal of Historical Studies*, 3(2005), 1-14. Contrary to such a criticism, Mardin builds his whole argument upon these differences but does not make this with an Orientalist prejudice. In other words, he does **not** take the Ottoman-Turkish society as a “deviant case.” He constantly underlines the significance of a through understanding of the particularities, and clearly expresses the insufficiency of a method focusing upon the “absences” and “defects”. For details see the previous pages. For a critical analysis of such kind of an Orientalist discourse on the differences between East and West, see Bryan Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism & Globalism*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994). He shows that “[The] deficiencies of Islamic society, politics, economics and culture, are, in orientalism, located in the problem of an absent civil society.” *Orientalism, Postmodernism & Globalism*, 31. According to Turner, “by its very nature, language is organized around the basic dichotomy sameness and difference in order to account for the ‘uniqueness of the West’”. In the case of Islam and Christianity, however, there is a strong warrant to focus on those features which unite them rather than divide them, or at least to examine those ambiguous areas of cultural overlap between them... Despite these areas of mutual contact, the general drift of orientalism has been to articulate difference, division and separation.” *Orientalism, Postmodernism & Globalism*, 32.

explanation for this duality, with the exception of Mardin and his socio-historical explanation. This section will go over those state-centric explanations through a further classification on the basis of their motivations/orientations; their answers to the *why* question (the reasons why they view this ‘reality’ as a problem). According to this further classification, five different positions come about: for the first of them this problem is closely related with the low level of consciousness within civil society about “rational solutions to the problems of the country” (rational democracy-oriented perspective); for the second this reality is a problem since it curbs the consolidation of liberal democracy on the basis of individualism and pluralism (liberal democratic consolidation- oriented perspective); for the third position it is a problem since the existence of a dominant state faced by a weak civil society connotes that the society has been developing under the manipulation of the state rather than following its “natural/spontaneous path” (liberal conservatism oriented perspective); for the fourth this “reality” has had detrimental effects for the development of a socialist movement in Turkey (liberal socialism oriented perspective); and for the fifth, this “reality” is a problem to be overcome in order for the practice of “active citizenship” to emerge in that polity (liberal republican citizenship oriented perspective).

3.3.1. “Rational Democracy” and “Universality” Oriented Perspective and Hegelian Conceptualization of Civil Society

The first group within the state-centric approach is composed of the studies that are concerned with the reality of strong state-weak civil society dualism with an eye to the question of democratic consolidation in Turkey. These studies view the existence of a weak civil society dominated by a strong state as a big problem since they perceive it as an impediment on the consolidation of democratic political

system in the country. Hence, these studies are mainly interested with the so-called “problems of democracy” in Turkey.⁴³⁵

However, when the underlying understanding of democracy in those studies is investigated there appear two different lines of thought: on the one hand, there is an understanding of democracy with a stress upon *rational behavior* on the part of the citizens and their ability to think and behave in terms of the “long term interests of the society” upon which there should be a consensus. On the other hand, there is an understanding of democracy that approaches it within the terms of liberal democracy with a more salient emphasis on individualism and pluralism. Accordingly, the former is connected with the Hegelian conceptualization of civil society whereas the latter is concomitant with the classical liberal-individualist-pluralist conceptualization.

The most distinguishing aspect of the former approach is the emphasis on *rationality and the principle of universality* on the basis of which a consensus about the long term common interests of the society is built. Due to his concern with “rational democracy which is an *exchange of views among the rational people* with the purpose of formulating the best policies for the country”⁴³⁶ Metin Heper appears as the representative of the former type of understanding whereas a number of other scholars are in the latter terrain. Heper is one of the most outstanding representatives of the *statist-institutionalist approach* offering a state-centered perspective for an analysis of the state-society relations in Turkey. The basic

⁴³⁵ This is not to say that the studies categorized under other perspectives are not interested in the question of democracy or democratic consolidation in the country. As was pointed out before, this problematique is an inseparable part of almost all those studies in this category. However, the point here is to highlight the most outstanding priority of the works in the literature concentrating on the concept of civil society. It is thought that the differences between these perspectives become most evident in these different priorities.

⁴³⁶ Metin Heper, “Türkiye’de Unutulan Halk ve Birey”, 44-45.

precepts of the statist-institutionalist approach this approach were presented in the late 1960s by J. P. Nettl and constituted a new phase in the debates concerning the methodological positioning of the state.⁴³⁷ The main concern in those debates is related to the question of whether the state is to be viewed as a by-product of a specific social and/or economic context or as an entity in itself which gives shape to the political and social dynamics.⁴³⁸ The statist-institutionalist approach takes the state as the independent variable and hence attributes an autonomous position to the state as an entity in itself. The representatives of this approach are dismayed to find that “many of the most important theoretical approaches to politics –pluralist and Marxist alike- assigned very little independent weight to the state.”⁴³⁹ This is why Michael Mann, as an important representative of this approach, claims that

most general theories of the state have been false because they have been reductionist. They have reduced the state to the pre-existing structures of civil society. This is obviously true of the Marxist, the liberal and the functionalist traditions of state theory, each of which has seen the state predominantly as a place, an *arena*, in which the struggles of classes, interest groups and individuals are expressed and institutionalized... Though such theories disagree about many things, they are united in denying significant autonomous power to the state. But despite the existence of excellent critiques of such reductionism ... there has still been a curious reluctance to analyze this autonomy. ⁴⁴⁰

The importance of the notion of the autonomy of the state leads to a view of states “as social actors and as society-shaping structures”:

Politics in all of its dimensions is grounded not only in “society” or in “the economy” or in a “culture” –if any or all these are considered separately

⁴³⁷ J.P. Nettl, “The State as a Conceptual Variable”, *World Politics*, 20,4 (1968), 559-92, cited in Özman and Coşar, 83.

⁴³⁸ Özman and Coşar, 83-84.

⁴³⁹ Stepan, *The State and Society: Peru in Comparative Perspective*, 1978 cited in Paul Cammack, “Statism, New Institutionalism, and Marxism”, *The Socialist Register*, 1990, 147.

⁴⁴⁰ Michael Mann, “The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results”, *European Journal of Sociology*, 1985, Vol.25, 185. Emphasis added.

from the organizational arrangements and activities of states. The meanings of public life and the collective forms through which groups become aware of political goals and work to attain them arise, not from societies alone, but at the meeting points of states and societies. Consequently, the formation, let alone the political capacities, of such apparently purely socioeconomic phenomena as interest groups and classes depends in significant measure on the structures and activities of the very states the social actors, in turn, seek to influence.⁴⁴¹

One of the most outstanding representatives of the state-centric approach that views the state as an autonomous force in Turkey is Metin Heper. The major question that Heper seems to be concerned is the reasons why “political democracy...has been in trouble in Turkey during the recent decades.”⁴⁴² In accordance with the statist-institutionalist approach as described above, the starting point of his analysis is the premise that “[t]he phenomenon of the state gives birth to a particular political culture” and hence takes the state tradition in Turkey as the independent variable that explains the character/nature of the political life in that context.⁴⁴³ According to him, “ignoring the phenomenon of the state leads to *inappropriate paradigms*, and, therefore to *false concepts* that *disguise the real essence of politics* in given polities.”⁴⁴⁴ In that respect, what is to be done with respect to Turkish politics is “a systematic study of the implications for political structure and culture of the phenomenon of the state which has been *a fact of life*

⁴⁴¹ Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research” in *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. For a discussion of statist-institutionalist approach and the question of the state autonomy see, Paul Cammack, “Statism, New Institutionalism, and Marxism”, *The Socialist Register*, 1990; R. Milliband, “State Power and Class Interests”, *New Left Review*, No.138, March-April 1983; Atul Kohli and Vivienne Shue, “State Power and Social Forces: On Political Contention and Accommodation in the Third World” in *State Power and Social Forces*, eds. J. Migdal, A. Kohli and V. Shue, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Karen L. Remmer, “Theoretical Decay and Theoretical Development, The Resurgence of Institutional Analysis”, *World Politics* 50 (October 1997), 34-61.

⁴⁴² Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 1.

⁴⁴³ Heper, *The State Tradition ...*, 7.

⁴⁴⁴ Heper, *The State Tradition ...*, 10. Emphasis added.

since the early Ottoman centuries.”⁴⁴⁵ As can be seen, he takes the existing state structure as *the reality* and argues that all analyses should take this structure as their starting point.

Adapting the categories of the center and periphery of Mardin’s analyses to the statist-institutionalist approach, he begins to use the category of the center to mean the state as the primary political actor monopolizing the sphere of political activity.⁴⁴⁶ This capacity to monopolize the political sphere is taken for granted by Heper and that is also why he argues that it is necessary to study the state in order to understand the tradition of politics in a particular context as well the evolution of that tradition.⁴⁴⁷ What is this reality, “the fact of life” in concrete terms? What is the nature of the state tradition that should be the starting point of analyses about Turkish politics? Heper’s answer to this question is related to his employment of the concept of “stateness” which is related to “the extent to which the major goals for society are designated and safeguarded by those who represent the state, independent of civil society.”⁴⁴⁸ The higher and lesser degrees of stateness give birth to particular political cultures that are categorized by Heper under two broad categories: transcendentalism or statist orientation and instrumentalism, or societal orientation.⁴⁴⁹ He further differentiates between the extreme and moderate forms of these orientations. “Transcendentalism refers to the belief that man primarily belongs to a moral community whereas instrumentalism embodies the belief that man primarily belongs to an interest community.”⁴⁵⁰ Accordingly, in the former

⁴⁴⁵ Heper, *The State Tradition ...*, 11.

⁴⁴⁶ Özman and Coşar, 89.

⁴⁴⁷ Özman and Coşar, 89.

⁴⁴⁸ Heper, *The State Tradition ...*, 5.

⁴⁴⁹ Heper, *The State Tradition ...*, 7-8.

⁴⁵⁰ Heper, *The State Tradition ...*, 8.

the association is taken to be uniformity; the law is seen as the expression of the collective reason and will of the membership; politics is understood primarily or exclusively in terms of leadership and education. Transcendentalism connotes the high ideals of duty, service, and the sublimation of interests.⁴⁵¹

In instrumentalism, “association has no moral responsibility; law is conceived in terms of rational agreement among the membership; politics is seen in terms of ‘business’, that is the adjustment of private pursuits and the reconciliation of various interests. Instrumentalism connotes freedom, diversity and plurality.”⁴⁵² In extreme forms of these orientations it is found that civil society (in the case of extreme transcendentalism) or the state (in the case of extreme instrumentalism) is “virtually smothered.”

According to Heper “Turkey has for the most part been a moderate transcendental polity” and consequently, “the Ottoman-Turkish polity was marked from the beginning by a state that was sharply distinguished from the social groups.”⁴⁵³ So, this is the concrete form of “the fact of life” with regard to the state in Turkish polity. Regarding the implications of this orientation for political structure and culture, the most important connotation is related to the way in which the realm of politics is defined. “In moderate transcendentalism a consensus is imposed upon society in the form of static norms. The state is institutionalized around those norms.”⁴⁵⁴ In other words, as was mentioned above, it is the state that defines the parameters of

⁴⁵¹ Heper, *The State Tradition ...*, 8.

⁴⁵² Heper, *The State Tradition ...*, 8.

⁴⁵³ Metin Heper, “ ‘The Strong State’ and Democracy: The Turkish Case in Comparative and Historical Perspective” in *Democracy and Modernity* ed. S.N. Eisenstadt, (Leiden: E.S. Brill, 1992), 151.

⁴⁵⁴ Heper, *The State Tradition ...*, 8.

politics thereby monopolizing the realm of political activity. In instrumentalism, on the other hand, “goals for society are set by civil society.”⁴⁵⁵

The implications of being a moderate transcendental polity are important in the relationship between the state and civil society in Turkey. As a result of this nature of state as the primary political actor, he formulates the *basic assumption* of his study as follows:

The capacity of civil society to create consensus not by imposition from above, not arrived once and for all, but progressively as a resolution of conflicts about fundamental claims, is closely related to the ‘fortunes’ of the state to the extent that if such a consensus is not reached there emerges, or re-emerges, a state that is sovereign and autonomous vis-à-vis civil society. The ‘sovereignty’ of the state refers to its independence in formulating goals for society; its ‘autonomy’ has to do with its independence in working out its internal organization.⁴⁵⁶

There are several important points that can be deduced from this quotation and each of these points signifies the parallelism between Heper and Hegel’s conceptualization of civil society. First, Heper as in the case of Hegel, sees civil society as a realm which is characterized by conflicts about fundamental claims. Second, civil society is viewed as a sphere where in fact a consensus *can (and must)* be reached as a result of a “progressive resolution” of those conflicts. As was explained in a detailed way in the last chapter, Hegel also spends great effort to stress this capacity of individuals in civil society by reconsidering their thoughts on “the nature of mind”, “the end of reason”, “the purpose of education”, and “the coalescence of right and duty in freedom”. Third, Heper argues in this quotation that civil society in Turkey has not been able to succeed in this task of achieving such a consensus. Fourth, this ‘inability’ in turn, has been giving rise to the emergence and re-emergence of a strong state in that polity. In other words, the

⁴⁵⁵ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 8.

⁴⁵⁶ Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 5, 19. Emphasis added.

sovereignty of the state vis-à-vis civil society, i.e. the high degree of stateness in Turkey stems from the incapacity, inability of the civil society to create a consensus on its own. These points also display important parallelism with Hegel's views. This state of affairs on the part of the civil society is an indication, a sign of the strength and the monopolizing power of the state as the primary political actor. It is at the same time proposed by Heper as the underlying reason why Turkey has been a moderate transcendental polity in which the consensus is imposed upon society in the form of state norms. It is imposed by the state because civil society is not able to create it.

The quotation above, however, leaves an important question without an answer: Why is civil society unable to attain a progressive resolution of conflicts about fundamental claims and hence is exposed to an imposition from above? Heper's answer to this question comes in the following pages: "the opening-up of the political system ... produced a dominant state faced by an ill-organized and politically subordinate periphery."⁴⁵⁷ In other words, failing to be well-organized and "having always *pushed around* the Turkish periphery could not develop a public interest and emerge as civil society-as-public".⁴⁵⁸ What this phrase 'civil society-as-public' refers to, in turn, is the "members of the civil society who are able to transcend their private concerns, and to elaborate a public opinion on matters of general interest."⁴⁵⁹ Hence, as to the explanation regarding the incapacity of the civil society to create a consensus, he refers to the tendency on the part of the civil society actors to be concerned with their own short-term particular interests rather than the long-term interests of the society. However, this time it is needed to find out the roots of this tendency. Heper's explanation for it comes with reference to the claim that "the state elites are sensitive to the crisis of integration and therefore

⁴⁵⁷ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 98.

⁴⁵⁸ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 103. Emphasis added.

⁴⁵⁹ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 104.

not sympathetic towards the periphery whilst the periphery, mostly smothered, was therefore whenever possible over-defiant, which reinforces the prejudices of the state elites.”⁴⁶⁰ In other words, the civil society’s trials at being integrated into the center (i.e the state) and at influencing the process of defining the goals of society have always been approached with intolerance by the latter because of a “perceived crisis of integration” and it has always been left outside; this, in turn, has always given rise to a “perceived crisis of legitimacy” on the part of the civil society⁴⁶¹. In Heper’s words: “The latter crisis was a spin off from the former.”

This type of analysis, however, seems to bring us to a bottleneck at this point: the strong state and weak civil society are presented as the explanation of each other. As was examined above, Heper, having a statist-institutionalist disposition, starts with laying down the characteristics of the state structure in Turkey (strong, dominant, sovereign, autonomous) and argues that what makes such a state “emerge and re-emerge” is the incapacity of the civil society to create a consensus within itself. When it comes to the origins of this incapacity on the part of the civil society, however, it is said to be rooted in the intolerance and prejudices of the state. Heper himself terms this situation as a “vicious circle” in which each of them adds fuel to the other.⁴⁶² However, considered from the point of view of the readers of this analysis it can be argued to leave them quite puzzled, which, in turn, negatively affects its explanatory power.

A possible way out of this puzzle would be to look at Heper’s views on democracy. According to him democracy has two dimensions: “the *problematique* democracy faces is the necessity of striking a balance between political participation and

⁴⁶⁰ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 17, 98.

⁴⁶¹ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 16-17

⁴⁶² Heper, *The State Tradition*, 16-17.

prudent political leadership.”⁴⁶³ Heper argues that the “the essential characteristic of the advanced democracies is that they have in their structure the aspects of liberalism, democracy and the state.”⁴⁶⁴ In this formulation “liberalism connotes individualism”, and is associated with the view that “the individual is valuable by virtue of being individual”, he/she has fundamental rights and liberties, the state has no right to interfere into the small world of the individual. However, the rights and liberties of the individual end at the point where those of another individual begin.⁴⁶⁵ Democracy is to be taken as the right to political participation of the individuals and groups. All of these individuals and groups are equals in being the holders of this right so nobody can impose certain ideas upon others but should try to convince them. The decisions are to be taken on the basis of the principle of the majority.⁴⁶⁶ Lastly, the state represents the common interests (*ortak menfaat*) of the society. Heper argues that the most distinguishing characteristic of the “advanced democracies” is the attainment of a “balance between individual rights and liberties, majority principle and the long term interests of the society.” Unless such a balance is achieved, Heper claims, “the political regime can be dragged into anarchy, oligarchy or authoritarianism.”⁴⁶⁷ The absence of a consensus about the qualifications of an advanced democracy and the variations in the ways persons and institutions perceive democracy inevitably has led to problems in the working of our democracy.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶³ Metin Heper, “Transition to Democracy in Turkey: Toward a New Pattern” in *Politics in the Third Turkish Republic*, eds. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 13.

⁴⁶⁴ Metin Heper, “Demokrasimizin Sorunları”, *Doğu Batı*, No.21, 2002-2003, 161.

⁴⁶⁵ Heper, “Demokrasimizin Sorunları”, 161.

⁴⁶⁶ Heper, “Demokrasimizin Sorunları”, 161.

⁴⁶⁷ Heper, “Demokrasimizin Sorunları”, 161.

⁴⁶⁸ Heper, “Demokrasimizin Sorunları”, 162.

The way of achieving such a balance between these dimensions of an advanced democracy is closely associated with the definition of politics in Heper's studies. In that respect, he refers to a distinction made by Bahri Savcı between "active dynamic politics" and "politics in its widest sense":

'Active dynamic politics' comprised those activities of a cadre or organization which aim at securing and preserving political office, i.e. obtaining and perpetuating the confidence and consent of the voters. 'Politics in its widest sense' meant determination of public policy based on rational analysis, but at the same time coming closest to the preferences of the voters."⁴⁶⁹

The tribulations of Turkish democracy are offshoot of the general leaning in that polity towards the first definition (active dynamic politics) rather than perceiving political activity in terms of "*finding out rational solutions to problems.*"⁴⁷⁰ If and when politics is understood in its widest sense "we will have a parliament and public bureaucracy of a higher level of quality and this will contribute to our democracy... since this will press on the political actors to formulate more realistic policies."⁴⁷¹ Such a transformation in the approaches toward politics will end up with the emergence of a new generation of well-informed politicians who have a realist vision besides their political common sense.

The nitty-gritty of this kind of an approach towards politics and democracy is to be found in the emphasis on rational solutions, well-informed and realist politicians as well as the emphasis on the majority principle. Heper is an advocate of "rational democracy which is an *exchange of views among the rational people* with the purpose of formulating the best policies for the country."⁴⁷² He delineates the political life in

⁴⁶⁹ Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 78. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁷⁰ Heper, "Demokrasimizin Sorunları", 165.

⁴⁷¹ Heper, "Demokrasimizin Sorunları", 165.

⁴⁷² Metin Heper, "Türkiye'de Unutulan Halk ve Birey", 44-45.

a way that suggests that there are close ties between the civil society elements as representatives of different world-views and interests on the one hand and the political parties on the other hand. The political parties that he calls as the political elites are expected to act as the builders of a consensus by resolving the conflicts of civil society in accordance with the long-term, common interests of the whole society. In other words, they are expected to come closest to the rational democracy understanding of the state elites. This is supposed to be realized with the help of a realist vision and through an enlightened debate among the educated, responsible people. He criticizes the existing political parties in Turkey for not having such an approach. Instead, he argues, the political elites have been in a disposition to be concerned with their own interests and also that they do not have any respect for the people (*halk*)."⁴⁷³ This means that they are not interested in resolving the conflicts and creating a consensus. Rather, they have been engaged with their confrontation between the state elites and themselves which is the basic cleavage dominating the Turkish polity for a long time. It can be seen, then, that for Heper as in the case of Hegel what is to be given utmost importance is the long term common interests of the society, or the principle of universality. He also sees the state as the representative of these interests in ideal terms.

Summing up the argument so far, it can be argued that Heper sees the realm of civil society as the realm of the conflict of particularities. However, he believes in the possibility of resolution of those conflicts and puts forward the crucial importance of the healthy working of the principle of representativeness. The particularities of the civil society are to find representation on the part of the political parties; the political elites, supposed to be the preservers of the common interests of the society as a whole, are to contribute to the creation of a consensus on what is the best for the country. As can easily be seen this is the very framework of liberal democracy and what Heper seems to suggest as a solution to the "problems of democracy" is

⁴⁷³ Heper, "Türkiye'de Unutulan Halk ve Birey", 46-47.

the healthy working of liberal democracy. However, healthy here is in the sense of being rational and realist before everything.

It is also important to point out here the parallelism between Heper and Hegel in terms of their conception of civil society as the realm of particularism, egoism and conflict as well as a conception of the state as representing the moment of ethical life where the particularities of the civil society melted into universality. What is more, in a very similar line of thinking with Hegel, Heper also argues that civil society itself has an inherent capacity to create a consensus out of these particularities, conflicts, and confrontations. As was shown before, he associates the state with the long-term common interests of the society as a whole and accuses the civil society groups and the political parties alike for not taking these priorities into account in a rational and realist manner.⁴⁷⁴ It can be recalled from the section on Hegel in the previous chapter that, for Hegel if the individuals change radically their views and understandings regarding the “end of reason” and the “ultimate aim of education” and the “nature of mind” they can surely come to have a consciousness about the principle of universality. He claims that “Individuals can attain their ends only in so far as they themselves determine their knowing, willing and acting in a universal way and make themselves links in this chain of social connexions”⁴⁷⁵, in other words when particularity of the self-interested individuals “is held in check by the power of universality”.⁴⁷⁶ Hegel criticizes “the feeling that needs, their satisfaction, the pleasures and comforts of private life and so forth, are absolute ends” since it “implies treating education as a mere means to these

⁴⁷⁴ The emphasis on rationality, universality, consensus and common interests of the society is a perfect example of the rational politics and the associated understanding of state as an “enterprise association” that Oakeshott is very critical of. With regard to these views these two scholars stand at two polar positions. It seems to be the case that Oakeshott’s perspective questions and challenges Heper’s approach to the state- civil society relations in all aspects.

⁴⁷⁵ Hegel, 124.

⁴⁷⁶ Hegel, 123.

ends.”⁴⁷⁷ This view for him is not able to capture the nature of mind and the end of reason. He argues that, “the end of reason” is not “the pleasure for pleasure’s sake.” Hegel claims that “on the contrary, its end is to banish natural simplicity” by which he refers specifically to overcoming “the crude type of knowing and willing, i.e. *immediacy and singularity, in which mind is absorbed.*” So, both Hegel and Heper think that mind and reason are *capable* of securing the principle or rationality of universality. This necessitates a ‘maturation’ of the mind so that it is rescued from ‘simplicity and immediacy’. This, in turn, is closely related with his ideas on the aim of education as mentioned above. To recall Hegel once again here,

The final purpose of education, therefore, is liberation and the struggle for a higher liberation still ... In the individual subject, this liberation is the hard struggle against pure subjectivity of demeanor, against the immediacy of desire, against the empty subjectivity of feeling and the caprice of inclination.⁴⁷⁸

These points display great parallelism between Heper’s stress on rational democracy in the form of educated, enlightened views on what is good for the society as a whole. In both cases there is a belief in the potential of the civil society to succeed in this and achieving a consensus among the particularities, immediacies, singularities, caprices characterizing that sphere of life. Again, it is argued in both cases that since in terms of the existing reality civil society is not able to realize this potential it is the state supposed to do this.⁴⁷⁹ Another important parallelism between Heper and Hegel is that they both tend to think of the realm of civil

⁴⁷⁷ Hegel, 125.

⁴⁷⁸ Hegel, 125.

⁴⁷⁹ In his references to rationality and rational decision making regarding the political life a parallelism is observed between Heper and Max Weber as well. As is known, Weber formulated the concept of rationality in relation with reason or reasoning, calculation and efficiency. He used it in the sense of a “the methodological attainment of a definitely given and practical end by the use of an increasingly precise calculation of adequate means.” See Anthony Giddens, *Politics, Sociology and Social Theory*, (Oxford: Polity Press, 1995), 44. However, what is especially important from the point of view of this thesis is that Heper, in a similar manner with Hegel, sees rationality as the necessary condition to overcome particularity, singularity, and immediacy in a way to reach universality.

society in close relationship with economic activities. In both cases the particularities in question are considered by taking into account the significance of economic needs and interests, not independent of economic activities. Heper associates civil society with the activities of business groups and their autonomous economic power from the state.⁴⁸⁰ He criticizes the relationship between state and civil society from this point of view by arguing that “the bureaucratic intelligentsia in Turkey certainly has had a rather condescending attitude towards business groups”⁴⁸¹ and that “governments closely controlled the various organizations set up by these groups.”⁴⁸² To sum up, then, Heper is one of the scholars who perceive the “reality of strong state-weak civil society confrontation” as the major question to handle regarding the concept of civil society in Turkey; he presents a peculiar state-centric approach to the background of this confrontation; and the reason why he deals with this subject is related with his concern with the problems regarding the consolidation of a “rational” type of democracy in the country; and there is great parallelism between his conception of civil society and with that of Hegel. The most distinguishing aspect of Hegel’s conceptualization of civil society (and the relationship between civil society and the state) is his stress on the egoistic ‘individuals’ and their particularisms on the one hand, and his emphasis on the principle of universality through a particular use of ‘reason’ and education on the other hand.

3.3.2. Liberal Democratic Consolidation-Oriented Perspective and the Liberal-Individualist-Pluralist Conception of Civil Society

Besides the two approaches that were examined above with reference to Mardin’s and Heper’s writings, there is another strand within the literature. Similar to these previous two approaches (exemplified by Mardin and Heper) this approach is

⁴⁸⁰ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 101-105.

⁴⁸¹ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 103.

⁴⁸² Heper, *The State Tradition*, 102.

characterized in the first place by a perspective that views the “reality” of strong state-weak civil society confrontation as *the main question* regarding civil society debate in Turkey. However it is different from both of them in important respects. What most distinguishes this approach from them, is its highly skeptic attitude toward the state and its consistent state-centric explanation for the background of this “fact of life” of Turkish politics; in other words, the steady reference to the *state as the explanation* for the weakness and certain limitations of civil society in Turkey. It largely focuses upon the particular state tradition in Turkey as the “hindrance”, a “barrier” on the way of the development of civil society in Western sense of the term. Indeed, this state-centric explanation is a decisive divergence between this approach and Mardin’s analysis though this approach takes its very inspiration from Mardin’s comparison of the Western and Ottoman-Turkish context from the point of view of the evolution of state-society relations. Moreover, unlike Mardin’s analysis this approach is characterized by attributing a positive value, even a certain degree of ‘superiority’ to the way Western social history has evolved compared with the Ottoman-Turkish social evolution. It should be added as an important parallelism between Mardin and this approach, however, that in both cases civil society is conceptualized in its liberal-individualist-pluralist sense and in both cases the priority is on the consolidation of a liberal democratic political system in the country.

This approach also departs from Heper’s statist-institutionalist approach. As was explained before, Heper’s analysis is characterized by a Hegelian conception of the state-civil society relation, of the state as the moment of ethical life where all conflicts are resolved in accordance with the long-term common interests of the society and as an emphasis on the potential and actual capacity of civil society to make a connection between particularity and universality. The conception of state employed by the studies examined in this section, on the other hand, is radically different in the sense that they strongly argue in favor of increasing the society’s control over the state’s actions and minimizing its interference into societal affairs.

As will be shown in detail in the following pages, those studies converge in conceiving civil society as functional for the realization of this ideal. In other words, they regard that the encouragement of the emergence and development of this kind of a civil society is necessary for giving the control of the social life to the society. So, what is good for the society is to be determined through participation of *the society* rather than being formulated by the state in the Hegelian sense of the term. Consequently, in this approach this dominance of the state/weakness of civil society is put forward as the major factor preventing the emergence and consolidation of liberal democracy in the country which is considered as an end to achieve. Finally, as can be expected, another important competent of this approach is an adherence to the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society. Hence, an autonomous, active and effective civil society which is the sphere of rights and liberties; the platform for the co-existence and representation of pluralities of individuals and groups; and epitomizing the autonomy of the society to govern itself is viewed as the precondition of democracy. As can be recalled from Chapter 2 the emphasis on the control of the state power; limiting its sphere of activity through guaranteeing a larger space for civil society; stress on the plurality at individual and group level; representation of this plurality through voluntary activity to which every citizen has an equal right are the central themes of this conception.⁴⁸³ As was explained in detail in the previous chapter, civil society is thought in association with the idea of “self-government of the society” which is to be achieved via “activeness” of the elements of civil society. But perhaps the most distinguishing aspect of this understanding is that the main impetus, the motivation behind this kind of activeness is the protection and enhancement of individual rights and liberties both including the notion of individual interests. Besides welcoming the differences, the plurality within the society, this conception presupposes that parties of this plurality are given equal chance of participation through legal equality. This liberal conception of civil society is fed mostly by the

⁴⁸³ For a detailed examination of the central premises of this conception of civil society see Chapter 2.

classical liberal separation between state and society. Accordingly, since they are thought of as two distinct entities the utmost attention is given to the confrontation between them. State, being outside the society, unless checked and balanced by the society has a tendency to dominate every sphere of life. This, in turn, would constitute a major threat to individual rights and liberties.⁴⁸⁴ Consequently, the concept of civil society is employed, in its liberal individualist-pluralist conception as a means of doing away with this threat.

This approach whose major characteristics explained above is epitomized in the works of a number of prominent scholars of the literature. Hence some samples from the works of these academics will be given in the following pages with the purpose of demonstrating the main tenets of this approach. These works are characterized by a certain understanding of democracy (liberal democracy) and a particular understanding of a democracy-friendly civil society at the same time. At the heart of this understanding there are the three central premises of the liberal-individualist-pluralist conceptualization of civil society which were explained in the previous chapter. In order to make this analysis in an organized way, these sample works will be considered on the basis of these three central themes: an over emphasis on state/civil society dichotomy; political participation in the form of civil societal activity as a means of controlling and limiting the state's sphere of activity and guaranteeing the individual rights and freedoms as formulated within liberal tradition; and thirdly the idea of pluralism which is to be practiced with the help of the principle of equality before the law.

It is obvious that the fundamental characteristic theme shaping this liberal-individualist-pluralist approach is the skepticism towards the state and pointing out the structure of the state as the main reason behind the weakness of civil society in Turkey. As was mentioned with reference to Gray in the last chapter "[t]he *sine*

⁴⁸⁴ The approach of liberal tradition to the concept of "liberty" as well as to the category of individual are explained in Chapter 2.

qua non of the liberal state in all its varieties is that governmental power and authority be limited by a system of constitutional rules and practices in which individual liberty and the equality of persons under the rule of law are respected.”⁴⁸⁵ The anti-statist core of liberalism in general and of the liberal-individualist-pluralist conceptualization of civil society in particular appears frequently in the works of scholars that represent this approach in Turkey. For instance a prominent representative of this tradition argues that there is “a style of rule detrimental to the development of civil society in Turkey” and this style of rule stems from two sources: one is the popular image of the state among both the public and the elites as an “omnipotent control mechanism” or a “fearsome tool” and the other is the attitude of the bureaucrats serving in the state mechanism and dealing with the periphery”.⁴⁸⁶ With regard to the popular image the reference point is the Turkish political culture which “is replete with the references to the ‘omnipotent state’ that functions as an eternal force, shaping and moulding the political system and society alike”.⁴⁸⁷ The popular image of the state as a “fearsome tool in the hands of the center” has given rise to an understanding among the public that “it was to be avoided at most times yet also assumed to have infinite resources and means at its disposal that could be distributed to the subjects of the state through benign largesse.”⁴⁸⁸ However, this image is a rather ambivalent one in the sense that it portrays the state as “both punishing and rewarding”: “when challenged it turns into a nasty and cruel (*ceberrut*) mechanism of suppression; but when socio-political forces cooperate with it, there is much to be gained from its

⁴⁸⁵ John Gray, *Liberalism*, 2nd Edition, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 71-72.

⁴⁸⁶ Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey: Democracy, Development and Protest” in *Civil Society in The Muslim World*, ed. Aryn B. Sajoo, (London, New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2002), 250.

⁴⁸⁷ Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey...”, 250

⁴⁸⁸ Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey...”, 250.

benevolence.”⁴⁸⁹ This popular image of the state (common among the elites as well as the ordinary people) is to be taken as an indicator of the real existence of that omnipotent state and this image of the state and the state-society relations “went together with a center that assumed that its functions legitimately included the goal of dominance over every nook and cranny of social life.”⁴⁹⁰

The attitude of the bureaucrats serving in the state mechanism is also underlined as a manifestation of the dominance of the state which has been detrimental to the development of civil society in Turkey: “Too often that attitude has been patronizing and humiliating” as result of which the “periphery [has become] too harassed”.⁴⁹¹ It is as a result of such analyses that the conclusion is reached in this approach in terms of the development of civil society:

Under these circumstances one does not expect to find much evidence of the roots of civic initiative, of the voluntary activism necessary to engage and *re-shape the state*. It is small wonder, then, that the state tradition in Turkey does not sit well with civil society.⁴⁹²

Consequently, one of the prominent scholars in the liberal-individualist pluralist tradition labels it “a serious political question” that “the relationship of the state to civil society in Turkey” is characterized by “a long tradition of a dominant state controlling the social fabric.”⁴⁹³ She argues that this tradition has been reproducing itself since the Ottoman period, and the military interventions during the Republican period have been “reassert[ing] the state’s dominance over many institutions of civil society work[ing] to the detriment of civil society and

⁴⁸⁹ Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey...”, 250.

⁴⁹⁰ Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey...”, 250.

⁴⁹¹ Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey...”, 251.

⁴⁹² Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey...”, 251. Emphasis added.

⁴⁹³ Binnaz Toprak, “The State, Politics and Religion in Turkey”, in, 119.

install[ing] a yet stronger state-dominant polity.”⁴⁹⁴ As a result, a familiar inference is drawn from this explanation:

A major obstacle to the development of civil society in Turkey is an overpowering bureaucracy which leaves little room for individual initiative and collective pursuit of interests within autonomous domains, free from state interference. The bureaucracy functions with the logic of checking what the state traditionally considers to be deceitful and contriving citizens applying to its bureaus.⁴⁹⁵

A prominent representative of the liberal-individualist-pluralist tradition argues that although there has been a certain level of transformation during the post-1980 period, the general trend in terms of the state-civil society relations has been that “every attempt on the part of civil societal elements to free themselves from the domination of the state had led to repression by the state.”⁴⁹⁶ In a similar vein, according to another scholar’s interpretation, the equation of civil society with organizational life and CSOs is part and parcel of a certain strategy on the part of the state aiming to control the realm of civil society.⁴⁹⁷ Through this strategy the state is said to enhance the conviction that only the “organizations” (i.e. the associations, foundations, trade-unions) that are recognized by the state (i.e. those registered by the security forces of the state since a CSO necessarily has to go through this procedure) are included within the realm of civil society and thereby strengthens its influence over civil societal activities.

⁴⁹⁴ Toprak, “The State, Politics and Religion in Turkey”, 120-121.

⁴⁹⁵ Toprak, “The State, Politics and Religion in Turkey”, 120

⁴⁹⁶ Göle, “Toward an Autonomization of Politics and Civil Society in Turkey”, 213-214. “The autonomization of civil society has different dimensions according to Göle: the liberal economic policies represented the economic dimension and the Islamist movement represented the cultural dimension.

⁴⁹⁷ Ömer Çaha, “Sivil Toplum Üstüne” in *Sivil Toplum ve Demokrasi*, ed. Lütfi Sunar (İstanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları, 2005), 14.

As a manifestation of this particular state tradition it is argued for instance that although the number of voluntary associations has been increasing since the establishment of the Republic, “the overall rate of membership in voluntary associations appears to be quite low.”⁴⁹⁸ The major reason is deemed to be the tendency of the “political authorities ... to use executive power in a relatively arbitrary manner to establish a punitive capacity to suppress actual or potential challenges to the establishment.”⁴⁹⁹ In a similar manner, lying upon the results of a comparative quantitative research, the author elsewhere concludes optimistically that “the magnitude and diversity of political participation in Turkey has oscillated over the years” but finds the political regime in the country showing a counter trend:

... in terms of political motives and the application of political resources to pressure governments and influence political decisions Turkish citizens seem to have accumulated a relatively high level of awareness, skills and knowledge. They seem to use such skills proficiently and effectively. Hence such a citizenry enabled the functioning of a vigorous multi-party system in Turkey. A culture of pluralism has gained considerable amount of ground in the past 50 years. However, the political regime of the country and most specifically its constitution stands out as the greatest impediment for the consolidation of a more pluralist context.

In accordance with this critical approach to the particular ‘relationship of the state to civil society’ the realm of civil society is defined as “the realm of the groups of individuals who can decompose themselves from the state”⁵⁰⁰ or as “a distinct social sphere” by emphasizing the importance of the autonomization of civil society

⁴⁹⁸ Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey”, 256. Kalaycıoğlu finds some explanation for this low rate in certain tenets of political culture in Turkey such as “a sense of interpersonal distrust” and “lack of social tolerance of dissent”. See Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, “Turkish Democracy: Patronage versus Governance”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol.2, No.1 (Spring 2001), 60-62.

⁴⁹⁹ Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey”, 256-257, 261.

⁵⁰⁰ Çaha, *Aşkın Devletten Sivil Topluma*, 9.

from the state.⁵⁰¹ As can be expected it is the concept of 'individual' that lies at the heart of this view on civil society and it is stated that "a state that is restricted in terms of its activities is an inevitable necessity for the development of social initiative and individual liberties"⁵⁰² it is viewed as a deficit that liberalism in Turkey did not imply individualism."⁵⁰³ There is the belief that a healthy structure of civil society should be organized according to the rules and regulations of market mechanism, i.e. according to the principle of competitiveness, the state's only intervention being that of the function of a referee.⁵⁰⁴

As has been explained in the previous chapter "the first and most basic democratic function of civil society" in liberal-individualist-pluralist conception, is to provide "the basis for the limitation of state power, hence for the control of the state by society, and hence for democratic political institutions as the most effective means of exercising that control."⁵⁰⁵ Hence the second distinguishing feature of this approach is an instrumental view of civil society in that political participation in the form of civil societal activity is seen as a means of limiting the state and/or as a checking mechanism for the possible despotic tendencies of the state so as to guarantee individual rights and liberties. As was shown previously, this is a major priority of Tocqueville's classical conception of civil society. As has been explained in the previous paragraphs, there is a widespread agreement that there has been a state tradition in Turkey which is "patronizing and humiliating", "repressing" and "dominating" the society. Accordingly, the question of "how

⁵⁰¹ Nilüfer Göle, "Toward an Autonomization of Politics and Civil Society in Turkey" in *Politics in the Third Turkish Republic*, eds. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 214.

⁵⁰² Çaha, *Aydınlar ve Demokrasi*, 72 (?).

⁵⁰³ Göle, "Toward an Autonomization of Politics and Civil Society in Turkey", 218.

⁵⁰⁴ Çaha, *Aydınlar ve Demokrasi*, 72.

⁵⁰⁵ Samuel Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?" *Political Science Quarterly* 99 (Summer 1984), quoted in Diamond, 7.

active and effective civil society is in Turkey” is taken into account with reference to “ascertain[ing]” whether it wields any power and influence vis-à-vis the state.⁵⁰⁶ Civil society denotes a means of stopping the tendency on the part of the state to intrude into social and individual lives and of increasing the capacity of the (civil) society to ‘govern itself’. In a similar manner it is argued by another representative of this approach that unless the realm of activities of the state is taken to its minimum, a civil society that is in service of democracy could not develop in this country: “civil society and the state are like the pairs of a scale. That one of them is weighty means the other is weightless.”⁵⁰⁷ The following definition of civil society is also illuminating in this respect:

Civil society refers to a social context that is determined by structures, processes and institutions which, in turn, stem from the voluntary, private actions of individual citizens. Hence, civil society connotes the lack of intrusion of the state or centralized national power in the affairs of private citizens. It is the autonomous, consenting and self-initiated actions of each individual that determine the gist of the matter that constitutes civil society. The overall emphasis of such a definition is on the free will, local decision-making and social contract undisturbed by the state.⁵⁰⁸

It is not unexpected, then, that the most emphasized aspect of civil society conceptualized as such is associational life “which functions as the core of civil society” and its autonomy from the state. As can be recalled, this emphasis is reminiscent of Tocqueville’s stress on associations as was explained in the previous chapter. In that respect, the characteristics of these associations are also put under scrutiny in Turkey with an eye on the question of whether or not they function as *watchdogs* over the deeds of state. For instance Kalaycıoğlu makes a critique of the existing civil society in Turkey from this perspective. He focuses on

⁵⁰⁶ Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey”, 256.

⁵⁰⁷ Ömer Çaha, *Aydınlar ve Demokrasi*, (İstanbul: İz Yayınları, 1999), 72. See also his “Civil Society in Western Europe and Ottoman Empire: A Comparative Perspective”, www.liberal-dt.org.tr/modules/printer.php?art=250; and his “Sivil Toplum ve Liberalizm [Civil Society and Liberalism], *Diyalog*, Vol.1, No.1, Jan. 1996, pp. 188-213.

⁵⁰⁸ Kalaycıoğlu, “State and Civil Society in Turkey”, 251-252. Emphases added.

the nature of relations among the civil society organizations as well as those between the state and the CSOs. What deserves attention in that respect for Kalaycıoğlu is the tendency among the CSOs to cooperate with the state rather than cooperating with other CSOs which, in its turn, leads to one of the most important deficits of the civil society in Turkey. That criticism is again closely linked with the state tradition in Turkey:

What Turkey is experiencing is not only a fragmented civil society, but one consisting of voluntary associations that are better at rivalry than mutual cooperation. *As a rule, voluntary associations do not seem to consider the state as an adversary*, but rather an ally to be mobilized against their competitors. So voluntary associations tend to campaign for state attention, subsidies, assistance while seeking to eliminate or eclipse their closest rivals.

It is not unpredictable that the CSOs are criticized for not being in mutual cooperation with each other but it is interesting that they are at the same time criticized for not considering the state as an adversary; in other words, the CSOs are expected to view the state as an adversary. Indeed, this view is in line with the definition of civil society quoted above. The tendency on the part of the CSOs to cooperate with the state at the expense of other CSOs has negative consequences that prevent the establishment of a democratic relationship between state and civil society: the civil society can neither exist independently of the state nor develop an autonomous identity from it. Hence, it is argued, it cannot fulfill its watchdog function over the possible authoritarian tendencies of the state. It is in this sense that, Omer Çaha, another representative of the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society, differentiates between “civil appearances” (*sivil görüntüler*) corresponding to concrete “physical appearance” of civil society on the one hand, and “civil consciousness” which adds a “unique and libertarian identity to those appearances differentiating them from the state”⁵⁰⁹ on the other. For the development of civil society the former is never enough by itself; it has to be complemented by the latter which is indeed more important. Such a civic

⁵⁰⁹ Ömer Çaha, *Aşkın Devletten Sivil Topluma*, [From Transcendental State to Civil Society], (İstanbul: Gendaş, 2000), 11.

consciousness which gives the civil society a unique identity and a libertarian culture can only grow in a context where individuals give priority to their own rights and liberties rather than to the maintenance of the state (*devletin bekası*). It is viewed as a major problem that there has been a counter tendency in Turkey in the sense that the state has been the main determinant of the political life and culture. According to Çaha, “civil consciousness can only be attained through a liberal and democratic culture”⁵¹⁰ because it is the liberal thought that stirs up an individual consciousness and fuels the passion to prioritize individual rights and liberties above anything else.⁵¹¹ In Turkey, however, the constitutive elements of civil society lack this liberal and democratic culture which, in turn, is the main obstacle in front of the development of civil society in that polity.⁵¹² As a result what is observed in Turkey is limited with “civil appearances”, rather than a “civil consciousness”. There are three preconditions of civil society in Çaha’s formulation: differentiation, organization and autonomization.⁵¹³ According to this, all different social groups should be free to get organized and to participate in politics so that these organizations would serve as intermediary institutions that contribute to the attainment of individual rights.⁵¹⁴

Viewing civil society and civil societal activity as *a means* to check the state, protect individual rights and freedoms so that define and attain individual interests autonomously is also observed in the definition of civil society with reference to

⁵¹⁰ Çaha, *Aşkın Devletten Sivil Topluma*, 12.

⁵¹¹ Çaha, *Aşkın Devletten Sivil Topluma*, 10.

⁵¹² Çaha, *Aşkın Devletten Sivil Topluma*, 13.

⁵¹³ Çaha, *Aşkın Devletten Sivil Topluma*, 307.

⁵¹⁴ Çaha *Aşkın Devletten Sivil Topluma*, 308.

“voluntary and self-governing organizations”⁵¹⁵; “self-organization of the society that acts with the purpose of pursuing individual, national or group interests”⁵¹⁶; and as “the sphere of autonomy where the citizens bring to the forefront the problems that concern themselves discuss about them and formulate them at the discourse level.”⁵¹⁷

Conception of civil society as the realm of liberties in the sense of “autonomous pursuit of interests” without being subject to state’s interference is concomitant with a definition of democratic practices as the rules and procedures regulating the relationships (i.e. the competition) among the various actors within this autonomous realm. This equals to the idea of liberal pluralism in which the conflicts between differences and particularisms are thought to “accommodate” each other and reach up to a consensus through this kind of a resolution. Since the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society is built upon the emphasis on the state-civil society confrontation and on the need to limit and control the state’s sphere of activity, the conflicts and struggles or uneven power relations within civil society are considered only within the framework of consensus and harmonious co-existence of differences. Once the state’s interference is left outside social initiative at individual and group levels is expected to rise it is assumed that this competition will take place in a harmonious way under equal conditions and so the end result will be the resolution of conflict and hence consensus. What is

⁵¹⁵ Gülgün Erdoğan-Tosun, “Birleştirici Demokrasi Devlet-Sivil Toplum İlişkisinin Yeniden Yapılandırılması İçin Bir Analiz Aracı Olabilir mi?” in *Sivil Toplum ve Demokrasi*, ed. Lütfi Sunar (İstanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları, 2005), 29.

⁵¹⁶ Gülgün Erdoğan-Tosun, “Türkiye’de Devlet-Sivil Toplum İlişkisi ve Demokrasinin Pekişmesinin Önündeki Engeller” in *Sivil Toplum ve Demokrasi*, ed. Lütfi Sunar (İstanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları, 2005), 135.

⁵¹⁷ Gülgün Erdoğan-Tosun, “Türkiye’de Devlet-Sivil Toplum İlişkisinin Niteliği ve Sorun Boyutları”, speech given at “Hikâyemi dinler misin? Tanıklıklarla Türkiye’de İnsan Hakları ve Sivil Toplum Sergisi”, Muğla, 17-24 August 2004, <http://www.tarihvakfi.org.tr/ihs/Mugla/konusmametni.asp> Retrieved on 30.10.2006.

needed for the development of civil society is “an understanding that is founded upon all kinds of sociological differentiation in the society and that leaves the initiative to social groups”.⁵¹⁸ There is an underlying assumption that obscuring the “intrusion of the state” into this “autonomous” and “local decision making” is the sufficient condition to make this process work harmoniously. There is also an underlying assumption that if undisturbed by the intrusion of state, the individuals and the groups that are voluntarily formed by them are inclined towards mutual cooperation. This, in turn, is due to the assumption that a “pluralist context” is enough to give the individuals and groups equal chance of accumulating “awareness, skills and knowledge” as well as the chance of using such skills “proficiently and effectively.”

In accordance with these suppositions, Kalaycıoğlu prefers to define political participation as “the use of political resources by citizens *acting in a pluralist opportunity structure* to respond to and exert pressure on government.”⁵¹⁹ The social groups get organized under a particular political party and compete with each other for the attainment of state power and those who get the majority have the absolute right to control the state mechanism in the name of the society as a whole.⁵²⁰ Ergun Özbudun’s emphasis on the political parties and the relations between CSOs and them is representative of this liberal-plural view of politics. In one of his most recent studies on civil society and democracy in Turkey he quotes the civil society definition given by Larry Diamond as “the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or a set of shared values.”⁵²¹ According

⁵¹⁸ Çaha, *Aşkın Devletten Sivil Topluma*, 317.

⁵¹⁹ Kalaycıoğlu, ““Turkish Democracy: Patronage versus Governance”, 59. Emphasis added.

⁵²⁰ Ömer Çaha, “Cumhuriyet ve Demokrasi”, *Yeni Türkiye*, No.23-24, 1998, 1071.

⁵²¹ Ergun Özbudun, “Civil Society and Democratic Consolidation in Turkey”, in *Civil Society, Democracy and the Muslim World*, 1997, 85.

to Özbudun, “consolidation of democracy requires a balanced relationship between civil society and political society”⁵²² comprising “strong (sometimes even organic) relations between a civil society organization and a political society organization, namely political parties”⁵²³ so that the outcome would be “political society, informed, pressured, and periodically renewed by civil society”.⁵²⁴ This stress upon the political role of civil society is also in line with the liberal pluralist analyses that place at the center the principle of competitiveness on the part of the civil societal elements that strive for political representation through close ties with political parties.

As can be seen, social differentiation and pluralism is celebrated as the *cine qua non* of democracy.⁵²⁵ Accordingly, it is argued that democracy is to see all kinds of differences and the competition for power among those differences as a source of richness.⁵²⁶ “The relative autonomization of the political system and social sphere from the domination of the state elites”⁵²⁷ contributes to “differentiation and pluralism” or “truly diverse identities in civil society” which had hardly been tolerated in Turkey.⁵²⁸ All of these notions, in turn, are attributed a positive value in terms of the development of a democratic state-society relationship in Turkey. According to Nilufer Gole for instance, “it is precisely [the] overpoliticization of civil society that hinders democratization” by which she suggests that civil societal

⁵²² Özbudun, 85.

⁵²³ Özbudun, 85.

⁵²⁴ Özbudun, 86.

⁵²⁵ Çaha, “Cumhuriyet ve Demokrasi”, 1071.

⁵²⁶ Çaha, “Cumhuriyet ve Demokrasi”, 1071.

⁵²⁷ Göle, “Toward an Autonomization ...”, 217.

⁵²⁸ Göle, “Toward an Autonomization ...”, 213, 219.

elements should be engaged with “issue-politics” and “express their own particular demands” rather than being engaged with “holistic politics.”⁵²⁹ This is the necessary condition for democratization according to her:

Democratization can occur in theory and praxis when such a relativization and self-limitation of social movements occurs as civil society liberates itself from totalizing political projects... In Turkey, in accordance with this formulation, the self-limitation of goals, the abandonment of totalizing projects and the acknowledgement of pluralism become prerequisites for the development of a civil society.⁵³⁰

As can be seen, the principle of pluralism has a central place in this liberal-democratic consolidation oriented perspective and the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society: “what is needed for the democratization of civil society is the prevention of totalization of differences.”⁵³¹ In addition to these characteristics, a democratic civil society should also be characterized by a “consensual, tolerant, open-to-bargain and participatory political culture.”⁵³² A representative of this approach criticizes “Middle East politics” *for its conflictual character and its “lack of consensuality, the lack of self-regulation of the social order”*⁵³³ which, as was explained above, is thought to be related with the repression of the demands for autonomization by the state. What is now needed for solving this problem and for reaching a consensus and self-regulation of social order, is “the interaction and the establishment of horizontal relations between different social actors and political ideologies” which in turn “can lead to shared discursive

⁵²⁹ Nilüfer Göle, “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics” in *Civil Society in the Middle East*, ed. A. Richard Norton, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 36-37.

⁵³⁰ Göle, “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics”, 37.

⁵³¹ Erdoğan-Tosun, “Türkiye’de Devlet-Sivil Toplum İlişkisinin Niteliği ve Sorun Boyutları”, web source.

⁵³² Erdoğan-Tosun, “Türkiye’de Devlet-Sivil Toplum İlişkisinin Niteliği ve Sorun Boyutları”.

⁵³³ Göle, “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics”, 37. Emphasis added.

relations and civic culture.”⁵³⁴ Göle for instance argues that “Turkey is experiencing a very rich “debate culture”” providing “a platform for freedom of expression and an encounter between different points of view which in turn “destroy the walls which separate groups in thought and lifestyle and slowly contribute to the experience of cultural, political and ethnic pluralism.”⁵³⁵ The role that the state is expected to play is in the form of a legal framework of rights and obligations: “... a state intervention providing the framework of rights and obligations is necessary for civil society in the form of voluntary associations.”⁵³⁶ This is why, “the only reference point for democracy is nothing but society”⁵³⁷ and also why “democrats view the society as an end in itself while they view the state

⁵³⁴ Göle , “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics”, 37. There are two important points that need special emphasis since they put her in a rather different place than the other liberal plural approaches examined under the same category in this study. First, and perhaps the most distinguishing part of Göle’s approach is her acknowledgement and emphasis upon the power relations within the civil society as an autonomous sphere of activity. She argues that she is especially interested in uncovering the power relations that have been covered during the process of a hegemonic struggle going on in the civil society. Nilüfer Göle, “Demokratik Bir Kamusal Alan İçin Güçlü Bir Sivil Toplum Ön Koşuldur” interview by Uğur Kömeçoğlu, Kenan Çayır, Lütfi Sunar in *Sivil Toplumunu Konuşmak*, ed. Lütfi Sunar, (İstanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları, 2005), 208. She states that she is especially interested in deciphering the mentalities, the frames of mind that serve to make the hegemonic relations invisible by normalizing them. However, it is obvious that she stands somewhere different from the leftist analyses that tackle with the same question. This is for the reason that at the center of her analyses there is the questioning of the “values system” and the “symbolic violence” rather than the economic inequalities that the latter types of analyses pay attention. This last point is also closely related with the definition of pluralism Göle employs i.e. the plurality of opinions and lifestyles. The second point of divergence between Göle’s analysis and other liberal pluralist approaches is her views upon the adventure of the concept of civil society in different contexts. On this issue she comes closest to Şerif Mardin and argues that any mentioning of the differences between these contexts should take into account the particular social histories. More precisely, to refer to the existence of a particular formation of state-society relations in Turkey different from the West should not take the form of talking about ‘the deficits’ on the part of the former. Göle, “Demokratik Bir Kamusal Alan İçin Güçlü Bir Sivil Toplum Ön Koşuldur”, 208.

⁵³⁵ Göle , “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics”, 37.

⁵³⁶ Göle , “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics”, 36.

⁵³⁷ Çaha, “Cumhuriyet ve Demokrasi”, 1070.

as a means.”⁵³⁸ According to this formulation, “in democratic regimes, the state is flexible and neutral in a way that can be adapted to the sphere of maneuver of any group in the society.”⁵³⁹

This liberal idea of pluralism is observed even in the writings of a scholar who claims that what she proposes is an alternative to the recent neo-liberal alternatives of liberal democracy.⁵⁴⁰ According to this view, the “civil society [composed of “associations founded upon pluralist political interests”] is in a primary position whereas the state is secondary to it...The CSOs will takeover certain social responsibilities that had previously been held by the state.”⁵⁴¹ The principle of associative-ness is related to “the distribution of social, political and economic power among the voluntary organizations in civil society” instead of the centralization of these powers in the state.⁵⁴² In this picture the provision of public welfare and other services should be left to the CSOs and the state should be responsible for only funding these organizations;⁵⁴³ the primary distributor is not the state but the CSOs.⁵⁴⁴ So this model of associative democracy is characterized by the authorization of the CSOs on the one hand and a re-definition of the role of the state.⁵⁴⁵ According to this, “the state is perceived not as an institution that produces, governs and performs but as an institution that cooperates.”⁵⁴⁶ Although this

⁵³⁸ Çaha, “Cumhuriyet ve Demokrasi”, 1077.

⁵³⁹ Çaha, “Cumhuriyet ve Demokrasi”, 1071.

⁵⁴⁰ Gülgün Erdoğan-Tosun, “Birleştirici Demokrasi...”, 25.

⁵⁴¹ Erdoğan-Tosun, “Birleştirici Demokrasi...”, 27-28.

⁵⁴² Erdoğan-Tosun, “Birleştirici Demokrasi...”, 28.

⁵⁴³ Erdoğan-Tosun, “Birleştirici Demokrasi...”, 29.

⁵⁴⁴ Erdoğan-Tosun, “Birleştirici Demokrasi...”, 28.

⁵⁴⁵ Erdoğan-Tosun, “Birleştirici Demokrasi...”, 37.

⁵⁴⁶ Erdoğan-Tosun, “Türkiye’de Devlet-Sivil Toplum İlişkisi ve Demokrasinin Pekişmesinin Önündeki Engeller”, 127.

“associative model of democracy” goes a step further in suggesting a more radical shift in the roles of the state and civil society at the most basic level it follows a similar line of thinking with other academicians that are categorized under the title of the liberal-individualist-pluralist approach. Once again, civil society- as- the realm of autonomous activity, voluntariness, initiative and liberties is defined in terms of its relation to and control over (the authoritarian tendencies of) the state and its deficits. It is again viewed as a major problem that politics is perceived by the politicians and state elites in Turkey as a means to change the society while it should be perceived as “a social practice that includes reaching at consensus-creating solutions through the competition of different interests, ideas and preferences.”⁵⁴⁷ Inner contradictions and uneven power relations within the civil society are once again overlooked and/or taken for granted. Its contribution to a democratic way of life is defined with reference to its being plural and autonomous from the state and in addition to its ability to function as the primary political actor that takes over much of the responsibilities of the state. It is not easy to find out how to determine which CSOs will act as the provider of the public services? There is reference only to a negotiative process among them and it is assumed that both the process of determining the public political decisions and the process of their implementation will be characterized by consensus rather than conflict once it is assured that civil society is plural and autonomous in character. The CSOs are thought of as the new holders of state’s responsibilities as the prime distributor, governor, producer etc. but the category of the CSOs does not constitute a homogeneous group. Guaranteeing pluralism and negotiation cannot be considered as the sufficient condition of a just process determining which of those CSOs will be the main distributor since not all CSOs are at an equal status in social, political, cultural and economic terms.

⁵⁴⁷ Erdoğan-Tosun, “Türkiye’de Devlet-Sivil Toplum İlişkisi ve Demokrasinin Pekişmesinin Önündeki Engeller”, 127.

To sum up, the scholars examined under the subtitle of “liberal-democracy oriented perspective” are commonly characterized by first a perspective that views the “reality” of strong state-weak civil society confrontation as the main question regarding civil society debate in Turkey; second, they commonly share a state-centric explanation for the background of this “fact of life” of Turkish politics; third the reason why they focus upon this question is that they think this weakness of civil society (due to the dominance of the state) is the major factor that prevented the emergence and consolidation of liberal democracy in the country which they consider as an end to achieve. Finally, as has been explained for each of these scholars in the previous pages, they all adhere to the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society. The emphasis on the control of the state power; limiting its sphere of activity so that guaranteeing a larger space for civil society; stress on the plurality at individual and group level; representation of this plurality through voluntary activity to which every citizen has an equal right are the central themes of this conception.⁵⁴⁸ As was explained in detail in the previous chapter, civil society is thought in association with the idea of “self-government of the society” which is to be achieved via “activeness” of the elements of civil society. But perhaps the most distinguishing aspect of this understanding is that the main impetus, the motivation behind this kind of activeness is the protection and enhancement of individual rights and liberties both including the notion of individual interests. Besides welcoming the differences, the plurality within the society, this conception presupposes that parties of this plurality are given equal chance of participation through legal equality. This liberal conception of civil society is fed mostly by the classical liberal separation between state and society. Accordingly, since they are thought of as two distinct entities the utmost attention is given to the confrontation between them. State, being outside the society, unless checked and balanced by the society has a tendency to dominate every sphere of life. This, in turn, would

⁵⁴⁸ For a detailed examination of the central premises of this conception of civil society see Chapter 2.

constitute a major threat to individual rights and liberties.⁵⁴⁹ Consequently, the concept of civil society is employed, in its liberal individualist-pluralist conception as a category to do away with this threat. The concept of civil society denotes and connotes the means through which the society regulates its life without (or with minimum) state intervention. Two implications follow: first, this approach remains blind to the inner dynamics of the society in the sense of uneven power relations (stemming from economic status, socio-cultural position, gender etc.) that could curtail any individual's chance of active participation and of making his/her voice heard in civil society. This question is thought to be overcome through equality before the law and such inequalities are handled within the concept of 'pluralism'. Second, it leads to the conception of the state as a referee that watches *from outside* to see to it that everyone is following "the rules" which are ideally thought to be formulated by *the (civil) society*. However, this kind of a conception of the state as an entity outside and above the society is challenged seriously by the perspectives developed by Marx and Gramsci in their works on the state-civil society relation.

It should also be underlined at this point that there are two important differences between the development of the concept of civil society in the Western liberal tradition and its adventure in Turkish liberalism. First, in the case of the European liberal thought, as was explained in the previous chapter, the concept of civil society was not always thought in distinction with the state. Rather, as was exemplified in Locke's conception, the concept of civil society denoted the 'society with a state'. Another important difference between the Western liberal tradition and Turkish liberalism is that in Europe the concept of civil society has always been handled in relation with the economic activities. In other words, state and civil society distinction has evolved in such a way that civil society was associated with economics and it has been viewed as an autonomous sphere of economic activities of individuals and groups outside the state intervention. In the Turkish case, however, economics is not a central theme of the liberal-oriented conceptions of civil society. In most cases individual rights and liberties in the liberal sense of

⁵⁴⁹ The approach of liberal tradition to the concept of "liberty" as well as to the category of individual are explained in Chapter 2.

these terms, which at the same time rest at the heart of the liberal understanding of civil society, are not brought to the foreground in relation with the economic realm.

3.3.3. “Natural Development” and “Spontaneous Order” Oriented Perspective and the Conservative Liberal-Individualist-Pluralist Conception of Civil Society

Another sub category of the studies, which is built upon i) the perception of the strong state-weak civil society duality as a reality of Turkish politics and ii) a state-tradition oriented explanation for this reality, is differentiated when it comes to the question of *why* it would be a problem. Reverberating the views of Oakeshott and Hayek, who were examined as representatives of the liberal-conservative conception of civil society, this perspective problematizes the weakness of civil society faced by a dominant state from the point of view of the “spontaneous order” and/or “natural development” of the society. This approach suggests that the weakness of civil society in Turkey is a symptom and indication of the curbing of the spontaneous development of society by the state. In simple terms, it is argued that due to the particular state tradition a vibrant civil society has not been able to develop in Turkey and hence the society has been hold back from following its natural path of development. So this aspect is what renders this approach different from other approaches that criticize the dominance of the state in social, political and economic aspects of life and emphasize the principle of pluralism.

This kind of a perspective and conception of civil society is epitomized most clearly in Mustafa Erdoğan’s works on the subject. What gives Erdoğan’s approach a considerable tone of conservatism is his overemphasis upon the spontaneous and/or natural development of the society and accordingly limited role of the state in terms of its relations with the society. In a way that is reminiscent of Oakeshott and Hayek he constantly underlines the importance of the self development and self-order of the society. With reference to Hayek, for instance, he makes a differentiation between an artificial order (*yapma düzenler*) which is designed and

imposed by an authority on the one hand and a spontaneous order on the other. He gives the structure of an organization (*örgüt*) as an example of the former and argues that a very typical example of the latter is the society itself.⁵⁵⁰ In accordance with this emphasis on spontaneity of the society he gives the utmost importance to cultural attitudes and values embedded in that social context. Hence he thinks that in principal transformations at the level of consciousness do not occur easily and that any external interference with the purpose of initiating such a transformation would be harmful for the society.⁵⁵¹ The upshot of such an argument is parallel to Hayek's claim that the major question is that of "how we can make the best use of the spontaneous forces found in a free society." He argues that although such interferences by the state to the spontaneous and autonomous course of transformation of the society have been occurring in Turkey since the single party period, it should be accepted that it takes a much longer time for the society to adapt itself to the novelties and hence to change.⁵⁵² This is so because the emergence of new attitudes and mentalities and their consolidation is closely related with the stability of the certain practices and institutions that have been in existence; it is this kind of stability that modes of thinking and behaving are being formed and reformed.⁵⁵³

As can be seen, the stress upon the practices, institutions and mentalities that crop up within the natural process of development of society amounts to the conservative part of Erdoğan's views on the state-society relationship. This at the same time constitutes the ground upon which his approach to the concept of civil

⁵⁵⁰ Mustafa Erdoğan, *Demokrasi, Laiklik, Resmî İdeoloji*, (Ankara: Liberte, 2000), 19-20.

⁵⁵¹ Mustafa Erdoğan, "Türkiye'de Sivil Toplumun Gelişmesi İçin Devlet Değişmeli", interview by Lütü Sunar, in *Sivil Toplumunu Konuşmak [Talking About Civil Society]*, ed. Lütü Sunar (İstanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları 2005), 190.

⁵⁵² Mustafa Erdoğan, "Türkiye'de Sivil Toplumun Gelişmesi İçin Devlet Değişmeli", 191.

⁵⁵³ Erdoğan, "Türkiye'de Sivil Toplumun ...", 191.

society flourishes which is in effect in line with the liberal-pluralist tradition. He thinks that at the crux of the debate on civil society and the relationship between civil society and politics there is the question of to what extent the organization at the societal level is autonomous from the political authority.⁵⁵⁴

With respect to the Turkish context it is argued in this approach that the state has always been characterized by the ever deepening “passion to put the society in order” (“*tanzim etmek*”) and hence “has left almost no autonomous sphere” for it.⁵⁵⁵ He claims that the Republican period represents the era where this passion has reached its zenith and that until very recently the society have been almost entirely planned/designed (*kurgulanmak*) by the state in accordance with the principles of a state ideology.⁵⁵⁶ According to Erdoğan “the essence of the political struggle in Turkey is nothing but a resistance [on the part of the state] to the possibility of loosing the monopoly of controlling the society.”⁵⁵⁷ As result, Erdoğan argues, the society has lost its ability to take initiative which has been the main source of the impasse that the Turkish politics finds itself in. This repression of the dynamism of the society is a major obstacle on the way of the democratic consolidation in Turkey and the revitalization of an active and initiative-taking society is required for democratization.⁵⁵⁸ He seems to refer to a renewal because he argues that the Turkish context had already witnessed the experience of a highly active associational life during the end of the 19th century and the beginning of 20th century.⁵⁵⁹ This situation, however, has come to an end as a result of the repression

⁵⁵⁴ Erdoğan, “Türkiye’de Sivil Toplumun ...”, 189.

⁵⁵⁵ Erdoğan, “Türkiye’de Sivil Toplumun ...”, 189.

⁵⁵⁶ Erdoğan, “Türkiye’de Sivil Toplumun ...”, 189, 193.

⁵⁵⁷ Erdoğan, “Türkiye’de Sivil Toplumun ...”, 190.

⁵⁵⁸ Erdoğan, “Türkiye’de Sivil Toplumun ...”, 192.

⁵⁵⁹ Erdoğan, “Türkiye’de Sivil Toplumun ...”, 191.

and elimination policies of the Republic.⁵⁶⁰ Thus, it was not the state that initiated the democratization process in Turkey; on the contrary what the state has been engaged with all through the Republican period is to try to slow down this process started by the society.⁵⁶¹ This is the explanation suggested for the immaturity of civil society in Turkey.

So, Erdoğan not unlike the scholars examined previously, gives the utmost importance to the autonomy of the society from the state's interference in his definition of civil society; but departs from them in formulating his criticism from a conservative perspective highlighting the worth of the spontaneity and stability of social practices (mentalities, institutions, ways of thinking and behaving that arise from within the society) throughout the historical development of society. He summarizes this critique in claiming that the society is not an organization that can be designed, re-shaped, ruled and manipulated for the sake of a certain goal. However, such a view has been dominant on the part of the state so far in Turkey since the state has always claimed a position for itself not only outside but also above the society.⁵⁶² What is needed, however, is just the opposite, that is, a state outside the society, a "state without an ideology", a state that whose *raison d'être* is not ruling/governing the society but "serving" the society. Erdoğan explains that an "organization" by definition requires that an authority assigns certain roles to the individuals associated with that organization; moreover the authority in question is responsible for the governance and forwarding of these roles in accordance with the goals of the organization.⁵⁶³ Hence, the perception of the "society as an organization" has resulted in a transcendental view of state which in turn has

⁵⁶⁰ Erdoğan, "Türkiye'de Sivil Toplumun ...", 191.

⁵⁶¹ Mustafa Erdoğan, "Türkiye'de Sivil Toplumun ...", 191.

⁵⁶² Mustafa Erdoğan, "Hikmet-i Hükümetten Hukuk Devletine Yol Var mı?" in Mustafa Erdoğan, *Dersimiz Özgürlük*, (İstanbul: Pınar Yayınları, 2001), 30-31.

⁵⁶³ Mustafa Erdoğan, *Demokrasi, Laiklik, Resmî İdeoloji*, (Ankara: Liberte, 2000), 19-20.

curbed the development of civil society as an autonomous sphere of activity. If the society had been left on its own spontaneous evolution instead of being viewed as an organization to be ruled it would have reached a state of maturity.

This harsh opposition to the perception of civil society as an organization is reminiscent of Oakeshott's differentiation between "state as an enterprise" and "state as an association" that was described in detail in the first chapter.⁵⁶⁴ Although Erdoğan does not directly use those terms in his works, it is quite obvious that his criticism of the current state of affairs with regard to the state-society relations and the state's perception of civil society in particular, corresponds to Oakeshott's criticism of "rational politics" and corresponding understanding of state as enterprise association. In both cases the authors are concerned with disheartening the state's intervention into the society and its evolution, and the effort to mobilize the society and individuals for the sake of a collective good/common purpose. They strongly argue against both the validity and necessity of such a disposition with an emphasis upon the individual differences that lie at the source of social plurality. Hence, there is another aspect of Erdoğan's opposition to the conceptualization of social formation as an organization or as an "enterprise" in Oakeshott's terms. This, in turn, is related with the importance that he attaches to the category of the individual and this emphasis again constitutes a point of convergence between Erdoğan and Oakeshott. An organization or an enterprise, according to them is a threat to the principle of individuality in the sense that it views the individuals only as the staff and/or agents who are assigned certain tasks by a central authority.⁵⁶⁵ However, the distinct and unique aims, ideals, life views and preferences of individuals are more valuable than the collective decision-making processes, social preferences and priorities.⁵⁶⁶ The individual and his/her freedom of choice should

⁵⁶⁴ Michael Oakeshott,

⁵⁶⁵ Mustafa Erdoğan, *Demokrasi, Laiklik, Resmî İdeoloji*, (Ankara: Liberte, 2000), 19-20.

⁵⁶⁶ Mustafa Erdoğan, *Demokrasi, Laiklik, Resmî İdeoloji*, 29.

be the main priority. Indeed for Erdoğan what lies at the heart of the individual rights and liberties is freedom of choice.⁵⁶⁷ Therefore, he argues that the reference points of the individuals' choices are of great variety and a convergence between those references should not be expected.⁵⁶⁸ Again in great parallelism, Oakeshott argues that the difference in the sense of plurality among the individuals is not something that can be eliminated. Oakeshott explains this with resort to the notion of 'reason'. In the words of a conservative liberal,

We are obliged to recognize that human beings may disagree for many different reasons, not just because some are less wise and good than others, but because being rational they can always notice or emphasize different aspects of what they perceive, or pursue different purposes. We are obliged, in short, to renounce the dream of achieving unity by common recognition of one, universal truth.⁵⁶⁹

This reference to the uniqueness and freedom of choice of each individual naturally goes hand in hand with hostility in Erdoğan's works towards a definition of civil society in terms of organizational/associational life. Contrary to this view, he seems to think of civil society as composed of individuals. Those individuals may or may not choose to come together, to get organized and behave as a group. This must be happening as a voluntary act, out of a free choice of the individual. Erdoğan argues that the emphasis on associations and associational life within the debate on civil society tends to present civil societal activity as an obligation, a duty rather than as a right that individuals may or may not choose to use.

As a last point of convergence between Oakeshott and Erdoğan it is important to point out the emphasis upon the concept of law (rule of law) which is an inseparable part of their thinking. In that respect, both refer to the importance of the

⁵⁶⁷ Mustafa Erdoğan, *Demokrasi, Laiklik, Resmî İdeoloji*, 33-34.

⁵⁶⁸ Mustafa Erdoğan, *Demokrasi, Laiklik, Resmî İdeoloji*, 34.

⁵⁶⁹ Shirley Robin Letwin, "On Conservative individualism" in *Conservative Essays*, ed. Maurice Cowling, (London: Cassell, Ltd., 1978).

“bounding of the state by law” in the sense of restricting the activities of the state to the limits set by the law.⁵⁷⁰ In both cases, the answer to the question of how and/or by whom those laws should be made is clear: *the society* during the course of its natural historical evolution. As was explained before, Oakeshott is of the opinion that the rules of a civil association, which is the ideal form, can only be determined by living through those rules; which rules are needed will be revealed by the practice. Similarly, Erdoğan talks of law with reference to its capacity to bound, the state in the direction of the demands coming from *the society*.

The conception of civil society that can be inferred from this conservative oriented perspective corresponds in great part to the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception. As a general characteristic of liberal approaches to civil society, in both cases, the main confrontation is depicted as that of the one between state and civil society whereas the power relations/struggles through which those “demands limiting the state” are formed and compete with each other are disregarded. They are all considered within the framework of liberal idea of ‘pluralism as richness or as fortune’. Again, civil society is viewed instrumental in giving the initiative to the society and individuals in particular, attaining the goal of spontaneous order by limiting the state. Lastly, as in the case of the representatives of the classical liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society, in the conservative liberal-individualist-pluralist this autonomy and plurality of civil society is not handled with reference to economic activities. However, in the case of Hayek, whose ideas constitute one of the two original sources of this conception, economics and society’s autonomy and plurality in terms of economic activities rest at the center of the idea of civil society. The works of Erdoğan, which are chosen as the representative of this approach in Turkey, are largely concerned with the spontaneous order and natural development of society with an eye on the problematic relationship between state and Islamic identity in Turkey.

⁵⁷⁰ Mustafa Erdoğan, “Hikmet-i Hükümetten Hukuk Devletine Yol Var mı?”, 31.

3.3.4. Socialism- Oriented Perspective and the Liberal-Individualist-Pluralist Conception of Civil Society

The concept of civil society has also been on the agenda of the left in Turkey since the 1980s. As will be shown in the following pages, there are different ways in which the concept is being thought and discussed within the leftist tradition in Turkey. This section will go over the liberal-leftist position that shares much with the liberal tradition in general in terms of its approach toward the concept of civil society⁵⁷¹: first, it is common within the liberal-left to take the confrontation between strong state and weak civil society both as “a fact of life” in Turkish politics and as the major question to handle in the civil society debate. Moreover, it puts forward state-centric explanations as to the background of this fact of life. In other words, their analysis also revolves around the theme of a weak civil society as a result of dominant state tradition as the most outstanding issue to be discussed. Their difference lies in the conclusions they draw from this kind of an analysis i.e. to the question of *why* they take this to be *the* issue. In that respect two different perspectives can be distinguished from each other within the liberal-left. The first group of studies makes this discussion with an eye to the question of “socialism in Turkey”. In other words, they see the problem of a strong state dominating the society and curtailing the development of civil society as the major reason behind the ineffectiveness of socialism as a political movement in Turkey. The other perspective within the liberal-leftist literature on civil society is concerned with the strong state-weak civil society confrontation as part and parcel of their interest in the notion of “active citizenship” as it has been developed within the liberal-republican tradition of thought and it will be explored in the next section.

Not unlike the previous three approaches (the universality-oriented perspective, spontaneous order-oriented perspective and liberal democracy-oriented perspective) the socialism-oriented perspective is also built upon the strong state-

⁵⁷¹ As has been pointed before, the critical strand within the leftist tradition which takes its inspiration from Marx and Gramsci’s conceptions will be analyzed in the following chapter.

weak civil society dichotomy as a reality of Turkish politics and adheres to a state-centric explanation for this reality. In other words, the state tradition and its attitude toward society which has always been dominating, manipulating and repressing is viewed as the main reason behind the weakness of civil society. Considering the emphasis that these left oriented scholars put on the question of strong state and the resulting weak civil society, it is indeed not so unexpected that their conception of civil society has much in common with the liberal idea of civil society. As has been explained in Chapter 2, at the heart of all liberal-oriented conceptualizations of civil society rests this state-civil society dichotomy and the need to control and limit the state's activities through the enlargement of civil society. Corollary to this focus on the distinction between state and civil society, civil society is associated with individual rights and liberties, autonomy and self-government of the society, and a conception of pluralism as the harmonious co-existence of differences and hence as a 'fortune' for the society. As will be shown with reference to some samples from the writings of leading leftist scholars, these are at the same time the central ideas characterizing the conception of civil society that one comes across within the socialism-oriented perspective. Hence it shares a considerable common ground with other three perspectives in terms of *what* is problematized, *how* that problem is explained and *which conception* of civil society is employed. However, it diverges from them in terms of the question of *why* that problem would be a 'problem'. More specifically, this perspective takes the strong state-weak civil society dichotomy as a serious problem with the claim that it is due to the state's constant grip over society that socialism has not been able to develop as a grassroots movement comprising a challenge/alternative to the status quo. The scholars cited in this category are well known for their left leanings and in certain occasions they have emphasized their concern with unequal power relations characterizing the social realm. Nevertheless, it is also evident that, as will be shown in detail below, the way they conceptualize civil society displays important parallelism with the liberal-individual-pluralist conception. Consequently, *what is most interesting about this perspective is the coexistence of two rival politico-philosophical dispositions: a liberal-individualist-pluralist perspective in terms of the way civil*

society is conceptualized on the one hand and socialism on the other hand. In the following pages, this coexistence will be explained with reference to sample works of three prominent scholars in this tradition. The preliminaries of the socialism-oriented perspective on civil society within the liberal-leftist literature can be found in the writings of İdris Küçükömer which mostly date back to the 1960s⁵⁷² and has been represented by Ahmet İnsel and Murat Belge whose works have also been turning points since the 1980 in the leftist literature on civil society in Turkey.

As has already been explained in the previous parts of this study, there are three central themes characterizing the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society: state-civil society dichotomy seeing these two as separate entities existing in opposition to each other; an instrumental approach to civil society as a means to check and limit the state and to protect individual rights and liberties; and an understanding of pluralism as a source of “affluence” since it is considered within the framework of harmony and resolution of conflicts under legal equality. As will be shown below, these three themes rests at the center of socialism-oriented perspective’s understanding of civil society.

As in the case of all liberal-oriented approaches in the civil society debate, state-civil society dichotomy is the central theme in liberal left literature. It is a common attitude among the scholars in this tradition to take the analysis of this confrontation between a dominant state and a weak civil society as their starting point and build their whole argument on it. Besides, they commonly adapt a state-centric explanation for the problematic of strong state–weak civil society as a characteristic of Turkish political life. It is obvious that they use the left side of this

⁵⁷² Indeed, Küçükömer has the reputation of being the first intellectual bringing the concept of civil society to the agenda of intellectual political debates in Turkey. See for instance, Yücel Yaman, “Tek Dikenli Deniz Kestanesi Topal mıdır, Kel midir?”, in *İdris Küçükömer Anısına Türkiye’de Sivil Toplum Arayışları*, (İstanbul: WALD- World Academy for Local Government and Democracy Publications, 2000) as well as other contributors in that collective book.

pair as the *explanan*⁵⁷³ whereas they handle the right side as the *explanandum*.⁵⁷⁴ Consequently, the state structure and/or state tradition in Turkey is viewed as blocking the development of an autonomous social sphere. It is believed that this state structure has been the ground upon which certain ways of thinking and behaving have grown within the society.

For instance, in the case of Küçükömer this analysis of strong state dominating the (civil) society is discussed with reference to the theme of “segmentation of power” (*iktidarın bölünmüşlüğü*) between state and society and it is given the utmost importance.⁵⁷⁵ It is labeled as “the first hypothesis” upon which the whole argument is built:

In the Greko-Roman world and the Western world that ascended from it, power has always been segmented at various levels; it is open to be segmented. Together with the anarchical element virtual to it [sic.]. Segmentation is seated deep in the structure, and it is the essence, though the history moves. It is just the opposite in the East, segmentation is temporary rather than being structural; what is essential is monism in power! There is no symmetry but a complementary organic whole.⁵⁷⁶

Accordingly, the Western type of state which is founded upon a system of balance between various holders of power, and the Eastern type of state which as a principle excludes decomposition of power represent two different genres.⁵⁷⁷ This

⁵⁷³ Explanatory variable.

⁵⁷⁴ Something to be explained.

⁵⁷⁵ İdris Küçükömer, *Sivil Toplum Yazıları Bütün Eserleri 3*, (İstanbul: Bağlam, 1994), 199,194-195, 187-188; 144-147; 132-135; 124-127. Küçükömer himself uses the term “segmentary” in his writings.

⁵⁷⁶ Küçükömer, *Sivil Toplum Yazıları*,126.

⁵⁷⁷ İdris Küçükömer, “Türkiye’de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?”, 132. Küçükömer also underlines the centrality of the concept of “state order” (*devlet düzeni*) in relation to his discussion on the “Asiatic mode of production”. According to him, that mode of production and the state order and the relationship of hegemony are closely connected with each other. See, İdris

kind of a state structure state of affairs constitutes the “political heritage” of this country which is articulated with “legal and ideological heritage”, as well as the epistemological heritage.⁵⁷⁸ As explained above, the main characteristics of the “political heritage” pertain to the centralized and hierarchical organization of political power which has always been dominant as opposed to the systematic segmentation in the West. “Epistemological heritage” in its turn, is reflected in “the way we learn, think and decide.”⁵⁷⁹ Küçükömer argues that when these two determine “the way we learn, think (?) [sic.] and decide in politics” and names this as “political epistemology.”⁵⁸⁰ He summarizes the motto of this political

Küçükömer, “Asyagil Üretim Biçimi, Yeniden Üretim ve Sivil Toplum”, in *İdris Küçükömer, Bütün Eserleri 3 Sivil Toplum Yazıları*, (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 1994), 27. According to him, in that mode of production the determining feature is that “the hegemony of the sovereign (*hükümdar*), the head of the political society, is complete (*tam*). He defines “the form (or the relationship) of hegemony” in the Asiatic mode of production as the kind of “central-unitary-bureaucratic-political order”. “Asyagil Üretim Biçimi...”, 30. For him this relationship of hegemony “is included in the economic base, it is dominant over the economic base”. “Asyagil Üretim Biçimi...”, 31. Similarly, he argues that in the Asiatic mode of production “the operational integrity of the form of production or socio-economic structure ... is identical with the reproduction of the state order in which the continuity of the relationship of hegemony is institutionalized.” “Asyagil Üretim Biçimi...”, 31. In this state order, “opposite and horizontal relations (*karşıt ve yatay ilişkiler*) are excluded or neutralized; diagonal incongruous relations (*çapraz uyumsuz ilişkiler*) can not find the conditions of development and integration... Another general trend [in the Asiatic mode of production] is the prevention of the conditions of continuous private property.” “Asyagil Üretim Biçimi...”, 31. Hence, Küçükömer argues that with the collision of political and ideological structures, “the process of the reproduction of the state produces the characteristic monolithic structure and its type of human agency. All relations pertaining to the form of production are connected with, cohesive to and dependent on the central state order.” “Asyagil Üretim Biçimi...”, 32. Küçükömer gives the Ottoman state as the perfect example to this type of state order and the mode of production. He sees the servitude order (*devşirme ve kulluk*) lying at the center of these structures. In this state order and the mode of production, he argues, there is no possibility for the forces of production to become “independent or relatively independent” holders of political power. “Asyagil Üretim Biçimi...”, 51. From this perspective, due to the particular relationship of hegemony in the form of a particular state order, a different mode of production but not capitalism did emerge in that context.

⁵⁷⁸ Küçükömer, “Politika Nedir?..”, 146.

⁵⁷⁹ Küçükömer, “Politika Nedir?..”, 146.

⁵⁸⁰ Küçükömer, “Politika Nedir?..”, 147.

epistemology as: “In short, in this country the top thinks and knows, the down does not intervene!”⁵⁸¹

The dominance of the state in Turkish political life is again the central theme in Ahmet İnel’s works whose perspective on this issue is directly related with a more general question of the modernization process in Turkey. With regard to the nature of the modernization process İnel underlines the non-spontaneous character of this process which according to him has led to a “depression” on the part of the Turkish society.⁵⁸² He argues that what Turkey has been living together since a hundred years is nothing but the “pain of world shift” (“*dünya değıştirme sancısı*”) by which he refers to the process of the “replacement of the traditional institutions and societal reference points with those of the modern world”.⁵⁸³ Since this process has not been in the form of a natural and spontaneous development of the society it has been causing the “existential malaise” (“*varoluş huzursuzluğu*”) that has such implications as a hurt imaginative capacity and the absence of self-reliance and self-esteem on the part of the society.⁵⁸⁴ İnel strongly rejects the analyses that tend either to ignore those implications or to conceive them as byproducts of economical/political depression and he accuses these approaches of failing to comprehend the depth of the depression.⁵⁸⁵ Instead, he argues that what underlies at the origin of this “state of frustration and confusion” that characterizes the society in Turkey is *the fact that the shift has been “undertaken by an authority that sees itself outside and above the society.”*⁵⁸⁶ Perhaps the society might have voluntarily

⁵⁸¹ “Kısaca bu ülkede yukarısı düşünür bilir, aşağısı karışmaz!” Küçükömer, “Politika Nedir?..”, 146.

⁵⁸² Ahmet İnel, *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, 6th ed. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005).

⁵⁸³ İnel, “Giriş” in *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, 7.

⁵⁸⁴ İnel, “Giriş” in *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, 7.

⁵⁸⁵ İnel, “Giriş” in *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, 7-8.

⁵⁸⁶ İnel, “Giriş” in *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, 11. Emphasis added.

chosen to follow the same path with different considerations and objectives and within a different rhythm; but the fact that it has been dragged into /pushed towards that direction has caused the emergence of conservatism almost as a reflex.⁵⁸⁷

İnsel associates this situation with the central place of statism in Turkish political life. He argues that among the political principles that the state announces its commitment it is neither republicanism nor laicism nor nationalism but statism which is the most essential.⁵⁸⁸ It is the principle of statism that surrounds and unites the other principles and hence it means much more than state's intervention into economics as it has been usually defined. Consequently, statism is,

a totalist/wholist political world in which all kinds of dynamics within the society are under the supervision and control of the state; every social development is evaluated from the perspective of the superior interests of the state; no social phenomenon outside the state is attributed autonomous legitimacy.⁵⁸⁹

This kind of statism is thought to be in direct connection with the modernization process that have been in effect since the nineteenth century is considered to have the greatest weight in determining the nature of the state-society relations in Turkey. Insel observes a difference between the modernization process of the Ottoman Empire and of the Republican era in that in whereas in the former the main issue was the modernization of the state, in the Republican period the major

⁵⁸⁷ Insel, "Giriş" in *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, 11-13. What Insel means with the term conservatism is something different from a conservatism that rejects all kinds of novelties and in which the tradition is defended persistently, because he refers especially to the adaptive capacity of the society in Turkey in terms of technological developments. Instead, what he means with conservatism is a certain form of social behavior that manifests itself in the form of silence and a search for opportunities to do things in its own way.

⁵⁸⁸ Insel, "Giriş", 13.

⁵⁸⁹ Insel, "Giriş", 14.

concern became the modernization of the society.⁵⁹⁰ During the first phases of the modernization process in the Republican era statism was in the form of an effort to push the society in a certain direction as the activeness and mobility in the society has increased in time, especially after the 1970s, it began to take the form of an effort to keep the society stagnant and inactive.⁵⁹¹ In both cases, it is obvious that the main objective has always been the surveillance and control of the society. One way or another, İnel argues that it has always been *the main endeavor of the state in Turkey to direct, to change, to design and to set the society in order*.⁵⁹² It is in this context, then, that he criticizes the modernization process in Turkey for being instrumental: *according to him the ultimate goal has never been modernization per se but the establishment and consolidation of the dominance of the state over the society*.⁵⁹³ As an inseparable part of such an approach toward society the state is also occupied with the monopolization of political legitimacy.⁵⁹⁴ Social and political rules are legitimate only if they are under the tutelage of the state and the state determines the contents of those rules by itself and by taking into consideration the reason d'état (*hikmeti hükümet*).⁵⁹⁵ The republican state rejects any intermediary institution or spokesman between its modernizing aims and the society.⁵⁹⁶ The Kemalists has continued the centralist, authoritarian state tradition that is *extremely disturbed by all kinds of opposition* and they were equally hostile to the idea of autonomous development of

⁵⁹⁰ Ahmet İnel and Cengiz Aktar, "Devletin Bekası İçin Yürütülen Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinin Toplumsal Sorunları" *Toplum ve Bilim* 31/39 Autumn 1987, reprinted in *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, 21; "Liberalizm, Muhafazakârlık ve Türkiye'de Toplumsal Tahayyül", *Birikim*, May 1989, no.1, reprinted in *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, 79-80.

⁵⁹¹ İnel, "Introduction", 15.

⁵⁹² İnel, *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, passim. Emphasis added.

⁵⁹³ İnel, "Devletin Bekası İçin Yürütülen Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinin Toplumsal Sorunları", 45; "Giriş", 13,.

⁵⁹⁴ İnel, "Devletin Bekası İçin Yürütülen Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinin Toplumsal Sorunları", 24.

⁵⁹⁵ İnel, "Devletin Bekası İçin Yürütülen Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinin Toplumsal Sorunları", 47.

⁵⁹⁶ İnel, "Devletin Bekası İçin Yürütülen Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinin Toplumsal Sorunları", 45.

social imagination.⁵⁹⁷ İnsel adds that this continues to be in effect with the same vigor as it had in the past.⁵⁹⁸ This is the reason why İnsel claims that what is named as democracy by the official ideology is indeed a “guardianship regime” (*“vesayet rejimi”*) in which a certain group of civilian and military state officials “guard” the society.⁵⁹⁹ It is related with this claim that he goes to argue that *“there is no record in social memory of Turkey of a victory that the society has won against the traditional state power.”*⁶⁰⁰ This is so because what is at stake in Turkish politics is “a state that gets its legitimacy only from itself on the one hand, and a puny society (*“cılız toplum”*) that has no legitimacy in the eyes of the state, on the other.”⁶⁰¹

The problematique of a particular state structure that has been trying to dominate, manipulate, and direct the society is again the starting point in Murat Belge’s

⁵⁹⁷ İnsel, “Liberalizm, Muhafazakârlık ve Türkiye’de Toplumsal Tahayyül”, 84. İnsel claims that the Ottoman state is different in one important respect from the Republican state: it recognizes the plurality and autonomy of different social groups (*“somut toplumsallıklar”*) and suffices with supervising them from a distance. See “Introduction”, 19. Despite this difference, however, there is a basic line of continuity between the Ottoman state tradition and the Republican state according to İnsel’s analysis: Ottoman state never defines its politics according to those socialities; in other words, it does not base its legitimacy upon those groups. Accordingly, it is absolutely against the existence of all kinds of local and autonomous locuses of power in order to secure the continuity of its own power. All centrifugal political forces have to be abolished so as to protect the status quo. See, “Devletin Bekası İçin Yürütülen Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinin Toplumsal Sorunları”, 37. As was explained above, this tendency towards monopolization of power and towards a state structure that gets its legitimacy only from itself not from the society continued to be the dominant tendency in the state structure during the republican period as well.

⁵⁹⁸ İnsel, “Liberalizm, Muhafazakârlık ve Türkiye’de Toplumsal Tahayyül”, 84.

⁵⁹⁹ İnsel, “Liberalizm, Muhafazakârlık ve Türkiye’de Toplumsal Tahayyül”, 85.

⁶⁰⁰ İnsel, “Liberalizm, Muhafazakârlık ve Türkiye’de Toplumsal Tahayyül”, 85. He mentions certain historical dates and periods (1878, 1908-1912, 1920-25, 1930) as short-lived exceptions to this general trend but points out that in each case the end was the same: an inevitable defeat of political liberalism in Turkey. He also adds that the military interventions of 1960, 1971 and 1980 were the manifestations of the fact that coming to power through legitimate ways also is not enough to prevent this constant defeat of political liberalism in Turkey. See “Liberalizm, Muhafazakârlık ve Türkiye’de Toplumsal Tahayyül”, 85.

⁶⁰¹ İnsel, “Devletin Bekası İçin Yürütülen Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinin Toplumsal Sorunları”, 58.

writings on civil society. He argues that the society in Turkey has a “decrepit and outmoded (*köhn ve külüstür*) outlook” and, similar to Küçükömer and İnsel, he focuses upon the particular state tradition as the major reason behind the failure of the society.⁶⁰² In his view,

There is a peculiar type of state sovereignty in Turkey. *This state has never given a real initiative to its society.* By “the state” I mean a state tradition which has been in existence for quite a long time. ... there has been a continuity in the repressive and authoritarian attitudes of the state which in time has become a tradition... Under these conditions the basic reason for the failure is obvious. *The cause behind anything that can happen in this country is the state that constantly directs the society, never leaves it alone, and jealously holds onto the monopoly of power.* If the result is a failure it [the state] is again the reason because it has given the opportunity to succeed or to fail to nobody but only to itself.⁶⁰³

Consequently, Belge argues, although Turkey did not undergo a colonization process which has influenced the process of identity formation in many countries, the society in Turkey and the “Turkish identity” has been “injured” not by a foreign power but by the acts of the state.⁶⁰⁴ Not unlike Küçükömer, İnsel, and other scholars concerned with the “fact” of strong state-weak civil society dichotomy in Turkey Belge takes the Westernization/modernization process of Turkey as the general frame of reference and questions the state’s direct interference into the process of social evolution in the sense that the society has been given no chance to play a role in determining the direction of the path of that evolution. Rather than being in a position to shape its life and the rules of this life, “the society has been pushed and dragged into certain processes that it does not understand.”⁶⁰⁵ The

⁶⁰² Murat Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 5th ed. (İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 1993), 108.

⁶⁰³ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 108-109. Emphasis added. See also Murat Belge, *Tarihten Güncelliğe*, 2nd. ed. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004), 35.

⁶⁰⁴ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 109.

⁶⁰⁵ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 109.

centrality of the state in Turkey is a phenomenon that has been a “structural characteristic” for a very long time:

The state has entered into every sphere of life in a way that leaves no considerable autonomy for the civil society and in some of those areas it has existed as a monopoly. In economics, education, even in religion the state exists with all its weight and this existence has made the society stubby (*güdükleştirmek*).⁶⁰⁶

Accordingly, Belge argues that the state in Turkey is not neutral; to the contrary, it is a state whose sayings are listened so that the ways of behaving in the society are determined in accordance with those sayings.⁶⁰⁷ Besides, this state “is not used to being a partner in a dialogue. What it is used to be is that of the position of the speaker of a monologue.”⁶⁰⁸ It is within this context of a particular state tradition that Belge refers to certain characteristics of “Turkish identity”⁶⁰⁹ and sees those characteristics as “the syndromes of a society which has been restricted and left desperate.”⁶¹⁰ As will be explained below, it is important to figure out these characteristics since they are closely related with Belge’s approach to the concept of civil society in the sense that he views them as impediments for the emergence of a Western type civil society. Among these characteristics he stresses the lack of liberty which he again sees as an implication of the particular state tradition in Turkey and argues that this model of state-society relations “leaving no space for freedom in the reproduction of the society naturally effects the individual lives.”⁶¹¹ As a consequence, the “oppression/punishment system” characterizing this relationship “has produced “fear” at all levels” and the end result has come to be “a

⁶⁰⁶ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 168.

⁶⁰⁷ Murat Belge, “Devlet- Sivil Toplum Diyalogu”, *Radikal*, 15.05.2001.

⁶⁰⁸ Belge, “Devlet- Sivil Toplum Diyalogu”.

⁶⁰⁹ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 114.

⁶¹⁰ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 118.

⁶¹¹ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 115.

society composed of individuals who are afraid of being genuine, of listening to their inner voice, and of acting differently... so [the upshot is] a search for authority and obedience at all levels and circumstances.”⁶¹² Drawing upon this argumentation Belge makes a distinction between the concepts of freedom (*özgürlük*) and emancipation (*serbestlik*). According to this distinction, freedom is defined as something internal defining and limiting itself while emancipation is defined as something external which comes out as a result of the relaxation of the limits set externally and which does not supervise itself.⁶¹³ According to this distinction, Belge argues that “in this sense Turkish identity is not free but at certain times it finds an opportunity for emancipation” depending upon the degree of strictness of the state’s control over the society and he also adds that “if there is no freedom there is no creativity either.”⁶¹⁴ As was explained above, Belge sees the state tradition as the main factor responsible for this situation because it is the state that has drawn the borders of the social life in this country:

We have lived under its laws and constitutions and under its bans. We have acquired knowledge and have learned about the values within its education system. We have acted in economic and other realms within the borders that it has set and consequently we have come to the point where we stand today... At which point has the state of the Turkish Republic let our thought be free? Which criticism, which creativity has it allowed? ⁶¹⁵

These remarks by the three forerunners of the socialism oriented perspective clearly show that the central theme in their discussion on the concept of civil society is the strong state-weak civil society dichotomy which is symptomatic in all liberal-oriented conceptions of civil society. As can be recalled from the previous parts of

⁶¹² Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 115.

⁶¹³ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 115.

⁶¹⁴ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 115. This distinction shows a great parallelism between İnsel’s analysis regarding the emergence of “inner society” instead of civil society in Turkey. See page 208-9 above. It is also reminiscent of the Isaiah Berlin’s distinction between positive and negative freedom.

⁶¹⁵ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 97.

this study, the second theme characterizing the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society is a view on the realm of civil society (associated with autonomy, voluntariness, political participation) as functional in checking the state and limiting its control over the society so that guaranteeing individual rights and liberties and creating a living space for the pluralism in the society. This kind of an approach is also observed in the socialism-oriented perspective too. In the case of Küçükömer, this issue is discussed within the context of the relationship between “political society” and “civil society”. According to this, “political society is the society where the politics is done” whereas “civil society in the simplest sense is the society where the needs are satisfied.”⁶¹⁶ How and through what mechanisms the needs are satisfied can only be understood by comprehending what is happening in the political society. This is why, in another definition Küçükömer refers to political society as the society where the dominant groups make decisions and use force if necessary in order to reproduce themselves together with their material conditions and he claims that the power belongs to that society.⁶¹⁷ What he inferred from these definitions is that civil society is characterized by economic relations including the processes of production, distribution and exchange of the product created for meeting the needs, and hence it comprises all who are included in any one of those processes.⁶¹⁸ However, not all groups that partake in the production relations are represented and entitled to use the power in the political society where politics is done. It should also be mentioned at this point that Küçükömer’s definition of politics is closely related with these definitions. He views politics as “the decision and action that provides the redistribution of the resources.”⁶¹⁹ This activity and decision-making process contains in itself two contradictory dispositions which are in a constant competition with each other: one is a desire to keep the existing state

⁶¹⁶ Küçükömer, *Sivil Toplum Yazıları*, 133.

⁶¹⁷ İdris Küçükömer, “Liberal Değil, Sivil Toplum” in *Sivil Toplum Yazıları*, 123.

⁶¹⁸ İdris Küçükömer, “Türkiye’de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?” in *Sivil Toplum Yazıları*, 133.

⁶¹⁹ İdris Küçükömer, “Politika Nedir? Politika Kaynakların Yeniden Bölüşümünü Sağlayan Karardır, Eylemdir” in *Sivil Toplum Yazıları*, 141, 143.

of affairs in terms of the distribution of the resources and to increase the amount of the current shares; and the other disposition is towards a desire for a change in those conditions.⁶²⁰ These two conflicting processes compose “a contradictory whole” and the “intensity and dynamism” of them gives shape to politics as Küçükömer defines it.⁶²¹

On the basis of these definitions Küçükömer constructs his analysis of the relationship between political society and civil society which has much to say about the way he problematizes Turkish political life. What can be deduced from an overall examination of this analysis is that he tackles with two major questions related with this distinction: First question is related with the extent to which political society is inclusive. In other words, it asks whether or not the majority of the population, who are one way or another part of the civil society characterized by production relations, are also included in the political society. This is a core question that Küçükömer gives an utmost importance in relation to the above-mentioned discussion about the segmentation of power.⁶²² According to Küçükömer’s formulation the true citizens (*gerçek yurttaş*) are those who take part in the political society.⁶²³ He argues that throughout the course of the history of the West, even starting from the civilizations based upon slavery, there has always been a struggle to widen the limits of political society in a way that would entitle more and more people as ‘citizens’.⁶²⁴ The changes in these limits have determined and contributed to the process of decentralization and segmentation of power. In Turkey, on the other hand, political history has followed a completely different

⁶²⁰ Küçükömer, “Politika Nedir?..”, 143.

⁶²¹ Küçükömer, “Politika Nedir?..”, 143.

⁶²² İdris Küçükömer, “Türkiye’de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?”, 133.

⁶²³ İdris Küçükömer, “Türkiye’de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?”, 133.

⁶²⁴ Küçükömer, “Türkiye’de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?”, 133.

path as a consequence of which “political society has always remained narrow” and the “tradition of democratic citizenship” has almost always been non-existent.⁶²⁵ Despite the long process of interaction between the West and the Ottoman-Turkish civilizations, the monistic, totalistic essence has remained unchanged.⁶²⁶ In the West, two struggles have taken place in parallel to each other. On the one hand, there has been a struggle for political power in the form of a struggle to expand the limits of the political society, but this at the same time is a struggle to re-define/re-shape the material conditions of production and its sharing out.⁶²⁷ The second question regarding the relationship between political and civil society is closely connected with the first one and it revolves around the separation/distinction/decomposition (“*ayrışma*”) between the two. Indeed, he brings this issue to the forefront as an answer to the first problem and argues that the underlying reason why political society has remained so narrow is the collision (“*çakışma*”) between political society and civil society in Turkey.⁶²⁸ Küçükömer describes what has taken place in the West as a two-phased development: at first there is “a separation between the civil society and political society based upon the decomposition of economic level and political level from each other and then the phase of a merger between the two with the participation of those who take part in the civil society into the political society too.”⁶²⁹ Despite this merge, however, the two levels are distinct from each other.⁶³⁰ Küçükömer here refers to the existence of an economic realm in the West which is not under direct control of the political authority. This has been the case in the West ever since the Greek and Roman

⁶²⁵ Küçükömer, “Türkiye’de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?”, 134.

⁶²⁶ Küçükömer, “Türkiye’de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?”, 135.

⁶²⁷ Küçükömer, “Liberal Değil Sivil Toplum”, 124.

⁶²⁸ Küçükömer, *Sivil Toplum Yazıları*, passim; “Türkiye’de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?”, 133-134; 131.

⁶²⁹ Küçükömer, “Politika Nedir?..”, 144.

⁶³⁰ Küçükömer, “Politika Nedir?..”, 144.

periods and the emergence of capitalism is another phase of this development. Küçükömer gives a positive value to this separation between the superstructure and emergence and development of the economic realm as autonomous spheres. This is because he thinks that through this separation between politics and economics, power has always been segmented instead of being centralized in the state. It should be pointed out at this point that he seems rather over-optimistic in evaluating the relationship between civil society and political society in the West. Although he does not neglect that a never ending struggle has been taking place within the civil society to be able to partake in the political society, he seems to argue that there has been a tendency towards the expansion of the boundaries of the political society to include an ever increasing share of the population. Besides this, actually, the main reason why he makes this discussion is to depict the situation in Turkey. He argues that in Turkey these two levels collide with one another. This means that both the civil society where the material conditions and relations of production are lived, and the political society where the decisions and actions regarding the distribution of the resources take place are dominated by a small group of bureaucrats excluding the majority of the population ("*halk*").⁶³¹ In that respect, he argues that what is especially interesting in the case of Turkey is that the narrowness of the political society –which is examined as the first problem above- is at the same time the narrowness of civil society.⁶³² Contrary to the developments in Western Europe, there has not been an autonomous group with considerable economic autonomy from the state in Turkey. It is a small group of state elites in Turkey who "do politics", i.e. who make decisions in a way that would reproduce their dominance over the *halk*.

A conception of civil society as a control mechanism over the state is also present in İnsel's writings on the topic. According to him, civil society is "a social sphere

⁶³¹ Küçükömer, "Türkiye'de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?", 131-134, 138, 144 and passim.

⁶³² Küçükömer, "Türkiye'de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?", 134.

which is influential on politics; from which the political power takes its legitimacy; which *has political powers that can counter the political power at the center and which is able to affect the state's acts by using those powers.*"⁶³³ In another occasion he defines civil society as a *"political subject that can encounter the state in the official realm."*⁶³⁴ Depending upon this definition and his analysis of the Ottoman-Turkish state tradition, he concludes that it is hard to talk about civil society in that context as an important historical category.⁶³⁵ Rather İnsel argues that what has emerged as an alternative to civil society is what he calls as *"inner society" (iç toplum).*⁶³⁶ This inner society is very different from civil society as he defines it. It has come into existence because *"the efforts to become a civil society have constantly failed"* [and] the historical lesson driven out of those defeats has been to do things as the way state commands within the sphere of state actions, but [parallel to this] to create an inner society in order to prevent the intrusion of this sphere into the real life practices.⁶³⁷ A considerable amount of energy coming out of the dynamism of the society is used for the consolidation of this inner society. This, however, means spending the social energy for the defense and protection of what is existent, and hence the inner society does not have a claim to create a social dynamism and to transform the society together with itself.⁶³⁸ Hence, this inner society creates a world that has no

⁶³³ İnsel, "Devletin Bekası İçin Yürütülen Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinin Toplumsal Sorunları", 39. Emphasis added.

⁶³⁴ İnsel, "Liberalizm, Muhafazakârlık ve Türkiye'de Toplumsal Tahayyül", 95. Emphasis added.

⁶³⁵ İnsel, "Devletin Bekası İçin Yürütülen Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinin Toplumsal Sorunları", 39. He explains that one can talk about *"crumbs of civil society" (sivil toplum kırmıntıları)* in the Ottoman Empire in the form of the organizations of *çarşı*, community and guilds. However, he argues, when the above-mentioned definition of civil society is taken into account together with the state tradition in the Ottoman empire, it is not possible to refer to those organizations as manifestations of civil society. See, *ibid.*, 38-39.

⁶³⁶ İnsel, "Liberalizm, Muhafazakârlık ve Türkiye'de Toplumsal Tahayyül", 95.

⁶³⁷ İnsel, "Liberalizm, Muhafazakârlık ve Türkiye'de Toplumsal Tahayyül", 95.

⁶³⁸ İnsel, "Liberalizm, Muhafazakârlık ve Türkiye'de Toplumsal Tahayyül", 96.

productive outcomes and that is characterized by the dominance of conservative trends.⁶³⁹

In a parallel line of thinking Belge argues that

[civil] society is not a society per se. It is a thing that can be found in a society but it is not something *quantitative* either. Rather, it is a qualification related with the existence of a society and its *style* of self reproduction... Hence civil society ... is not an object that can come to power. More than that, through its existence it determines the ways through which power is acquired and the form of power relations.⁶⁴⁰

Out of this general framework Belge deduces the essence of civil society which he formulates as follows:

In a society which carries the characteristics of a civil society social ideology is not determined from above; the individuals have their own ideologies. Because at the foundation of society there are practices of life (*pratik hayat biçimleri*) that make such an outcome possible: the tradition of autonomous organization prepares the ground for collective defense of rights. In the course of history a kind of inviolability and even sacredness is attributed to those rights and to the institutions that those rights are protecting and the political structure, [political] authority have to be respectful of those inviolabilities.⁶⁴¹

Hence, the existence of this civil society in a society has great influence upon the political life because “the society has a firm standing on the face of political power and the latter *has to* take this into consideration.”⁶⁴² Such conceptualization of civil society also explains the reason why Belge prefers to use the concept to describe the

⁶³⁹ İnsel, “Liberalizm, Muhafazakârlık ve Türkiye’de Toplumsal Tahayyül”, 96. This is the conservatism that İnsel refers as part of the depression of the society in Turkey which was defined above as “a certain form of social behavior that manifests itself in the form of silence and a search for opportunities to do things its own way”.

⁶⁴⁰ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 42. Emphases original.

⁶⁴¹ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 43.

⁶⁴² Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 43. Emphasis original.

“society of citizens.”⁶⁴³ He argues that there are various ways of examining societies in general; and the concept of civil society is one way of, among many others, of looking at societies.⁶⁴⁴ For instance, he explains, Marxists see social classes when they look at a society, nationalists see it as composed of different ethnicities etc.; the concept of civil society, on the other hand, provides a perspective that tends to see a “society of citizens” in a society: “If we are interested in the nature of *state-citizen relationship* in a society at any time [civil society] is a perspective that can open up new horizons in that task.”⁶⁴⁵ When this quotation is considered in companion with the one above it becomes clearer why he describes civil society as,

*[a] society which has acquired, before everything, the habit of doing things outside the state authority. [A society] which does not expect everything from the state, which is outside but not necessarily against the state, nevertheless independent from it to the extent possible.*⁶⁴⁶

Similar to Küçükömer, Belge argues that those characteristics describing a civil society have made their actual appearances during the course of social evolution in the Western Europe which in turn has grown out of the Greco-Roman tradition.⁶⁴⁷ At the heart of all those historical processes there is the “principle of autonomy”, the creation of autonomous realms of activity outside the state’s direct interference and the emergence of a “system of independent citizens”. It is upon this background that he criticizes the situation in Turkey as well as other countries outside the U.S., Canada and Western Europe and argues that what is observed in those contexts is not a civil society but “an authoritarian state that is in charge of

⁶⁴³ Murat Belge, “Sivil Toplum Nedir?”, Sivil Toplum ve Demokrasi Konferans Yazıları No:1, 2003, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları Eğitim ve Araştırma Birimi http://stk.bilgi.edu.tr/docs/belge_std_1.pdf. Retrieved on 25.12.2006.

⁶⁴⁴ Belge, “Sivil Toplum Nedir?”, 1.

⁶⁴⁵ Belge, “Sivil Toplum Nedir?”, 1.

⁶⁴⁶ Belge, “Sivil Toplum Nedir?”, 10. Emphasis added.

⁶⁴⁷ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 43; Belge, “Sivil Toplum Nedir?”, 12.

everything with neither a democratic tradition nor a yearning for democracy.”⁶⁴⁸ The society in those contexts, on the other hand, has little or no experience in self-organization and doing things by itself and it does not seem strange to anybody in the society that “everything is done by the state, under its leadership.”⁶⁴⁹ Belge explains that this overwhelming presence of the state in everything going on in the society goes hand in hand with state’s direct involvement in determining the borders of the political realm and that it is the state that decides where and how the politics is to be done as well as what can be said and it does this through prohibitions.⁶⁵⁰

As was already examined above, Belge makes an analysis of the Turkish context from this perspective and on the basis of this analysis he concludes that civil society as it has developed in Western contexts did not emerge in other parts of the world because of the nature of the state structure. In other words, his problematique is that of finding out the reasons why a civil society as it has been conceptualized by the liberal-individualist-pluralist tradition has not made any appearance in the Turkish context rather than an interest in a re-definition and/or re-conceptualization of civil society. To the contrary, he complains from the inflationist use of the term and hence from the variety of meanings attached to it.⁶⁵¹ As a solution, he suggests that everybody involved in the civil society debate should be aware of the concrete, substantial content of the term as it came into being as a solid part of social history in the West and claims that this concrete content has already determined what everybody should understand from the term. Once this concrete meaning of the term of civil society –which corresponds to the plural autonomous areas not under the control of a single overarching authority

⁶⁴⁸ Belge, “Sivil Toplum Nedir?”, 10.

⁶⁴⁹ Belge, “Sivil Toplum Nedir?”, 10.

⁶⁵⁰ Belge, “Sivil Toplum Nedir?”, 11.

⁶⁵¹ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 41; Belge, “Sivil Toplum Nedir?”, 14.

(*sulta*)- is clarified, Belge argues that this Western model of civil society can be replicated in non-Western contexts including Turkey.⁶⁵²

A particular view of pluralism is the third theme characterizing the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society as was explored in the previous chapter and it has a significant place in the socialism-oriented analyses as well. For instance, it is argued by the scholars in this tradition that the strong state tradition in Turkey works in a way that prizes “serving the state” [*devlete hizmet*] which as a result exterminates human initiative and responsibility; it is an “anti-individual disposition.”⁶⁵³ Hence, the outcome is rejection of heterodoxy and opposition to new syntheses.⁶⁵⁴ Belge names this kind of an attitude as “fundamentalism” and argues that besides the lack of freedom and creativity, another characteristic of Turkish identity that comes out as a result of the particular state-society relations (determined almost completely by the state) is fundamentalism.⁶⁵⁵ He defines fundamentalism as “the dogmatic, absolutist, deductive method of thinking and the habit of putting belief ahead of criticism” and argues that as a “permanent element of political tradition in Turkey” it is the “common ground of all political ideologies.”⁶⁵⁶ As the other two characteristics of the Turkish political culture, fundamentalism also emanates from the state tradition in Turkey since the state’s approach toward the society has always been formulated on this basis and hence constituted “the model for the ideological absoluteness and the cruelty as a natural consequence of it at the practical level.”⁶⁵⁷ The state authority in the Ottoman

⁶⁵² Belge, “Sivil Toplum Nedir?”, 14.

⁶⁵³ Küçükömer, “Politika Nedir?..”, 145.

⁶⁵⁴ Küçükömer, “Türkiye’de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?”, 132.

⁶⁵⁵ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 8, 85-95.

⁶⁵⁶ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 8.

⁶⁵⁷ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 91.

Empire, Belge explains, “was absolute and it could do anything.”⁶⁵⁸ There was a “gap between the masses and politics... The Ottoman state did not allow the existence of a “political” realm in social life. According to its mentality the state was to rule and the society was to be ruled and no confusion in these roles was to be allowed.”⁶⁵⁹ Belge argues that the Republican state did not try to change this “rhetoric” but instead expanded and systematized it by adding new motifs.⁶⁶⁰ This fundamentalism and absolutism at the state level were also reproduced within the realm of social relations and became “the most negative characteristic of Turkish political culture.”⁶⁶¹ In his words, “As the members of a society whose thought has never been free, has never been critical, and hence has never achieved creativity; and as the unruly children of the Turkish Republic always in need of correction we are all fundamentalists.”⁶⁶² As a consequence, ““disputation” is something that we neither know nor like.”⁶⁶³

İnsel also tackles this issue within the context of the formation of national identity in Turkey and argues that “in Turkey there is the state before the nation. It is not the nation that gives the state its legitimacy; to the contrary it is the state that makes the nation a nation and entitles it with legitimacy.”⁶⁶⁴ There is a conception of the

⁶⁵⁸ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 88.

⁶⁵⁹ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 86.

⁶⁶⁰ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 89.

⁶⁶¹ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 91.

⁶⁶² Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 98.

⁶⁶³ Murat Belge, “Diyalog Kültürü”, *Radikal*, 18.05.2001.

⁶⁶⁴ İnsel, “Devletin Bekası İçin Yürütülen Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinin Toplumsal Sorunları”, 45.

⁶⁶⁴ İnsel, “Devletin Bekası İçin Yürütülen Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinin Toplumsal Sorunları”, 53.

nation in Turkey as the “nation of the state.”⁶⁶⁵ The “essence”, the characteristics of this nation in turn are designated and determined in official meetings under the supervision of and even the monopoly of the state elites.⁶⁶⁶ As part and parcel of this understanding there is a strong homogenizing tendency on the part of the state which connotes the rejection of the legitimacy of plurality, differentiation, conflict of the society. This is due to the fact that the state can envisage sociality only in the abstract terms of nationality and only under its aegis.⁶⁶⁷

Although he argues that “the slogan of “civil society against the state”” does not mean much by itself, ⁶⁶⁸ and that “civil society cannot be a political aim by itself [since] it is known that there are inhuman movements within the civil society”⁶⁶⁹ what Insel suggests as a solution to this question is that the civility [of the society] should at the same time be including the principle of plurality.⁶⁷⁰ He constantly makes references to the heterogeneity of the society and criticizes the emphasis given to “unity and togetherness” (*birlik ve beraberlik*) in the official discourse.⁶⁷¹ At this point he inevitably confronts the question how to handle this plurality in the society. His answer to this question is associated with his approach to the concept

⁶⁶⁵ Insel, “Liberalizm, Muhafazakârlık ve Türkiye’de Toplumsal Tahayyül”, 54.

⁶⁶⁶ Insel, “Liberalizm, Muhafazakârlık ve Türkiye’de Toplumsal Tahayyül”, 53-54.

⁶⁶⁷ Insel, “Liberalizm, Muhafazakârlık ve Türkiye’de Toplumsal Tahayyül”, 58.

⁶⁶⁸ Insel, “Sosyalist Olduğum İçin Anti-Kemalistim” in *Sol Kemalizm’e Bakıyor* eds. Levent Cinemre and Ruşen Çakır, (Istanbul: Metis, 1991) reprinted in *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, 270.

⁶⁶⁹ Insel, “Türk Devleti Totaliter Değil”, *İzlenim*, June 1993, reprinted in *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, 286.

⁶⁷⁰ Insel, “Sosyalist Olduğum İçin Anti-Kemalistim”, 270.

⁶⁷¹ Ahmet Insel, “Türkiye’nin Kronik Rejim Bunalımı Üzerine”, *Birikim*, May 1990, no. 13, reprinted in *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, 176; “Sosyalist Olduğum İçin Anti-Kemalistim”, 270; “Milli Birlik ve Beraberlik Ruhu”, *Cumhuriyet*, 18 November 1991 reprinted in *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı* 296-299.

of democracy because he argues that “democracy is a project for plural society.”⁶⁷²

On another occasion he argues that,

[d]emocracy is a form of social organization and a form of existence which provides that all forms of life, belief and work -either currently existent in the society or possibly would come into existence in future- stand side by side. What gives acceleration to this form of existence is the liberation of human beings and the increase in the richness of human life. It is to pave the way for the happiness and freedom that humans can experience within their relations with other human beings; not to secure their happiness and freedom under any institution. In order to be able to envisage this, it is necessary to associate social dynamism with no moment (kerte), institution or idea outside the society.⁶⁷³

However it is not so clear how to reach those objectives of freedom, increase in the richness of the human life, recognition of all forms of life, belief and work. He seems to suggest that the recognition of legitimacy of the plurality and providing that those pluralities exist together would be the sufficient condition for overcoming the depression of the Turkish society. So he conceptualizes civil society as an inseparable part of *democracy defined as a project for plural society*. Only after its plurality is heard at the state level the civil society can appear as a political subject according to İnsel’s definition. He adds that “today thinking of democracy in Turkey amounts to thinking of the internal conditions to provide that politics will again prompt and activate *the society* and to make sure that *the society* is able to create a new world that is designed by *itself*.”⁶⁷⁴ Similarly he stresses that democracy means to believe that “the solutions to the problems (*dertlere deva*) are not to be searched in an authority above the society but *in the forces of the society*.”⁶⁷⁵ İnsel argues,

⁶⁷² Ahmet İnsel, “Kemalist “Laiklik” mi, Çoğul Toplum Laikliği mi?”, *Birikim*, December 1990, no.8 reprinted in *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, 140.

⁶⁷³ Ahmet İnsel, “Demokrasi Üzerine” in *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, 226.

⁶⁷⁴ İnsel, “Türkiye’nin Kronik Rejim Bunalımı Üzerine”, 172. Emphasis added.

⁶⁷⁵ İnsel, “Türkiye’nin Kronik Rejim Bunalımı Üzerine”, 176. Emphasis added. On another occasion he underlines that as the activeness of civil society increases it would inevitably

The basic principle that should be guiding the acts and political preferences of the libertarian movements is to take the necessary measures that would stop the state from taking a side in the differences of ideas, beliefs and life styles and to provide that the state should take the necessary measures to prevent that those differences turn into physical clashes.⁶⁷⁶

What is implicit in this kind of liberal approach to pluralism as a 'richness' is the view that *society* will handle the plurality within itself and will create the new rules of a new world and find solutions to the problems. It is believed that social disputes/conflicts can be resolved under normal conditions and if they are resolved in that way they turn into beneficial dynamics for the society.⁶⁷⁷ It is clear that for the representatives of the socialism-oriented perspective the question of the confrontation between the state and society and putting an end to the dominance of the state over society in Turkey is the major problem that has to be handled with the highest priority. Only with the abolishment of this "regime of guardianship" Turkey is going to witness the 'awakening' of the society in the sense of activation of the "imaginative capacity" that has been curbed through state's interference for a very long time. In Insel's words, for instance, "rescuing the Republic of Turkey from the hands of its guardians means to rescue the existence of the society in Turkey within its plural character."⁶⁷⁸ This, in turn, will lead to the emergence of civil society in the liberal-individualist-pluralist sense of the term. By the emergence of this civil society, the rules regulating social life in Turkey will be determined by the society not by the state as has been the case for a long time.

find itself within a dichotomy: a dichotomy between opinion leadership and leadership for developing initiative in the society on the one hand and becoming a locus of political power on the other. Ahmet Insel, "Sivil Toplum ve Siyaset", *Radikal* 2, 23.07.2006.

⁶⁷⁶ Insel, "Kemalist "Laiklik" mi, Çoğul Toplum Laikliği mi?", 141.

⁶⁷⁷ Insel, "Türkiye'nin Kronik Rejim Bunalımı Üzerine", 176.

⁶⁷⁸ Insel, "Türkiye'nin Kronik Rejim Bunalımı Üzerine", 175.

As was mentioned above, the peculiarity of this approach lies in the fact that when these scholars are considered with respect to the meaning they attach to civil society they share a common ground with the liberal-individualist-pluralist tradition while on the other hand they have a concern with socialism in Turkey. For instance, a major concern of Küçükömer in focusing on the concept of civil society is to investigate the reasons why a class movement did not develop in Turkey and try to show a possible solution to pave the way for such a movement. The factors that he calls as “narrowness of the political society and civil society”, “collision of the political society and civil society”, “political heritage”, and “epistemological heritage” result in the end in a system of “servitude” (*kulluk*).⁶⁷⁹ This claim can be better understood when considered together with the relationship between political freedom and political power that he strongly emphasizes. He associates political power with the capability to do something; this capability is the essence of both power and freedom.⁶⁸⁰ Hence, the two –political power and political freedom– should always be together; none of them means much without the other.⁶⁸¹ Yet, for Küçükömer, in the Turkish context the people is deprived of both as a result of a complex of social, historical and political factors and this is why he names the end result as a system of *kulluk* to the state instead of citizenship. Küçükömer claims that *this particular kind of relationship between the state and the people (halk), in turn, makes the classes “transparent”*.⁶⁸² What is observed instead of a confrontation between classes is a duality between the state on the one hand and the *halk* on the other. In relation to those points, he argues that the people are not political subjects and they have no power to sanction and adds that it is not possible to observe

⁶⁷⁹ Küçükömer, “Türkiye’de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?”, 132.

⁶⁸⁰ İdris Küçükömer, “SHP’nin Yeri ya da Temsil Ettiği Politik Miras” in *Sivil Toplum Yazıları*, 189.

⁶⁸¹ Küçükömer, “SHP’nin Yeri ya da Temsil Ettiği Politik Miras”, 189.

⁶⁸² Küçükömer, “Türkiye’de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?”, 132. Emphasis added.

either the characteristics of a class society or a type of organization on the basis of class identity.⁶⁸³

In addition to this system of servitude which in the end makes the classes transparent, there is another factor that curbs a tendency towards a class movement on the part of the people. This factor is related with the cultural distance between those who are dominant both in the civil society and political society on the one hand and the people on the other hand. This distance according to Küçükömer is a result of the Westernization process in Turkey. Because of this distance, people do not identify themselves with the political movement that these state elites represent.⁶⁸⁴ Combined with the absence of a class movement and consequently people gravitate toward other “alternatives” i.e. political movements that make references to conservative values of the people and specifically to Islam.⁶⁸⁵ Hence, the leaning towards conservative liberal right which has been a dominant tendency in Turkey is both the cause and result of the absence of a strong class movement. Both tendencies add fuel to each other.

The last point is closely associated with the second aspect of Küçükömer’s main concern, i.e. his concern with showing the way for an effective class movement in Turkey. On the basis of these analyses, Küçükömer argues that the solution is to provide that the people acquire their rights and authority and to increase their effectiveness.⁶⁸⁶ This can be done through a consciousness-raising that would

⁶⁸³ Küçükömer, “SHP’nin Yeri ya da Temsil Ettiği Politik Miras”, 194.

⁶⁸⁴ İdris Küçükömer, “Paşa’nın ve Amerika’nın Oyunları”, in *Sivil Toplum Yazıları*, 64-66.

⁶⁸⁵ Küçükömer, “Türkiye’de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?”, 134; Küçükömer, “Paşa’nın ve Amerika’nın Oyunları”, in *Sivil Toplum Yazıları*, 64.

⁶⁸⁶ İdris Küçükömer, “Çağdaş Yanılgı ve Demirel: Solun Açmazı”, in *Sivil Toplum Yazıları*, 202-203.

provide that people “take themselves into account”⁶⁸⁷ so that they can become “real citizens.”⁶⁸⁸ By doing this, Küçükömer warns the leftist circles against the trap of losing touch with the people. More specifically, he argues that a leftist movement can never be successful in Turkey unless it gets organized at the grassroots level.⁶⁸⁹ So it would be a great mistake to choose the way of trying to seize the state power at the expense of democratic expansion of the limits of the political society so that it would cease to be dominated by the classes that has somehow become prosperous.⁶⁹⁰ This is the major factor that has motivated Küçükömer to focus upon the concept of civil society in Turkey. He approaches it within the framework of answering the question of how to turn the people, the *halk* into “real citizens” by overcoming the epistemological and political heritage of the country and make them take themselves into account. He is concerned with the absence of individual and her rights and liberties in the Turkish context with this question at the background. In these respects he is in line with the liberal pluralist conception of civil society. Moreover, his stress upon the autonomy of the civil society, i.e. economic level from the political society brings him closer to liberal approach in the debates on civil society; his objection to the dominance of political society by economically strong classes, and hence his stress on the exclusion of economically disadvantaged classes, however, places him within the leftist tradition. His left-wing position is also supported by the fact that his analysis of the relationship between civil society and political society at the end aims to contribute to the emergence and development of a class-based movement in Turkey. Due to his over-emphasis upon the “political heritage” of Turkey in the sense of the absence of a fragmentary nature of political power and the consequent state structure resulting in a particular structuration of civil society he is analyzed under the category of the

⁶⁸⁷ Küçükömer, “Çağdaş Yanılgı ve Demirel: Solun Açmazı”, 203.

⁶⁸⁸ Küçükömer, “Türkiye’de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?”, 138.

⁶⁸⁹ İdris Küçükömer, “Amerika Hangi Tarafta?”, in *Sivil Toplum Yazıları*, 78.

⁶⁹⁰ Küçükömer, “Türkiye’de Sol Liberal Olabilir mi?”, 138.

state-centric approach to the analysis of state- civil society relationship in Turkey. It should be mentioned at this point that Küçükömer's views on civil society actually constitute a quite complex and confusing whole. In some cases it becomes blurred what the author is arguing in favor of. For instance' as was shown above in some cases he argues in favor of a liberal market economy keeping the state's intervention into the economic realm at its minimum and hence in favor of the development of an economically strong groups like the bourgeoisie in the West. It is clear that he sees the non-autonomous character of the bourgeoisie in Turkey as a major problem. On the basis of these claims and his definition of the civil society as the "autonomous society of needs" ("otonom ihtiyaç toplumu") one can argue that what Küçükömer means by the term civil society is the free market economy of liberalism. When considered with his views on political society and its "expansion", however, it is revealed that what deeper inside he is striving for is the inclusion of more and more people in the processes of decision-making and hence their becoming "true citizens" who share the power with the state. So, he does what is expected from a leftist oriented intellectual in that sense; but he makes this discussion with reference to the concept of "political society". Consequently, it would be a great mistake to point out solely that Küçükömer defines civil society as the society where the economic relations are lived and which he claims should be free from state intervention. Indeed, what is to be done is to follow Küçükömer and consider his views on civil society always in association with his views on political society.

A similar situation in the form of the coexistence of liberal-individualist-pluralist as well as socialist concerns can be observed in the writings of Insel. It can be argued that although the definition of civil society he uses and the way he questions the state-society relations in Turkey displays parallelism with the liberal-individualist-pluralist approaches to the concept of civil society, when Insel's writings on left-wing politics are also taken into consideration a different picture emerges in the sense of a thorough elaboration of the unequal power relations within society and among the individuals. Indeed, one can easily get the impression that Insel talks of

(civil) society as if it is a homogeneous entity having certain rights and liberties in its relationship with the state and also that the power relations and confrontations inherent in the civil society are not problematized with the same level of anxiety. As was shown above, his criticism regarding the dominant discourse on civil society in Turkey remains within the confines of a *call for the principle of pluralism* with the help of which those conflicts are expected to be resolved under normal conditions. He refers to “the principles that *the society* accepts and internalizes”⁶⁹¹ but does not go into the details of the processes as a result of which these principles are formed, accepted and internalized by *the society*. At this point, his conceptualization of “civil society” displays an obvious parallelism with the liberal pluralist-individualist conception of the term. Indeed, referring to “(civil) society” as “a political subject in itself” by definition has a homogenizing effect. The major indication of this liberal-individualist-pluralist conceptualization is his over-emphasis on the confrontation between state and society and the weakness, passiveness and intrawardedness of the latter that makes it unable to stand as a “political subject” that gives the state legitimacy and influence its acts and decisions through its political power. As a corollary to this preoccupation with this major confrontation, he does not tackle with the confrontations *within* society and goes even to argue that “the most common and constant threat to the basic rights and liberties of the citizens of the Turkish Republic is always the Kemalist state itself”⁶⁹² and hence that “all libertarian movements should not miss the target in their struggles and *should place their frontline in opposition to the state’s dominance over the society.*”⁶⁹³

However, when İnsel’s works on the left-wing politics are also taken into account, it becomes evident that he is seriously concerned with unequal power relations between individuals as well as those at a macro level, i.e., between state and

⁶⁹¹ İnsel, “Demokrasi Üzerine”, 219.

⁶⁹² İnsel, “Kemalist “Laiklik” mi, Çoğul Toplum Laikliği mi?”, 141.

⁶⁹³ İnsel, “Kemalist “Laiklik” mi, Çoğul Toplum Laikliği mi?”, 137. Emphasis in the original.

society.⁶⁹⁴ He deals with certain core concepts such as equality, freedom and solidarity with the aim of “redefining the left”⁶⁹⁵, and he claims that the ultimate goal of the leftist imagination (*sol tahayyül*) is to eliminate the obstacles in the realm of human relations blocking the autonomization and creative capacity of the humans and to struggle to let plural personalities express themselves freely.⁶⁹⁶ In the same context he expresses that leftist imagination stands against the type of power relation that hinders human creativity or uses it for the consolidation of that power relationship and adds that this kind of a relationship can also characterize the relations among the individuals as well as it can stem from the state.⁶⁹⁷ However, since it is the state that is seated at the center of this kind of a power relationship in most societies today, it is this state that the left stands against.⁶⁹⁸ The primary political action of the left would be the undertakings that could make everybody in the society conscious and active subjects of politics and since the state is the major obstacle on the way to this objective it should open their first front against the state.⁶⁹⁹ Those relations of power hindering human creativity and hence leading to inequalities among the individuals also must be fought against; yet since “the most common and constant threat to the basic rights and liberties of the

⁶⁹⁴ Ahmet İnsel, *Solu Yeniden Tanımlamak*, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000).

⁶⁹⁵ As was mentioned above, parallel to Küçükömer, deep in his engagement with the state-society relations there is the endeavor to point out where the leftist circles should focus their attention.

⁶⁹⁶ İnsel, *Solu Yeniden Tanımlamak*, 33.

⁶⁹⁷ İnsel, *Solu Yeniden Tanımlamak*, 35.

⁶⁹⁸ İnsel, *Solu Yeniden Tanımlamak*, 35.

⁶⁹⁹ İnsel, *Solu Yeniden Tanımlamak*, 35. İnsel argues that the major reason why liberalism – liberal-right and conservative right- has been so attractive to the people in Turkey is because it has direct references to the established state tradition in Turkey and because it offered an alternative with the idea of “*serbestî*”. He adds that leftists in the country have to understand this case of liberalism very well. See *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı* , 96. Accordingly, as was mentioned briefly above, he suggests that in order to be successful they should reject the centralized, monist tendencies of the state and the idea of a group of elites designing, directing, regulating, and hence dominating the society. See *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı* , 96.

citizens of the Turkish Republic is always the Kemalist state itself” this ‘front’ has the priority.

Hence, the most important point where İnsel can be criticized from the point of view of this study is that he *declines to connect the two lines of argumentation and to merge them in the form of a thorough critique of the debate revolving around the concept of civil society*. In other words, among the scholars engaged in the civil society debate in Turkey İnsel is one of the few who is also concerned with the unequal power relations from the point of view of the suppressed and the disadvantaged. He makes an in depth analysis of those relations and also handles the task of developing possible solutions to this problem at the theoretical and practical levels. However, he does not integrate these analyses into his approach to the concept of civil society, or into the way he conceptualizes civil society. According to the general framework adopted in this thesis, what seems to be missing in his conceptualization of civil society is a stress upon the major drawbacks of the dominant discourse on civil society in Turkey which perpetuates the neglect of the conflicts and inequalities stemming from various types of differences through an over emphasis upon unequal relationship between state and society. As was explained above, *İnsel’s major criticism towards the use of the term civil society is his call for adding the principle of plurality to the demand for an autonomous civil society which is able to encounter the state. He does not paste his interrogations on such concepts as equality and solidarity into his approach to the concept of civil society which indeed could have provided an important opening for the civil society debate in Turkey.*

It can be observed that this discussion has important implications for the civil society-politics relationship since it offers a perspective for the position of the subordinated individuals and groups within the network of the uneven relations of power characterizing the realm of civil society. Hence, when there is a talk of civil society as a “political subject”, it has to be carved out that what is at stake is not just the encounter between the state structure and the civil society as an abstract,

homogeneous entity. As has been mentioned above, talking of civil society as “a political subject in itself” consolidates the view that civil society is taken as a homogeneous entity. Perhaps the relationship between civil society and politics needs to be formulated on the basis of a particular conception of ‘politics’ which İnsel gives as part of his definition for the leftist imagination:

According to the leftist imagination, politics is neither the art of ruling the humans nor the defense of the state and the science of governance. These two definitions construct politics upon the dichotomy between the rulers (governors) and the ruled (the governed). For the left, on the other hand, politics refers to the essential realm (*aslı alan*) where the members of the society claim to be the owner of their collective destiny and in that sense where they construct the society. The right stresses the practice of ruling/governing when there is a talk of politics; it attaches a much higher value to the efficiency of the governance than the nature of the decision-making processes... The left, on the other hand, underlines the importance of the way persons constituting the society perceive themselves as constituent subjects.⁷⁰⁰

This definition of politics explains the reason why İnsel gives the notion of human creativity such a central role in his analysis: it is the humans who would govern/rule themselves and construct the society. He defines equality as that of the equivalence (*denklik*) of the creative power of the humans within all their differences and argues that “humans are equal in terms of their creative capacities.”⁷⁰¹ Accordingly, the leftist understanding of equality should be committed to the “liberation of the creative power of everyone so that creativity is not monopolized by a class, a stratum or a cast.”⁷⁰² He also draws attention to the fact that there are humans in the society who are in a subordinate position who have little or no equipment (*donanım*) necessary to continue social struggle and that hence their horizon is inevitably restricted.⁷⁰³ Unlike the elitist approaches to this

⁷⁰⁰ İnsel, *Solu Yeniden Tanımlamak*, 20.

⁷⁰¹ İnsel, *Solu Yeniden Tanımlamak*, 24.

⁷⁰² İnsel, *Solu Yeniden Tanımlamak*, 25.

⁷⁰³ İnsel, *Solu Yeniden Tanımlamak*, 42.

question, the libertarian left (*özgürlükçü sol*) believes that it is a major task to strengthen the outfit of those with no equipment⁷⁰⁴ and “turn everybody in the society into conscious and active subjects of politics.”⁷⁰⁵ İnsel also emphasizes that the differences in terms of equipment stem not only from economic positions of the individuals and that “the social positions are determined both by the individuals, their histories, psychological factors and the opportunities they meet in their lives; and by the values, culture and expectations of the socio-economic class or stratum that those individuals find themselves in.”⁷⁰⁶

As was explained above, those arguments tell much about the civil society-politics relationship although İnsel *does not use them directly as part of his conceptualization of civil society and its relation with politics*. It is necessary to highlight those questions regarding the uneven relations between individuals, because civil society cannot be viewed as an entity in itself which is expected to appear as political subject encountering the state. At the backstage of this appearance there is a complex web of power relations that result in an uneven distribution of the “equipments” necessary to become a political subject together with a creative power. So, parallel to the questioning of the status of civil society as a political subject, it should also be questioned to what extent civil society comprises everyone in the society as political subjects.

Like Küçükömer and İnsel, Belge’s writings on the concept of civil society and the meaning he attaches to the term are in line with the liberal-individualist-pluralist tradition. However, again like these two representatives of liberal-left, he is a self-declared socialist. Belge argues that he tries to reach a certain level of abstraction in

⁷⁰⁴ İnsel, *Solu Yeniden Tanımlamak*, 42.

⁷⁰⁵ İnsel, *Solu Yeniden Tanımlamak*, 35.

⁷⁰⁶ İnsel, *Solu Yeniden Tanımlamak*, 42.

making a definition of civil society and to carve out its essence (the principle of autonomy plus the system of independent citizens) since he thinks that it would be possible by this way to articulate it with any ideology and with socialism alike.⁷⁰⁷ Surely, when articulated with this model of civil society the emerging socialism will be quite different from the “authoritarian/totalitarian, monolithic socialism that we have witnessed so far.”⁷⁰⁸ Accordingly, he suggests a different approach to the notion of revolution which he defines as the change of a political regime through methods other than the procedures that it had formulated for its change and by the active involvement of persons and masses who have not been associated with that regime.⁷⁰⁹ Consequently, he urges for more participation at the grassroots level for the development of socialism and he tries to articulate the concept of civil society into a discussion about a socialist revolution in the sense that he uses the term. He believes that to create such a momentum within the society what is needed is a society of independent citizens who are not constrained, suppressed and directed by the state so that becoming capable of using their freedoms and hence their creative capacities. His interest in the prospects for the future of socialism and his approach to the concept of civil society in relation to those prospects draw an important parallelism between Belge, Küçükömer and İnsel. They also converge in approaching the concept as an analytical tool for studying the state-society and state-individual relationship. Like other scholars examined so far he has no inclination towards integrating a discussion and a query about the intra-societal and inter-individual relations and webs of power into his approach to the concept of civil society. The centrality of the question of the confrontation between the state and civil society in their analyses at the expense of the inner dynamics of the civil society in terms of the multidimensional confrontations and uneven power

⁷⁰⁷ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 44.

⁷⁰⁸ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 44.

⁷⁰⁹ Belge, *Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?*, 45.

relations is an important convergence point between these scholars and other liberal oriented approaches examined above.⁷¹⁰

The analysis in the previous paragraphs depicted how the three leading leftist scholars of the civil society debate in Turkey approach to the negative implications of the reality of the strong state-weak civil society confrontation in that polity. The analyses made by these scholars make references to the detrimental effects of the official ideology's emphasis on the social and political homogeneity in the form of a disregard of the plurality characterizing civil society. They call for opening spaces for greater participation on the part of the civil society creating channels for delimiting the state. As was detailed above, they converge in arguing that the dominance of the state on society has made impossible the development of a Western type of civil society rendering the society inactive, incapacitated, and non-creative and the demands coming from it illegitimate.

It is clear, then, that these leftist scholars also adhere to the liberal pluralist-individualist conception of civil society and that it is not a central task of their work on civil society to try to develop a different conceptualization other than the dominant understanding. Rather, they take the concept as it is formulated by the hegemonic liberal-individualist-pluralist view and query on the reasons and consequences of the absence of "civil society" understood in that sense. Within both categories the realm of civil society is depicted as a sphere of pluralism, as a means for self-determination of the society, as the realm of rights and liberties outside the state's intervention. In that respect it might sound surprising to point out that the self-declared socialists like Belge and İnel being are preoccupied with an analysis of the strong state tradition and its domination over the society, their use of the concept of civil society is not reminiscent of Marx or Gramsci but of Tocqueville. Mostly due to the distinction they employ between economic liberalism and political liberalism and their rejection of the former but affiliation

⁷¹⁰ This is the most important reason why this approach has been called as "liberal left".

with the latter,⁷¹¹ they argue to the greatest extent in favor of the control of state actions by the (civil) society, i.e., through autonomous and voluntary political activity, individual rights and liberties, and classical liberal idea of pluralism. They openly argue that putting an end to the domination of the state over the society through defending this kind of a liberal idea of civil society is the major problem having *the highest priority* that should be concerning the Left as well as right-wing liberalism in the country. Perhaps this is the reason why for instance İnsel, having made a highly forceful analysis of “re-definition of the left” in terms of such major questions as freedom and equality, chooses to use the liberal conception rather than connecting these argumentations with his views on the concept of civil society and elaborating on a critique of the hegemonic liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of the term.

What makes these leftist analyses different is the connection they build between the weakness of civil society (in the classical liberal-individualist-pluralist sense) in Turkey and the weakness of the socialist movement in that polity. For those scholars without a chance of active participation, initiative and the active use of creative capacity on the part of the people it is not something unexpected that an effective socialist movement could not find a fertile ground to flourish. In order for this to occur, they argue, the suppression and dominance of the state should first be brought to an end. This is the main reason, then, why they are categorized as liberal-socialism oriented perspective in this study.

It should also be noted at this point that the case of socialism-oriented approach illustrates very clearly the necessity of paying attention to the all dimensions of the debate around the concept of civil society. Unless the approaches toward the

⁷¹¹ Belge recently declared his adherence to an “ideological and political liberalism” while rejecting economic liberalism and has agreed that he has built his own understanding of Marxism on the basis of a liberal-democratic view. See, Tûba Çandar, *Murat Belge Bir Hayat*, 4.ed. (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2007), 240. Concomitantly, he explains that “theoretically” he defines himself as a socialist. Çandar, *Murat Belge Bir Hayat*, 328.

concept is tried to be grasped with all their complexity, these socialism-oriented partakers of the debate could well be cited in the same category with the liberal-democratic consolidation oriented perspective that was examined above. There is considerable parallelism between the two in terms of i) what they problematize with regard to the issue of civil society in Turkey (which is the “reality” of the confrontation between a strong state and a weak civil society in both cases); ii) how they elaborate on the background of this “reality” (which is the state-centric explanation in both cases); and iii) the conception of civil society they adhere to (which is the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception in both cases). However, the difference between the two approaches becomes evident when it comes to why they are engaged with this debate. What İnsel, Küçükömer and Belge has been striving for in the last instance through their writings on the topic is the development of socialism as a comprehensive political movement. Thus, it is not possible to argue that they are as reluctant as the dominant liberal perspective to the inequalities and power relations from the point of view of the disadvantaged/excluded/marginalized within (civil) society. However, such consideration has not been a direct part of their conceptualization of civil society. They rather has given priority to challenging the dominance of the state in order to open up a space for a civil society that could function as a fertile ground for the development of socialism. And what the term civil society connotes is a distinct social sphere outside and autonomous from the state, a “political subject” that can encounter the state and affect its actions so that guaranteeing individual rights and liberties and the living space of pluralism and “heterogeneity”. This, in turn, is what the term civil society connotes in the classical liberal-individualist-pluralist tradition. Moreover, it is debatable whether or not their concern with the individuals as individuals per se rather than as members of a particular economic class is in line with the socialist tradition. For instance İnsel refers to creative potential of individuals and to the necessity of activating this potential of each and every person. However, the reason why some individuals cannot activate their creative potential is explained not with reference to economic factors and to the social class of which he/she is a member. As was quoted before, the discussion is

about how to “turn everybody in the society into conscious and active subjects of politics” and this argumentation is not built on the individuals as members of a class determined by the economic factors. In a similar manner, Belge argues that although being an important category “class does not determine everything”: “there are people of many kinds and it is not that much important which class they belong to.”⁷¹²

3.3.5. “Citizenship” Oriented Perspective and the Liberal-Republican Conception of Civil Society

The second strand within the leftist literature on the reality of the strong state-weak civil society confrontation in Turkey problematizes this reality from the perspective of the civic humanist or republican tradition within political thought. Hence, it places great importance on civic virtue, active citizenship, and social responsibility as crucial values of individual and social life. As will be shown in detailed manner in the following pages, however, this approach also tries to articulate this republican tradition with the principles of political liberalism which glorifies the individual rights and freedoms as the highest values in state-society/individual relations. Hence, in a way that reflects the liberal republican conception of civil society and Habermas, it is argued that although at the philosophical level republicanism and political liberalism are in conflict with each other they can nevertheless be brought together through a certain way of articulation and that the “political discourse” that articulates the two can be called “republican liberalism.”⁷¹³ This is the first and foremost premise of liberal republican tradition. As can be recalled, the conventional distinction between the two traditions underlines the differences in their visions of society and conceptions of the self: while liberalism glorifies individual rights and freedoms as the highest values in

⁷¹² Çandar, *Murat Belge Bir Hayat*, 309.

⁷¹³ E.Fuat Keyman, *Değişen Dünya Dönüşen Türkiye*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005), 173-174. He refers in that respect to Richard Dagger, *Civic Virtues*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

social life, republicanism sees civic virtue and social responsibility as the most valuable principles of social life.⁷¹⁴ Secondly, there is the idea within liberal-republicanism that this conventional distinction between individual freedoms and social responsibilities is becoming increasingly blurred due to the changing nature of modern societies and their increasing complexity. So, at the heart of liberal-republican perspective rests the conviction that the idea of citizenship has to be revived on the basis of the ideas of active political participation of the individuals together with all kinds of differences and identity claims. The relationship between individual, society and the state has to be rethought and the concept of civil society is to be brought to the forefront in this context of great social, economic and political transformations:

[i]n today's world ... the notion of individual liberties is not restricted with a notion of freedom that is based upon the minimization of the state interference. Today's notion of individual liberties is thought together with the individual's capabilities to construct his/her own environment, to create a difference, and to look at the social processes critically; and it includes the notion of active and participatory citizenship. Consequently, individual liberty also includes the act of influencing actively the political realm through civil society...⁷¹⁵

İlhan Tekeli dwells on these global developments and transformations which are related with the changing meaning of democracy and the important shifts in the approaches to the concept of individual. According to Tekeli the world has been going through a great transformation as a result of which conventional definitions of democracy and politics have lost much of their explanatory powers and a need has arisen to re-define/re-conceptualize them.⁷¹⁶ It is as a result of this transformation, he argues, that the debates about participatory democracy and civil

⁷¹⁴ Keyman, *Değişen Dünya Dönüşen Türkiye*, 174.

⁷¹⁵ Keyman, *Değişen Dünya Dönüşen Türkiye*, 174. For a more detailed analysis of in what respects liberal-republicanism approaches to liberalism and in what respects to republicanism see the section on liberal-republicanism in Chapter 2.

⁷¹⁶ İlhan Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, (Ankara: Ayrıntı Basımevi, 2004), 8.

society have begun to dominate the agenda. This transformation has four aspects each of which has important implications: the shift from industrial society to information society; the shift from the Fordist production to flexible production; the shift from the world of nation-states to a globalized world; the erosion of modernist way of thinking and its replacement by post-modernist approaches.⁷¹⁷ This complicated transformation of the world has been pressing for a change in the conventional ways of thinking about and practicing democracy.⁷¹⁸ The most visible part of this pressure, Tekeli argues, is the crisis of representative democracy.⁷¹⁹ The underlying reason of this crisis, in turn, is the need for a change in the approach to the individual in democratic theory. According to Tekeli, this new world extends the liberties of individuals while at the same time ascribing more extensive responsibilities to them.⁷²⁰ What is expected from the citizens of this world is creativity, active citizenship and responsibility, not a passive fulfillment of their duties given to them from above.⁷²¹ He argues,

The active individual of this new world is very different from the individual of the world of nation states. This is an individual who is open to the world, democrat, participatory, and pluralist... It is expected from this individual that he/she takes responsibility for the society, he/she becomes a social subject, and thereby contributes to the social capital of the society. That is to say, this individual should be an active member of civil society.⁷²²

As can be expected, in certain aspects the citizenship oriented liberal-republican perspective has much in common with the classical liberal-individualist-pluralist tradition. As in the case of all other liberal-oriented perspectives examined so far,

⁷¹⁷ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 8-9.

⁷¹⁸ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 15, 97-104.

⁷¹⁹ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 9.

⁷²⁰ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 142.

⁷²¹ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 142.

⁷²² Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 142.

liberal-republican perspective in Turkey also takes as its starting point the state-civil society dichotomy. This, in turn, is to be considered as the third central premise of the liberal-republican perspective within the civil society debate in Turkey. Accordingly, once again the building block of the whole argument is the peculiar state tradition and/or state structure in Turkey and as a result of which emerges the dichotomy of a strong and dominant state and a weak and ineffective civil society as a “reality” of Turkish politics. Thus, this approach follows the familiar line of thinking in concentrating upon the dichotomy between a strong state and a weak civil society, conceiving the latter as a consequence of the former. Again similar to the approaches examined above, this analysis is built mainly upon a critical analysis of Turkish modernity which is thought to “constitute both normative and political context for a better understanding of civil society in Turkey.”⁷²³ In this respect, it is claimed that “since its inception in 1923 Turkish modernity has operated as a ‘state-centric’ modernity” and its constitutive elements are cited as “strong state tradition, national developmentalism, an organic vision of society and a republican model of citizenship.”⁷²⁴ With regard to the first, there is reference to “the dominant role that the state has played in various ways in the production and reproduction of societal affairs as a whole.”⁷²⁵ According to this, since the beginning Turkish modernity has been defined by this dominance of the state because “Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his followers approached the state as the pre-condition for the possibility that Turkey would live as an advanced and

⁷²³ E. Fuat Keyman, “Modernity, Democracy and Civil Society in Turkey” in *Environmentalism in Turkey: Between Democracy and Development*, (Ashgate, 2005), Manuscript, 6.

⁷²⁴ E. Fuat Keyman and Ahmet İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, and the Question of Democracy in Turkey” in *Citizenship in a Global World: European Questions and Turkish Experiences* ed. E. Fuat Keyman and Ahmet İçduygu, (London, New York: Routledge, 2005), 1-4.

⁷²⁵ Keyman and İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, and the Question of Democracy in Turkey”, 5.

civilized nation in the midst of contemporary civilization."⁷²⁶ Hence, it is through this dominant role that

[t]he state in Turkish modernity has acted as the privileged and sovereign subject operating almost completely independently from society and assuming the capacity to transform society from above... Thus, the strong state tradition meant a state-centric way of governing society from above by assuming a unity between state and nation...⁷²⁷

National developmentalism, in its turn, was the second component of Turkish modernity which "defined the state as the dominant economic actor ... [to act] as the developmental state creating a state-directed economy."⁷²⁸ This context provided that "in its national developmentalist intervention into society the state assumed potential autonomy and the administrative characteristic of having no transparency or accountability to society."⁷²⁹ The third component is the organic vision of society which created the sociological grounding of Turkish modernity.⁷³⁰ Accordingly, "society [is defined] not with reference to such categories as class or individual but on the basis of the "duties and services"" and it is not approached "in terms of individual rights and freedoms, nor [was it] seen as containing individualism, pluralism, participation and claims to difference."⁷³¹ The fourth component of Turkish modernity, closely related with the first three, is the

⁷²⁶ Keyman argues that this was related with the fact that Kemalist idea of the state was a commitment to what Ernest Gellner calls as "political modernity" which sees "the modernization of the polity and society as linked to the state" and seeks its legitimation in the strength which it bestows on the state. Ernest Gellner, *Encountering Nationalism*, (London: Polity, 1994), 83 quoted in Keyman, "Modernity, Democracy and Civil Society in Turkey", 11.

⁷²⁷ Keyman, "Modernity, Democracy and Civil Society in Turkey", 11.

⁷²⁸ Keyman and İçduygu, "Citizenship, Identity, and the Question of Democracy in Turkey", 6.

⁷²⁹ Keyman and İçduygu, "Citizenship, Identity, ...", 6.

⁷³⁰ Keyman and İçduygu, "Citizenship, Identity, ...", 6.

⁷³¹ Keyman and İçduygu, "Citizenship, Identity, ...", 6.

republican model of citizenship which demanded that “normative primacy [should be] accorded to the national interest over individual freedoms, to duties over rights, and to state sovereignty over individual autonomy.”⁷³² Consequently, it is claimed that “the making of modern Turkey involved the transformation of the masses into citizens, but prevented the language of rights from entering into the process of construction of secular national identity.”⁷³³

So, these four elements together “established the foundational basis for the state-centric mode of operation of Turkish modernity” and these basic principles have continued to shape the state-society relations in Turkey until recently; this is the major reason why one cannot observe a Western type of civil society in that polity. It is also underlined, however, that until recently there has not been any irresistible pressure from the society with the demand for a more active political participation in Turkey. This, in turn, stems from the fact that except a small minority, a great majority of people in this country have been made passive through the practice of representative democracy which have led to nepotism and patronage.⁷³⁴ For Tekeli, as a result of this process, in the near future the unwillingness of the people to internalize active citizenship and their reluctance to political participation might be the most serious problem hindering the emergence and development of a new political culture.⁷³⁵ However, there is a need for a movement of active citizenship since a consciousness of active citizenship is a prerequisite of democratic consolidation in Turkey.⁷³⁶

⁷³² Keyman and İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, ...”, 6.

⁷³³ Keyman and İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, ...”, 6.

⁷³⁴ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 44-48, passim.

⁷³⁵ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 43-44.

⁷³⁶ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 44. This is why, he concludes, “this passiveness has to be overcome, sooner or later.”, 47.

As the fourth central premise of the liberal-republican perspective (and at this point it again merges with other liberal-oriented approaches) there is the belief that this state-centric nature of Turkish modernity has reached a point of impasse during the recent years because “during the 1980s and 1990s Turkish modernity and its state-centric governing of society from above faced a serious legitimacy and representation crisis.”⁷³⁷ The major reasons behind these crises are “radical changes and transformations that have been occurring” both in the world and in Turkish society “generating impacts on state-society relations in Turkey.”⁷³⁸ In addition to the global transformations cited above, Keyman and İçduygu cite three local changes taking place in Turkish social and political life: The first one is the radical transformation of the Turkish economy both ideologically and institutionally since the 1980s through the replacement of import-substitution industrialization with export-promotion industrialization and then the increasing exposure of the Turkish economy to economic globalization.⁷³⁹ Consequently, “rather than national developmentalism, the regulation of state-economy relations has become increasingly dictated by the neoliberal discourse of individualism, the free market and the minimal state.”⁷⁴⁰ Secondly, the organic vision of society has collapsed as a result of three important developments which are “the resurgence of Islam, the “Kurdish question” and the emergence of civil society”.⁷⁴¹ It is important to point out here that Keyman and İçduygu associate the role civil society has played in this process with “introducing to Turkish the language of rights and freedoms, the discourse of individualism and the idea of participatory democracy.” The third development, which came as a result of the first two, was the crisis of the republican model of citizenship:

⁷³⁷ Keyman and İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, ...”, 5.

⁷³⁸ Keyman and İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, ...”, 5.

⁷³⁹ Keyman and İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, ...”, 7.

⁷⁴⁰ Keyman and İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, ...”, 7.

⁷⁴¹ Keyman and İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, ...”, 8.

The language of rights and freedoms which involved both individual and group-based claims to autonomy, pluralism and democracy... the societal calls and demands for the expansion of the state-controlled space of rights ... have revealed that the potential for the further democratization of Turkey lies in the implementation and consolidation of a more liberal, democratic and civic understanding of citizenship... This meant the replacement of the republican model of citizenship that had privileged the duties and services of the citizens to the state with the active, democratic and liberal understanding of citizenship speaking in the language of rights.⁷⁴²

So these three developments “created an increasing “gap” between the strong-state tradition and the changing society” and according to Keyman and İçduygu “it is this gap that has given rise to the changing nature of Turkish modernity and the legitimacy crisis.”⁷⁴³ In short, then, despite there has been a peculiar state tradition in Turkey which is characterized by a dominant state as “the privileged and sovereign subject operating almost completely independently from society and assuming the capacity to transform society from above” the mentioned set of local and global changes and developments have made necessary a reformulation of the concept of citizenship. They argue that the most important consequence of those radical transformations has been that they “require the state to govern its society democratically, to regard its citizens as having rights and freedoms, and to conceive of societal relations on the basis of the principle of difference rather than that of sameness.”⁷⁴⁴ They suggest that “a feasible and effective solution to the deep problems of Turkish politics should be sought ... by exploring ... possible ways of articulating identity claims to citizenship rights.”⁷⁴⁵ This in turn can be done first by “recogniz[ing] the omnipotence of claims to identity/difference as a social and

⁷⁴² Keyman and İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, ...”, 8.

⁷⁴³ Keyman and İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, ...”, 9. They also cite 2001 economic crisis and the Turkey’s integration process into the EU as significant challenges to the conventional formation of state-society relations in that polity.

⁷⁴⁴ Keyman and İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, ...”, 17.

⁷⁴⁵ Keyman and İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, ...”, 17-18.

historical fact”⁷⁴⁶ that “cannot be wished away, that cannot be phantasmatically made to disappear.”⁷⁴⁷ The liberal republican approach to the concept of civil society is directly connected with their emphasis on the reconstruction of citizenship: “what makes the notion of civil society so integral to such a diverse array of state-society relations is its direct articulation to the notion of citizenship.”⁷⁴⁸ Hence, “the positive role of civil society” for Keyman, İçduygu and Tekeli who are taken as the representatives of liberal-republicanism in Turkey concerns the enlargement of the republican model of citizenship to include identity claims so that it “constitutes a necessary condition for democratizing the state-centric world.”⁷⁴⁹

In a parallel line of thinking with Habermas, democratization of this state-centric world, in turn, is viewed as possible with the increased level of interaction through active participation of citizens. There is emphasis on the relational nature of all kinds of identities, worldviews, lifestyles, social and cultural affiliations, and hence the opening up of the political public sphere to all of these differences and to the pluralities. Civil society is viewed as a means of succeeding in this: “in this sense, as a site of politics from below, civil society creates pluralism in a society which has been constructed discursively as organic and nationally homogenous.”⁷⁵⁰ According to Tekeli this state of affairs in terms of the increasing significance of citizenship and civil society is closely associated with the changing meaning of democracy and the changing approach of the democratic theory toward the idea of individual. He

⁷⁴⁶ Keyman and İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, ...”, 19.

⁷⁴⁷ A .Yeatman, “The Subject of Democratic Theory and the Challenge of Coexistence” in *Citizenship and Democracy in a Global Era*, (New York: St Martin’s Press, 2000), 103 quoted in Keyman and İçduygu, “Citizenship, Identity, ...”, 19.

⁷⁴⁸ E. Fuat Keyman and Ahmet İçduygu, “Globalization, Civil Society and Citizenship in Turkey: Actors, Boundaries and Discourses, *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 7, No.2, 2003, 229.

⁷⁴⁹ Keyman and İçduygu, “Globalization, Civil Society and Citizenship in Turkey”, 232.

⁷⁵⁰ Keyman and İçduygu, “Globalization, Civil Society and Citizenship in Turkey”, 232.

argues that individual as described above is radically different from the one presumed both by representative democracy and by pluralist democracy in that in both of these two approaches to democracy there is an emphasis upon the conflict of interests either at the individual or group level. In representative democracy there is a view of atomistic individuals each of whom is concerned only with maximizing his/her happiness; hence in this understanding there is no reference to the relations among those individuals.⁷⁵¹ With the shift to pluralist democracy⁷⁵² this approach to the individual has changed slightly. This time, the importance of the relations among individuals is acknowledged but those relations are thought as relations stemming from the convergence of interests. In other words, in pluralist approach to democracy there is emphasis on civil society as being composed of interest groups which emerge as a result of coming together of individuals with similar interests.⁷⁵³ A radical shift in democracy's approach toward the category of the individual happens only with the emergence of participatory democracy according to Tekeli because this approach defines the individuals with reference to the desire to be "public subjects"" (*kamusal özne*).⁷⁵⁴ In this model, those individuals

⁷⁵¹ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 57. The author explains that he prefers to use the word "happiness" instead of "utility" since the former is more comprehensive.

⁷⁵² Tekeli talks about the changes in the approaches to democracy in an evolutionary manner composed of four phases. That is to say, he argues that while at the beginning democracy was mostly conceptualized as representative democracy, then a new approach in the form of pluralist democracy appeared. As a third step in the evolution of democracy participatory democracy has come to the scene, and finally the debates about democratic theory has been shaped around the concept of governance (*yönetişim*). He argues that in the current situation none of these different understandings and practices of democracy excludes the others and that they exist all at the same time. Their principles articulate to one another; and consequently, there emerges a "complex", "hybrid" democratic practice. Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, passim. Indeed it can be argued that while the two phases can be considered as two forms of liberal democracy, the concept of participatory democracy has been fed by and has references to the socialist frame of thought.

⁷⁵³ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 64.

⁷⁵⁴ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 68.

are assumed to demand new roles in the society and to reject to leave the political decision-making processes to representatives⁷⁵⁵ and hence,

...every individual and group is given the opportunity to get their wishes realized and thereby to make their lives meaningful ... the lifespan of each human being is considered as a project and the freedom to realize it is given to that person. Of course, this individual cannot be expected to be passive; he/she will be an active individual. In a society composed of those individuals it is necessary that they are allowed to implement their projects and that diversity (*çeşitlilik*) in the society is seen as a source of richness and creativity.⁷⁵⁶

However, the individuals cannot be expected to act alone with their motivation to become a “subject”; rather it is most likely that they will come together with those who have similar motivations so that they will try to increase their potentials.⁷⁵⁷ This, in turn, will lead to the emergence of a new-type of social actor: CSOs.⁷⁵⁸ Hence Tekeli sees the emergence of the theory and practice of participatory democracy as a radical transformation in the way democracy is thought and practiced. With this phase the territorial limitation also ceases to be an obstacle for this kind of active citizenship. With the last phase of democratic evolution, that is with the shift to democratic governance, this trend consolidates itself together with the new approach to the individual as active citizen, i.e. as a public/social subject who sees his/her life as a project that can be implemented only by himself/herself or

⁷⁵⁵ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 68.

⁷⁵⁶ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 101.

⁷⁵⁷ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 108.

⁷⁵⁸ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 108-110. It is important to point out here that Tekeli makes a clear distinction between an interest group and a CSO and identifies the former with a concern with interest maximization whereas the latter is a type of organization which paves the way for an individual to become a public subject, gives additional meanings to his/her life, gives a sense of belonging and prestige and consequently increases his/her satisfaction from life. Tekeli suggests that the former type of organizations that are formed with the purpose of pursuing group interests should be termed not as CSOs (STK) but as a “democratic mass organizations” (*demokratik kitle örgütü*), 108-110.

together with those who have similar motivations. The last phase differs from the participatory democracy in its conceptualization of the individual as a convergence point of various different types of relationships.⁷⁵⁹

Against such a background, then, it can be argued that a major concern of the liberal-republican perspective in Turkey is to tackle with “the general problem of civil society in Turkey” which is “the problem of transforming the quantitative importance of civil society into qualitative effectiveness.” In Keyman’s words: “a critical analysis of civil society constitutes a needed and necessary task for the case of Turkey, if what is desired is an effective civil society capable of possessing and exercising a transformative power.”⁷⁶⁰ This is why he argues that only such a critical view of civil society can show “the ways of transforming it into a space of ‘democratic deliberation’.”⁷⁶¹ This kind of an approach is in considerable proximity with Habermas’s argument that “citizens are politically autonomous only if they can view themselves jointly as authors of laws to which they are subject as individual addressees.”⁷⁶² At the same time, this approach toward the notion of individual freedom clarifies the connection that is built between civil society, citizenship and pluralism.⁷⁶³ There is a claim in favor of a plurality of citizens comprising “civil society as an alternative democratic identity both to the state-centric understanding of politics and to individualism.”⁷⁶⁴ In parallel to this, it is suggested that

⁷⁵⁹ Tekeli, 103.

⁷⁶⁰ Keyman, “Modernity, Democracy and Civil Society in Turkey”, 6.

⁷⁶¹ Keyman and İçduygu, “Globalization, Civil Society and Citizenship in Turkey”, 233.

⁷⁶² Habermas, “Reconciliation Through the Public Use of Reason”, 130.

⁷⁶³ For more about Keyman’s views on the notion of freedom see his “Globalleşme, Özgürlük, Etik ve Siyaset” , *Sivil Toplum*, Vol.2 No.5 2004.

⁷⁶⁴ Keyman, *Değişen Dünya Dönüşen Türkiye*, 168.

what we need to do is to vitalize within a democratic collective identity an active individuality which is the bearer of individual rights and liberties, seeks for solutions to social problems, aims at transforming his/her environment at the micro level and the state-society relations at the macro level in a democratic way. This identity has a name: civil society and civil society organizations. In ideal terms, civil society is the collective form of active and transformative individuality.⁷⁶⁵

Such views of liberal republicanism on democracy, individual and citizenship bring with them two further points each constituting central premises of this approach. On the one hand, as was explained in the previous chapter, liberal republicanism diverges from communitarian oriented liberal tradition in that it approaches the notion of active political participation not as a value in itself but as a means of reaching individual ends under the conditions of freedom and equality. As can easily be observed in the previous paragraphs, the representatives of this approach in Turkey also follows this way of thinking and emphasize the significance of active citizenship for realizing their own individual “projects”. Civil society as the realm of active citizenship is viewed in terms of “the opportunity [given to the individuals] to get their wishes realized and thereby to make their lives meaningful” it is also argued that “the lifespan of each human being is considered as a project and the freedom to realize it is given to that person.”

This point is also related with the particular approach toward the notion of pluralism of the liberal-republican perspective and this approach this needs to be elaborated on as the final characteristic of this perspective. As was explained in the previous chapter the republican tradition in general challenges the classical liberal distinction between the public and private identities of individuals and calls for the representation of all differences in the political public realm (i.e. civil society). As can be recalled, liberal republicanism conceives freedom as non-domination rather than in terms of non-interference and being left alone in the private sphere. It is

⁷⁶⁵ Keyman, *Değişen Dünya Dönüşen Türkiye*, 168.

argued instead that differences may sometimes be the source of domination as well as being the source of richness. What is proposed, then, is to open up the political public sphere, which means civil society, equally to all kinds of differences, without limiting any one of them with the private sphere. This in turn is considered possible only through the active participation of individuals as citizens in civil society in conditions of freedom and equality. The individual, according to this approach is situated within the web of those relationships. These relationships are never constant; the individual may cease to become a member of a web of relationship; he/she can partake in a different web and then can leave it too.⁷⁶⁶ The society is composed of a multitude of such webs of relations constituted around a variety of issues and hence has no territorial boundaries.⁷⁶⁷

As has already been pointed out, this approach acknowledges “the power relations, all kinds of inequalities, exclusions” that are reflected in the social structure as “asymmetrical relations or unilateral connections, unformed relations.”⁷⁶⁸ At the same time however, it is expected that as a result of the process of “mutual interaction” a consensus will be reached in every web of relations comprising the society.⁷⁶⁹ Those who do not comply with that consensus will leave that web and join in another one which is in coherence with their preferences.⁷⁷⁰ Hence, while acknowledging that “there is no causal link between pluralism and democracy”⁷⁷¹ the liberal-republican perspective believes in what Habermas calls “the social integrative power of communicative action” and “discursive formation of opinion

⁷⁶⁶ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları* 103.

⁷⁶⁷ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 103.

⁷⁶⁸ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 103.

⁷⁶⁹ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 103.

⁷⁷⁰ Tekeli, *Katılımcı Demokrasi ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, 103.

⁷⁷¹ Keyman and İçduygu, “Globalization, Civil Society and Citizenship in Turkey”, 232.

and will". It does not go on to bring to the forefront the various dimensions of inequality (economic, social, cultural, etc.) that come out of the working of micro-level relations of power which are indeed always co-existent with the phenomenon of plurality.⁷⁷² Rather, parallel to Habermas's views on the topic, there is a belief in the "force of the better argument" and in a "competition with arguments in order to convince one another, that is in order to reach a consensus."

In short, then the liberal-republican perspective within the literature on civil society in Turkey has several features some of which bring it closer to liberalism whereas some bring it closer to republicanism. First, this approach moves from the presupposition that certain world-wide transformations have made necessary a merger between these two traditions and that such a merger is possible. So, it associates civil society with active citizenship on the basic principles of freedom and diversity; and underlines both the responsibilities and rights of the individuals and hence the importance of being a "subject". Active participation is thought as a way of reaching self-satisfaction, self-esteem and respectability in the society.⁷⁷³ This is reminiscent of Habermas's argument that "identity of the individual and that of the collective are interdependent; they form and maintain themselves together." Second, not unlike all other liberal oriented approaches in the literature this approach also takes the existence of a weak civil society in Turkey as a 'reality' and argues that the underlying reason behind this is the existence of a dominant state acting as a sovereign entity and controlling the society. Third, the

⁷⁷² Keyman and İçduygu, "Globalization, Civil Society and Citizenship in Turkey", 232. Instead, Keyman İçduygu prefers to draw attention to the danger that "pluralism can also be articulated by religious and ethnic fundamentalism which denounces democracy from the outset" which means that "civil society as a space of pluralism can easily be simultaneously 'used' and 'abused' by fundamentalist discourses to strengthen their communitarian visions of society.

⁷⁷³ On the question of giving meaning to life and its relationship with the principle of pluralism, see also his "Yerel Siyaset ve Demokrasi, Çoğulculuk, Sivil Toplum," in *Sivil Toplum İçin Kent, Yerel Siyaset ve Demokrasi Seminerleri*, (İstanbul: Wald Publications, 1998), 216-217.

representatives of this approach are of the opinion that this dominance of the state characterizing the state-society relations in turkey has come to an end due to certain important changes taking place in Turkey and in the world. Fourth, these changes require that there should be a shift in the way the state approach to political participation and plurality of the individuals in the society. In that sense this approach constitutes a challenge on the classical liberal conception of freedom as non-interference on the basis of public/private distinction marks the republican character of liberal-republicanism. So, according to the liberal-republican perspective the state should acknowledge that everybody in the society has these rights and responsibilities, and hence should recognize the omnipotence of claims to identity/difference as a social and historical fact. Consequently it should come to terms with the reality of plurality and civil society could be the way through which this objective can materialize. As was mentioned previously, this approach puts a reservation on the notion of pluralism. However, it has also been pointed out that this reservation does not amount to a concern with the possibility that everybody in the society may not be in an equal position to pursue their plural claims to identity/difference because of the uneven relations of power characterizing the relations among individuals and groups. Rather, it is necessary that the state has to come to terms with the plurality in the society as a social and historical fact because unless this plurality is recognized it is not possible to articulate the notion of citizenship with the notion of active, participant, responsible, initiative taking, creative, transformative individual who does not content only with the 'individual rights and freedoms' in the liberal sense of the term. Hence, as can be seen in the quotations above, civil society is viewed as a site that is associated with this type of an identity and as "the collective form of active and transformative individuality". This is important for this approach because "today's understanding of governance requires ... that what is good for the society is defined not by the state elites but as a result of the discussion among various demands coming from the society (*toplumsal talepler*).⁷⁷⁴ In that sense this approach follows a similar line of thinking with

⁷⁷⁴ Keyman, *Değişen Dünya Dönüşen Türkiye*, 175.

Habermas and his emphasis on communication and discourse. It should be highlighted that this kind of an emphasis on the need to limit the power of the state and keep its actions under scrutiny is not among the highest priorities of Habermas whose views constitute the origin that the representatives of liberal republicanism in Turkey follow. However, as was mentioned before, this kind of a preoccupation constitutes the most important commonality among all liberal oriented perspectives in Turkey. In other words, the most visible form of liberalism in Turkey becomes this concern with strong state-weak civil society dichotomy. So, in case of the citizenship oriented liberal-republican perspective also what is challenged is once again the uneven power relationship between the state and (civil) society, and what is argued for is to change this status quo to the advantage of the latter. This kind of a change is thought to give rise to the emergence of active and transformative individuality through communication. The emphasis upon the notion of consensus and the possibility of reaching at that consensus as the result of mutual interaction among responsible, active, social subjects, on the other hand, brings this approach close to the liberal tradition. However, there is a need to add that the debate on civil society should include a thorough elaboration on the various dimensions of inequality (economic, social, cultural, etc.) that come out of the working of micro-level relations of power which are indeed always co-existent with the phenomenon of plurality. Those micro relations of power directly affect the capacity of individuals and groups to become bearers of such an identity. Besides the questioning of the state-society relations colored by the dominance of the former, and the call for the “democratization of the state-centric politics” this problem also should be occupying a central place in the debates on civil society if the concept of is to provide a genuine contribution to the theory and practice of democracy.⁷⁷⁵

As was explained at the beginning, this chapter is concerned with revealing the prevailing way(s) of usage of the concept of civil society in Turkey and it has been argued throughout that the hegemonic view on the concept is to be searched and

⁷⁷⁵ A discussion on power relations is presented in Chapter 4.

carved out in relation to several questions. In other words, it is not sufficient by itself to focus only on the different conceptions of civil society which have their roots in the classical and modern Western political thought. Hence, the methodology of this study is to focus on four major questions with the aim of carving out the currently prevailing/established usages of the concept. The first question and it seems to be the most fundamental one is related with the contextualization of the literature on civil society. More specifically, it is the question of “in what context and in relation to which major problem of Turkish politics is the concept of civil society made the focus of attention? In that respect, one of the most striking findings of Chapter 3 is the widespread agreement on the existence of a state structure –which is itself outside and independent of the society- that has been in a constant effort to control and dominate all aspects of social life in Turkey. It is argued in the majority of the studies that a vigorous civil society has not been able to develop in the country due to this dominant state and that this is the major theme to be discussed with regard to the concept of civil society in Turkey. Thus, the strong state/weak civil society duality has been the theme dominating the literature on civil society in Turkey. It can easily be observed that other themes (the issues related with the CSOs per se; the relationship between Islam and civil society; between nationalism and civil society; between political culture and civil society) are not debated with the same intensity as this major question. Only a small minority of the scholarly works on civil society in Turkey challenges the “reality” of this dichotomy and hence follows a different line of thinking by arguing that rather than being a “fact” of Turkish political life this dichotomy is “fake” and a misleading conceptual tool.

It is a major consideration of this thesis, however, to avoid sweeping generalizations under broad categories. Hence, the works that contextualize the discussion of civil society within the question of a strong state-weak civil society dichotomy have been subjected to further categorizations and it has been found out that they differ from each other (i) in terms of their *explanation as to the background of this duality* and (ii) in terms of the consequences they draw as to the

reasons *why they see this duality as a problem* and (iii) in terms of *the conception of civil society* associated with these texts in question. So the second major question that is paid attention in this thesis in order to distinguish hegemonic/conventional approach from non-hegemonic/non-conventional is the question of *how* is the reality of strong state-weak civil society explained. The most illustrative of the former differentiation is the difference between the socio-historical explanation on the one hand and the state centric explanation. What deserves attention in that respect is that in the greatest majority of cases the explanation for this “reality” is state-centric while Mardin’s works on the topic represents the social-history oriented explanation according to which this particular state tradition is a culmination or upshot of the peculiar social and historical conditions characterizing the Ottoman-Turkish polity. The hegemonic state-centric approach on the other hand is mostly characterized by the emphasis on the particular strong state tradition characterizing the Ottoman-Turkish polity as an impediment to the development of an active, participant, and autonomous civil society. The utmost importance is given in these studies to the “active-ness”, “liveliness” etc. of civil society on the face of a strong and dominant state that has been -and is continuing to be- in a constant effort to subjugate demands coming from the society for higher levels of participation either at individual or group levels. The currently existing civil society is usually portrayed as one that is not in a position to counter-balance this strong state. As can be seen, this approach tends to conceive the state and civil society in Turkey as two distinct entities and the state as having an endeavor to be the force manipulating, dominating and suppressing the society obscuring the development of civil society as an autonomous sphere of activity. So “weak civil society” is depicted as a consequence of the “dominant state.” Then, the reason why these approaches are called as state-centric in this study is that they converge in concentrating on the state as the *explanatory variable* or the *independent variable* to explain civil society. More specifically, they share the viewpoint that discusses the state-society relations in Turkey with reference to the particular state structure and state tradition in that polity and its ‘harmful’ effects on society. In other words,

they converge in viewing the state as a “society-shaping structure” in Skocpol’s above-mentioned terms.

However, the category of the state-centric approach to the “reality” of strong state-weak civil society dichotomy is too bulky to be left at that point. It brings a serious number of works together; but a closer look at those studies reveal that they it would be a mistake to leave all these studies under the same title. The differences among the approaches analyzed in that section becomes visible when it comes to their inferences, meaning when it comes to the question of *why* the reality of strong state-weak civil society dichotomy would be a problem. The detailed examination above has shown that basically four fault lines can be distinguished in that respect. First, there is the approach that views this as a problem since it is an impediment on the creation of a consensus about the long-term common interests of the society. This approach argues in favor of such a consensus created as a result of a rational debate among the educated and the enlightened on the basis of the principle of universality. Second, there is a perspective that draws attention to the implications of this structure of state-civil society relations for the individual rights and freedoms and for the development of an autonomous ‘associational life’ outside the state. In other words, civil society is conceptualized as the realm of rights and liberties at the individual and/or group level with a view to limiting the scope of state activities. The dominance of the state in Turkish political life is referred as a problem for the development of such a civil society which they view as a *prerequisite of liberal democratic consolidation*. The third perspective is characterized by a stress upon the “spontaneous order” and “natural development” of society. So, the dominance of the state and the consequent “immaturity” of the civil society are problematized mostly for the reason that this dominance has intervened and curbed the “natural” path that the social evolution has been following. Thus, although once again the autonomy of the civil society is stressed, the dominance of the state is questioned and the two are presented as separate, this time this criticism is done with a *conservative tone*. The fourth perspective is concerned with the reality

of strong state and weak civil society dualism in relation with the question of “*socialism in Turkey*” and hence sees this particular structure of state-society relations and the consequent weakness of civil society as the main reason why socialism has not been able to develop as an effective political movement appealing the masses. The fourth perspective, in its turn, deals with that question as part of an interest in the notion of *citizenship* particularly as it has been formulated by the liberal-republican tradition and focuses on the concept of civil society as a means to bring together the liberal principles of individual rights and liberties with those of active citizenship of the republican tradition.

It is not something unexpected that this kind of a preoccupation with the state/civil society confrontation and with delimiting the realm of state activity has been going hand in hand with the dominance of the liberal perspective upon the meanings attached to the term. This dominance of the liberal perspective, in turn, has two important implications: on the one hand, it makes itself felt in the conceptions of civil society that are employed by different scholars. Briefly, this means that both the dominant conception and the prevailing alternatives are shaped by the liberal perspective at the background. Thus another important finding of the analysis made in this chapter is that the hegemonic conception of civil society adapted by the scholars, who build their analysis upon the “reality” of the strong state-weak civil society, is the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception. In other words, what the term “civil society” denotes in most cases is the sphere of voluntary activity – autonomous from the state- where the individuals come together and cooperate with each other –mostly within and through associations i.e. in an organized way with the purpose of having an influence upon the political decision-making process and a control over the state activities. Indeed, it is a global phenomenon that the hegemonic conception of civil society, due in large part to the developments examined in Chapter 1, has been the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception whose origins go back to the classical work of Tocqueville. What Chapter 3 has shown is that Turkey is no exception to this trend and a great

majority of the works on civil society in Turkey adheres to this conception. Since this conception makes its appearance most often within the literature on the question of “the fact of strong state/weak civil society” as the main issue, not surprisingly one comes across this understanding in the works of the many leading scholars of the civil society debate in Turkey including Şerif Mardin, Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, Ömer Çaha, Nilüfer Göle, Ergun Özbudun, Gülgün Erdoğan Tosun, Atilla Yayla, Binnaz Toprak, İdris Küçükömer, Ahmet İnsel, Murat Belge.

It should also be mentioned as another finding of Chapter 3, however, that besides the dominant view, there are versions of this hegemonic view of civil society employed by scholars with differing political dispositions. A first group of these versions is to be found within the same framework of the approach that considers the strong state/weak civil society duality as a characteristic of Turkish politics and hence as the major question to focus on. In the case of these approaches within the studies that take the strong state-weak civil society dichotomy as a “fact”, it is again possible to observe the dominance of the liberal perspective: as will be discussed below, these versions are composed of the Hegelian conception (e.g. Heper), conservative-liberal conception, (e.g. Mustafa Erdoğan), and liberal-republican conception (e.g. Keyman, Icduygu and Tekeli). As will be discussed in below, all these approaches – due in large part their occupation with the confrontation between the state and civil society and with delimitation of the state’s power – commonly share a perspective that is constructed upon an idea of consensus in their conceptions of civil society. Briefly, there is the idea of the resolution of conflicts with the help of the liberal idea of pluralism.⁷⁷⁶ They all define civil society in large part with reference to *consensus reached through the principle of plurality*.

⁷⁷⁶ Apart from those cited, there are alternatives to the dominant conception of civil society which are utilized in the analyses that *challenge* the “reality” of the strong state/weak civil society duality. The communitarian-republican conception and the Marxian-Gramscian conception are examples of this kind of a critical perspective. They will be explored in the following chapter.

Having made these important points about the findings of this chapter it is apt to finish by a critical assessment specifically of the *conceptions of civil society* that prevails within the academic literature in Turkey. In order to do this, the dominant understanding and its versions will be considered in a comparative perspective. It can be argued that even though their lines of argumentation differ in certain aspects both from the dominant understanding and from each other, in the last analysis they share a common ground that constitute in a sense the “skeleton” of all these approaches. This common ground, shared by liberal pluralist-individualist, Hegelian, conservative liberal, liberal-republican, and communitarian-republican alternatives to it, is related with the way these conceptions approach to the particularities characterizing the civil society. As will be shown below, all of them have a general perspective that approaches the plurality, differences and conflicts between particularisms characterizing civil society from the point of view of “consensus” or “resolution/dissolution of conflicts”. The way of achieving this consensus or resolution is formulated differently in each of those cited alternative conceptions of civil society; and these different ways of thinking will be explained in the following paragraphs. What is most important from the point of view of this thesis is that, *in one way or another*, each and every one of them is built upon this idea of resolution and/or consensus. It is argued that the plurality of interests, views, ideological positions, identities, life-styles is to be taken for granted as a fact of life. Those differences should have the right to express themselves in the political public sphere since this plurality is seen as a source of richness rather than as a threat to social peace and unity which has been the view of the state elites in Turkey. Two presuppositions lie under the positive value that the liberal view attributes to plurality: first, it presupposes that once let free to get organized and express and pursue their positions there occurs a free and equal competition among those particularities which comprise the realm of civil society. Second, it is also presupposed that this competitive platform also paves the way for the creation of a consensus.

However, this thesis argues that the dynamics of these conflicts and confrontations characterizing civil society should be approached not with a perspective colored by the ideas of consensus but with a perspective that makes references to antagonism (and as will be explained below power relations). This kind of a perspective is envisaged as a possible contribution to the explanatory force of the concept of civil society as an analytical tool. Before going into the dimensions of such a perspective it is apt to recall how the cited conceptions of civil society share a consensual view. Throughout this chapter, all of these approaches are examined in great detail in a way that explains how each of them has a consensus-oriented perspective. Thus for the time being it will suffice to reiterate their main lines of argumentation in order to strengthen this main argument of the following chapter.

It should be pointed out here these consensus-oriented perspectives, with the exception of the communitarian-republican conception (i.e., the liberal-individualist-pluralist, liberal conservative, Hegelian, and liberal-republican conceptions of civil society) share in common the perspective that focuses upon the state-civil society distinction and hence upon the confrontation between the two as *the major conflict* and as the main theme to be discussed in relation with the concept of civil society in Turkey. This is directly related with their consensual approach to the realm of civil society because their *over-concern* or *overestimation* with the state-civil society confrontation is concomitant with an *underestimation* of certain crucial and interrelated points: first, their general perspective regarding the state-civil society distinction comes closer to what Gramsci calls as ontological distinction rather than a methodological distinction. Consequently, by taking them as two distinct ontological entities, they pay the greatest attention to the confrontation and the power relations between the two (the state and the civil society). This, however, is done at the expense of underrating the confrontations, conflicts and power relations within civil society. Rather than concentrating upon these aspects of civil society they concentrate upon the relationship between “*the state*” vs. “*the civil society*” leaving the inner dynamics of each out of picture. However, once the inner dynamics of civil society is considered thoroughly it becomes clear that it is

the interplay of complex web of power relations that lies underneath the “fair play” of the particularities in that realm. This recognition, in turn renders the picture much more complicated in terms of the “boundaries” between “the state” and “the civil society”. Once the workings of those power relations begin to be considered as the main focus of attention it becomes extremely problematic to consider the state as a distinct entity outside and above of the individuals and social groups and the power relations between them.

As has been explained in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, in the liberal pluralist-individualist approach to civil society it is presumed that the individuals, by virtue of being rational/reasonable beings, have certain aims, goals, interests and priorities and this is what motivates them to engage in civil societal activity. Hence, the realm of civil society is depicted as the realm of particularities (i.e. differences of interest, points of view, identities etc.) and it is supposed to welcome them and their confrontations within the framework of the principle of pluralism. As was explained in Chapter 2, it is believed that the principle of legal equality (equality before the law), is the sufficient condition to handle this plurality within the society. In accordance with this liberal premise, liberal conception of civil society imagines civil society as a realm where individuals get organized without having to get the permission or approval of the state around certain interests and concerns and try to influence the state mechanism in a way that would end up with political decision that would serve their cases. Unless such active and autonomous political involvement on the part of the citizens, it is argued, there will be no checking mechanism over the power of the state which would cause the state’s infringement over the individual rights and freedoms. The state, in this formulation, is expected to stay above and outside this “fair competition” taking place within the society and to play the role of the “referee” watching over “the game”. Since the conditions are determined equally for everyone in civil society – through formal –legal equality- they all have an equal chance of “winning” in the sense of influencing and/or determining the course of political decision making process. It is thought that under these equal conditions, all differences and

particularities within civil society will “accommodate” each other and the end result will be a consensus to which everyone is supposed to adhere since everyone and every group are given the same equal right to participate and express themselves in the society. This consensus at the same time connotes that individual rights and liberties are preserved during the process.

This being the dominant view’s approach to the conflicts and confrontations within civil society alternative conceptions can also be examined from this point of view. To start with, Heper’s approach influenced by Hegel tries to deal with the particularities characterizing civil society by developing a distinction between ideal and real. At the center of this distinction there is the argument that civil society is ideally able to deal with and resolve the tensions stemming from those particularities and egoism within and by itself. However, this requires a particular consciousness, a particular use of reason and educating the mind in a way that will grasp the inter-connection between particularity and universality. Individuals and groups within the civil society can succeed in this in so far as they determine their knowing, willing and acting in a universal way and make themselves “links in this chain of social connexions”, they educate themselves to break away with the trap of “immediacy and singularity”. However, as seen in both Hegel and Heper, it is argued in this approach that *the reality* on the part of the civil society and its constituent elements is far from this *ideal* condition. So, it is concomitant with this gap between the ideal and real civil society that the state is conceptualized as the culmination of the principle of universality in the sense of the long term and common interests of the society. The state is supposed to connect the particularity and universality in a way that would create a consensus in the absence of such ability on the part of the individuals constituting civil society.⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷⁷ It has been shown in Chapter 3 that without recognizing this parallelism between Hegel and Heper especially in terms of the ideal/real distinction it is impossible to make sense of the Heper’s seemingly contradictory views on the state-civil society relationship in Turkey.

The conservative liberal alternative to the pluralist-individualist conception of civil society which is represented by Mustafa Erdoğan, and inspired in large part by Oakeshott and Hayek, is concerned with the concept of civil society with an emphasis on the spontaneous/natural development and self-ordering of society. So, the emphasis is on the “practical life” as it has developed as part of the history and traditions of the society. In other words, it is argued that the conditions characterizing the practical life, the rules that a society governs itself should be accepted as they emerge and develop within the process of this spontaneous development. As was explained before, an inseparable part of this practical life is thought to be the reality of plurality; because of this, there is the strong rejection of the idea of a state that formulates common goals for the whole society. Thus, the concept of civil society is viewed as the means to achieve this goal of spontaneous development of civil society without the “rational” interference of the state through formulation of universal goals. Hence, the most distinguishing characteristic of the conservative liberal approach to the concept of civil society is its emphasis and preference to “use and enjoy what is available” (because of its “familiarity”) rather than to wish for or to look for something else”. The rules of the self-order of the society are to be determined by living through those rules; which rules are needed will only be revealed by practice which in turn is shaped by the history and traditions of the society. This significance attached to the traditions and existing political, legal, cultural institutions is a premise that differentiates it from classical liberalism. The conception of civil society that can be inferred from this conservative oriented perspective corresponds in great part to the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception. As a general characteristic of liberal approaches to civil society, in both cases, the main confrontation is depicted as that of the one between state and civil society whereas the power relations/struggles within civil society are ignored, it is supposed that they would be resolved during the course of the natural path of development of the society. “The society” will find a way of governing itself. Indeed, both in the writings of Mustafa Erdoğan and in those of Michael Oakeshott the emphasis is on the impossibility of reaching a consensus among the varieties of individual choices, priorities etc. and neither Erdoğan nor

Oakeshott is interested in a discussion about the concrete ways of finding a common ground between these particularities which is an idea to which both of them are extremely hostile. So, as was explained in the previous chapters, as a characteristic of the conservative disposition in general, they prefer to take the conditions shaping the character of the social, economic, cultural aspects of life as they are, and they “agree with classical liberals that there is nothing untoward about undeserved inequality *per se*.”⁷⁷⁸ In that sense, this approach remains indifferent to the uneven power relations, conflicts and confrontations stemming from them and takes them as they come with the natural/spontaneous development of the society.

When it comes to the liberal-republican conception of civil society it is observed that compared to other liberal-affiliated conceptions of civil society this view tries to bring to the forefront in a much clearer manner the sources of conflict among individuals. Formulated in large part by Habermas in his writings on public sphere, discourse ethics and communicative action, and found resonance in Turkey in Keyman’s and Tekeli’s works on the subject, this approach is interested in the concept of civil society in the sense of political public sphere. At the heart of this conception lies the belief that increased levels of interaction, communication and deliberation among individuals will help the creation of a consensus in the political public sphere. This sphere is to be opened up to the differences and particularities of all kind and these differences will be deliberated within the principle of active citizenship, public argument and public reasoning. This approach tries to challenge the classical liberal distinction between public and private and tries to re-formulate this distinction in a particular way: while opening up the public sphere to a maximum of differences that classical liberalism labels as private, it calls for the appropriate use of political rights by the citizens “not only with regard to self-

⁷⁷⁸ David Conway, *Classical Liberalism The Unvanquished Ideal*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998), 102.

interest, but also oriented toward the common good.”⁷⁷⁹ To recall, Cohen explains that “citizens in such an order share a commitment to the resolution of problems of collective choice through public reasoning.”⁷⁸⁰

The other variant of the republican approach to the concept of civil society, the communitarian-oriented conception, in its turn tries to handle the particularity, differences and the resulting conflicts within civil society with recourse to the concepts of virtue, realization of the individual within and through the community, civic “friendship” and ethics of civil society. This approach underlines the importance of the common good of the community and argues that to give priority to the community is not to be taken as a necessity but as the condition that individuals realize themselves as humans. As was mentioned before, all conceptions of civil society examined above, with the sole exception of the communitarian-oriented republican conception, have a point in common: they are all conceptions that one comes across within the literature on the reality of the weak civil society dominated by a strong state in Turkey. Consequently, they are all characterized by an overemphasis upon the state-society confrontation as a fact of Turkish political life. However, they are not equally concerned with the conflicts and struggles within civil society; all of them are built upon the presumption that civil society is something desirable these conflicts are resolvable *in one way or another*. Although Sarıbay’s communitarian-oriented republican conception is embedded in a general perspective that finds this occupation with the strong state-weak civil society duality as misleading, he also has a consensus oriented analysis with regard to the particularities of civil society. He suggests civil society should be viewed as an ethical entity, instead of being approached within the confines of an instrumentalist approach. It should not be conceptualized as a means to achieve some end; rather it should be approached in terms of “an ethical way of being

⁷⁷⁹ Habermas, “Equal Treatment of Cultures...”, 2.

⁷⁸⁰ Quoted in Habermas, “Further Reflections ...”, 446.

together.”⁷⁸¹ This ethical view of civil society will enhance the understanding of civic friendship which denotes that individuals can realize themselves only within the community and hence everyone should be concerned with what is good for the community as a whole. This kind of an approach is supposed to resolve the tensions between particularities since as Sarıbay formulates it, “we are free because we live together.”⁷⁸²

As was argued before, this centrality of the idea of consensus, or the resolution of conflicts, amounts to a severe drawback in the explanatory potential of the concept of civil society. It leaves unanswered, or worse, simply ignores certain questions that try to explore the power relations within society. This is related with the implications and the crucial consequences of the scarcity of debate on certain fundamental issues. More specifically, there is a need to highlight the exclusionary aspects of “civil society” in the dominant (liberal with its variants) usage of the term regarding those who find no place in its system of needs or in its associational life, and therefore a need to question the description of civil society as a sphere of ‘uncoerced action’ for “all.”⁷⁸³ As long as the concept of civil society remains within the confines of the resolution-and-consensus oriented perspective it will inevitably be the case that albeit considered as a solution to the problems of modern societies, the notion of “civil society” in this dominant usage can also be a part of the problem. However, it would be erroneous to assume that the position in question is without any rivals. On the contrary, as will be shown in the following chapter, it is challenged quite seriously from different perspectives. This challenge comes from Marxist, Gramscian and ethical approach to civil society. It will be the task of Chapter 4 to present examples to such critical studies and to demarcate their criticisms toward the versions of the hegemonic view of civil society.

⁷⁸¹ Sarıbay, “Sivil Toplumda Ahlak ...”, 31.

⁷⁸² Sarıbay, “Sivil Toplumda Ahlak ...”, 37.

⁷⁸³ Robert Fine and Shirin Rai, “Understanding Civil Society: A Preface” in *Civil Society: Democratic Perspectives*, eds. R. Fine and S. Rai, (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 2.

CHAPTER 4

CRITICAL THEORETICAL REMARKS ON THE CONCEPT OF “CIVIL SOCIETY”: CHALLENGING THE HEGEMONIC VIEW

The previous chapters have highlighted the established ways of usage of the concept of civil society in Turkey in a relational perspective with the adventure of the concept in the Western context. The major task of the current chapter in its turn is to discuss the capacity of the concept as an analytical tool in its currently hegemonic usage; the capacity in question is in terms of providing new openings both in general and for the analysis of Turkish political life in particular. As can be recalled, three distinguishing features characterize the hegemonic view in Turkey: first, the fixation with the state-civil society dichotomy, which takes the two as two separate entities and views the power struggle between them (a strong state and a weak civil society) as the major confrontation characterizing the socio-political life, is symptomatic in that respect. It is also a common attitude to view the particular state tradition in Turkish polity as the reason behind this uneven power relationship between state and civil society. As a consequence of this obsession with state-civil society dichotomy, i) civil society is conceived as a means of limiting the dominance of the state over society and ii) the conflicts among the particularities within civil society are approached within the framework of the liberal idea of pluralism. According to the latter, these conflicts would take place under the conditions of legal equality; the particularities would “accommodate” each other; and hence the end result would be a consensus. These themes are commonly shared by all liberal-oriented conceptions of civil society (classical liberal-individualist-pluralist, conservative liberal-individualist-pluralist and liberal-republican conceptions) on the one hand and by the Hegelian conception represented by Heper’s works in Turkey on the other hand.

Two interesting upshot come out of the analysis made so far in this study regarding the hegemonic position in the literature on civil society in Turkey: first, as was shown in Chapter 2, the Western tradition of liberalism and hence the liberal conception of civil society was not always characterized by this state-civil society dichotomy. In the case of Locke, for instance, the concept of civil society was used to denote 'society with a state' and hence the terms state and civil society did not stand for two mutually exclusive categories. In the Turkish context, on the other hand, all liberal-oriented conceptions of civil society take this dichotomy for granted as their starting point and conceptualize state and civil society as two distinct and mutually exclusive entities without any consideration of the different adventure of the concept in the Western tradition. The second interesting point about the hegemonic position in Turkey is to observe that the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society is also shared by socialist intellectuals. As was shown in detail in the previous chapter, despite their concern with the priority of socialism as an ideal, in terms of the way they use the concept of civil society the socialism-oriented approach have much in common with the hegemonic liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society. These scholars also view state and civil society in a mutually exclusive manner; underline the confrontation between the two as the major conflict characterizing socio-political life in the country and hence conceive of civil society as a means of limiting and controlling 'the dominant state'; and argue in favor of civil society as the living space of 'pluralism'.

This widespread acceptance of the central premises of the hegemonic perspective on the concept of civil society in Turkey -even crosscutting different politico-philosophical dispositions- does not mean that it is without any challengers. To the contrary, there are also critical studies challenging the central premises of the hegemonic view; yet, at least so far, these critical studies have remained as a small minority in the literature on civil society in Turkey. It is argued in this thesis,

however, that in order for the concept of civil society to provide a proficient tool for socio-political analysis what is required is to focus on these critical approaches. In other words, the incessant repetition of the same themes within the hegemonic discourse needs to be replaced by a discourse that aims to highlight the flaws of the concept of civil society in its currently prevailing usage(s). Unless this is done the explanatory potential of the concept as an analytical tool will continue to be considerably low leaving a number of crucial questions unanswered (even without being posed). Consequently, the aim of this chapter is twofold: First, it aims to highlight these flaws of the hegemonic position with the help of the critical theoretical perspectives developed most plainly by Marx and Gramsci. In that respect, examples will be presented to this kind of a critical perspective from the academic literature in Turkey. Second, it tries to bridge this Marx-Gramsci inspired critical perspective with some other more recent theoretical discussions, considerations and certain crucial concepts that have also been on the agenda of intellectual political debates. This seems to be an efficient way of enriching and deepening the concept of civil society. With that purpose in this chapter, Marx and Gramsci's critical approaches will be articulated to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's theoretical reflections on the concept of *antagonism*; Michel Foucault's theoretical reflections on the notion of *power*; and Sheldon Wolin's theoretical reflections on the idea of *fugitive democracy*.

Indeed, it should be highlighted that the critical approach in question in Turkey does not consist of only the Marxist-Gramscian studies. There is at the same time a critical perspective representing the communitarian-republican conception of civil society analyzed in Chapter 2. The starting point of this critical approach, as in the case of the Marx-Gramsci oriented critical view, is a challenge towards the endorsement of the strong state-weak civil society as a fact of life of the Turkish politics. In both of these critical approaches it is commonly suggested that the attempt to think of state and civil society as two distinct entities confronting each other has certain drawbacks as a result of which it can serve only as a misleading

conceptual tool. The major argument underlying the communitarian-republican oriented approach is that the overemphasis on the confrontation between state and civil society causes an “instrumental approach” toward the idea of civil society rather than approaching it in terms of the idea of an “ethical community”. It is argued that this kind of an instrumental view hinders the development of a concern with “ethics of/for civil society” and that what is in fact needed is just like such an ethical perspective. Civil society in this approach is associated with such notions as love of community, civic friendship and political participation as values in themselves. The communitarian-republican conception’s ethical oriented critique claims that the obsession with strong state-weak civil society ignores the possibility of despotic tendencies *within* civil society and hence efforts on the part of the civil societal groups to gain supremacy over the others. Second, it is argued that this view tends to conceptualize civil society in an instrumental way which in turn is a major obstacle to focus on an ethics of civil society. Actually, the emphasis on ethical values of civil society is deemed necessary for a struggle against despotic tendencies within civil society. In other words, it is believed that if individuals view civil society as the place where they can experience civic friendship and love of community, such trends will not be the dominant pattern of behavior.

Ali Yaşar Sarıbay’s works on civil society represents such an ethical critique of the dominant view in the literature on the state-civil society relations in Turkey. As a background to his criticism, Sarıbay makes an analysis of postmodernity which he defines as a symbol for a new condition (“*durum*”) that modern society and modern culture has entered into.⁷⁸⁴ He makes a detailed examination of the major characteristics of this new condition but what is especially of significance from the point of view of this study is his reference to the opposition between unity, universalism, absolutism (i.e. the major characteristics of the “project of modernity”) on the one hand; and plurality, fragmentation, particularism and

⁷⁸⁴ Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Postmodernite, Sivil Toplum ve İslam*, 3rd ed. (İstanbul: Alfa, 2001), 5.

relativity as defining the postmodern condition on the other.⁷⁸⁵ It is in direct connection to his analysis of postmodernity that he deals with the concept of civil society. This is why he formulates the big question behind his concern with the concept as the question of whether the civil society is the realm that legitimizes the fragmented character of postmodernity and whether civil society corresponds to the borders of a battlefield characterized by despotism which most probably stems from this fragmentation.⁷⁸⁶

It is important that Sarıbay draws attention to the insufficiency of the debates revolving around the issue of the autonomization of the civil society from the control and dominance of the state and its development as the realm of rights and liberties and hence he constantly refers to the danger of despotism with regard to civil society.⁷⁸⁷ He criticizes the dominant view for presenting this as both the necessary *and* sufficient condition of being democrat. Hence, he is hesitant to celebrate the plurality of civil society which is usually glorified as a source of richness by the dominant view. In other words, he is concerned with the dangers inherent in this plurality in the sense that the groups within civil society may also be engaged in a contest for power, power that is reminiscent of the state power (monist and absolutist) and this search may be disguised behind discourses which at first sight appears to be in opposition to the absolutist and monist practices of the state.⁷⁸⁸ On the basis of this critical approach to the dominant view, the bigger question that should be concerning all who are interested in the concept of civil

⁷⁸⁵ Sarıbay, *Postmodernite, Sivil Toplum ve İslam*, pp.7-25 especially 21-25.

⁷⁸⁶ Sarıbay, *Postmodernite, Sivil Toplum ve İslam*, 25.

⁷⁸⁷ He expresses his objections frequently in his works at different pages. See among others, Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Kamusal Alan Diyalojik Demokrasi Sivil İtiraz*, (İstanbul: Alfa, 2000), 55-56; Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Postmodernite, Sivil Toplum ve İslam*, 3rd ed. (İstanbul: Alfa, 2001), 126-127; 179; 148, 135, 128; Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, "Sivil Toplumda Ahlak: Üniversitas mı, Societas mı?" in *Sivil Toplum: Farklı Bakışlar*, ed. Lütfi Sunar (İstanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları, 2005), 36-37.

⁷⁸⁸ Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Kamusal Alan Diyalojik Demokrasi Sivil İtiraz*, 56.

society is formulated as that of: “what for?” instead of “what?”⁷⁸⁹: “To know *why/what for* (*niçin*) we want civil society would pave the way for acquiring the consciousness about *what* to build.”⁷⁹⁰ Answering that question is an inseparable part of an effort to render civil society the alternative of political despotism; moreover, dealing with this question is especially important in Turkey where the concept of civil society has been used in a way that caused it to lose much of its content.⁷⁹¹

As part of his own answer to the question of *what for* Sarıbay seems to be suggesting that civil society should not be viewed in instrumental terms but should be seen as an end in itself.⁷⁹² In other words, in a way that is reminiscent of Ferguson’s conception of civil society he refers to civil society as a form of ethical community (“*ahlakî bir beraberlik formu*”)⁷⁹³, as an “ethical entity” (“*ahlakî bir varlık*”)⁷⁹⁴ and hence he argues that there has to be an ethical essence of civil society that would prevent it from falling into the trap of despotism. According to him, the situation in Turkey has been just the opposite in the sense that civil society has most of the time been viewed as a means to achieve another end. This end, in turn, has usually been limiting the dominance of the state over society in Turkey and consequently a concern with ethical perspective on civil society has often been ignored in the literature.⁷⁹⁵ At the heart of this “ethics or virtue of civil society” lies

⁷⁸⁹ Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Postmodernite, Sivil Toplum ve İslam*, 3rd ed. (İstanbul: Alfa, 2001), 138.

⁷⁹⁰ Sarıbay, *Postmodernite, Sivil Toplum ve İslam*, 138.

⁷⁹¹ Sarıbay, *Postmodernite, Sivil Toplum ve İslam*, 138.

⁷⁹² Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, “Sivil Toplumda Ahlak: Üniversitas mı, Societas mı?” in *Sivil Toplum: Farklı Bakışlar*, ed. Lütü Sunar (İstanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları, 2005), 32, 36.

⁷⁹³ Sarıbay, “Sivil Toplumda Ahlak...”, 36.

⁷⁹⁴ Sarıbay, “Sivil Toplumda Ahlak ...”, 31.

⁷⁹⁵ Sarıbay, “Sivil Toplumda Ahlak ...”, 36-37.

the understanding that “there are other individuals who are all at least as respectable as me”.⁷⁹⁶

The basic principles of this ethical perspective, in turn, are built upon a particular conception of the ‘individual’ and ‘democracy’. Sarıbay gives great significance to the power of the individual to self-determination as a way of preventing the danger of despotism within the civil society and hence as a way of making civil society possible.⁷⁹⁷ Moreover, he also suggests democracy should be defined as the “rule of the individual” (“*bireyin iktidarı*”) instead of “rule of the people” (“*halkın iktidarı*”)⁷⁹⁸ but he adds that this individual should not be thought of as the atomistic individual but in the form of Ernest Gellner’s concept of “modular individual”⁷⁹⁹ which would be more appropriate for a discussion of *civil society as an ethical entity*. He defines the main characteristic of the modular individual as that of behaving in a way that takes into consideration other individuals and knowing that they are all parts of a whole.⁸⁰⁰ Hence while being autonomous, this individual also has a sense of belonging to a community.⁸⁰¹ This idea amounts to what Ferguson calls as “the social disposition of man” and “the principle of affection to mankind”. As can be recalled, Ferguson in that respect argues in favor of “the virtues of candor, friendship, generosity and public spirit” and also of “the promotion of the welfare of mankind” and underlines that the individual should be aware that “he himself

⁷⁹⁶ Sarıbay, *Postmodernite, Sivil Toplum ve İslam*, 18.

⁷⁹⁷ Sarıbay, *Kamusal Alan Diyalojik Demokrasi Sivil İtiraz*, 56.

⁷⁹⁸ Sarıbay, *Kamusal Alan Diyalojik Demokrasi Sivil İtiraz*, 56.

⁷⁹⁹ Sarıbay, *Postmodernite, Sivil Toplum ve İslam*, 19.

⁸⁰⁰ Sarıbay, *Postmodernite, Sivil Toplum ve İslam*, 19.

⁸⁰¹ Sarıbay, *Kamusal Alan Diyalojik Demokrasi Sivil İtiraz*, 56.

as an individual is no more than a part of the whole” and that “we must cease to esteem ourselves”.

In this communitarian-republican perspective, the notion of dialogical democracy is also integrated to the discussion on civil society. A basic role of civil society is to “unite the individuals and groups that are isolated and excluded within the social order without harming their differences and hence autonomies.”⁸⁰² Dialogical democracy can be a way of succeeding in this since,

[d]ialogical democracy first and foremost assumes that dialogue is the only means that makes it possible to live together with the other in a state of reciprocal tolerance. While doing this, in turn, it does not consider who and what the other is and hence it opposes to all kinds of fundamentalism.⁸⁰³

This is why, it is explained, dialogical democracy takes reflexivity and deliberation as its essence.⁸⁰⁴ Although he acknowledges that it is not possible to overcome all kinds of social conflicts through dialogue he claims that dialogical democracy points at the “direction and the content of the ideal that we should seek.”⁸⁰⁵ To turn to the ethics of civil society it is obvious that the principle of civility, the concept of modular individual and dialogical democracy constitute the ethics of civil society. Besides these, he refers to Aristotle and his views on human nature and friendship. As was mentioned before, the major reason why civil society should be viewed as an ethical entity is the fact that human beings are naturally social creatures and hence the notion of friendship has great importance in human life.⁸⁰⁶ In that respect there is reference to Aristotle’s conception of “civic friendship”, which requires that

⁸⁰² Sarıbay, *Postmodernite, Sivil Toplum ve İslam*, 18.

⁸⁰³ Sarıbay, *Kamusal Alan Diyalojik Demokrasi Sivil İtiraz*, 12.

⁸⁰⁴ Sarıbay, *Kamusal Alan Diyalojik Demokrasi Sivil İtiraz*, 12.

⁸⁰⁵ Sarıbay, *Kamusal Alan Diyalojik Demokrasi Sivil İtiraz*, 13.

⁸⁰⁶ Sarıbay, “Sivil Toplumda Ahlak ...”, 31-32.

an individual should consider and protect the good of the others as his/her own good, as an inseparable part of this ethical entity and underlines that the ultimate common good would emerge in that way.⁸⁰⁷

To conclude, it is an important point of divergence between liberal approaches and Sarıbay's approach that he constantly warns against the dangers inherent in the struggle for power among the various groups within the civil society which can result in the domination and suppression of certain groups by others. This is why he strongly criticizes those approaches that pay the utmost attention to the confrontation between state and civil society representing monist/absolutist and pluralist understandings of social-political community respectively. Unless prevented, he argues, the confrontations within civil society may turn into despotism and render it a fragmented society in which the individuals and groups do not have any adherence either to each other or to the community. However, Sarıbay prefers to think of civil society as an ethical form of community that makes the co-existence of differences possible by protecting their autonomies but at the

⁸⁰⁷ Sarıbay, "Sivil Toplumda Ahlak ...", 32. Interestingly, besides these references to civic friendship and to the requirement that individuals should see themselves as part of a whole, Sarıbay also makes references to Oakeshott's differentiation between an enterprise association and civil association as analytical tools to formulate his theory of the ethics of civil society. As explained in detail in the preceding parts of this study the distinguishing characteristic of the latter is that the individuals come together not with the purpose of formulating, pursuing and realizing a common goal. According to Sarıbay this means that the association is not viewed by its members in an instrumental way. The members are a part of that association not because they see it as a means to reach an end but because they see it as a form of living together in a way that the rights of everyone are protected voluntarily and reciprocally. This, in turn, is succeeded through general rules and laws determining the ways through which the particularities, differences are protected while going on to live together. Hence, civic association is built, first and foremost upon rules and laws. However, it is also possible to claim that in Oakeshott's formulation civic association is a requirement for the realization of the individual goals and ends. Oakeshott constantly underlines the irreducible variety and plurality among individuals and sees the rules and laws in a society as a necessary condition to make it possible that these individuals realize their own plan and goals. In that sense, it does not seem accurate to bring such a perspective together with communitarian and republican ideas like civic friendship, the individual as part of the whole etc. which have a central place in Sarıbay's writings on the concept of civil society.

same time constituting a community *through "civic friendship"*. This, in turn, is shaped by the conception of "modular individual"; by the emphasis on dialogue, deliberation and reflexivity. He is also concerned with the notions of "responsible community" and "responsible individual."⁸⁰⁸ In a way that is directly reminiscent of the communitarian conception of Ferguson who constantly makes references to such concepts as "felicity of conduct in human affairs", "man as a member of society", "disinterested love of public" he argues that "it is not that we live together since we are free; rather we are free since we live together."⁸⁰⁹

As the general feature of the communitarian oriented conception of civil society, however, it is not easy to conclude that Sarıbay is clear about how to establish this balance and how to determine and formulate the rules and laws regulating the relations within civil society and those between individual and community, between the state and civil society. He accepts that dialogue is not a magical solution to all kinds of social conflicts, but after that the discussion is left open-ended. It can perhaps be imagined that an atmosphere for dialogue is created between parties that represent different positions and that are not equals in terms of their cultural, political, economic powers; however, it is not easy to imagine how the inequalities between the parties will affect the course of the dialogue and whether or not the love of the public and the civic friendship will suffice to erase the traces of unequal relations of power.

The promise of an "engaged citizenry" is an important contribution of all variations of the liberal and republican approaches to the concept. However, as Chandoke puts it quite directly,

... fine terms such as "engagement" become sticky ones when we test what they really mean. Yes, human beings fashion their worlds in dialogue.

⁸⁰⁸ Sarıbay, *Postmodernite, Sivil Toplum ve İslam*, 223.

⁸⁰⁹ Sarıbay, "Sivil Toplumda Ahlak ...", 37.

Unless we talk to others and familiarize ourselves with their different perspectives we cannot possess informed judgments ... The idea that it is our job as responsible citizens to sustain a moral conversation is attractive. But is it fair and just? The public sphere can exclude certain voices and marginalize others.⁸¹⁰

Similarly, it is important to stress that “if participation is to mean anything, it will challenge existing power relations and will bring about conflict: the absence of conflict in many participatory programmes is something that should raise our suspicions.”⁸¹¹ There is a need to integrate into the debate on civil society a consciousness that it is not simply the realm of caring, mutual support, cooperation, consensus, or civic virtues as the majority of contemporary theorists of civil society tend to propose. Hence, although the communitarian-republican approach represented by Saribay in Turkey differs from the dominant position in an important respect, (meaning challenging the obsession with strong state-weak civil society and in trying to bring to the forefront another dimension of the topic) that criticism falls short of highlighting the most crucial flaws of the dominant position. “What is needed is a more vigorous engagement with its [civil society] potentially destructive aspects ...”⁸¹² As Björn Beckman argues, “we need to look outside the state-civil society dichotomy in order to be able to locate the constituting features of civil society”:

The conflicts are constituted, not primarily in the relation between the interests represented by the associations and the state but between these interests themselves, for instance, between capital and labour, landowners and tenants, between communities who feel threatened or disadvantaged, women and men, movements with competing worldviews and strategies for society. The uneven power relations in society are reflected at the level of the state, influencing what groups have access and have their interests protected and promoted and what are groups are marginalized, victimized

⁸¹⁰ Chandoke, “What the Hell is Civil Society?”, 4.

⁸¹¹ Jenny Pearce quoted in Jensen and Miszlivetz, “The Languages of Civil Society – Europe and Beyond”, 6.

⁸¹² Chandoke, “What the Hell is Civil Society?”, 5.

and repressed. State institutions are formed and transformed in the context of such struggles... The struggles are fought out within the institutions of the state as well as in the organizations of civil society...⁸¹³

This kind of an engagement with the potentially destructive aspects of civil society in the sense of “the uneven power relations in society” and an effort to deconstruct the state-civil society distinction is central to Marx’s and Gramsci’s conceptions of civil society as was explained in great detail in Chapter 2. Marx’s conception of civil society draws attention to the economic relations and class structure as the most determining features of the realm of civil society and thinks of the state as the site where these are reflected. Marx’s challenge to the distinction between state and civil society is a political economy oriented challenge. Gramsci’s contribution makes Marx’s conception of civil society more complex by adding the dimension of hegemony (i.e. the intellectual and moral leadership). He refers to civil society and the state as two superstructural levels and at the same time connects them with economic relations. He sees civil society as the realm where the ideological struggle for hegemony takes place and considers hegemony and economic power as inseparable conditions of becoming a state. It is possible to see, albeit as a small minority, the representatives of their conceptions within the academic literature on civil society in Turkey. This thesis prefers to follow the path of these critical approaches inspired by Marx and Gramsci and tries to contribute that way of thinking by articulating it with more recent debates revolving around the concepts of antagonism and power. As Gramsci’s contribution enriches Marx’s analysis by adding a concrete analysis of ideological struggles, these recent debates have the potential to augment that perspective by serving as analytical tools to explore into what is going on within the civil society.⁸¹⁴

⁸¹³ Björn Beckman, “Explaining Democratization: Notes on the Concept of Civil Society” *Civil Society, Democracy and the Muslim World*, 1997, 3.

⁸¹⁴ Apart from the communitarian-republican and Marxist-Gramscian critiques of the dominant usage of the concept of civil society another critical point of view deserves to be mentioned here. Although it does not propose a peculiar conceptualization for “civil society”, the critique expressed in this view draws attention to the possible different ways in which the state-civil society dichotomy can be “used and abused” by rival ideological

As can be recalled from the discussion in Chapter 2, Marx has a political-economy oriented approach toward the state-civil society relationship and his conception of civil society aims to show the interconnectedness of the class relations characterizing civil society and the state. In other words, he challenges the liberal understanding of the state as a distinct entity or as the night-watchman outside state-civil society distinction. Marx strongly rejects the possibility of separating the economic and political spheres so that economic inequalities are put aside as if they have no influence on political power. Galip Yalman is among the scholars representing this kind of an approach.⁸¹⁵ He stresses the socio-economic inequalities

positions. Navaro-Yashin's study shows how the concept of civil society was employed, incorporated, and implied in competing discourses of power in Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s, that is, to the discourse of the Welfare Party and that of Kemalist bureaucrats. In that context, according to him, "civil society" was transformed into a symbolic ground on which legitimate state power was going to be based." He dwells on this argument and shows how each group, i.e. both the members of the Welfare Party and Kemalist bureaucrats, have been in a constant effort to present themselves as the representatives of the civil society. Welfare Party officials, he argues have obtained political power "by arguing that they were not representatives of "the state", but of "civil society"". Similarly, he argues, secularists also employed the notion of "civil society" in their attempts to defend a secularist establishment. "They have wanted to illustrate that secularism is not about "the state" but "about the will of the people", that it was not "an imposition from above" but "a reflection of society"". He points out that "civil society does not have a singular reference, rather it is context-bound and contingent" and that "it may no longer be helpful to search for separate domains for state and society, power and resistance". Rather, it is important to beware of the ways in which the term "civil society" is manipulated by different social movements aspiring to state power to their own ends.

⁸¹⁵ For an earlier elaboration on Marx's conception of civil society and his challenge to the state-civil society distinction see, Gülnur Savran, *Sivil Toplum ve Ötesi Roussesau, Hegel, Marx* (İstanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1987). Savran is amongst the first scholars in Turkey who underlined the uniqueness and radicalism of Marx's challenge to the concept of civil society. She does this through an analysis of the conceptions of civil society in the works of Roussesau, Hegel, Marx in a comparative perspective. She argues that Roussesau, and Hegel "cannot go beyond the point of view of civil society and cannot pose a radical criticism of civil society." Savran, 181. On the basis of her analysis Marx she explains that for Marx "in capitalism social relations take on two different forms as economic and political relations..." The state becomes a fetish as a distinct political institution formally independent from the hegemonic class. That the state exists as a distinct political institution disguises the fact that it is in fact historically a specific relationship of hegemony. Hence to accept as a given that the economical and the political constitute two distinct spheres, to

and conflicts within civil society as the central issue to be handled with when at stake is the state-civil society relationship and also adheres to Marx's view that the state is neither outside nor above those conflicts characterizing civil society. To the contrary, the state also should be viewed as part and parcel of the material conditions and workings of civil society. He argues against the idea that economy can be thought of as a separate realm and challenges the state-society distinction by arguing that the state also is a form of relations, he argues that the form of the state reflects the class relations of the society. For him, "a proper analysis of capitalism should be grounded on the methodological premise that the state and the economy do not "exist" as external entities ... for in the present era as ever, state power is integral for the constitution *and* reproduction of the market economy..."⁸¹⁶ Hence he underlines "the need to come to terms with the constitution of the social classes in general, and the bourgeoisie in particular *within and through* the state".⁸¹⁷ The reason why he calls for such a perspective is his observation that what has been the hegemonic discourse in Turkey is built upon an image of the state distant from and reluctant to the demands coming from the society, dominating the latter and gets its power and authority from no other source but only itself.⁸¹⁸ Concomitantly, Yalman

assume these forms without questioning why these specific and distinct spheres have emerged come to mean being locked up in the fetishism which is endemic to the social relations of capitalist society." Savran, 191-192. In a parallel line of thinking, Savran refers to Marx's criticism of Hegel with regard to the principle of universality. According to this, Marx argues that "since the state is abstracted from society, it seems to represent the society as a whole... Hence the state produces an illusion of universality: In this illusion, both the private and atomistic interests of the members of civil society and the particular interests of the certain segments of bourgeoisie are generalized in the abstraction of "national interest."" Savran, 192.

⁸¹⁶ Galip Yalman, "Do We Need a "New" Political Economy of Development? Reflections on State and Capital within the Context of Structural Adjustment and Never Ending Crisis", Paper prepared for Conference on – Toward a New Political Economy of Development, Political Economy Research Centre, University of Sheffield, July 4-6, 2002. <http://www.shef.ac.uk/~perc/dev/papers/yalman.pdf>, 1.

⁸¹⁷ Yalman, "Do We Need...", 1. Emphasis added.

⁸¹⁸ Galip Yalman, "Hegemony Projesi Olarak Devletçilik, Kalkınmacılık ve Piyasa" in *Liberalizm, Devlet, Hegemonya*, ed. E. Fuat Keyman, (İstanbul: Everest, 2002), 316.

argues, this hegemonic discourse presents the market and the civil society as the realms where individual liberties are lived/realized and which exist independently of the state.⁸¹⁹ Hence, in this discourse, because of the dominance of the state as a distinct ontological entity *per se*, the politics-economics relationship is presented in such a way that economy is forced to work according to the needs and priorities of the state rather than being able to work in accordance with its own principles.⁸²⁰ This, in turn, is conceived to be part and parcel of the state's endeavor to keep its domination over every sphere of life of the individual and society. By the same token, it is argued that "its [the state's] subordination of the economy would prevent the emergence of the market as an 'autonomous sphere', that is, as a domain of private activity where the ends of the individuals would be supreme."⁸²¹ In that way, it tries to enhance a public consensus at the heart of which rests market liberalism which in turn serves to render the "class nature of power" invisible.⁸²²

In this kind of a Marxist conception, civil society is viewed as the realm where economic (market) relations are lived and a "balance of class forces" exists; and it is argued that this balance is "registered in the state itself (as the state is the field of power relations)."⁸²³ So, the rules, regulations, laws etc., which are usually treated as the activities of a neutral state outside and above the societal confrontations, are not indeed immune from those class conflicts. However, this Marxist approach claims

⁸¹⁹ Yalman, "Hegemony Projeleri Olarak...", 316.

⁸²⁰ Yalman, "Hegemony Projeleri Olarak...", 317.

⁸²¹ Galip Yalman, *Bourgeoisie and the State: Changing Forms of Interest Representation within the Context of Economic Crises and Structural Adjustment: Turkey During the 1980s*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Manchester, Manchester School of Social Sciences (Development Studies), 1997, 99.

⁸²² Yalman, "Hegemony Projeleri Olarak...", 327.

⁸²³ Galip Yalman, "The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie in Historical Perspective: A Relativist Paradigm or a Panoply of Hegemonic Strategies?" in N. Balkan and S. Savran eds. *The Politics of Permanent Crisis: Class, Ideology and State in Turkey*, (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc. 2002), 38.

that the mainstream studies on civil society in Turkey bring to the foreground the confrontation between state and society and ignore how this balance of class forces is reached and preserved within civil society as well as within the state: “[C]enter-periphery dichotomy was believed to be perpetuated as the main axis of the confrontation, thereby signaling the relative weakness or retardation of a civil society.”⁸²⁴

Whether this was the (mis)representation of the reality by the scholars themselves or its (mis)conception by the political elite and/or bureaucrats ... either way the view held sway that the bureaucracy was not only the foundation of the state, but it was ... endowed with knowledge above the materialism of civil society...Whereas, in actual fact, it has provided a perfect example of the misconception of social reality being *concept determined* in the sense of being exhausted by subjective meanings...⁸²⁵

This *misconception of social reality* regarding the state and its relation to the “materialism of civil society” is considered indeed “a deliberate attempt to shift the principal contradiction from being between producing and appropriating classes to one of distribution among the appropriating groups.”⁸²⁶ Consequently, “*putting an end to class based politics* [is] the core of the new hegemonic strategy” accompanying the restructuring of the state during the structural adjustment of post-1980 period.⁸²⁷ However, the political-economy oriented approach emphasizes “the indispensability of class analysis for a better understanding of the state and/or the market and their interrelationships.”⁸²⁸ This view criticizes harshly the “widespread tendency to gloss over the fact that, for Marx, state power was integral for the

⁸²⁴ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie...”, 23.

⁸²⁵ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie...”, 25 and Yalman, *Bourgeoisie and the State*, 96. Emphasis original.

⁸²⁶ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie...”, 27. Emphasis original.

⁸²⁷ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie...”, 41. Emphasis original.

⁸²⁸ Yalman, *Bourgeoisie and the State...*, 18.

constitution *and* the reproduction of the market economy as a form of the capitalist relations of production.”⁸²⁹

Hence, the political-economy oriented Marxist conception of civil society argues convincingly against the overemphasis on a particular state tradition in the Ottoman-Turkish context which treats the state as “an autonomous structure with a logic and interests of its own” and overstresses “its differentiation from the society [as] a structural feature of its formation.”⁸³⁰ Concomitantly, this conception of civil society is radically different than what is taken for granted in studies that are built upon this conception of state. This means that rather than being conceived as the realm of individual rights and liberties, initiative, autonomous activity, voluntariness, civic friendship, solidarity and the like, civil society (and the state) is thought to represent certain forms of class relations and struggles/conflicts between different economic classes and in that sense they are closely interrelated. In other words, there is a power, struggle and conflict oriented perspective on the concept of civil society which is the most salient defect of the hegemonic position.

As was explained in Chapter 2, a parallel line of thinking to that of Marx is observed in Gramsci’s works on the concept. Gramsci conceptualizes civil society as the realm of ideological struggle for hegemony. The concept of hegemony is used to denote the way in which the social class dominant in terms of economic power would win the consent of the masses so that it can become a state. In that way, Gramsci highlights the interrelationship between the state and society and even the fact that they are indeed the same thing. As can be recalled, what makes Gramsci different from Marx, is that he conceptualizes civil society as one of two superstructural levels meaning that he does not equate the realm of civil society with economic relations (the base). Rather, of course as a methodological distinction

⁸²⁹ Yalman, *Bourgeoisie and the State*, 28.

⁸³⁰ Yalman, “The Turkish State and Bourgeoisie...”, 24.

not as an ontological distinction, he thinks of economic power and the hegemony achieved in civil society as two different categories. In that sense, then, civil society is the site of ideological struggles. The hegemony (i.e. “intellectual and moral leadership”) gained in civil society, in turn, would constitute an inseparable part of “the State” and this is why he argues that “the state does not have and request consent but it also “educates” this consent.”⁸³¹ So like Marx, Gramsci also rejects approaching state and civil society as two ontologically distinct entities and again in a parallel line of thinking with Marx he also prefers to conceive civil society in terms of power struggles and conflicts between social classes.

In accordance with this perspective, Necmi Erdoğan shows the complicated relationship between the state and the civil societal organizations that declare to be adherents of Kemalism, the official ideology of the Turkish Republic. Through an analysis of discourses employed by those CSOs, Erdoğan challenges the dominant view on civil society in Turkey. As was delineated through this chapter, at the heart of this dominant view rests attribution of a positive value to the concept of civil society as a counter force against an overpowered, dominant state. He takes the discourses and practices of these CSOs as the cases where this distinction becomes blurred and this kind of an approach to the state/civil society distinction is rendered misleading.

Erdoğan argues that the non-official Kemalism represented by the Kemalist CSOs cannot and should not be seen as a simple replication of the official discourse. *Sivil Kemalizm*, as he calls it, is an expression of the re-articulation of Kemalism, on the face of existing power relations, to a new context, with a new accent.⁸³²

⁸³¹ Gramsci, 259. For a detailed investigation of the Gramscian conception of civil society see Chapter 2.

⁸³² Necmi Erdoğan, “ “Kalpaksız Kuvvacılar”: Kemalist Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları” in *Türkiye’de Sivil Toplum ve Milliyetçilik*, ed. Stefanos Yerasimos, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000), 261.

Nevertheless, this is not to deny the common ground that those CSOs share with the official ideology. He gives examples to show the ways in which the Kemalist CSOs seek for the approval, support and assistance of the state, how they complain about the reluctance on the part of the state officials to appraise and value their activities; and how they see the approval and support of the state officials as values to be proud of.⁸³³ He points out that “Kemalist CSOs identify themselves with the state and with the official ideology since they defend the founding ideology of the Republic”⁸³⁴ and that they get extremely disappointed when they are not appreciated by the state. Erdoğan takes this ambivalent position of the Kemalist CSOs between the official world and civil society as a case where we see the fallacy of the conventional distinction between “the state” and “the civil society” since one can easily observe the overlap between the two in their case.⁸³⁵ Although these organizations define themselves as actors of civil society, their discourse aims at hegemonization of Kemalism by articulating it to a new context shaped by the current configuration of power relations.⁸³⁶ This in turn, is to be considered as an indication of “hegemony as a never-ending process”⁸³⁷ as Gramsci formulated it. It is also related with the question of “by what social forces and how is the constituting political discourse to be re-articulated and replicated.”⁸³⁸

The brief analysis made above is sufficient to make it obvious that Marx and Gramsci’s conceptions of civil society and the academic works taking their inspiration from these conceptions is very crucial in carving out the flaws of the

⁸³³ Erdoğan, “ “Kalpaksız Kuvvacılar” ...”, 250-253.

⁸³⁴ Erdoğan, “ “Kalpaksız Kuvvacılar” ...”, 244.

⁸³⁵ Erdoğan, “ “Kalpaksız Kuvvacılar” ...”, 236.

⁸³⁶ Erdoğan, “ “Kalpaksız Kuvvacılar” ...”, 261.

⁸³⁷ Erdoğan, “ “Kalpaksız Kuvvacılar” ...”, 261.

⁸³⁸ Erdoğan, “ “Kalpaksız Kuvvacılar” ...”, 261.

hegemonic position. Based upon an incessant repetition of the (strong) state-(weak) civil society dichotomy, an idea of civil society as a means of limiting and controlling the state, and a view of pluralism as a 'source of richness' this dominant view tends to miss out i) the conflicts and struggles taking place within civil society due to uneven power relations and ii) the interconnectedness between state and civil society. Both flaws have already been pointed out influentially by Marx and Gramsci's conceptions of civil society. This is why it is necessary to focus on these conceptions in order to be able to 'fill in the blanks' in the hegemonic usage(s) of the concept of civil society. These critical works are of great significance to be able to look at the literature staying out of the hegemonic position. They forcefully show that state and civil society are not two distinct entities with fixed boundaries around them. They are both formed and re-formed by the uneven power relations and conflicts characterizing socio-political life and in that sense they are interconnected. Moreover unlike the versions the hegemonic view, they develop a perspective on the concept of civil society that underlines the connection between economics and politics.

As a possible contribution to this way of thinking, this thesis proposes to connect the premises of these conceptions with three concepts lying at the heart of more recent theoretical works. These concepts have not so far been part and parcel of the debate on the concept of civil society *per se*; but the time seems to be right for an articulation between them and the concept of civil society. Such theoretical reconsiderations, which will be built upon the alternative conceptualizations of civil society by Marx and Gramsci, seem to be necessary in order to prevent that the concept of civil society remains as a surface concept without or with very little capacity to serve as an efficient analytical tool. This will further a power-conflict-antagonism oriented perspective on the concept as opposed to the dominant pluralism-and-consensus oriented perspective. Such a shift in perspective in turn seems to be necessary in order to surmount the bottleneck that has been

characterizing the debates revolving around the concept of civil society in general. As was mentioned before, the concept of “antagonism” as elaborated by Laclau and Mouffe, “power” as developed by Foucault and “fugitive democracy” as proposed by Wolin can be considered to be suggestive in that respect. *These concepts seem to be contributing to the way civil society has been conceptualized by Marx and Gramsci.* This reformulated usage of the concept goes hand in hand with a series of four theoretical maneuvers: First, Laclau and Mouffe’s works on antagonism will help to shed light on the true nature of the relationships characterizing civil society radically different from the consensus oriented perspective. This, in turn becomes possible only when there is a shift in the focus of attention –from a focus upon the state-civil society confrontation and power relations between the two to the confrontations and power relations within the civil society. In other words, the preoccupation and/or obsession with the state-civil society confrontation has to give way to a broader perspective that takes into account other forms of conflicts and struggles. Since this kind of a broader perspective requires an analysis of the uneven power relations there is a need to integrate a comprehensive “analytics of power” into the concept of civil society. When these two maneuvers take place, it is impossible to remain blind to the fact that state and civil society are not ontologically different entities which would be the third theoretical move. As was mentioned before, in fact in all these aspects the contributions of Marx and Gramsci’s critical/alternative conceptualizations of civil society should be acknowledged. The theoretical considerations of these concepts are brought to the forefront in this thesis with the purpose of connecting them with Marx and Gramsci’s alternative conceptions of civil society. The fourth theoretical move will in turn be related to a change in the way “democracy” is being conceptualized.

To start with, Mouffe’s challenge to consensual view of politics is quite illuminating. According to her “with the demise of Marxism, the illusion that we can finally dispense with the notion of antagonism has become widespread. This

belief is fraught with danger, since it leaves us unprepared in the face of unrecognized manifestations of antagonism.”⁸³⁹ This is why Mouffe argues for “acknowledging the permanence of conflict and antagonism”⁸⁴⁰, and hence this is a positive contribution to the critical re-consideration of the use of the concept of civil society from the perspective that was described above. It makes sense from the point of view of this perspective to read Mouffe arguing “Instead of shying away from the component of violence and hostility inherent in social relations, the task is to think how to create the conditions under which those aggressive forces can be defused and diverted...”⁸⁴¹ As will be shown below, Mouffe comes to this point as result of her criticisms against liberalism, liberal republicanism, postmodern liberalism and communitarianism. These criticisms are crucial in understanding her emphasis on the notion of antagonism because at the most basic level she accuses all of them with a “mistaken emphasis on consensus”.⁸⁴² She deals with these questions not specifically in relation with the concept of civil society but in connection with her concern for democratic theory. However, the perspective that she develops is quite effective from the point of view of an effort to re-consider the concept of civil society.

At the basis of Mouffe’s criticisms there is a challenge towards “the universalistic and individualistic modes of thought which have been dominant in the liberal tradition.”⁸⁴³ In that respect she suggests an “elaboration of a non-individualistic conception of the individual.”⁸⁴⁴ This conception will be based on the “rejection of

⁸³⁹ Chantal Mouffe, *Return of the Political*, 2.

⁸⁴⁰ Mouffe, *Return of the Political*, 8.

⁸⁴¹ Mouffe, *Return of the Political*, 153.

⁸⁴² Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 7.

⁸⁴³ Mouffe, *Return of the Political*, 99.

⁸⁴⁴ Mouffe, *Return of the Political*, 100.

the atomistic liberal vision of an individual that could exist with her rights and interests prior to and independently of her inscription into community” since according to Mouffe this vision subsequently has become “an obstacle to the deepening of modern democracy.”⁸⁴⁵ However this new approach challenging the atomistic vision of individual will not have a communitarian color either: it is “a new approach to individuality that restores its social nature without reducing it to a simple component of an organic whole.”⁸⁴⁶ Instead of these, it is suggested that the specificity of the ensemble of social relations “can only be grasped by recognizing the multiplicity of the identities and subject positions that make up an individual.”⁸⁴⁷ This multiplicity of identities and subject positions, in turn, can be grasped only through an analysis of the existing power relations in the society. It is these relations that should be the focus of attention since it is within these webs of power relations that these identities and subject positions are formed (and re-formed). It should also be added that Mouffe suggests a particular approach to these relations. This approach is built upon two parallel presumptions: on the one hand there is the basic argument that “antagonism can never be eliminated and it constitutes an ever-present possibility in politics”⁸⁴⁸ and hence the mentioned multiplicity of identities and subject positions cannot be thought independently of the notion of antagonism. “Conflict and division are inherent to politics and there is no place where reconciliation could be definitely achieved as the full actualization of the unity of ‘the people’.”⁸⁴⁹ Indeed, this kind of a view on antagonism has been developed earlier by Mouffe and Laclau in their *Hegemony and the Socialist Strategy*. According to their approach antagonism is in a sense the building block, the

⁸⁴⁵ Mouffe, *Return of the Political*, 100.

⁸⁴⁶ Mouffe, *Return of the Political*, 100.

⁸⁴⁷ Mouffe, *Return of the Political*, 100.

⁸⁴⁸ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 13.

⁸⁴⁹ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 15-16.

constitutive element of in all kinds of subject positions. In other words, all subject positions are constituted within and through antagonism. This, in turn leads to the case that the constitution of identities are never fully-developed and fully-completed. In that respect antagonism is different from real opposition or contradiction.⁸⁵⁰ The latter types of relations converge in “the fact of being *objective relations*” according to which opposition is an objective relation between real objects and a contradiction is an objective relation between conceptual objects.⁸⁵¹ That is to say,

...it is something that the objects *already are* which makes the relation intelligible. That is in both cases we are concerned with full identities. In the case of contradiction, it is because A *is fully* A that being-not-A is a contradiction - and therefore an impossibility. In the case of real opposition, it is because A is also fully A that its relation with B produces an objectively determinable effect.⁸⁵²

In the case of antagonism the situation is different:

...the presence of the ‘Other’ prevents me from being totally myself. The relation arises not from full totalities, but from the impossibility of their constitution...⁸⁵³ Insofar as there is antagonism I cannot be a full presence for myself. But nor is the force that antagonizes me such a presence: its objective being is a symbol of my non-being and, in this way, it is overflowed by a plurality of meanings which prevent its being fixed as full positivity.⁸⁵⁴

It is possible to get two inferences from such a conceptualization of antagonism. First, it is clear that since antagonism is present at the constitution of subject positions and identities it is not something erasable. Antagonism is internal to and

⁸⁵⁰ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, (London, New York: Verso, 1985), 124-125.

⁸⁵¹ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 124. Emphasis original.

⁸⁵² Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 124-125. Emphases original.

⁸⁵³ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 125.

⁸⁵⁴ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 125.

constitutive of all subject positions and hence a consensual view on socio-political relations is fallacious. Second, as was explained in the quotation, antagonism prevents the subject positions from becoming fully-developed. The subject positions are not completed, open to change and hence contingent. This, in turn means that these subject positions cannot constitute themselves as 'objective realities' and they cannot be defined, determined and fixed objectively unlike the case of an opposition or contradiction: "Real opposition is an *objective* relation –that is determinable, definable- among things; contradiction is an equally definable relation among concepts; antagonism constitutes the limits of every objectivity."⁸⁵⁵

This belief in the ever-presence of antagonism as constitutive of all kinds of identities, the non-fixity of subject positions and hence the impossibility of consensus in turn is closely associated with a second presumption, i.e. the claim that the tension between equality and liberty cannot be reconciled and that *there can only be contingent hegemonic forms of stabilization of their conflict*.⁸⁵⁶ Each time this kind of a contingent hegemonic stabilization takes place, it happens at the expense of some form of exclusion:

We have to accept that every consensus exists as a temporary result of a provisional hegemony as a stabilization of power, and that it always entails some form of exclusion. The ideas that power could be dissolved through a rational debate and that legitimacy could be based on pure rationality are illusions which can endanger democratic institutions.⁸⁵⁷

⁸⁵⁵ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 125.

⁸⁵⁶ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 5. Emphasis added.

⁸⁵⁷ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 104.

Consequently, what is required is “coming to terms with the hegemonic nature of social relations and identities.”⁸⁵⁸ This in turn means arguing strongly against the “liberal illusion of a pluralism without antagonism” because

to conceive democratic politics exclusively in terms of a struggle of a multiplicity of interest groups or of minorities for the assertion of their rights is to remain blind to the relations of power. Such a perspective prevents us from recognizing how certain differences are structured as relations of power.⁸⁵⁹

This conception of democratic politics on the basis of relations of power draws attention to the fact that “some existing rights have been constructed on the very exclusion or subordination of others.”⁸⁶⁰ As was mentioned before, the communitarian perspectives that emphasizes the notion of unity of ‘the people’ seeing the individual as a “simple component of an organic whole; and also the liberal republican perspective of rational debate are criticized from such a perspective. Mouffe recognizes the latter’s “desire to show the limitations of the democratic consensus as envisaged by the aggregative model – only concerned with instrumental rationality and the promotion of self interest” and explains that “deliberative democrats insist on another type of rationality, the rationality at work in communicative action and free public reason.”⁸⁶¹ However, for her

to aim at a universal rational consensus [is] the real threat to democracy. Indeed this can lead to violence being unrecognized and hidden behind appeals to ‘rationality’ as is often the case in liberal thinking which disguises the necessary frontiers and forms of exclusion behind pretences of ‘neutrality’.⁸⁶²

⁸⁵⁸ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 105.

⁸⁵⁹ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 20.

⁸⁶⁰ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 20.

⁸⁶¹ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 94.

⁸⁶² Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 22.

So the attention is on the danger that “exclusions can be denied by declaring that they are the product of the free exercise of reason” and on the fact that “it is not enough to eliminate dimension of antagonism and exclusion from one’s theory to make it vanish from the real world. It does come back, and with vengeance.”⁸⁶³ This kind of an approach towards the realm of social relations and toward the concept of democratic politics provides a clue for this thesis’s endeavor to divert the attention from the confrontation and power relations between the state and civil society to those that exist within civil society and to underline the antagonistic nature of the relations characterizing civil society and the exclusions, dominations, marginalizations as parts of this antagonistic structure. Such a perspective on civil society has also been suggested by Stuart Hall:

... ‘civil society’ is no ideal realm of pure freedom. Its microworlds include the multiplication of points of power and conflict - and thus exploitation, oppression and marginalization. More and more of our everyday lives are caught up in these forms of power, and their lines of intersection. Far from there being no resistance to the system, there has been a proliferation of new points of antagonism, new social movements of resistance organized around them - and, consequently, a generalization of ‘politics’ to spheres which hitherto the left assumed to be apolitical: a politics of the family, of health, of food, of sexuality, of the body. What we lack is any overall map of how these power relations connect and of their resistances. Perhaps there isn’t, in that sense, one ‘power game’ at all, more a network of strategies and powers and their articulations - and thus a politics which is always positional.⁸⁶⁴

Similarly Ehrenberg argues:

What civil society “is” can be grasped only by looking carefully at what it its constituent structures do, how they are organized, and what political and economic forces are at work – no matter how strenuously some theorists try to describe it as an autonomous sphere of democratic activity. In this sense, civil society is really a heuristic device, a theoretical guide that can reveal

⁸⁶³ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 31.

⁸⁶⁴ Stuart Hall “The Meaning of New Times” in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, Eds. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, (London: Routledge, 1996).

important matters of social life but cannot adequately be described in and of itself.⁸⁶⁵

These remarks considered together with Mouffe's insistence on antagonism and exclusion, provide a useful guide to make sense of the concept of civil society without staying within the confines of the hegemonic view. More specifically, through such a perspective civil society becomes a concept that can be functional in grasping "the present hegemonic configuration"⁸⁶⁶ in order to be able to struggle against it and envision and develop an alternative to it. This is so because the present configuration of power relations is a contingent one and it is transformable. However, in order for such transformation to take place in the first place that configuration has to be made discernible: *"Instead of trying to erase the traces of power and exclusion democratic politics requires us to bring them to the fore, to make them visible so that they can enter the terrain of contestation."*⁸⁶⁷ Through this contestation alternatives to the present hegemonic configuration may emerge and develop. This kind of an opportunity in turn is a crucial requirement for democratic politics:

once the very idea of an alternative to the existing configuration of power disappears, what disappears also is the very possibility a legitimate expression for the resistances against the dominant power relations. The status quo has become naturalized and made into the way "things really are."⁸⁶⁸

Thus, it is necessary to deal with "the very question of what are *the conditions of existence of the democratic subject*"⁸⁶⁹, to bring them to the fore and make them evident in order to be able to struggle to transform them. "...[A]ny social objectivity

⁸⁶⁵ Ehrenberg, 235.

⁸⁶⁶ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 6.

⁸⁶⁷ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 33-34. Emphasis added.

⁸⁶⁸ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 5.

⁸⁶⁹ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 96. Emphasis added.

is ultimately political and that it has to show the traces of exclusion which governs its constitution."⁸⁷⁰ In other words, "instead of trying to disguise them [the forms of exclusion] under the veil of rationality or morality" what is needed is "to make room for dissent and to foster the institutions in which it can be manifested"; this is vital for a pluralist democracy."⁸⁷¹ This is at the same time vital for a critical idea of civil society.

This kind of an approach to the pluralism from the perspective of antagonism, exclusion and power, in short from the perspective of hegemony, is accompanied by a particular understanding of democratic politics as an "unending process." Since the present hegemony implies a contingent configuration of power relations, and since it is possible to make this hegemonic configuration contestable by making these power relations visible, it follows that no hegemony is stable. Considering also the multiplicity of identities and subject positions that was mentioned above, once a contingent configuration of power relations takes place it is always possible to replace it with an alternative. In the following pages the implications of this kind of an understanding of democratic politics will be considered in more detail. However, before coming to the details of it, at this point it more convenient to continue with Foucault's approach to the concept of power since it is directly related with and highly illuminating for the framework that Mouffe designates for an analysis based upon antagonism and power relations. Indeed, although this connection has not been made by any of the two intellectuals, these two perspectives seem to be complementary to each other. As has been explained in the previous paragraphs, Mouffe pays utmost attention "to acknowledge the existence relations of power and the need to transform them, while renouncing the illusion

⁸⁷⁰ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 99.

⁸⁷¹ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 105.

that we could free ourselves completely from power..."⁸⁷² Accordingly, the main question of democratic politics ceases to be how to eliminate power; do away with domination and violence; instead it becomes the question of how to find ways through which they can be limited and contested.⁸⁷³ In order for all these, however, an analysis is required of the relations of power that are presently at work. This endeavor, in turn, requires a comprehensive account of the phenomenon of power, and in doing so Foucault's approach is revealing.

Foucault's approach to the concept of power is what makes him relevant for the purposes of this thesis. His perspective is quite illuminating both due to its affiliation with Mouffe's theoretical framework and due to his challenge to the dominant view that sees the state as the sole locus of power. With regard to the identification of power with repression, and particularly with the state apparatus, he refers to "the fact that power is so deeply rooted and [to] the difficulty of eluding its embrace", and explains "that is why the notion of repression which mechanisms of power are generally reduced to strikes me as very inadequate and possibly dangerous."⁸⁷⁴ He rejects the criticism that he neglects the state apparatus by concentrating upon micro-powers:

I don't claim at all that the State apparatus is unimportant, but it seems to me that ... one of the first things that has to be understood is that power isn't localised in the State apparatus and that nothing in society will be changed if the mechanisms of power that function outside, below and alongside the State apparatuses, on a much more minute and everyday level, are not also changed.⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷² Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 22.

⁸⁷³ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 22.

⁸⁷⁴ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge, Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* ed. Colin Gordon, (New York, London, Toronto...: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980), 59. Interviewers: editorial collective of *Quell Corps?* June 1975

⁸⁷⁵ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 60.

Similarly, he also explains in another occasion

... what I want to say is that relations of power, and hence the analysis that must be made of them, necessarily extend beyond the limits of the state. In two senses: first of all because the State, for all the omnipotence of its apparatuses, is far from being able to occupy the field of actual power relations, and further because the State can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations. The state is superstructural in relation to a whole series of power networks that invest the body, sexuality, the family, kinship, knowledge, technology and so forth.⁸⁷⁶

He argues that “political theory has never ceased to be obsessed with the person of the sovereign.”⁸⁷⁷ It is due to this obsession that the focus has been on “the importance that the theory of power of right and violence, law and legality, freedom and will, and especially the state and sovereignty...”⁸⁷⁸ However, Foucault argues that this kind of an approach to power “is utterly incongruous with the new methods of power whose operation is not ensured by right but by technique, not by law but by normalization, not by punishment but by control, methods that are employed on all levels and in forms that go beyond the state and its apparatus.”⁸⁷⁹ Consequently for Foucault, “what we need ... is a political philosophy that isn’t erected around the problem of sovereignty, nor therefore around the problems of law and prohibition. We need to cut off the King’s head: in political theory that has still to be done.”⁸⁸⁰

Hence, once he points out the incongruence of the state centered approach to power, he develops a different approach based on five “hypotheses” as he calls them. According to this:

⁸⁷⁶ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 122.

⁸⁷⁷ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 121.

⁸⁷⁸ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol 1, 89.

⁸⁷⁹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol 1, 89.

⁸⁸⁰ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 121.

(i) power is coextensive with the social body; there are no spaces of primal liberty between the meshes of its network; (ii) relations of power are interwoven with other kinds of relations (production, kinship, family, sexuality) for which they play at once a conditioning and conditioned role; (iii) these relations do not take the sole form of prohibition and punishment but are of multiple forms; (iv) their interconnections delineate general conditions of domination, and this domination is organized into a more-or-less coherent and unitary strategic form; that dispersed, heteromorphous, localized procedures of power are adapted, reinforced and transformed by these global strategies, all these being accompanied by numerous phenomena of inertia, displacement and resistance; hence one should not assume a massive and primal condition of domination, a binary structure with 'dominators' on one side and 'dominated' on the other, but rather a multiform production of relations of domination ...; (v) power relations do indeed 'serve' but not at all because they are in the service of an economic interest taken as primary, rather because they are capable of being utilized in strategies; (vi) there are no relations of power without resistances; ... resistance to power ... exists all the more by being in the same place as power; hence, like power, resistance is multiple and can be integrated in global strategies.⁸⁸¹

This being Foucault's general approach to the concept of power, he also suggests certain "methodological precautions": first, he suggests that the analysis should not be concerned with "the regulated and legitimate forms of power in their central locations with the general mechanisms through which they operate" but rather with "power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary..."⁸⁸² Second, he argues that "the analysis should not concern itself with power at the level of conscious intention or decision; it should not attempt to consider power from its internal point of view" and suggests to avoid asking the "labyrinthine and unanswerable question 'who then has power and what has in mind?' What is the aim of someone who possesses power?' Instead, what is needed is a study of power in its external visage ... where it installs itself

⁸⁸¹ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 142.

⁸⁸² Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 96.

and produces its real effects.”⁸⁸³ The third methodological caution is related for Foucault to the

fact that power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual’s consolidated and homogeneous domination over others or that of one group or class over others... What, by contrast, should always be kept in mind is that power, ... must be analyzed as something which circulates or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain...power employed and exercised through a net-like organization.⁸⁸⁴

This kind of an approach to the concept of power is in accordance with Mouffe’s analysis of pluralism since in the latter there is constant reference to antagonism and power relations as the major characteristic of social relations. So, there is on the one hand Mouffe’s approach which is functional in this thesis’s endeavor to dwell on the need to divert the major attention from the confrontation and the nature of power relations between the state and civil society to those that exist within civil society. In other words, in a parallel line of thinking with Marx and Gramsci’s conceptions of civil society her theoretical framework on the notion of antagonism provides a perspective to see civil society in different terms than those of ‘rights and liberties’. On the other hand, Foucault offers a way of looking at the nature of those power relations and in what ways these power relations are at work. In this sense what Foucault refers to as “the political task” is “to criticize the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize them in a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked so that one can fight them.”⁸⁸⁵

⁸⁸³ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 97.

⁸⁸⁴ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 98.

⁸⁸⁵ Foucault quoted in Bent Flyvbjerg, “Ideal Theory, Real Rationality: Habermas Versus Foucault and Nietzsche” Paper for the Political Studies Association’s 50th Annual Conference, *The Challenges for Democracy in the 21st Century*, London School of Economics and Political Science, 10-13 April 2000. Internet version <http://flyvbjerg.plan.aau.dk/IdealTheory.pdf>.

What this very brief overview of Mouffe's and Foucault's approaches has to offer, then, is a radical shift in the way the concept of civil society is commonly used from the versions of hegemonic view towards the alternative approach developed by Marx and Gramsci. They together help one to "fill in the blanks" in the dominant usage of the term as the realm of autonomy, voluntariness, active citizenship, solidarity, rights and freedoms, dialogue etc. They serve as the tools necessary to make the three of four maneuvers in the approach toward the use of the concept as described above: First, they depict the true nature of the relationships characterizing civil society radically different from the consensus oriented perspective. Following from this, offering a broader perspective on the multiple forms of conflicts and struggles, they integrate a comprehensive analysis of power into the concept of civil society. Third, they are illustrative of the fact that state and civil society are not ontologically different entities. These three theoretical moves finally and necessarily lead to a change in the way "democracy" is being conceptualized, and hence in the way the relationship between civil society and democracy is being thought of. Rather than staying within the confines of "democracy-friendly-civil society" type of analysis, this approach requires that one is concerned with *democracy within the civil society* and hence *democracy within the state*. In other words, there is a call for giving up the perspective that sees democracy as an end to be achieved by satisfying certain institutional requirements. The perspective in question views civil society as one of those "ingredients" of democracy. Proceeding within the framework of liberal democracy this perspective on the civil society-democracy relationship envisages a democratic way of life which is composed of (i) the "neutral", "referee" or the "night watchman" state outside and above all conflicts of interests, identities, and classes; (ii) the "rule of law" which protects individual rights and liberties and endows each individual with the same/equal legal and political rights and hence with equal chance of making their voice heard; and (iii) a vibrant civil society i.e. an active and plural

realm of social-political movements and/or organizations which are neither founded by nor are under the control of state but have an aim of influencing and scrutinizing the state and its activities through political participation. It is presumed in this scheme that once these conditions are fulfilled there is/will be “democracy” in a certain context. Yet, it is possible to argue that there is a fatal drawback in this kind of an approach: it is built upon the presupposition that takes democracy as something external to those “ingredients” and conditions; democracy is envisioned as standing alone at some “higher” place waiting to be reached and acquired through satisfaction of these conditions. However, democracy should be viewed as integral to all these processes, i.e. to the workings of the state structure, to the denotations and connotations of the concept of rule of law and to the realm of civil society. No one of these concepts has a universal, fixed content. Adapting the claim that Ehrenberg makes with regard to civil society to all of these concepts, one can argue that what the state/rule of law/civil society ‘is’ can only be grasped by looking carefully at what its constituent structures do, how they are organized, and what political and economic forces are at work. Hence there is or can be no state/rule of law/civil society that “serves” democracy; there is or can be only a democratic state/democratic rule of law/democratic civil society. The way that democracy can be embedded into these concepts, in turn is through integrating the point of view of the disadvantaged/the excluded/the marginalized. When such a point of view is integrated into the concept of civil society, it appears that what we need is an approach that takes its inspiration from Marx and Gramsci’s works on the topic rather than the versions of pluralism-and-consensus oriented hegemonic approach.

There are uneven power relations (and these power relations “do not have to take the sole form of prohibition and punishment”) leading to inequalities, domination, exclusion, marginalization, pacification, and silencing in the society. These power relations may -and usually do- take different forms in different contexts (different

in terms of time and space); there are contingent hegemonic configuration(s) of these power relations. They are not stable, constant and fixed; what is most stable about them is their ever-existent nature. So, it is not possible to deal with them in a once-and-for-all manner i.e. by determining “the target” and fighting against it. This kind of an approach in turn requires a constant attentiveness, concern and awareness of these power relations and changing configurations of these relations. In the last instance civil society is a sphere of life where these relations of power are at work so articulation of this kind of a perspective with the concept of civil society is necessary in order to be able to elaborate on the notion of a “democratic civil society.” This line of thinking, then, has important implications one regarding the concept of democracy and one for the concept of civil society. To start with the first, as has just been argued above, it defies the view that sees democracy as something to be reached, institutionalized and consolidated. Rather it requires a perspective which is more akin to the notion of “fugitive democracy” employed by Wolin. Wolin introduces this concept with the purpose of arguing against the conceptualization of democracy as “a form of government” and an end point and challenges the perspective of “constitutional democracy” in that sense.⁸⁸⁶ According to him,

[a]s a starting-point it is necessary to reject the classical and modern conception that ascribes to democracy ‘a’ proper or settled form. ... That kind of institutionalization has the effect of reducing democracy to a system while taming its politics by process.⁸⁸⁷... I propose accepting the familiar charges that democracy is inherently unstable, inclined toward anarchy, and identified with revolution and using these traits as the basis for a different, aconstitutional conception of democracy.”⁸⁸⁸

⁸⁸⁶ Sheldon Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy” in *Democracy and Difference* ed. Seyla Benhabib

⁸⁸⁷ Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, 601 quoted in “Fugitive Democracy: Sheldon Wolin and contemplating the local” web source, <http://www.rustyparts.com/wp/2006/04/25/fugitive-democracy-sheldon-wolin-and-contemplating-the-local/>

⁸⁸⁸ Sheldon Wolin, “Norm and Form”, 37. Quoted in “Fugitive Democracy: Sheldon Wolin and contemplating the local”.

Thus, for Wolin democracy is the collective action of ordinary people as they come together temporarily in an act of resistance/struggle against certain injustices (stemming from the established regime, or from all other types of power relations constitutional or otherwise. He does not think of it as a political system or political regime. It is always “a rebellious moment” rather than “a form of government.”⁸⁸⁹ It is in this sense that he argues against constitutional democracy: “constitutional democracy is democracy fitted to constitution. ... Not only are constitutions about what is legal and illegal political activity, but they regulate the amount of politics, the temporal rhythms or periodicity of politics...”⁸⁹⁰ Then democracy is not something to be founded/institutionalized/consolidated; it is not a place to go; not a preset end to be achieved. It is something *fugitive*—as Wolin calls it. It can appear anywhere. It’s “a moment rather than a form,” —an episode exploding beyond fixed centers of power.⁸⁹¹ It’s “an ephemeral phenomenon rather than a settled system.”⁸⁹² Consequently, “democracy is not about where the political is located but about how it is experienced.”⁸⁹³

When this kind of a perspective (based upon the ever-existence of power relations and antagonisms; the possibility of a shift in the present configuration of these power relations by making them openly contestable; and hence an understanding of democracy as something “fugitive”) is articulated with the concept of civil society the implications of the term “democratic civil society” becomes radically

⁸⁸⁹ Wolin, “Norm and Form”, 54-56. Quoted in “Fugitive Democracy: Sheldon Wolin and contemplating the local”.

⁸⁹⁰ Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy”, 34.

⁸⁹¹ Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy”, 39-40.

⁸⁹² Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, 602. Quoted in “Fugitive Democracy: Sheldon Wolin and Contemplating the Local”.

⁸⁹³ Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy”, 38.

different from the rhetoric of a “democracy-friendly civil society”. What the term “democratic civil society” implies is a criticism of the latter approach; and it is characterized by a stress on the insufficiency to underline the autonomy of this sphere of life from the state; its basic principles as those of voluntariness, active citizenship, self-governing of the society, pluralism, dialogue, communication, toleration, friendship, articulation of the particular and the universality. Denoting a particular sphere of life where individuals experience the complex web of power relations interwoven, as Foucault argues, with other kinds of relations like production, kinship, family, sexuality, ethnicity etc., the concept of civil society should serve as the analytical tool to bring these relations to the forefront, to highlight them and hence to make them contestable rather than serving to consolidate the illusion that differences leading to inequalities are not important. It is supposed, then, to connote a sphere of life where democracy as something fugitive is experienced.

It was argued at the beginning of this chapter that it is more helpful to concentrate over the way(s) the concept of civil society is used rather than being concerned with finding a definite answer to the question of “what is civil society?” Both the previous chapter and the current one has illustrated that it does not mean much by itself to highlight either convergences in using the same conception or divergences in terms of the utilized conceptions. The context within which a particular conception is employed is equally –perhaps more- important. This being its disposition the analysis made in this chapter has been done with the purpose of bringing a new dimension to the way the concept is used in Turkey. With regard to the major reason behind this point of impasse in the Turkish case is the common reproduction of the liberal individualist-pluralist approach. This is not only in the sense of the widespread employment of the liberal conception of civil society within a spectrum of diverging ideological positions but also in the sense of the reproduction of the liberal presumption of consensus and pluralism without

antagonism, i.e. the resolution of conflicts by “bracketing” the uneven distribution of power. The latter is even more striking because it is an approach shared not only by the dominant view of civil society but by many of the alternative conceptions except Marxist and Gramscian perspectives.

CONCLUSION

This study adheres to the view that considering its long-term adventure in political thought, the extensive literature revolving around it, and its recent popularity, the concept of civil society still deserves to be the subject matter of yet another study. It is not an aspiration of this thesis, however, to propose a brand new conception of the term. In a very brief manner, what this thesis aims to do is a critical analysis of the way(s) the concept of civil society has been used, with special reference to the Turkish context. Through this kind of an analysis on the basis of the Turkish case, it also tries to conclude by reaching at some more general methodological inferences on the topic.

The first aspect of this two-dimensional aspiration involves a wide range of concerns including the questions of *why*, *how* and *in what context* is the concept of civil society made the focus of attention; as well as a concern about the denotations and connotations of the term (its conceptualization) on these occasions. For the reasons explained in Chapter 3, it is not by itself sufficient to determine the various conceptions and to point out the connections with the Western literature to have an idea about the literature on civil society in Turkey. The analysis made in this thesis has shown that the literature in question is a multidimensional complex and that these conceptions should be considered together with the questions of in what context, in association with what kind of questions and concerns and for what reason they are being employed. Hence, in order to get a thorough picture of the fault lines of the debate, all these points regarding the literature in Turkey need to be considered simultaneously as well as in connection with the adventure of the concept of civil society in political thought. It should be restated here that although the discourse on civil society can also be analyzed with reference to the media, political parties, bureaucracy or the civil society organizations, the focus of

attention in this thesis has been chosen as the academic works on the subject matter. Thus, it can be said that the major aim of this thesis is to draw a 'map' of the academic literature on the topic. That kind of a mapping out of the approaches, usages and conceptions of civil society in the academic literature in Turkey constitutes the essential part of the contribution the thesis hopes to make to the literature.

What comes out of such an analysis of the Turkish case together with an analysis of the theoretical debates on the concept of civil society have been manifold: First, it has appeared that the idea of civil society has been in existence for a very long time and during the recent decades there has been an increase in its popularity both in the world and in Turkey due to a combination of certain global and local developments. Second, it has become obvious that through its long life-span, the concept has acquired different denotations and connotations. This variety is observed in the first place among different philosophical traditions: Hegelian, liberal-individualist-pluralist, republican and Marxist traditions. However, this variety of denotations and connotations of the concept of civil society can also be observed in terms of the adventure of the concept within the same tradition. The most obvious example to such a case is the shift in the meaning of the concept within the liberal tradition: in the earlier classical texts of liberalism conceptualization of civil society was not built upon a state/civil society dichotomy; rather the two categories actually denoted the same phenomenon. This is to say that civil society was used to mean 'society with state'. From the 18th century onwards, however, state/civil society dichotomy and the confrontation stemming from the unequal distribution of power between them has become the central problematique of the liberal approach to the concept of civil society.

Third, the thesis has shown the ways in which the literature in Turkey is connected with these different paths that the adventure of the concept has followed in the Western political thought since it bears the traces of different conceptualizations of

civil society in that context. It has highlighted that the variety of the ways in which the concept of civil society is being thought and discussed in the West is also reflected in Turkey. In that respect, it has also brought under the light that in some cases, the discussion within the same tradition acquires a different pattern in Turkey. For instance, in the Western tradition, economic sphere and more specifically, autonomy in terms of economic activities has been a central theme in the liberal-individualist-pluralist conception of civil society (classical and conservative). However, the representatives of these approaches in Turkey seem to be much more concerned with political and socio-cultural autonomy and tend to associate civil society with such autonomy at the face of an 'overpowered state'. Besides, although the Western liberal tradition and its approach toward the concept of civil society has in time experienced a shift in terms of the conceptualization of the state-civil society relationship, in the Turkish case the studies taking their inspiration from the Western liberal-individualist-pluralist tradition generally ignores this shift in the connotation of the term. Put differently, while in the early works of the Western liberal tradition state and civil society were not conceived as mutually exclusive/diametrically opposed entities as is the case in the later works within that tradition, in Turkey the latter approach is endemic and/or symptomatic in all liberal-oriented conceptions of civil society. As was discussed in Chapter 4 with reference to the critical remarks of the Marxist approach to the concept of civil society, this stems largely from "their methodological penchant to treat the state as an independent variable."⁸⁹⁴ In other words, "the underlying theme of these reconstructions is the implicit depiction of the Ottoman and/or the Turkish state as a *sui generis* entity."⁸⁹⁵ This "distinctive ontology" would in turn "require a particular epistemological position"⁸⁹⁶ according to which "the state remains as an enigma ... for it essentially functions as an *explanans* rather than being considered as

⁸⁹⁴ Yalman, *Bourgeoisie and the State...*, 90.

⁸⁹⁵ Yalman, *Bourgeoisie and the State...*, 90.

⁸⁹⁶ Yalman, *Bourgeoisie and the State...*, 89.

an *explanandum* itself.”⁸⁹⁷ So, it is on the grounds of such an ontology and epistemology of the state that a particular hegemonic view on the concept of civil society has been developed in Turkey. “The lines of demarcation between the state and society have been drawn in such a clear-cut way” that signif[ies] the asymmetric ...nature of the relationship between the two.”⁸⁹⁸ Being referred as a characteristic feature of ‘strong states’, it is viewed as preventing the development of civil society as an entity distinct from the political centre. As can be seen, the studies representing this hegemonic view are at the same time ‘oppositional’ by being “primarily anti-state in inclination.”⁸⁹⁹ While treating the state as an independent variable, “there is no inclination whatsoever to exalt it as an ideal to be aimed at or to celebrate it as a goal already reached as representing the organic unity of society.”⁹⁰⁰ This kind of an approach to the state is challenged by the critical approach with the claim that it does not explain “why the state appears in that particular form where it does and nowhere else” and that “there is a need for a theory of state formation.”⁹⁰¹ Unless this is done, [a]ll we are told is that institutional structures of the states are to be given explanatory primacy.”⁹⁰²

Fourth, the thesis has reached the conclusion that the *academic literature* on the concept of civil society in Turkey has been dominated by the works which are representative of the Hegelian, classical-liberal-individualist-pluralist, conservative liberal-individualist-pluralist, and liberal republican conceptions; and consequently that the communitarian-republican and Marxist conceptions of civil society are seldom given voice in the academic world in Turkey. Fifth, however, it has

⁸⁹⁷ Yalman, *Bourgeoisie and the State...*, 91.

⁸⁹⁸ Yalman, *Bourgeoisie and the State...*, 96.

⁸⁹⁹ Yalman, *Bourgeoisie and the State...*, 90.

⁹⁰⁰ Yalman, *Bourgeoisie and the State...*, 90.

⁹⁰¹ Yalman, *Bourgeoisie and the State...*, 91.

⁹⁰² Yalman, *Bourgeoisie and the State...*, 102.

appeared on the basis of the analysis of the main tenets of these civil society conceptions that deeper inside the Hegelian, classical liberal-individualist-pluralist, conservative liberal-individualist-pluralist, communitarian republican and liberal republican conceptions constitute the *versions* of a particular hegemonic view on the concept of civil society. In that sense, the Marxist conception stands aloof from these conceptions in important respects and hence constitutes the alternative to this hegemonic view. This is an important finding that has the potential to be the basis upon which a critique of the concept of civil society in its currently hegemonic usage can be built.

This finding has led to significant methodological inferences regarding the use of the concept. The main tenets of the versions of the hegemonic view are an overemphasis on the state/civil society distinction; a consideration of civil society as a means of limiting and checking the state; a view of civil society as the realm of peaceful coexistence of differences and pluralities, the sphere of rights and freedoms and of consensus. It may be objected on the grounds that the Hegelian and communitarian-republican conceptions should be placed at a different place from the liberal-oriented conceptions since they do not revolve around the theme of a state-civil society dichotomy. It is true that rather than seeing the two as confronting and opposing each other in a mutually exclusive manner, the Hegelian perspective sees the two categories in a relational perspective. Civil society in Hegel's view is not a means to control the possible despotic tendencies of the state and delimit its sphere of action. Rather, the state is the representative of the principle of universality and of consensus. Similarly, the communitarian republican conception of civil society also differs from the liberal-oriented conceptions in that it also does not take the state/civil society dichotomy as its fundamental presumption. Accordingly, there is no such stress on the concept of civil society as a necessary tool that functions as a checking mechanism over the state apparatus. Despite this important divergence between Hegelian and communitarian republican conceptions on the one hand and liberal-oriented conceptions on the

other, it is possible to point out a common ground that all these conceptions share in terms of their approach to the differences and pluralities in the society. As was exemplified all throughout the thesis with reference to the classical texts as well as to the Turkish literature on the concept, this parallelism is in the sense that they all have a consensual view on differences and particularisms and have a leaning towards the liberal idea of 'pluralism without antagonism'. In the Hegelian approach the emphasis is on the need to reach the ideal of universality among the particularities constituting civil society and there is reference to the capability of individuals (who are viewed as a totality of particular aims, wants, caprice and necessity) to educate themselves in a way that unites them to the principle of universality. In the communitarian republican approach there is the understanding that once the ethical value of civil society for the human life is brought to the forefront together with such notions as love of mankind, public spirit and civic friendship the conflicts stemming from differences and particularities can again be rendered resolvable. In case of the liberal-oriented conceptions of civil society there is emphasis on the rule of law and the openness of the civil society to the representation of differences without the intervention and control of the state. According to this view, once the state power is held in check and as long as there is the largest space for individual and group autonomy the particularities would accommodate each other. In the case of the liberal-republican view, this takes the form of a belief in the "social integrative power of communicative action". In short, all of these different conceptions of civil society are colored by a general tendency towards associating the realm of civil society with the creation of consensus, harmony and cooperation rather than with conflict and uneven power relations as well as the belief that the confrontations and conflicts among particularities are *indeed resolvable*. The analysis regarding the Turkish case has shown that this kind of a consensual perspective on civil society has been symptomatic among the great majority of scholarly works on the topic and hence it has constituted the skeleton of all these seemingly different approaches to civil society. This case is in most part related with the dominance of the question of strong state-weak civil society

dichotomy as *the* question to be handled since the stress is on the necessity of controlling the state and on the uneven power relationship between state and civil society. However, even in the studies that are representative of the conceptions that do not revolve around a state/civil society dichotomy this consensual view is apparent. Hence, it is argued in this thesis that the studies in the Turkey that are cited as representatives of Hegelian, classical-liberal-individualist-pluralist, conservative liberal-individualist-pluralist, liberal republican and communitarian-republican conceptions are indeed the versions of the same hegemonic view. On the face of such a crucial common ground, the differences between them become secondary if not hollow.

The uniqueness of Marx and Gramsci's approach, on the other side, lies in the fact that their challenge constitutes an alternative way of thinking to the hegemonic position regarding both the state/civil society dichotomy and the relations characterizing civil society. It was explained with reference to both Marx and Gramsci's own writings on the topic and to the scholarly works in Turkey taking their inspiration from them, this approach sees the distinction between state and civil society as a methodological distinction rather than an ontological distinction. In accordance, the state is viewed as a form of relations and in that sense it does not stand aloof from the uneven power relations in the (civil) society. To the contrary, as Marx said, the political state has to "acknowledge and restore civil society" and "allow itself to be dominated by it". Moreover, according to Marx and Gramsci the relations among individuals and groups within civil society are not built upon peace, harmony, cooperation, civic friendship, free and equal coexistence of differences and so on but on the very fact of unequal distribution of power. For Marx, the underlying mechanism of these power relations is political economy whereas for Gramsci the concept of hegemony, which he uses to denote intellectual and political leadership, is also vital in addition to the role of economic power. So they suggest that the concept of civil society should be conceptualized with reference to the dynamics of power relations characterizing civil society and their

reflection at the state level.

Following this line of thinking, this thesis prefers to focus on the concepts of power and antagonism in association with the concept of civil society. The two main deficit of the hegemonic view of civil society is the underestimation of the inequalities in terms of power in the society and the belief that antagonisms could be resolved in a way that would create a consensus. The fallacy of this kind of an approach to the notions of antagonism and power characterizing the socio-political relations was initially discussed by Marx and Gramsci in their works on the concept of civil society. The perspective on the socio-political relations which puts the notions of antagonism and power has been further elaborated by Laclau, Mouffe and Foucault. It is in that respect, in terms of their critical perspectives on these notions of antagonism and power, that these scholars are brought together in this thesis with the Marxist conception of civil society. Laclau and Mouffe have shown that antagonism is at the very constitution of all identities and subject positions, it accompanies this process. Thus, it is not something erasable. Foucault, on his part, has offered a way of looking at the phenomenon of power as something elusive. When brought together with the Marxist conception of civil society these theoretical considerations provide a perspective on the concept of civil society radically different from the versions of the hegemonic view. It focuses on the power relations and antagonisms, their nature and working, their hegemonic configuration, their results in terms of exclusions and marginalizations for the certain groups in the society. This thesis then reaches the conclusion that this kind of a perspective is what is needed in order to render the concept of civil society a useful analytical tool for political analysis. In that way it would become an analytical tool to understand 'how certain differences are structured as relations of power'. By making these relations of power visible, it would become possible to envisage an alternative to the contingent hegemonic structure of these relations. The thesis has also suggested that this kind of an approach to civil society would also bring about a change in the way democracy has so far been widely conceptualized from democracy as

something to be 'established and consolidated' from democracy as something 'fugitive'.

It was argued at the very beginning of this study that the debate revolving around the concept of civil society –in general and particularly in Turkey- has found itself within a vicious circle. As can be recalled, it was argued in the introductory section that there are two major factors creating this impasse in the literature on the concept of civil society: one is the diversity of meanings attached to the concept i.e. the diversity of conceptions which is thought to make the concept “confused and confusing” and the consequent “division of the contemporary world of social theory between skeptics and the faithful (those who reject it as a fraud or illusion and those who privilege it as the normative ideal); the other is the dominance of the liberal approach to civil society. This thesis concurs with the view that neither side is satisfactory and hence rather than trying to join in one of either camps it chooses to “recognize the validity of the concept without romanticizing it.” This study agrees with the claim that what civil society “is” can be grasped only by looking carefully at what its constituent structures do, how they are organized and what political and economic forces are at work. These concerns, in turn, are closely related with the second factor creating an impasse in the civil society debate i.e. the domination of the consensus-oriented perspective on the conceptualization of civil society. This is so since this perspective has important flaws that diminish its capacity to depict what is really going on among the constituent structures of civil society. These flaws are related with the orientation towards consensus and resolution of conflicts through the very liberal idea of pluralism without antagonism. Consequently, it seems more fruitful to focus upon a re-consideration and *critique of the dominant usage* of the concept of civil society and put it under scrutiny with the help of critical theoretical works of Marx and Gramsci on the topic. This has been tried to be done in the current study on the basis of an analysis of the literature on civil society in Turkey.

In conclusion, it can be argued as an upshot of the analysis in this thesis that in order for the concept of civil society to provide a new opening for the analysis of political life in Turkey, it has to include in itself an analysis of the existing power relations in the society and of the present hegemonic configuration of these relations so as to highlight them; to bring them to the forefront and to show their reflection at the state level (i.e. the fact that the distinction between the state and civil society is a methodological rather than an ontological distinction) whereby making them open to be contested. Much effort has been spent to talk and write so far on the problematic of the state-(civil) society relationship (or confrontation, tension, dichotomy) and this has been done at the expense of missing out the power relations, antagonisms, and the constitution of hegemony *within* civil society and their reflection in the state, hence the interconnection between the state and civil society. Now the struggles, power relations as a result of which the existing hegemony is established should be put under scrutiny; the concept of civil society can be useful in so far as it is used within such a context. This is a double usage of the concept: as a tool for analyzing the socio-political reality and one for envisaging an ideal but in both cases it is a usage from the point of view of the disadvantaged or the subordinated. This, however, should be done in the form of microlevel as well as a macrolevel type of analysis. This would amount to following the path opened by Marx and further developed by Gramsci and also by making use of some other analytical tools providing a perspective to look at the “power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations where it becomes capillary” and the omnipotence of multiple forms of conflict that come out of all these multiple forms of power. Otherwise what is observed with regard to the concept of civil society is – and seems likely to continue to be – a general reproduction of the liberal-individualist-pluralist perspective. Thus, for the debate in general to overcome the bottleneck that it finds itself in there is a need for a new opening space through the articulation of these debates into the debate on the concept of civil society. Unless such an opening is provided to itself, the concept of civil society will fall short of

providing a new opening for the analysis of political life in both in Turkey and in the world.

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APPENDIX: TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tezin başlangıç noktası “sivil toplum” kavramının özellikle son yıllarda giderek artan popülaritesi olmuştur. Bu kavram hem Türkiye’de hem de dünyada siyasal tartışmaların kalbinde yatan çok önemli bir kavram olarak özellikle 1980’lerin ortalarından itibaren karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Sivil toplum kavramına olan ilgideki ve konuyla ilgili çalışmaların sayısındaki gözle görülür artışa rağmen bu tezde günümüzdeki sivil toplum tartışmasının bir tıkanma noktasında olduğu ya da kendini bir kısır döngü içinde bulduğu öne sürülmektedir. Bu tıkanıklığın arkasında iki temel neden var gibi görünmektedir. İlk olarak, sosyal kuram dünyasındaki kutuplaşma göze çarpmaktadır. Bu kutuplaşma sivil toplum kavramını “sahte” bir kavram, “illüzyon” ya da analitik anlamda faydalı bir araç olabilmek için fazla “muğlak” bir kavram olarak gören kuramcılarla onu “normatif ideal” olarak gören kuramcılar arasındaki kutuplaşmadır. Dolayısıyla kendimize şöyle bir soru sormamız ve nerede durduğumuza karar vermemiz bekleniyor gibidir: sivil toplum yirmi birinci yüzyılın yönlendirici düşüncesi, büyük fikri midir, yoksa daha iyi bir dünya arayışı için yanlış bir ufuk mu açmaktadır? Kısırdöngünün arkasında yatmakta olan diğer bir neden ise sivil toplum kavramının yaygın kullanım biçimleri üzerindeki liberal bakış açısı hakimiyeti gibi durmaktadır. Bu noktaya ileride daha detaylı olarak değinilecektir; ancak burada kısaca değinmek gerekirse bu bakış açısı sivil toplumu devletle karşılıklı bir kutuplaşma -ya da ikilik- çerçevesinde kavramsallaştırmakta, böylece de sivil toplumu devletin toplum üzerindeki baskınlığını, kontrolünü, manipülasyonunu engellemek ya da belli bir dereceye kadar sınırlandırabilmek için gerekli/olması gereken bir araç olarak ele almakta ve devlet ile sivil toplum arasındaki ayrılığa, gerilime ve çatışmaya olan bu aşırı vurgunun bir sonucu olarak sivil toplumun kendi içindeki farklılıkları ve çatışmaları ise “çoğulculuk”, çatışmaların çözümlenmesi ve konsensus vurgusu ile tartışma konusu yapmaktadır.

Bu tezin bu iki sorun alanına dair benimsemiş olduđu bakış açısı şu şekilde özetlenebilir: başta belirtilen kutuplaşmayla ilgili olarak bu iki seçenek ile sınırlı olmadığımız iddia edilmektedir; çünkü bu iki seçeneğin hiçbirisi kendi başına tatmin edici görünmemektedir. Bu anlamda, izlenebilecek bir başka yol eleştirel bir bakış açısı geliştirerek sivil toplum kavramını bir çözümleme aracı olarak kullanmaya devam etmek olabilir. Böyle bir bakış açısı sivil toplum kavramının geçerliliğini tanıyacak ancak bunu kavramı romantize etmeden, idealize etmeden ve onu toplumsam ve tarihsel temellerinden soyutlamadan yapmak yolunu izleyecektir. Böyle bir çaba ise kavramın belirsizlikleriyle ve hâkim kullanımlarındaki zaaflarıyla yüzleşmek böylece de aslında onu özenli ve yoğun bir eleştiriye tâbi tutmak anlamına gelmektedir. Bu tez bunu Türkiye özelindeki tartışmaları esas alarak yapmaya çalışmaktadır. Bu amaçla detaylı bir literatür analizi yapılmış ve ona dayanarak Türkiye’deki sivil toplum tartışmasının bir haritasını çizmek hedeflenmiştir. Bu literatür analizi aslında belli bir bakış açısının kavram üzerindeki çalışmalarda hâkim olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu nedenle aslında bu tezin öncelikli amacı bu hâkim bakış açısını –çeşitli varyasyonlarıyla- ortaya çıkarmak ve bunu takiben de bu hakim bakış açısını sivil toplum kavramına daha eleştirel yaklaşan çalışmaların yardımıyla eleştirel bir değerlendirmeye tâbi tutmaktır.

Bu temel amacın aslında birden fazla boyutu vardır. İlk olarak bu sivil toplum kavramının nasıl, kim(ler) tarafından, neden ve hangi bağlamda gündeme getirildiği anlaşılmaya çalışılmaktadır. İkinci olarak, bu sorularla iç içe olmak üzere, farklı sivil toplum kavramsallaştırmaları ortaya çıkarılmaya çalışılmaktadır. Bunu yapabilmek içinse Türkiye’deki literatürün hangi şekillerde Batı siyasal düşünce geleneğiyle bağlantılı olduğu anlaşılmaya çalışılmaktadır ki bu da tezin amacının üçüncü boyutunu oluşturur. Son olarak bu tez bütün bu incelemelerin sonuçlarını/bulgularını tartışma konusu yapmaktadır. Bu tartışma ise aslında temelde şu soruyla bağlantılıdır: Sivil toplum kavramı etrafındaki tartışmaların

‘nasıl bir demokratik toplum farklılık ve eşitsizliğin bir arada yaşadığı bir dönemin ihtiyaçlarına cevap verebilir?’ problematiğine yapabileceği bir katkı var mıdır?

Türkiye’de sivil toplum kavramı hakkında üretilmiş çalışmalara bakıldığında çoğunun belli bir ‘memnuniyetsizlikten’ kaynaklandığı, temel bir soru(n)dan hareket ettiği görülür. Bu tez tartışmanın haritasını çıkarabilmenin yöntemi olarak bu soru(n)lara yoğunlaşmayı seçmiştir. Bu metot dört temel soruyu birden cevaplamayı mümkün kılmaktadır:

1. Türkiye siyasetine dair hangi konu, hangi mesele bir akademisyenin sivil toplum kavramına ilgi duymasını tetiklemektedir?
2. Bu temel mesele nasıl çözümlenmektedir?
3. Neden bu mesele bu konu tartışılması gereken temel soru olarak seçilmektedir? Yapılan çözümlemeyle nereye ulaşılmaya çalışılmaktadır?
4. Hangi sivil toplum kavramsallaştırması bu analizlerde kullanılmaktadır?

Bu dört boyutun her birini aynı anda dikkate almak tartışmaya tam anlamıyla hâkim olabilmek için gereklidir. Sadece birine yoğunlaşmak yeterli olmamaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu tezde temel olarak bu sorulara akademik literatür özelinde verilmiş olan cevaplar inceleme konusu yapılmaktadır.⁹⁰³

İlk soruyla başlamak gerekirse, Türkiye’deki sivil toplum literatürüne genel bir bakış tartışmayı şekillendiren beş temel mesele olduğunu göstermektedir. Bunlardan birincisi, aslında tartışmanın geneline hakim olan güçlü devlet-zayıf sivil toplum ikiliğidir. En çok tartışılan ikinci konu ise gerek birbirleriyle gerek devletle olan ilişkileri, karakteristik özellikleri, yapılanmaları, demokratikleşme

⁹⁰³ Sivil toplum kavramı hakkındaki tartışmalar akademik çevrelerle sınırlı değildir. Kavram medyada ele alınış biçimi, siyasi partilerin söylemleri ya da sivil toplum kuruluşlarının söylemleri bazında da incelenebilir. Ancak bu tez yöntemsel olarak yalnız akademik çalışmalara yoğunlaşmayı seçmiştir.

açısından işlevleri v.s. bakımlarından sivil toplum kuruluşlarıdır. Üçüncü bir konu İslam ve sivil toplum ilişkisidir (ne derecede birbirleriyle uyumlu oldukları noktasında). Dördüncü olarak Türkiye siyasal kültürü ve sivil toplum arasındaki ilişki tartışma konusu yapılmaktadır. Son olarak da milliyetçilik söyleminin Türkiye'deki sivil toplum teori ve pratiğini üzerindeki etkisi dikkat çeken bir konudur.

Aslında çok net bir şekilde görülebilmektedir ki birinci konu –güçlü devlet-zayıf sivil toplum ikiliği- Türkiye'deki tartışmayı hâkimiyeti altına almış en dominant meseledir. Türkiye'de sivil toplum hakkındaki çalışmaların hemen hepsinde bu mesele merkezde yer almaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu tez de büyük oranda bu konuya olan farklı yaklaşım biçimlerini ortaya koymaya çalışan, bunun yanı sıra da bu konuya eleştirel yaklaşımları ortaya çıkaran bir çalışma olmuştur. Daha sonra değinileceği üzere konuya eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla yaklaşanlar olmasına rağmen hâkim duruş bu ikiliği (*dichotomy*) Türkiye siyasetinin bir 'gerçeği' olarak ele almaktır. Bu yaklaşım, aralarında politik/felsefî ciddi duruş farklılıkları olan sosyal bilimciler tarafından bile paylaşılan çok yaygın bir bakış açısidir. Çoğu akademisyen analizlerini bu 'gerçek' üzerinde temellendirmektedir.

Bu ortak paydaya rağmen yine de akademisyenler bazı noktalarda birbirlerinden ayrışmaktadırlar. Örneğin ilk etapta bu 'güçlü devlet-zayıf sivil toplum gerçeği'nin arka planına dair öne sürdükleri açıklamalar bakımından bir ayrım dikkate değer. Bu bağlamda iki farklı çözümleme tarzı birbirinden ayrıştırılabilir: toplumsal-tarih yönelimli açıklama ve devlet geleneği yönelimli açıklama. Burada hâkim tavır açıklamaya devlet yapısının, devlet geleneğinin incelenmesi ile başlamak yani bunu açıklayıcı değişken olarak almak, sivil topluma (sivil toplumun zayıflığına) dair tespiti buradan hareketle yapmaktır. İlk yaklaşıma örnek olarak Şerif Mardin'in çalışmaları gösterilebilir. Mardin de güçlü devlet-zayıf sivil toplum ikiliğini Türkiye siyasî yaşamının bir gerçeği olarak almakta ancak bu ikiliğin temellerine dair açıklamasını toplumsal tarihsel koşulları dikkate alarak yapmaktadır. Ona

göre Doğu ve Batı toplumları farklı “toplumsal evrim” süreçlerinden geçmişler ve bu farklı toplumsal-tarihsel koşulların sonucu olarak buralarda ortaya çıkmış olan devlet-toplum ilişkileri farklı olmuştur. Mardin bu bağlamda “rüya” kavramına yer vermekte ve her toplumsal yapının kendine ait bir rüyası, ulaşmayı hedeflediği bir ideali olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Bu çerçevede Mardin sivil toplumu bir “Batı rüyası” ve “bu rüyanın aldığı somut biçim, Batı Avrupa sosyal tarihinin bir parçası” olarak tanımlar. Bunu bu şekilde ortaya koyduktan sonra ise “Avrupa toplumlarının rüyası Müslüman toplumların rüyası olmamıştır” diyerek bu farklı rüyaların neden ve nasıl ortaya çıktığının ve bu rüyaların zaman içinde nasıl farklı yapılaşmaların oluşmasına sebep olduğunun analizini yapar.

Mardin’in çözümlemesinde Batı *telosunun* özünde belli bir düşünce yapısı ve bunun merkezinde de Batı sosyal tarihinin arkaplanında gömülü olan ve modern Batı Avrupa tarihinin koşulları içinde yapısal bir boyut kazanan belli bir insan (*human agency*) anlayışı yer almaktadır. Bu görüş temelde “insanı yeni hipotezler geliştiren, onları sürekli test eden, eleştiriye ve kendini ve çevresini yeniden inşa etmeye her zaman açık olan aktif bir manipulator olarak gören bir pragmatizm”e dayanmaktadır. Batı toplumlarının *telosunun* özünde böyle bir insan anlayışının yattığını belirttikten sonra Mardin “Batı rüyasının gerçeğe dönüşmesinin” tarihini incelemeye girişir. Bu tarihsel analizde şehirlerin yükselişi özel bir yer tutar “çünkü Batı kentsel tarihinin her aşaması bugün sivil toplumdan bir kavram olarak ne anladığımızın önemli bir belirleyeni olmuştur.” Mardin İslam topluluklarını karakterize eden *telosu* yine onun özünde yatan insan anlayışı/tasavvuru ile tanımlar. Ona göre Müslüman rüya (the Muslim dream) adaletli bir yöneticinin himayesinde oluşturulacak olan bir toplumsal denge ideali haline dönmüştür. Bu rüyanın iki tane ayırdedici özelliği bulunmaktadır: ilki yasal pratiklerin rasyonelleşmesinden ve hukukun belirleyiciliğinden ziyade bir liderin karizmatik otoritesine dayanıyor olması; diğeri de, “her ne kadar kendine özgü zengin bir insancıl içeriğe sahip olsa da, bu rüyanın insanın kendi tarihini kendisinin yapması suretiyle insanın tedrici mükemmelleşmesine” dair bir anlayışın benimsenmesini ve

gelişmesini engellemiş olmasıdır. Bu yaklaşımın altında yatan sivil toplum kavramsallaştırmasının aşağıda daha detaylı açıklanacak olan klasik liberal-bireyci-çoğulcu sivil toplum düşüncesi olduğu görülmektedir.

Devlet geleneğinden hareket ederek güçlü devlet-zayıf sivil toplum ikiliğini açıklamayı seçen yaklaşımlarda ise Osmanlı-Türkiye bağlamının ayırt edici özelliği olarak vurgu bu bağlamlarda ortaya çıkıp gelişen devlet yapısı üzerindedir. Devletin toplumdan uzak ve onun dışında, ondan bağımsız bir varlık olarak görülmesi, devletin sürekli olarak toplum üzerinde hâkim olma, toplumu yönetme, manipüle etme, kontrol altında tutma gibi hedeflerle hareket etmesi neticesinde – yani güçlü ve baskın bir devletin sonucu olarak- Türkiye siyasetinin bir gerçekliği olarak “zayıf sivil toplum”un ortaya çıkmış olduğu söylenmektedir. Toplumsal-tarih yönelimli açıklama ile devlet geleneği yönelimli açıklama arasındaki farkı vurgulamak önemlidir; çünkü birinci yaklaşıma örnek olarak gösterilebilecek çalışmaların sayısı oldukça kısıtlıyken diğer devlet geleneğini esas alan açıklamalar büyük bir çoğunluk teşkil etmektedir. Bu önemli bir ayrım olmakla birlikte tartışmanın tümünün hatlarını ortaya çıkarmakta yetersiz kalmaktadır. Çünkü devlet geleneği yönelimli açıklamalar kategorisine yerleştirilebilecek pek çok çalışma bulunmaktadır. Ancak şunun da altı çizilmelidir ki bu çalışmalar neden bu güçlü devlet- zayıf sivil toplum gerçekliğinin bir sorun olarak ele alınması gerektiği konusunda birbirlerinden ayrışmaktadır. Aslında bu soruya verilen cevaplar farklı siyasi-felsefi duruşlar arasındaki ayrımların en net olarak ortaya çıktığı nokta olarak görülebilir. Bu bağlamda beş farklı yanıt göze çarpmakta ve bu yanıtlar aynı zamanda farklı sivil toplum kavramsallaştırmalarını da çıkarsamamıza yardımcı olmaktadır. Yani aslında her cevaba belli bir sivil toplum kavramı eşlik etmektedir.

Rasyonalite/evrensellik yönelimli yaklaşıma göre “güçlü devlet- zayıf sivil toplum gerçekliği” temel bir sorundur çünkü bu durum toplumda toplumun uzun vadeli ve ortak çıkarları hakkında bir oydaşmanın oluşmasını engellemektedir. Bu yaklaşım böyle bir konsensüsün evrensellik ilkesi çerçevesinde, eğitilmiş ve

aydınlanmış, akıllarını bu yönde kullanabilme yetisini geliştirmiş insanlar arasındaki rasyonel bir tartışma ortamı neticesinde yaratılması gerektiğini savunur. Ancak Türkiye’de devletin toplum üzerindeki hâkimiyetinden dolayı sivil toplum gelişmemiş, gelişmesine izin verilmemiş, toplumsal hedefler hep devlet tarafından topluma empoze edilegelmiştir. Böylelikle de toplum uzun vadeli ortak çıkarlarını rasyonel ve aydınlanmış bir tartışma ortamı neticesinde formüle etme ve onlara ulaşma yetisini geliştirememiştir. Bu durum, yani sivil toplumun evrensellik ilkesi çerçevesinde hareket etme becerisinin gelişmemiş olması, ise güçlü devlet geleneğini daha da besleyen, onu iyice pekiştiren bir etken olmuştur. Rasyonalite, aklın kullanımı, özel ile evrensel arasında bir bağlantı kurma gerekliliği, devletin evrensellik ilkesinin temsilcisi olarak görülmesi, sivil toplumun aslında içinde böyle bir potansiyel bulundurmasına rağmen halihazırda evrensellik ilkesi çerçevesinde hareket edemiyor olduğuna dair tespitler bu yaklaşımı Hegel’in sivil toplum kavramsallaştırmasına yaklaştırmaktadır. Çünkü Hegel de sivil toplum hakkındaki yazılarında aslında sivil toplumun ideal olarak kendi içindeki gerilim ve çatışmaları çözerek evrensellik ilkesini hayata geçirebilecek potansiyele sahip olduğunu ancak realiteye bakıldığında bunun gerçekleşemediğini söylemektedir. Bunun gerçekleşebilmesinin aslında nasıl mümkün olduğunu da yine kendisi açıklamaktadır. Ona göre insanlar kendi kişisel ve kısa vadeli kaygılarıyla toplumdaki diğer bireyleriyle doğrudan bağlantılı olduğunu gördüklerinde, yani kişisel olanla evrensel olan arasındaki bağlantıyı kurduklarında bu konsensüs mümkündür. Bu bağlantıyı ise bireyler kendilerini bu toplumsal bağlantı zincirinin bir parçası olarak görecektir şekilde zihinlerini eğittikleri zaman, eğitimi de sadece kendi amaçlarına ulaşmak için bir araç olarak görmedikleri zaman kurabilirler. Türkiye’deki çalışmalar arasında Metin Heper’in konu hakkındaki çalışmaları bu yaklaşıma örnek olarak gösterilebilir.

Liberal demokrasinin pekişmesi yönelimli yaklaşıma göre “güçlü devlet- zayıf sivil toplum gerçekliği” temel bir sorundur çünkü bu durum ülkede liberal demokratik bir rejimin yerleşmesi ve pekişmesi önünde engel teşkil etmektedir. Bu ikiliğin

lkede liberal anlamda bireysel hak ve zgrlklerin ve devletin dıřında zerk bir rgtl yařamın geliřmesi bakımından olumsuz sonuları olduėuna dikkat ekilmektedir. Bu yaklařıma eřlik eden sivil toplum kavrayıřı  temel ilke etrafında řekillenen liberal-bireyci-oėulcu sivil toplum kavramsallařtırmasıdır. Bu  ile ise devlet-sivil toplum ayrımı (ikisinin birbirinde ayrı varlıklar olarak dřnlmesi), sivil toplumun devletin muhtemel despotik eėilimlerini kontrol altında tutmak iin gerekli bir ara olarak grlmesi, ve toplumda oėulluėu bir ‘zenginlik’ olarak gren belli bir oėulculuk anlayıřıdır. Sivil toplum bireysel hak ve zgrlklerin devletten baėımsız olarak tecrbe edilebildiėi, aynı zamanda kimlikler ve ıkarlar bazında oėulculuėun temsil edildiėi bir alan olarak dřnlr. Temsil imknı bulan bu oėul kimlikler ve ıkarlar birbirleriyle etkileřimde bulunacak, rekabet edecek ancak bu durum yasal eřitlik erevesinde eřit imkanlarla gerekleřeceėi iin ortaya ıkan manzara “harmoni” olarak adlandırılacaktır. Bu harmoni ise neticede farklılıkların, atıřmaların uyum ierisinde bir konsensse baėlanmasına vesile olacaktır. Bu sivil toplum anlayıřının klasik formlasyonunu Alexis de Tocqueville’de grmek mmkndr. Tocqueville srekli olarak devletin toplum zerindeki hkimiyetini arttırma abası iinde olmak gibi bir eėilimi olduėunu sylemekte ve bunun giderek despotik eėilimlere dnřeceėini ve bunu engellemenin tek yolunun toplumun kendi kararlarını verebilir niteliėe kavuřması olduėunu belirtmektedir. Bu yzden de devlet dıřında zerk bir rgtl yařama ok byk nem atfetmektedir. Bunu da demokrasinin vazgeilmez nkořulu olarak grmektedir. Trkiye’deki liberal demokrasi ynelimli yaklařıma da aėırlıklı olarak bu sivil toplum kavramsallařtırması eřlik etmekte ve bu yaklařım tezde řerif Mardin, Ersin Kalaycıoėlu, mer aha, Binnaz Toprak, Ergn zbudun, Glgn Erdoėan-Tosun ve Nilfer Gle gibi akademisyenlerin alıřmalarıyla rneklendirilmektedir.

Kendiliėinden dzen/doėal geliřme ynelimli yaklařıma gre ise “gl devlet- zayıf sivil toplum gerekliėi” temel bir sorundur nk bu durum toplumun doėal ve kendiliėinden ortaya ıkan geliřim srecinin, spontane dzeninin devletin

müdahalesi ile engellendiğine, önüne ket vurulduğuna dair bir işarettir. Yukarıda bahsedilen liberal-bireyci-çoğulcu sivil toplum kavramsallaştırmasının üç temel ilkesi burada da aynen göze çarpmaktadır. Ancak bu yaklaşımın en ayırt edici özelliği kendiliğindenlik ve doğal gelişim süreçlerine yapılan vurgudur. Altı çizilen nokta toplumun doğal gelişim süreci sürecinde, (devletin ya da dışsal herhangi bir etkenin müdahalesi olmadan) kendiliğinden ortaya çıkan pratikler, kurumlar, zihniyet yapısı, davranış ve düşünce biçimleri, Hayek'in ifadesiyle "toplumdaki spontane güçlerden faydalanmak"tır. Sivil toplum işte bu anlamda önem kazanmakta, toplumun kendisi hakkındaki kararları kendisinin veriyor olmasının, kendi doğal gelişim sürecinin izleyeceği yolu kendisinin tespit ediyor olmasının bir aracı olarak görülmektedir. Dolayısıyla bu yaklaşıma eşlik eden sivil toplum anlayışı Oakeshott ve Hayek'ten esinlenen muhafazakâr liberal-bireyci-çoğulcu sivil toplum kavramsallaştırmasıdır. Tezde Türkiye'den bu anlayışa örnek olarak Mustafa Erdoğan'ın çalışmaları zikredilmektedir.

Liberal-sosyalizm yönelimli yaklaşım için "güçlü devlet- zayıf sivil toplum gerçekliği" temel bir sorundur çünkü bu durum Türkiye'de sosyalist hareketin etkili ve geniş tabanlı bir siyasal hareket olarak ortaya çıkmasının önündeki en büyük engel olagelmıştır. Devletin toplum üzerinde hep var olan baskısı ve hâkimiyeti yüzünden sosyalizm statükoya meydan okuyan ve/ya da ona alternatif oluşturabilecek bir halk hareketi olarak gelişmemiştir. Bu yaklaşımın en ilginç tarafı sosyalizme dair bu vurguya rağmen bu yaklaşımda da kullanılan sivil toplum kavramının klasik liberal-bireyci-çoğulcu sivil toplum kavramsallaştırması olmasıdır. Bu kavramlaştırmanın üç temel ögesi burada da göze çarpmakta. Yine toplumdan ayrı ve farklı ve toplum üzerinde hâkim, topluma hiçbir zaman gerçek anlamda inisiyatif vermemiş, "kendini toplumun dışında ve üzerinde gören bir otorite" olarak devlete referansla çözümlemeler yapılmakta; sivil toplum "resmî alanda devletle karşı karşıya gelebilecek bir siyasal özne" olarak görülmektedir. Sivil topluma bireysellik, heterodoksi, özgürlük, yaratıcılık, inisiyatif alanı olarak olumlu bir değer atfedilmektedir. Resmi ideolojinin "birlik ve beraberlik"e yaptığı

vurgu da bu değerdendirmerinin merkezinde yatmakta ve demokrasi “çoğulcu toplum”a yönelik bir proje olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Sivil toplumun bu klasik liberal-bireyci-çoğulcu kavramsallaştırmasının yanı sıra bu yaklaşımda sosyalizme dair bir kaygı da dikkat çekmektedir. Ancak, sosyalizmin Türkiye’de gelişebilmesi için öncelikli mücadele devletin toplum üzerindeki hâkimiyetinin sona erdirilmesini içeren mücadeledir. Devlet ve toplum arasındaki eşitsiz ilişki en acil olarak uğraşılması gereken meseledir ve sivil toplum bu anlamda önem taşımaktadır. Bu yaklaşıma örnek olarak tezde Türkiye’de liberal solun önemli temsilcileri olan ve aynı zamanda sivil toplum tartışmalarını da derinden etkilemiş olan İdris Küçükömer, Ahmet İnsel ve Murat Belge’nin konuyla ilgili çalışmaları örnek olarak alınmıştır.

Son olarak, *vatandaşlık eksenli yaklaşıma göre* “güçlü devlet- zayıf sivil toplum gerçekliği” temel bir sorundur çünkü bu durum Türkiye’de cumhuriyetçi gelenek içinde tanımlanan aktif vatandaşlık nosyonunun gelişmesini engellemiştir. Bu yaklaşıma göre vatandaşlık fikri toplumdaki bireylerin tüm kimlik ve farklılık iddialarıyla birlikte aktif siyasal katılım ekseninde yeniden canlandırılmalıdır. Burada sözü edilen aktif birey liberal-cumhuriyetçi anlamda hem bireysel hak ve özgürlükleri olan hem de toplumsal sorumlulukların bilincinde olan bireydir. Bu yaklaşımda vurgu aktif katılım vasıtasıyla ortaya çıkan etkileşimde ve tüm kimliklerin ilişkisel niteliğindedir. Bu bağlamda sivil toplum demokratik müzakere alanı olarak düşünülmektedir ve bu noktada iletişimsel eylemin toplumsal anlamda birleştirici gücüne, düşünce ve iradenin söylemsel olarak oluştuğuna, ve bireylerin birbirlerini ikna edebilmek ve böylelikle bir konsensüs yaratabilmek amacıyla argümanlarının gücüyle yarıştıkları düşünülmektedir. Jürgen Habermas’ın öncülüğünü yaptığı liberal-cumhuriyetçi duruştan beslenen ve sivil toplumun bu duruş içerisindeki kavramsallaştırmasından hareket eden bu yaklaşıma Türkiye’den Fuat Keyman, Ahmet İçduygu ve İlhan Tekeli gibi akademisyenlerin çalışmaları örnek olarak gösterilebilir.

Buraya kadar yapılan analiz Türkiye’de sivil toplum üzerindeki literatürde hâkim temaları ve hâkim yaklaşımları ortaya koymaktadır. Bu tezde görünürdeki farklılaşmaya rağmen bütün bu yaklaşımların özde çok önemli bir ortak noktada birleştikleri iddia edilmektedir. Bu ortak nokta da neticede bu yaklaşımları birbirine alternatif farklı yaklaşımlar olmaktan bir hayli uzaklaştırmakta ve onları aynı hâkim bakış açısının versiyonları haline getirmektedir. Bu ortak noktanın kaynağında en temelde güçlü devlet-zayıf sivil toplum ikiliğine sürekli olarak bütün bu yaklaşımlarda yapılmakta olan vurgu yatmaktadır. Yani aslında bu hâkim anlayışın üç belirleyici unsuru vardır: birincisi belki semptomatik olarak nitelendirilebilecek bu devlet-sivil toplum ikiliğidir. Buradan hareketle devlet ve sivil toplum iki ayrı varlık olarak görülmekte ve ikisi arasındaki güç mücadelesi toplumsal-siyasal yaşamı karakterize eden en önemli çatışma olarak düşünülmektedir. Daha önce değinildiği gibi de bu yapılanmanın arkasında yatan neden olarak belli bir devlet geleneği öne sürülmektedir. Devlet-sivil toplum karşıtlığına yapılan bu aşırı vurgunun neticesinde ise i) sivil toplum devletin toplum üzerindeki hâkimiyetini ve baskısını sınırlandırmak için gerekli bir araç olarak görülmekte, ii) asıl vurgu devlet-sivil toplum karşıtlığı ve ikisi arasındaki eşitsiz güç mücadelesi ve çatışma üzerinde olduğundan sivil toplumun içindeki çatışmalar, mücadeleler, güç ilişkileri ve eşitsizlikler bu terimlerle değil liberal çoğulculuk düşüncesi çerçevesinde ele alınmaktadır. Bu düşünceye göre ise farklılıklar bir zenginlik kaynağı olarak görülmekte, farklı kimlikler ve çıkarlar arasındaki mücadelenin yasal eşitlik ilkesi çerçevesinde ve devletin kontrolü ve müdahalesinden bağımsız olarak uyum içinde süreceği, birbiriyle uzlaşacağı, ve neticede de toplumsal bir konsensüs yaratılacağı düşünülmektedir. Bu temalar bütün liberal-yönelimli sivil toplum kavramsallaştırmaları (klasik liberal-bireyci-çoğulcu, muhafazakâr liberal-bireyci-çoğulcu ve liberal-cumhuriyetçi) ve ayrıca Hegelci sivil toplum kavramlaştırması tarafından ortak olarak paylaşılmaktadır.

Şimdiye kadar özetlenen analize dayanarak ortaya konulan bu hâkim pozisyonla ilgili iki ilginç gözlem yapılabilir: ilk olarak, tezin ikinci bölümünde detaylı olarak

incelendiği üzere Batı liberal geleneğinde sivil toplum kavramı baştan itibaren devlet-sivil toplum karşıtlığı çerçevesinde ele alınmamıştır. Locke ve Hobbes gibi örneklerde görülebileceği üzere, erken liberal gelenekte sivil toplum kavramı “devletli toplum”u ifade etmek için kullanılan bir kavramdır ve bu nedenle bu kullanımda devlet ve sivil toplum terimleri birbirlerini dışlayan iki kategoriye ifade etmez. Türkiye’deki liberal gelenekte sivil toplumun bu kullanımlarına bakıldığında ise bu ikiliğin hep başlangıç noktası olarak alındığını ve temel tartışmanın bu ön kabul üzerine inşa edildiğini görmek mümkündür. Bu anlamda Batı geleneğindeki sözü edilen kırılma noktası göz ardı edilmekte, hiç yokmuş gibi varsayılmaktadır. İkinci bir dikkat çeken husus ise liberal-bireyci-çoğulcu sivil toplum anlayışının sosyalist akademisyenler arasında da kabul görmüş olmasıdır. Yukarıda da açıklandığı üzere, bir ideal olarak sosyalizme dair kaygıları olmakla birlikte sivil toplum kavramlaştırmaları Marx ya da Gramsci’ninkine değil Tocqueville çizgisini takip eden klasik liberal-bireyci-çoğulcu kavramlaştırmaya yakın durmaktadır.

Bu hâkim anlayış farklı açılardan eleştirilebilir. Aslında Türkiye’deki literatüre baktığımızda iki hat üzerinden eleştirinin geldiğini gözlemlemek mümkündür. Bunlardan birisi ahlakî eleştiri, diğeri ise Marxist eleştiridir. Her ikisinin de temel hareket noktası devlet-sivil toplum ayrımı üzerindeki aşırı vurgunun başka bazı önemli noktaların göz ardı edilmesine neden olabileceği düşüncesidir. Sivil toplum kavramının sürekli ve yaygın olarak bu karşıtlık çerçevesinde kullanılıyor olmasının aldatıcı olabileceğine dair bir düşünceyle bu kullanım eleştirilmektedir.

Cemaatçi-cumhuriyetçi sivil toplum kavramsallaştırmasıyla birlikte yürüyen ahlakî eleştiride devlet ve sivil toplum arasındaki çatışmaya yapılan aşırı vurgunun ve devletin toplum üzerindeki baskısının asıl mesele olarak sürekli gündemde tutulmasının sivil toplum içerisinde belli bir grubun diğeri üzerindeki olası baskısı ve hâkimiyetini, sivil toplum içindeki muhtemel despotik eğilimleri göz ardı etmek gibi bir riski taşıdığı dile getirilmektedir. Bu tür risklerle baş edebilmenin yolu

olarak ise bu yaklaşım sivil topluma bir araç olarak değil kendi içinde bir amaç olarak yaklaşmak gerektiğini iddia etmektedir. Buna göre, sivil toplum herhangi bir amaca –ki bu genelde devleti sınırlandırmak, denetim altında tutmaktır- hizmet eden bir araç değil başlı başına “ahlakî bir varlık olarak”, “ahlakî bir birliktelik formu” olarak ulaşmak hedeflenen bir amaç olmalıdır. Burada insanın hem özerk bir varlık olduğu ama hem de bir topluluğa aidiyet duygusu beslediği vurgulanmakta ve insanlığa duyulan sevgi, kamusal dostluk (civic friendship), cömertlik, kamusal ruh (public spirit), insanlığın iyiliğine hizmet etmenin önemi gibi değerlere dikkat çekerek, birlikte yaşamının, içinde yaşanan topluluğa çıkar kaygısı gütmeksizin hizmet etmenin, ve ancak birlikte yaşamının insanları özgür kıldığına altı çizilerek sivil toplumu karakterize edilen farklılık ve eşitsizliklerle mücadele edilebileceği öne sürülmektedir. Bu yaklaşımda gözlemlenen sivil toplum kavramsallaştırması Batı düşünceler tarihinde kökleri Ferguson’da gözlemlenebilecek cemaatçi-cumhuriyetçi sivil toplum anlayışıdır. Türkiye özelinde ise bu yaklaşıma örnek olarak Ali Yaşar Sarıbay’ın konu hakkındaki çalışmaları gösterilebilir.

Bu uzlaşma ve konsensüs vurgusu dikkate alınarak bakıldığında bu eleştirel yaklaşımın da aslında hâkim duruşun çok uzağında olmadığı görülmektedir. Çünkü yukarıda hâkim duruşun en önemli ortak noktası olarak açıklanan konsensüs anlayışı burada da göze çarpmaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle bir kez daha sivil toplum içerisindeki çoğullukların, çatışmaların, mücadelelerin, karşı karşıya gelmelerin uzlaşma yoluyla; çatışmaların çözülmesi ve neticede konsensüse varılmasıyla sonuçlanacağına dair bir vurgu dikkat çekmektedir. Daha önce sözü edilen farklı yaklaşımları birleştirerek aslında onları birbirine alternatif değil aynı hâkim duruşun versiyonları haline getirdiği iddia edilen bu anlayış burada da kendini göstermektedir. Bu anlamda, cemaatçi-cumhuriyetçi sivil toplum kavramsallaştırmasıyla birlikte hareket eden ahlakî eleştiri aslında hâkim duruşa gerçek anlamda bir meydan okuma ya da bir alternatif olamamaktadır. Bu tezde sivil toplumu karakterize eden çatışmaların ve karşı karşıya gelmelerin, farklılık ve

eşitsizliklerin dinamiklerinin, liberal çoğulculuk anlayışına dayalı konsensüs yönelimli bir bakış açısıyla değil, tersine güç kavramına ve eşitsiz güç ilişkilerine referansla açıklanabileceği iddia edilmektedir. Böyle bir bakış açısının sivil toplum kavramının açımlayıcı potansiyelini yükselteceği düşünülmektedir. Konsensüs düşüncesine yapılan bu vurgu ise tam tersine kavramın açıklayıcı gücünde ciddi bir düşüşe sebep olmaktadır. Bazı çok önemli sorular yanıtsız kalmaktadır. Belki de bu, sivil toplum kavramı etrafındaki tartışmaların içinde bulunduğu tıkanıklığın en önemli nedenidir. Bu nedenle aslında ihtiyaç duyulan şey sivil toplumun dışlayıcı/mahrum edici taraflarını gün ışığına çıkarmak, onunla özdeşleştirilen özerk örgütsel yaşamda ya da çoğulculuk ortamında kendilerine yer bulamayanların durumunu sorunsallaştırmak, böylelikle de sivil toplumun herkes için gönüllü eylem ve katılım alanı olaak tesvir edilmesini sorgulamaktır. Bu yapılmadığı ve sivil toplum kavramı çatışmaların uzlaşması ve konsensüs yönelimli bakış açısının limitleri dahilinde kaldığı takdirde aslında modern toplumların yaşamkata olduğu bir takım problemlere çözüm olarak dikkatlerin yoğunlaştığı sivil toplum kavramının kendisi problemin bir parçası olacak gibi durmaktadır. Sivil toplumun ağırlıklı olarak düşünüldüğü gibi sadece karşılıklı ihtimam, destek, işbirliği, dayanışma, yardım, uzlaşma, vatandaşlık erdemi gibi değerlerin alanı olmadığına dair bir bilincin önemini vurgulamak gerekmektedir. Sivil toplumun en azından toplumun bazı kesimleri için tahrip edici taraflarının da olabileceğini düşünmek gerekirken ve bunların neler olabileceğine dair bir ilgi de uyandırmak gerekmektedir. Batı siyasal düşünce geleneğinde böyle bir bakış açısı öncelikle Marx ve Gramsci'nin sivil toplum kavramsallaştırmalarında görülmektedir. Onların çalışmalarındaki sivil toplum kavramı hâkim pozisyona iki temel noktada meydan okumaktadır. Yani hem devlet ve sivil toplumun birbirinden ayrı iki varlık olarak görülmesine hem de sivil toplumun içindeki ilişkilerin konsensüs temelli olarak ele alınmasına radikal eleştiri söz konusudur. Türkiye'de hâkim duruşun dışında bu alternatif bakış açısıyla sivil toplum kavramına yaklaşan çalışmaların oldukça sınırlı sayıda olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Tezde bu tür eleştirel yaklaşıma örnek olarak Galip Yalman ve Necmi

Erdoğan'ın çalışmaları zikredilmektedir. Hem Marx ve Gramsci'nin orjinal yazmalarında hem de Türkiye'den gösterilebilecek örneklerde devlet ve sivil toplum arasındaki ayrımın ancak metodolojik bir ayrım olarak düşünülebileceği bunun ontolojik bir ayrım olmadığı vurgulanmaktadır. Buna bağlı olarak devletin toplumu karakterize eden güç ilişkilerinden bağımsız ve onların dışında/uzasında bir seyirci/hakem olmadığına dikkat çekilir. Ayrıca toplumda bireyler ve gruplar arası ilişkiler barış, uyum, işbirliği, farklılık ve eşitsizliklerin biraradalığı üzerinde değil tam da gücün eşitsiz dağılımı temelinde şekillenmiştir. Marx'a göre sivil toplumu karakterize eden bu güç ilişkilerinin temelinde politik ekonomi yatmakta iken Gramsci ekonomik gücün yanında entellektüel ve siyasi liderlik anlamında kullandığı hegemonya da bu güç ilişkilerinin özünde yatmaktadır. Her iki bakış açısındaki ortak nokta sivil toplumdaki güç ilişkilerinin dinamiğinin iyi anlaşılması gerektiği ve bu ilişkilerin devlet düzeyinde de yansımalarının olduğunun ortaya konulmasıdır.

Bu bakış açısı takip edilerek bu tez de sivil toplum kavramının analitik bir araç olarak kullanılması, bunu yaparken de hâkim duruşta sürekli kendini tekrar eden tema ve varsayımların dışında durmak hedefleniyorsa güç ve antagonizma (karşıtlık) kavramları ile birlikte düşünülmesi gerektiğini önermektedir. Marx ve Gramsci'nin sivil toplum kavramsallaştırmasından hareket ederek ve bu yaklaşımları güç, güç ilişkileri ve antagonizma kavramları hakkında daha yakın zamanlı bazı kuramsal çalışmalarla eklemleyerek sivil toplum kavramının açıklayıcı gücünün arttırılabileceğini öne sürmektedir. Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe ve Michel Foucault'nun çalışmaları bu anlamda, yani güç ve antagonizma kavramlarına olan yaklaşımları bakımından, Marx ve Gramsci'nin sivil toplum kavramsallaştırmalarına destek veren ya da onlarla birarada düşünülebilecek kuramsal yaklaşımlar olarak düşünülebilir. Laclau ve Mouffe karşıtlıkların (antagonizmanın) bütün kimliklerin ve özne pozisyonlarının (subject positions) kuruluş aşamasında var olduğunu, yani bu kimliklerin ve pozisyonların oluşum aşamasına eşlik ettiğini, dolayısıyla da silinebilir/yok edilebilir/ortadan

kaldırılabilir olmadığını söylemektedir. Mouffe ayrıca liberalizmdeki antagonizmasız çoğulculuk düşüncesinin bir “illüzyon” olduğunu iddia etmekte ve bazı farklılıkların güç ilişkileri biçiminde yapılandığını farketmemiz gerektiğini öne sürmektedir. Evrensel/rasyonel bir konsensüs düşüncesi toplumda şiddetin değişik biçimlerinin farkedilememesine ya da saklanmasına neden olabilir. Bu ise demokrasiye gerçek anlamda bir tehdit oluşturmaktadır. Ona göre her konsensüs sonuçta bazılarını dışlar, dışta bırakır; her konsensüs belli bir dışlama üzerine kurulmuştur. Buna paralel olarak her konsensüs aslında gücün belli bir biçimde denkleştirilmesi (stabilization) ile ortaya çıkan kalıcı olmayan bir hegemonyanın bir neticesi olarak ortaya çıkar. Böyle bakıldığı zaman mevcut hegemonyanın nasıl oluştuğunu anlamak ona karşı mücadele etmenin ve/ya da ona karşı bir alternatif hayal etmenin ve geliştirmenin yolu olarak görülmektedir. Çünkü oluşmuş olan hegemonya arızî, şarta bağlı (contingent) bir hegemonyadır ve bu nedenle de dönüştürülebilir niteliktedir. İşte bu nedenle, yani bu hegemonyaya karşı mücadele edebilmek için onun nasıl, hangi güç dengelerine dayalı olarak ortaya çıktığını anlamak gerekmektedir. Bu da liberal çoğulculuk anlayışında olduğu gibi eşitsiz güç ilişkileri toplumdaki bireyler ve gruplar arası ilişkileri hiç etkilemiyormuş gibi davranabileceğimizi varsayarak, bunları “parantez içine alarak” hepimizin haklar ve özgürlükler alanı olarak düşünülen sivil topluma eşit olarak katılabileceğimizi düşünerek başarılacak bir şey değildir. Mouffe’un ifadesiyle “demokratik siyaset bizden gücün ve dışlanmanın izlerini ve ipuçlarını silmeye çalışmak yerine onları öne çıkarmamızı, görünür kılmamızı beklemektedir ki böylece onlar çekilmeye açık hale gelebilsin.” Oluşmuş olan her konsensüsün derinde bazılarının dışlanması ve/ya da marjinalleştirilmesi pahasına gerçekleşmiş olduğunu görmek gerekmektedir. Sivil toplum da belli bir güç dengelenmesi neticesinde belli bir hegemonyanın kurulduğu ancak bu hegemonyanın sonsuza kadar değişmez nitelikte olmamasından dolayı sürekli olarak güç mücadelelerin yaşandığı bir alan olarak düşünüldüğü takdirde belli bir bağlamdaki siyasal-toplumsal yapıyı anlamada işlevsel olabilecek bir analiz aracı haline gelebilmektedir. Aynı zamanda sivil toplumu oluşturan bu güç ilişkilerinin devlet seviyesinde de yansıdığı,

devletin bu mücadelelerin, güç ilişkilerinin dışında, onlara uzaktan bakan bir varlık olmadığı düşüncesi de bu yaklaşımın ayrılmaz bir parçası olmaktadır. Zaten ancak hâkim (liberal) anlayışın özündeki bu devlet-sivil toplum ikiliğine ontolojik bir ayrım olarak bakma eğiliminden uzaklaşılabiliirse dikkatler devlet ve sivil toplum arasındaki güç mücadelesi ve eşitsiz güç dağılımının yaratabileceği sorunlardan sivil toplumun içindeki eşitsiz güç dağılımının ne gibi sonuçları olduğu/olabileceği meselesine çekilebilmektedir.

Oluşmuş olan güç dengesini ve hegemonyayı anlayabilmek için ise güç olgusunun detaylı bir çözümlemesine ihtiyaç vardır. Bu noktada da Foucault'nun güç kavramı üzerine çalışmaları oldukça destekleyici olmaktadır. Ona göre "güç devlet aygıtında yerleşik değildir ve gücün devletin dışında, aşağısında ya da yanında, daha gündelik ve daha anlık işleyiş mekanizmaları değişmediği sürece hiçbir şey değişmiş olmayacaktır." Güç toplumsal bünyeye yayılmış vaziyettedir ve güç ilişkileri diğer ilişki türleriyle (üretim, cinsiyet, akrabalık, aile) içiçe geçmiştir. Bu güç ilişkileri muhakkak yasaklama ve cezalandırma biçimlerinde kendini göstermez başka birçok formu olabilir. Bu nedenle asıl ilgi alanı olması gereken gücün düzenli ve meşru biçimlerinden çok en uç noktalardaki farkedilmesi en zor adreslerindeki biçimleri olmalıdır.

Laclau, Mouffe ve Foucault'nun bakış açıları, görülebileceği gibi, sivil topluma hâkim anlayıştan epey farklı bir açıdan bakmamıza olanak sağlamaktadır. Bir anlamda hâkim duruşta bırakılan boşlukları doldurmaktadır. Aslında bunu üç kuramsal manevrayı mümkün kılarak yaparlar. Birincisi, sivil toplum içindeki ilişkilerin gerçek doğalarının konsensüs yönelimli hâkim görüşten temelden farklı olduğunu ortaya koymaktadırlar. İkinci olarak bunun ancak odağı devlet-sivil toplum ayrılığı ve karşılaşmasından/çatışmasından sivil toplum içindeki karşılaşma/çatışmalara kaydırmakla mümkün olabileceğini vurgularlar. Yani, devlet-sivil toplum çatışması dışındaki diğer çatışmaları ve güç ilişkilerini hesaba katan daha geniş bir bakış açısı sunarlar. Bu iki manevra neticesinde devlet ve sivil

toplum arasındaki ayrımın ontolojik değil metodolojik bir ayrım olduğu gerçeğine sırt dönmek imkansız hale gelmektedir ki bu da üçüncü kuramsal manevradır. Bu yaklaşımlar işte bu noktalarda Marx ve Gramsci'nin sivil toplum kavramsallaştırmalarına katkıda bulunur niteliktedir. Bu üç kuramsal manevra ister istemez demokrasi kavramının yaygın anlamlandırılma şeklinde ve sivil toplum-demokrasi ilişkisinin ele alınış biçiminde de farklı bir bakış açısı getirmektedir.

Eğer toplumu anlamada esas olan güç ilişkileri ve onların yarattığı eşitsizlikler, baskı, dışlama, marjinalleştirme, pasifleştirme ve sessizleştirme mekanizmaları ise; bu güç ilişkileri alışılmış formlarından farklı biçimler de alabiliyorlarsa; toplumda oluşmuş olan hegemonya belli koşullara dayanan, kalıcı ve durağan olmayan bir hegemonya ise bu güç ilişkilerinden doğan hegemonya ile bir kereliğine mücadele etmek ve o mücadeleyi kazanmak diye bir şey söz konusu olmayacaktır. Tersine oluşmuş güç dengeleriyle mücadele ancak onların nasıl oluştuğuna dair bir farkındalık, dikkat ve kaygı ile mümkündür. Böyle bir bakış açısı demokrasiyi bir hükümet biçimi, bir takım koşulları yerine getirerek ulaşılabilecek bir hedef olarak görmekten ziyade Sheldon Wolin'in kullandığı anlamda "firari/tutulmaz/alıkonulmaz bir şey olarak algılamaktadır. Demokrasi bir siyasal sistem ya da rejim olarak değil, sıradan insanların geçici olarak belli bir direniş ya da mücadele eylemi çerçevesinde biraraya geldikleri kolektif bir eylem türüdür. Demokrasi kurulabilecek, pekiştirilebilecek, kurumsallaştırılabilecek bir şey değildir; varılacak bir yer, ulaşılabilecek önceden tespit edilmiş bir hedef değildir. O zaman da demokrasi-sivil toplum ilişkisi "nasıl bir sivil toplum demokrasiye katkıda bulunur ya da hizmet eder" sorusu çerçevesinde değil "demokratik bir sivil toplum nasıl olmalıdır" sorusu çerçevesinde tartışılmalıdır. Ehrenberg'in belirttiği gibi sivil toplumun ne olduğu ancak onu oluşturan yapıların neler yapmakta olduklarına, nasıl örgütlenmiş olduklarına ve hangi siyasi ve ekonomik kuvvetlerin iş başında olduklarına dikkatlice bakarak anlaşılabilir." Sivil toplum kavramına demokrasi kavramının eklenmesi, bu durumda, ancak dezavantajlı olanın,

dışlanmış olanın, marjinalize edilmiş olanın bakış açısından sivil toplumda olup bitenleri anlamaya çalışmakla mümkündür.

En başta da belirtildiği üzere, sivil toplum tartışmaları hem genel olarak hem de Türkiye bağlamında bir tıkanma noktasına gelmiş gibi görünmektedir. Bununla başedebilmenin yolu ne sivil toplum kavramını yirmibirinci yüzyılın normatif ideali olarak sunmak ne de kavramın hiçbir analitik gücü olmadığını söyleyerek bir kenara atmak. İkisinin de dışında olarak, yapılması gereken yaygın ve yerleşik kullanımında/kullanımlarında kavramın hangi açılardan eleştirilebileceğini ortaya koymak daha işe yarar bir tutum gibi görünmektedir. Bu kullanım biçimlerinde sivil toplum hangi önemli noktaları atlamaktadır, hangi soruları sormamaktadır sorularını yanıtlamaya çalışarak kavramı yeniden gözden geçirmek yararlı bir yöntem olarak önerilmektedir. Bu tez bu yöntemi Türkiye'deki sivil toplum tartışmalarından yola çıkarak ve bu tartışmalardan hareketle hem kavramın Türkiye'deki akademik literatürdeki hâkim kullanım biçimlerine dair bir takım tespitler yapmak hem de bu noktadan daha genel ve metodolojik çıkarımlarda bulunmak amacıyla benimsemiştir. Her iki amaca yönelik çabada Marx ve Gramsci'nin sivil toplum kavramsallaştırmaları esas teşkil etmiş ve onların kavrama getirmiş oldukları perspektif ile uyum içerisinde görünen bazı kuramsal tartışmalar (antagonizma, güç ve demokrasi kavramları hakkındaki daha yakın zamanlı kuramsal çalışmalar) gündeme getirilmiştir. Bu şekilde sivil toplum kavramının hâkim kullanım biçimlerine dair eleştirel bir bakış açısı geliştirilmeye çalışılmıştır. Böyle bir açılım olmadığı takdirde sivil toplum kavramının sürekli olarak aynı temalar ve aynı sorular çerçevesinde gündeme getirilmesi kavramın Türkiye ya da herhangi bir bağlamdaki sosyal ve siyasal koşulları anlamada yardımcı olabilecek bir çözümleme (analiz) aracı olmaktan uzak kalacağı düşünülmektedir.

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