

DEBATES ON CIVIL SOCIETY: FROM CENTRE-PERIPHERY TO RADICAL
CIVIL SOCIETARIANISM

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FIRAT DURUŞAN

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Sencer Ayata
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Prof. Dr. Raşit Kaya
Head of Department

That is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science

Prof. Dr. Ayşe Ayata
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Prof. Dr. Ayşe Ayata (METU, ADM) _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ayça Ergun (METU, SOC) _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Galip Yalman (METU, ADM) _____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name: FIRAT DURUŞAN

Signature :

ABSTRACT

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Duruşan, Fırat

M.S., Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ayşe Ayata

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The radical democratic conception of civil society strives for theoretically constructing and politically defending civil society as a social sphere autonomous from both the economy and state. As a position taken against Marxist and liberal theories, radical civil societarianism views the cultural and normative structures of modern societies as independent from and prior to systemically conceived economic and political relations. These structures is purported to give way to spontaneous social solidarity characterising civil society. With the mechanisms of domination and exploitation defined outside civil society, this approach ends up with excessive voluntarism characterising social relations thereof. Similarly, in the Turkish context, the dominant centre-periphery approach is predicated upon the external contradiction between the vertical state-society relations and horizontal relations between social actors. It is argued that the dominance of the former has caused the underdevelopment of civil society which is a particular expression of the latter. In any case, social conflicts are detached from structural political and economic mechanisms and conceived in voluntaristic terms. Consequently, the normative position radical civil societarianism takes vis-à-vis social movements fails to go beyond an imposition of the arbitrary notion of “civility” through the discourse of self-limitation.

Keywords: Civil society, self-limitation, centre-periphery, radical democracy.

ÖZ

SİVİL TOPLUM TARTIŞMALARI: MARKEZ-ÇEVREDEN RADİKAL SİVİL TOPLUMCULUĞA

Duruşan, Fırat

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Sivil toplum kavramının radikal-demokratik yorumu, gerek kuramsal gerek siyasi açıdan, sivil toplumu kapitalist ekonomi ve devletten özerk bir alan olarak tanımlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Marxist ve liberal kuramlara karşı takınılan bir tavrın ifadesi olan bu uğraş, modern toplumların normatif ve kültürel yapılarının ekonomik ve siyasal sistemlere öncül ve bunlardan bağımsız olduğu varsayımına dayanır. İddiaya göre sivil toplumun özünü oluşturan toplumsal dayanışmaya dayalı ilişkiler bu özerk normatif-kültürel çerçeveye içerisinde şekillenir. Ancak sistemik yapıların ve aktöre dayalı toplumsal ilişkilerin birbirinden bağımsız ve farklı toplumsal alanlarda gerçekleştiği varsayımı, sivil toplumu salt iradecilikle karakterize eden bir noktaya varmaktadır. Türkiye’de de sivil toplum tartışmalarına egemen olan merkez-çevre yaklaşımı, dikey devlet-toplum ilişkileriyle, toplumsal aktörler arasındaki yatay ilişkiler arasında, birincinin egemen olduğu dışsal bir çelişki önermektedir. Bu bağlamda Türkiye’de merkez-çevre çatışmasının egemenliği, Batı’daki anlamıyla yatay toplumsal ilişkilerin belirli, modern bir ifadesi olan sivil toplumun gelişmesine engel olmuştur. Dolayısıyla Türkiye’de de toplumsal aktörler arasındaki çatışmalar yapısal siyasi ve ekonomik süreçlerin dışında tanımlanmakta ve aynı şekilde iradeci bir çerçevede değerlendirilmektedir. Sonuç olarak, radikal sivil toplumculuğun toplumsal hareketlere karşı takındığı siyasi tavır, keyfi olarak tanımlanmış bir sivillik nosyonunun dayatılmasının ötesine geçememektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sivil toplum, öz-kısıtlama, merkez-çevre ilişkileri, radikal demokrasi.

To my mother

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From the early 1980's and on civil society became the centre of political debates on democracy on a worldly basis. Many commentators have interpreted the implications of the collapse of state socialism in Eastern Europe, the fall of the military dictatorships in Latin America and the crisis of the Keynesian welfare state in advanced capitalist countries as a generalised awakening of civil society against the state.¹ This interpretation quickly became the mainstream of civil society. Integrated with the ideology of the neo-liberal assault on the welfare state, the discourse of civil society has had every means to be reproduced. From governments to transnational institutions, to social movements of various, even contradictory persuasions, civil society became a catch-phrase of a new superficial consensus. The superficiality of this consensus quickly becomes manifest as one observes the contradictory applications of the term by various social actors and countless academic disputes on how to define civil society and its relation to democracy. Interestingly enough, pre-civil societarian political divisions came to be re-constructed with respect to the civil society. Left and right interpreted civil society in different terms and came to contest one another in defining it according to their own political priorities. This is not to say the impact of the discourse of civil society has been spurious. Quite the contrary, as it became the new meta-language of politics², it did transform political discourses. Democratic movements in various contexts have been interpreted in its light, that is, as social forces that vie for autonomisation and democratisation of civil society.³

¹ Jean Cohen & Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, *Civil society and political theory*. New Baskeville: MIT Press, 1992.

² John Keane, *Civil Society: Old Images New Visions*, Cambridge, Polity Pres, 1998.

³ Cohen & Arato, 1992, *passim*. Jean Cohen, Strategy or identity: New theoretical paradigms and contemporary social movements, *Social Research*, 52(4), 1985, pp. 663-716. *passim*.

This new understanding of democratic struggles has been hailed as the heir of socialist and social democratic understandings of democracy. In fact, the widespread currency the term has gained also stems from the fact that Marxism lost its hegemonic status in the political left as the principal paradigm of democratic opposition. Increasingly by those from the left, Marxism has been chided, among other reasons, for its totalising discourse which reduces the manifold social relations in civil society to the exploitative logic of capitalism and disdains the separation of state and civil society as an upshot of capitalism.⁴ It is purported that the political project Marxism suggests following this logic, is the abolition of the differentiation of state and civil society in a total revolution. It is alleged that the latter implication of Marxism has justified the totalitarian governments of state-socialist societies, which amounted to nothing but the very destruction of civil society which had given rise to the democratic and socialist projects in the first place.

In Turkey the emergent literature on civil society and democratisation also gained impetus in relation to and following the post-1980 re-structuring of state society relationships which similarly targeted the state's extensive involvement in the economy. The diagnosis of the status of civil society in Turkish polity paralleled at least in one significant point that of the one which was widespread in the international debates on civil society, namely, that the expansion of state hinders the development of an autonomous civil society. In Turkey, this line of argument closely corresponds with the dominant reading of state-society relations in Turkey which holds that the transcendent nature of the state in Ottoman-Turkish state tradition has effectively hindered the emergence of a strong civil society which was allegedly the first and foremost historical characteristic of the developed democratic polities.⁵ Hence it is fair to conclude that in Turkey as well, the guiding thread of the discourse on civil society was to assert the latter's emergence or strengthening against the state. Even though the emergence of civil society and democratisation have more than one, and often contradictory, interpretations with the term civil society denoting different

⁴ Cohen, Jean L. (1978) System and class: The subversion or emancipation. *Social Research*, 54(4), pp. 789-843. passim.

⁵ Metin Heper, *The state tradition in Turkey*. North HumberSide: The Eothen Press, 1985. passim.

phenomena in different strands of thought, that it develops and should be developed against the state is an idea shared across different applications of the term.

The plea for an independent civil society which was to protect the individual against state coercion rapidly became the mainstream following the transition to the civilian rule after the 1980-83 military regime.⁶ The military regime had curtailed the right of association and virtually swept the largest of existing associations with the possible exception of the business associations. A wave of persecutions and pressure upon almost any kind of collective political movement marked the era which is frequently referred to as that of de-politicisation. There is a certain degree of justification for the use of this term as the military junta justified the coup by referring to the over-politicisation of the society at large which led to widespread violence and paralysed the political system which further exacerbated the political upheavals. It is argued that the self-imposed mission of the military regime was to shove politics out of certain social domains where it did not belong in the first place, which implied in effect, the complete re-designing of the institutional structure of civil society. Such an intense intervention into the workings of the associational life/civil society and repression of political activity therewith is comfortably contextualised in the Ottoman-Turkish continuum of state tradition, the hallmark of which was the assumption that an entrenched civil society was lacking in the Turkish context. The reaction to the oppression of the military regime and its endurance after the establishment of the civilian government played a significant role in the justification of this paradigm among the Turkish left which suffered disproportionately in this period. Although it contained an unambiguous liberal ferment, the ideal of an entrenched civil society against the state became prominent in political left as well.⁷ The neo-liberal discourse of civil society, propagated alongside Özal's political discourse, put the emphasis on the free market and free enterprise. The reconfiguration of the state economy relationship was interpreted as the liberation of

⁶ Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, Türkiye'de demokrasi ve sivil toplum, in Fuat Keyman & Ali Yaşar Sarıbay (eds.) *Küreselleşme Sivil Toplum ve İslam*, İstanbul: Vadi, 1998, pp. 88-110, pp. 95-104.

⁷ Nebilay Erdoğan, *Türkiye'de sivil toplum kavramı: sağ ve sol sivil toplumculuk*, Mürekkep 13, pp. 103-124, p.103

the individual from the tutelage of the state. In this manner civil society was equated with the free market and the withdrawal of the state from the economy implied the nourishment of civil society in this respect.⁸ Indeed, even some of those political positions which were critical of the new-right project of the Özal government conceded that the reformulation of the state economy relationship in such neo-liberal terms could be a starting point for the long-awaited development of an autonomous civil sphere.⁹ Hence, after the transition to the civilian government, civil-society quickly became the catch-phrase which united many diverse political positions and actors. To sum up, the prevalent political repression of the military regime and the neo-liberal restructuring of the state economy relationship marked the two key aspects of the initial context of the emergence of the discourse of “civil society” against the state.

In Turkey as well, the discourse on civil society bifurcates between leftist and rightist interpretations. The proponents of the left-leaning perspective in Turkey similarly distinguish themselves from the new-right by stressing the irreducibility of civil society to the economy. Yet the anti-statist thrust of radical civil societarianism is more pronounced in Turkey given the dominance of the strong state/weak civil society dichotomy in.

This thesis comprises a critical review of the appropriation of the discourse of civil society by those authors who position themselves on the left. For practical considerations, their approach will be referred to as the radical civil societarianism. The choice of label is based upon the frequent appearance of ‘radical democracy’ within the accounts which belong to this line of thinking. As such the term is indicative of these accounts’ effort to differentiate themselves clearly from the Marxist tradition and re-define the left along their own priorities. The radical conception conceives of civil society as autonomous from both the state and

⁸ Korel Göymen, “The third sector in Turkey: Towards a new social contract with the state”, web content, <http://www.uvt.nl/kameleon/egpa2004/paper/goymen.doc>, 2004 passim.

⁹ Cf. Erdoğan, 1999 passim., Cf. Sarıbay, 1998 passim., Göymen, 2004, passim. and Gülgün Erdoğan Tosun, *Demokratikleşme Perspektifinden Türkiye’de Devlet Sivil Toplum İlişkisi*, İstanbul, Alfa Yayınları, 2002, passim.

economy and locates the democratic value of the latter precisely in its autonomous status. Developed as a criticism of both the Marxist and neoliberal understandings of civil society, which allegedly reduce it to economic sphere, this position asserts to be the heir of the former, which is conceived in its utter and well-deserved decline, in criticising the latter which is seen on the rise. The thesis inquires upon the theoretical premises of the radical conception with reference to its both western and Turkish adherents and attempts to reconsider the political implications of them. In carrying out this task, the first chapter provides a historical account on the development of the term of civil society. As it is mentioned before, civil society gained currency in political theory from the 1980s and on. The specific historical context of the late 1980s notwithstanding, many theorists turned back to the history of the term in the Western political thought.¹⁰ The concept had been abandoned more than 200 years ago and it needed to be excavated, as it were, in order to understand its current revival. Hence, presenting a genealogy of the term civil society is a common practice among the major works the contemporary debate on civil society has spawned. Yet such a philosophical-historical endeavour is far from being a neutral one since the interest in the term is a product of the current era. If theorising civil society involves the retrieval of the concept from the early-modern political thought, as a historiographical exercise, it is determined by the political relations of today. It would hence be appropriate to note that any historiography of the term civil society is one which prefers a particular content for the term depending on the historiographer's political position and theoretical priorities. Drawing upon this fact, the first chapter presents a discussion of the radical civil societarians' historiographies in an attempt to understand the main contours of the contemporary discussion. Special emphasis is put on a discussion over the extent to which the theoretical sources of the radical conception allow the conceptualisation of civil society as a sphere autonomous from the state and economy.

¹⁰ John Keane, *Civil Society: Old Images New Visions*, Cambridge, Polity Pres, 1998, p. 9. Cf. Krishan Kumar, *Civil Society: An inquiry to the usefulness of an historical term*, *The British Journal of Sociology*, 44(3), 1993, pp. 375-395, p. 376.

The second chapter concentrates directly on the contemporary radical conception of civil society as it is theorised prominently among others by John Keane and Jean Cohen & Andrew Arato. The discussion centres on the questions of the autonomy of civil society from the state and economy. The consideration of civil society as autonomous from state and civil society, leads the radical writers to sociology as the theoretical basis of its development as such. The aversion to economic conceptualisations of civil society, particularly the Marxist one, results in conceiving social transformation which lies at the genesis of civil society as primarily a cultural process of modernisation. At the basis of civil society is considered the rationalisation of the normative framework of social integration rather than the economic understanding of the development of the forces and relations of production. As Walzer puts it, civil society is predicated on the conception of the human being as a social animal prior to being a political or economic animal.¹¹ Radicals conceive the bureaucratic domination of the state and exploitative logic of capitalism as a threat to the development of civil society. Hence, the autonomy of civil society is essentially precarious as commodification and bureaucratisation are constant dispositions of the capitalist market and state. Along with the conception of differentiation, the conception of commodification and bureaucratisation are accounted for with reference to the theoretical framework of general functionalism. The conceptual vocabulary of system and social integration are utilised in conceiving the relationship between civil society and “un-civil” social spheres. Hence the discussion concentrates on this sociological account of modernisation and differentiation of civil society from the state and economy. Finally, another important concept which accompanies the radical conception, namely, self-limitation is taken under focus along with the discussion of autonomy. Self-limitation is important in conceiving the autonomy of civil society for it is equated with the problem of autonomy, but this time on the side of the social actors which belong to civil society. The preservation of the autonomy of civil society, for the radical civil societarians, entails the preservation of the autonomous functioning of the state and economy. That is, politics of civil society is not considered as a total expansion of civil society

¹¹ Michael Walzer, Sivil toplum düşüncesi: Toplumsal yapılaşmaya doğru bir adım, *Birikim*, 37, 1992, pp. 33-41, p. 40.

which would mean de-differentiation. De-differentiation is deemed anti-modern and ultimately dangerous for a democratic configuration of economy-state-civil society relations.

After the general theoretical discussion has been introduced, what remains is to engage the main lines of argument present in the Turkish debate regarding civil society and democracy in the light of the inferences made in the first two chapters. The third chapter is on the Turkish debates on civil society with a special emphasis on the adherents of the radical conception. It is the thesis's assumption that the post-1980 rise to prominence of the discourse of civil society in Turkey parallels the theoretical developments worldwide. That is to imply the general theoretical maxim provided by Şerif Mardin and widely shared among the dominant reading of state-civil society relations in Turkey, that the unique nature of those relations require unique epistemological assumptions¹² does not seem to hold as the theoretical climate of political science after 1980 coup testifies. In the Turkish debate on civil society, the question of emergence seems to be among the most crucial problems. Since the centre-periphery paradigm as developed by Mardin and the Ottoman-Turkish state-tradition approach of Heper, which together establish the reasons of the non-emergence of civil society in Turkey,¹³ are the dominant approaches in comprehending the questions of civil society in the Turkish context, the contemporary theorists of civil society spend some time in comprehending its emergence. Nevertheless, since the aforementioned dominant approach conceives the state-society confrontation as the prime contradiction which characterises the Turkish polity, the Turkish debates converge with the contemporary global tide of politics of civil society against the state. The radical conception of civil society in the Turkish

¹² Galip Yalman, Türkiye'de Devlet ve Burjuvazi: Alternatif bir okuma denemesi, in Sungur Savran and Neşecan Balkan (eds.) *Sürekli Kriz Politikaları: 2000'li Yıllarda Türkiye* 1. Kitap, İstanbul, Metis Yayınları, 2004, p. 47.

¹³ Şerif Mardin, Center-periphery relations: a key to Turkish politics. *Daedalus*, Vol. 102(1), pp.169-190, 1973 passim. and Metin Heper, The Strong State and Democracy: *The Turkish case in comparative and historical perspective*, in S.N. Eisenstadt, ed., *Democracy and Modernity*, Leiden, E.J. Brill,,1992a. and Metin Heper, The Strong State as a Problem for the Consolidation of Democracy in Turkey: Turkey and Germany compared in *Comparative Political Studies*, 25:2, 1992b, pp. 169-194.

debates is founded upon such a theoretical conjuncture. With Turkish radicals, the perplexed experience of modernisation the Turkey has undergone is reconsidered as one of the chief themes they refer to in terms of understanding the emergence of the discourse of civil society is the crisis of modernity.¹⁴ In this respect, the attention is drawn to a conception of legitimacy crisis the state has purportedly undergone with the rise of identity politics. For radical civil societarians in Turkey, the development of civil society is the source of the crisis and a way out of it simultaneously as it is conceived the hallmark of a democratic configuration of state-society relations. However, the crisis of modernity is a double edged sword for civil society. Identity politics, which had its role to play in the emergence of a discourse of civil society, holds to key to its corruption simultaneously. Those social groups who demand autonomy and strive for the development of a democratic relation between the state and civil society are disposed to slide into fundamentalism which does not only provokes state authoritarianism, but it also goes against a pluralist conception of civil society. Hence, alongside the questions of modernisation and crisis of modernity, this chapter also considers the radical stance vis-à-vis the ‘really existing civil society’ in Turkey.

In conclusion, a final evaluation of the relationship between the analytical premises of the radicals and their political implications in terms of their understanding of democracy are provided. In conceiving the limitations of their analyses of the Turkish state-civil society relations, Turkish radical civil societarians are evaluated with reference to the issues raised in the third chapter concerning the proposed relationship between the economy, state and civil society.

¹⁴ Fuat Keyman & Ahmet İçduygu, *Globalization, Civil Society and Citizenship in Turkey*, *Citizenship Studies*, 7(2), 2003, pp. 219-34. *passim*.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL HISTORY

Civil society has both descriptive/analytical and prescriptive/de-ontological connotations in the history of Western political thought. The two senses of the term are imbued in the sense that it is used in both describing and evaluating, initially, a type of political rule and later a social sphere distinct from the state. If the most prominent quality of the contemporary conception of civil society is its normatively loaded nature, this quality is derived from the philosophical postulates of a tradition of political thought as broad as liberalism. The main normative application of the term, in this respect, is related to the problem of the mediation between the particular and the universal. Witnessing the social transformations that took place in the 18th century Europe, the problem of mediation is related to emergence of the conception of the individual as a self-contained unit of reason. Once the autonomy and a self-seeking rationality became the attributes of the individual, the problem to be tackled became the moral quality of the collectivity. If the individual was the self-sufficient unit of reason, why did individuals come and formed collectivities? How was the individual to relate to the collectivity? Adam Seligman conceives the idea of civil society crucial in this respect.¹⁵ He means that the application of the term, including the contemporary use, deals with the problem of the relationship between individual and society, the particular and the universal, their relative moral values or whether they should be in constant tension or not. By this move, Seligman registers the inborn affiliation of the contemporary discussion on civil society with the liberal thinking whereby, to repeat, the problem of reconciling the particular with the universal takes the form of reconciling individual with the society. Arguably, though, the history of the concept civil society inheres as much this liberal problem as it manifests its perplexities and due critique. It should be noted before dwelling on the

¹⁵ Seligman, 1992, *passim*.

history of the term that if contemporary conception is a reappropriation of a concept from the history of political thought, it does inhere similar contradictions it has throughout its history. Yet on the other hand, this reappropriation involves retrospection, and by implication, involves partial reinterpretations of history. Therefore, the evaluation of reappropriations is also based upon a *contemporary* engagement with the concept. Before turning back to the specifics of this contemporary conception of civil society, this chapter will provide a brief summary of contemporary reappropriations of the idea of civil society as a historiographical exercise. Special emphasis will be on how the differentiation of civil society from the state is reconstructed. It should be mentioned on the outset that, even though the following section does not pretend to offer yet another alternative genealogy of the concept but rather concentrates on already existing ones, it needs to fill certain strategic caveats inherent in the reviewed historiographies. This is the reason the discussion on classical political economy and its legacy is somewhat more detailed than it is usually presented in the contemporary historiographies of civil society. Other than that, the principle goal is to stress the differences of interpretation among the referred authors to see how they relate to their own conceptions of civil society.

2.1. Classical Conception: Civil Society as Commonwealth

Before the development of capitalism as a self-sufficient economic system, the state and civil society were not considered as distinct spheres. The term civil society as originated in the pre-modern times accentuated in Aristotle's *Koinonia Politike* and Cicero's *Societas Civilis* denoted a form of polity which was contrasted to barbarism and despotic rule.¹⁶ Bobbio points at the distinction within this conception of civil society between the Aristotelian, or teleological understanding and the tradition of natural law. In Aristotle's use, the polis was the natural form of society which pertains to human beings. The good life for human beings consisted of becoming free and equal citizens of a polis governed by good laws. Civil society in this sense was a

¹⁶ Kumar, 1993, p. 376, Bobbio, 1997, pp. 34-7, Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 84

community of people living under any form of political rule based on impersonal laws dictated by the idea of justice rather than the arbitrary will of the rulers or anarchy. In the Aristotelian system, the bonds between the individual and the polis were immanent and natural; meaning that they were derivative neither of former's choice nor the latter's force. The community and state and the member of the community and citizen were yet to be distinguished. "To be a member of a civil society was to be a citizen – a member of the state - and, thus, obligated to act in accordance with its laws and without engaging in acts harmful to other citizens."¹⁷

The dissolution of the Greek Polis signalled the dissolution of *Koinonia Politike* as an ethical, organic totality and paved the way for an understanding individual independent of the community.¹⁸ The stoic interpretation of the collapse of the Greek polis marked the initial phase of the natural law tradition, whereby the relationship between individuals and community were assumed secondary and reliant on fundamental principles of justice embodied in universally valid laws of nature.¹⁹ Sabine's quotation from W. W. Tarn succinctly captures the transformation of Aristotelian organic conception:

Man as a political animal, a fraction of the polis or self-governing city state, had ended with Aristotle; with Alexander, begins man as an individual. This individual needed to consider both the regulation of his own life and also his relations with other individuals who with him, composed the 'inhabited world'; to meet the former need there arose the philosophies of conduct, to meet the latter, certain new ideas of human brotherhood.²⁰

Those new ideas consisted of referring to mystic ties among individuals which surpassed the political barriers of polis or any form of commonwealth.²¹ Soon those

¹⁷ Keane 1988, p. 36

¹⁸ Cf. George Sabine, *A History of Political Thought*, New York, Holt, 1950, *passim*.

¹⁹ Seligman, 1992, p. 17.

²⁰ W. W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilisation* (1952), p. 79 quoted in Sabine, 1950, p. 141.

²¹ Sabine, 1950, pp. 142-151.

ties were imbricated with religion and reason became the incarnation of Godly providence within the individual. Individual reason was understood as the innate capacity to deduce the laws of nature and be in concord with them. Moral obligations vis-à-vis natural law and capacity to reason with it were equal endowments in all individuals and, hence, against this fundamental equality, all social divisions were secondary. This conception established the foundation of the natural law tradition within which the laws that established the basis of a just order of the world emanated from the “natural order of things and man’s own reason”.²² This conception of justice with moral equality of capacity to reason became the means to criticise positive law and social divisions within the Roman legal and political theory.²³ Virtue meant inclination towards moral universality, where every individual was equal; and this demanded one surpass individual desires and passions of daily life and orient towards matters of common concern, i.e. those of the state. If public spiritedness or civic virtue was the central concern for good life, state was central in terms of assuring these virtues and organising civil society accordingly. Considered the embodiment of the common good of the public, civil society combined political power and community under republic and citizenry.

With the rise of Christianity, reason, as the individual’s capacity to discover the laws of nature was abandoned, and natural law came to be subordinated to divine providence. The belief of original sin implied that human existence in the world could not be just. Profanity characterised civil society and the Church was the only institution therein to provide grace for human beings. The sharp distinction between the sacred and the profane, the kingdom of God and the earth separated the Church from the state and resulted, initially, in the former’s indifference to the latter.²⁴ For Augustine, the institutions of civil society or any other achievement of man on earth

²² Seligman, 1992, p. 18.

²³ Ibid. p. 151, John Ehrenberg, *Civil Society: The Critical History of an Idea*, New York, New York University Press, 1999, pp. 22-30.

²⁴ Ibid., Ehrenberg, p. 36.

could not be just.²⁵ Contemptuous of the pagan Greco-Roman thought, which believed that justice could be deduced through reason, he postulated that true justice belongs to the City of God and humans could redeem themselves only through praising God's grace. Yet even though the state, consequence of human action, could not become the true bearer of grace on earth, state coercion could serve the function of withholding its subjects from sin through dealing punishment for their wickedness and disciplining them. Together with the spiritual sanctions of the Church, the state established the Christian Commonwealth. With Augustine then, the earlier chasm between the state and the Church started to close. Still the Christian Commonwealth subsumed the state and any human-made social institution with natural law being a manifestation of God's will. Eventually, grace alone came to serve as the basis of rule with the Church dominating the empire politically. It was not until Thomas Aquinas that natural law reclaimed its worldly essence and civil society, which was based on it, became a positive achievement of mankind rather than a mere consequence of sin.²⁶ Aquinas established the connection between natural law-reason-civil society and Christian morality by subordinating natural law to divine law while conceding natural law its independent place in ordering secular social relations.

In the Thomistic system, the divine law did not contradict or annul the law of nature (or the existing political order) but came to supplement it. Consequently, the ends and purposes of the Political Order –the State-[sic.] were firmly tied to those of the divine law, of furthering the moral ends of Christianity.²⁷

The emphasis on peace and order in natural law thinking came to the fore as the Church's 'secular' rule increasingly failed to uphold them.²⁸ Aquinas's reinvigoration of natural law and civil society was furthered by Dante Alighieri and

²⁵ Ehrenberg, 1999, pp. 33-5.

²⁶ Ibid. pp. 46-9.

²⁷ Seligman, 1992, p. 19.

²⁸ Ehrenberg, 1999, pp. 52-4.

Marsilius of Padua. The former argued for the central place of the earthly authority, a single secular state, in providing for peace and order on this world. The condition for the success of the state in preserving peace is that it “governs mankind on the basis of what all have in common and that by a common law it leads all towards peace.”²⁹ Still, Dante preserved the Church’s place in society by investing it with the ultimate authority in religious affairs and proposed a bifurcated structure of the Church and secular commonwealth. However, Marsilius emphatically argued for the subordination of the Church to the commonwealth against the papacy’s claims to be the ultimate protector of divine rules on earth. He postulated that any determination of the “good life” for human beings on earth was entirely secular and hence should be left to civil society.

Originally brought into existence for the sake of life, it [civil society] is constituted by the adjudication of disputes, restraint and punishment of wrongdoers, protection of what is common, and promotion of the worship and honour of God. The life of the Church is contained and defined by the political institutions of a secular civil society.³⁰

In fact, Marsilius went further than questioning the authority of the church on the secular matters of civil society. His second rejoinder to the theories of Christian Commonwealth took issue with absolutism.

...men came together to the civil community in order to attain what was beneficial and to avoid the opposite. Those matters, therefore, which can affect the benefit and harm of all ought to be known and heard by all, in order that they may be able to attain the beneficial and to avoid the opposite.³¹

This statement laid the foundations of a republican conception of civil society, but more importantly in terms of the discussion of this section, it signalled the process of

²⁹ Dante Alighieri, *On World-Government*, trans. Herbert Schneider, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1949), 9-10, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 49.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 53.

³¹ Marsilius of Padua, “The Defender of Peace,” in Lerner and Mahdi, eds., *Medieval Political Philosophy*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1963, p. 478, quoted in *Ibid.*

secularisation of the notion of civil society based on individuals as bearers of reason. Early Calvinist theories stressing the right to resistance to unjust rulers had humanist roots and added impetus to the secularisation of the natural law tradition.³²

The secularisation of the natural law, then, reasserted the independence of the individual conscience and reason from divine will. The discovery of and obedience to the universal dictates of natural law depended on the individual's agency. Contract became the prominent conception in comprehending and modelling the relations between individuals. Seligman mentions Grotius among the pioneering figures of the modern contractarian unfolding of the natural law tradition.³³ Grotius conceived dictums of natural law as rational axioms available for deduction through reason by everyone. It was on this line of thought that Hobbes erected his theory of *Leviathan*. Highly contemptuous of the social fragmentation and consequent power struggle and political disarray prevailing in England at that time, Hobbes developed his conception of the basis of a commonwealth in conformity with the laws of nature. Hobbes's conceptions of human nature and laws of nature were complementary in his insights as to the bases of civil society. Hobbes's conception of individual had two important components. First, human beings were calculating beings who constantly strove for self-preservation. Secondly, without a coercive authority over them, human beings had right to everything. In the 'natural condition', human beings were constant seekers of power. He explained this drive by referring to humans' intrinsic need for security, rather than basing it on an inclination towards acquiring property as his successors in contractarian thinking would. In the state of nature, since every human being had right to everything, all human beings were equal in terms of lack of security; and this lack they could not overcome therein.³⁴ Ceaseless struggle for power in the state of nature entailed a perpetual war of every man against every man. Even though Hobbes seemed to be pessimistic with regard to human

³² Seligman, 1992, p. 20.

³³ Ibid. pp. 20-1.

³⁴ Cf. Stanley Williams Moore, Hobbes on Obligation, Moral and Political. Part one: Moral Obligation, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 9(1), 1971 pp. 43-62. p. 50.

nature, he based the obliging character of natural law on this conception.³⁵ Accordingly, human drive towards preservation of life required ending this state once and for all. The first law of nature, that humans should seek peace so long as it is possible, found its corollary in human nature. The Commonwealth, for Hobbes, was the necessary condition of peace among human beings insofar as it was established in accordance with the laws of nature. The Commonwealth must dispense with licentiousness which had pertained to the state of nature, if peace was to be maintained. Peace was the precondition of any improvement to be achieved in the world: property, industry, science, progress etc. were impossible without peace. The maintenance and preservation of peace required human beings to renounce their natural right to everything. This resignation took the form of being authors of a contract to which every other human being was a party, delegating their individual rights to seek peace for themselves over to a sovereign, whose rule over civil society was to be absolute. The Commonwealth was the sovereign body which would essentially be the consequence of the contract and, at the same time, the single, overarching coercive body which would uphold the observance of the contract by its parties. Hence, Commonwealth was both the state and civil society in Hobbes's thinking. Without coercive power, or sovereignty civil society or civilisation was inconceivable. This is a crucial point which epitomises the natural law equation of state and civil society, and which would be contested in its decline in favour of a conception of civil society independent of state.

Another important consequence of Hobbes's theory for civil society is that, from him, the Commonwealth viz. sovereignty had no basis on a transcendent source. Both state and society were consequences of a collective reason consisting of a sum of individual reasons. Even though sovereign replaced individual reason and morality regarding preservation of peace, it had no reason of its own; in Hobbes's conception, it could not become author of a contract. It was an artifice, a consequence of the contract between individuals. This conception laid the foundations of classical liberalism and methodological individualism. The former would conceive of the state

³⁵ Ibid. pp. 46-7.

as a coercive power which protects property and establishes the legal framework of free contractual, i.e. market, relations between individuals.³⁶ If the concerns of security or preservation of life were taken up by the sovereign which laid at the basis of the absoluteness of its rule, those areas which were not directly related to maintenance of peace and order were left to individuals to decide. The sphere of private realm which stayed outside state's direct jurisdiction was considerably large.³⁷ Even though for Hobbes, the autonomy of the private sphere was not a value in itself, his implicit separation between the concerns of peace-order and self-interested individual activity was the basis upon which later classical liberal theory would conceive as the distinction between the state and civil society.

Locke followed Hobbes's steps closely in the contractarian natural law tradition. He conceded that human beings should leave the state of nature and establish civil society through a social contract which would form the basis of a state for the maintenance of order, preserving contractual relations among individuals and protection of property. Yet he went further on delimiting a private sphere by presenting a more accentuated account of individual rights, centred on property, and postulating that legal guarantees should protect this sphere even against the state.³⁸ The stress on property replaced Hobbes's stress on self-preservation. Unlike Hobbes' conception, property preceded civil society in Locke's understanding. His justification of property as an individual right was based on human beings' pre-state interaction with nature whereby the property was defined as the combination of one's own labour with nature. Furthermore, according to Locke, human beings were prone to cooperate and manage a certain deal of production in the state of nature and the propensity to form an impersonal state through social contract stemmed from the inconveniences regarding the adjudication of disputes thereof.³⁹ Hence, the state's

³⁶ Cf. Crawford B. MacPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1961, pp. 256-9.

³⁷ Ehrenberg, 1999, pp. 75-6.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 85.

fundamental function was acting as an impersonal judge in resolving the disputes between individuals. Insofar as the general equation of state and civil society within the natural law tradition is concerned, one might argue that Locke started turning towards a political-normative distinction between them. His attribution to human beings the faculty to socialise prior to the state marked his conception of a pre-state society as a collection of self-seeking individuals capable of developing exchange relations based on a conception, however primordial, of property. The political consequence was that once the state was established as the impersonal judge of disputes among individuals and protector of property, he argued, there was a danger of encroachment on individual rights by the state itself. The legacy of Locke in terms of state civil society relations which needs stressing here is hence the idea of a state limited by a constitution he developed as a rejoinder to the absolutist essence of the Hobbes's *Leviathan*. Even though he agreed that the establishment of civil society was a political act, he shifted the emphasis from sovereignty to property and exchange in organising society.⁴⁰ He went further on to consider the dissolution of the state without the dissolution of society on the occasion that the former usurped the natural rights of individuals.⁴¹

If Locke hinted at a conception of self-reliant society as the source of individual rights and warned against state's encroachment therein, Thomas Paine forcefully argued for its normative-political priority. Paine explicitly targeted state despotism which he considered parasitic on civil society, the latter being natural and self-sufficient. The universal natural rights were the legitimate basis of the states and had to be guarded against its intrusions by a constitution. Continuing squarely on the line of Hobbesian interpretation of natural law, Paine argued that the state was a mere consequence of a delegation of authority by the free and equal individuals through representative mechanisms. Keane registers the affiliation:

This rights based argument ... indicates why Paine thinks that states cannot be understood as a compact between the governors and the

⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 88-9.

⁴¹ Cohen & Arato, p. 88.

governed. Rights-bearing free and equal individuals naturally *precede* past, present and future states. Civilized ... governments have no rights, but only duties before citizens. They should be the product of contracting individuals and must always be considered creatures of their constitutions.⁴²

Paine's stress on natural rights was accompanied by his defence of the goodness of human nature. Accordingly, human beings had a natural disposition towards cooperating and forming a society based on solidarity and mutual aid.⁴³ In contradistinction to the state, individuals were bearers of not only natural rights but also an intrinsic morality based on spontaneous cooperation.

The articulation of morality and reason within the individual, characteristic of modern natural law tradition was questioned by David Hume.⁴⁴ Hume was critical of the grounding of moral action on a universal reason and rejected the unity of "is" and "ought". He postulated that the natural law understanding that human actions are dictated by a universal law which can be deduced by reason was a misconception. Reason, as a logical inductive process, could merely guide human action by providing knowledge as to the possible consequences of an action but the choice as to which course of action was to be taken was related to inclinations of individuals which were determined by her/his passions.⁴⁵ The establishment of civil society was not a necessity which stemmed from natural laws but was a consequence of conventions of individuals.⁴⁶ The moral value of civil society did not lie in immutable, universal natural laws. Nor was common good something which transcended what was good for individual members of civil society. The latter was merely an aggregation of individuals for the mutual pursuit of interest. As the bonds that hold the civil society together, the principles regarding freedom of contract and

⁴² Keane, 1988, p. 47.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 44-5.

⁴⁴ Seligman, 1992, pp. 36-8, Ehrenberg, p.110.

⁴⁵ Sabine, 1950, p. 600.

⁴⁶ Ehrenberg, p. 110

possession of property took the place of a transcendent morality of association.⁴⁷ Hume's conception of civil society as a collection of self-seeking individuals aggregating through exchange relations paved the way for the classical political economy and liberal individualist conception of civil society.

In defence of the natural law tradition, as it were, Kant developed his conception of the relationship between reason and civil society as a reply to Humean critique.⁴⁸ While broadly preserving the distinction between calculative, interest driven (pure reason) and moral (practical reason) aspects of human cognition, he argued that the latter was equally capable of guiding action. Both sources of action (i.e. impulses and morality) were natural endowments and shared equally by everyone.⁴⁹ In fact, capacity to discern and do what one *ought to* do was what distinguished human beings from other species. If practical reason was capable of discerning the right, morality (categorical imperative) was what compelled one to act accordingly. Antagonism from the nature, the empirical entanglements of individuals, be it natural or social, always compelled them to act with impulsive inclinations. Categorical imperative implied the duty in doing the right thing regardless of such physical compulsions. This tension pervaded Kant's account of civil society. Human beings were capable of moral action only in civil society, a form of existence towards which they were naturally inclined given their possession of practical reason which compelled them to consider others before practicing their natural rights. On the other hand, pure reason drew them towards isolation for it compelled them, in its turn, to do as they pleased at the expense of their fellow human beings.⁵⁰ Here lay, with regard to civil society, Kant's fundamental difference from Hume and other classical liberals who had derived the bonds that create civil society from mutual self-seeking activity. Kant's strict separation of good (justice) from happiness and relegation of

⁴⁷ Seligman, 1992 p. 38.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 41.

⁴⁹ Karl Jaspers, Kant, in Hannah Arendt ed. The Great Philosophers, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, v.1, 1962, p. 105.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 105.

the latter to the private sphere implied a diametrically opposite explanation of sociability. “In such a [i.e. civil] society, rather, the each man is free to form his own conception of happiness. The government has no right to make men happy against their will, but must merely see to it that the people live together as a community.”⁵¹ Yet again, Kant’s formalism regarding the republican character of rule continued along the liberal traditions’ general distinction between the private (happiness) and the public (justice). Rather than defining a particular form of government which would be based upon a particular conception of “happiness”, practical reason drew the guidelines as to how a form of government became just. By thus denying any substantial ethical content to government, Kant absolutised the distinction between the private and the public.⁵²

Kant postulated that for the maximum amount of freedom to be enjoyed in civil society, individual freedom should be limited according to the practical reason. The abstract principle of practical reason on which the sociability of individuals depended was one’s obligation to consider others as ends in themselves. This necessitated the restriction of one’s personal freedom by the freedom of the other.

Just as trees in a forest, by trying, each one, to take air and sunlight from the others, compel each other to seek both air and sunlight above them and so achieve a fine straight growth; while those which freely let their branches grow as they please, develop a stunted, crooked growth. All culture and art, and the best social order, are fruits of unsocial impulses.⁵³

Social progress, the gradual perfection of the humanity as a species depended on the use of practical reason *despite* the antagonism among human beings in terms of their individual ends.⁵⁴ Had there not been incompatibilities between individual ends, and hence no conflict among human beings, pure reason would have sufficed in securing

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 111.

⁵² Seligman, 1992, p. 44.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 110. (Jaspers is quoting from Kant without specifying the source.)

⁵⁴ Cf. Ehrenberg, 1999, p. 115.

civil society; practical reason would not have had any use. Choosing to act morally, i.e. by considering one's antagonist as an end in her/himself excelled civil society in moral quality and strengthened it. Yet since civil society was also constantly under threat coming from the asocial orientations of the individual members of civil society, Kant proposed his conception of sovereignty in similar terms with that of Hobbes.

There can be no freedom without law, no civil society without state and no peace without coercion. The antagonisms between people ... can assist humankind's moral growth if constrained by a state that forces free people to act in accordance with the moral duties they legislate for themselves. Kant's strong commitment to individual moral autonomy was paired with an equally strong commitment to the state, law and obedience.⁵⁵

The "mode of government" Kant deemed appropriate concerning the application of practical reason was republic. The practical reason only materialised in social existence, in individual's mutual consideration of each other. Hence, just laws were an outcome of a public debate where practical reason unfolded. Republic, for Kant, involved a notion of constitution which secured that those who were to obey the law were also its authors. Yet Kant stipulated that those who had the right to legislate renounce the execution of law and leave it to an impartial sovereign.⁵⁶ The republican government had to be representative in this sense, for, in the contrary case, the identity of legislator and the executor, the executor would have been executing its own will instead of the general will. The resulting rule would necessarily have been arbitrary and despotic. The distinction Kant drew between pure and practical reasons in a sense pervaded his conception of the relationship between the state and civil society. The moral quality of the separation of private from public reason, led Kant to his doubts regarding direct democracy, where the citizens were simultaneously the lawmakers and executors. Habermas would develop this distinction between the private and public uses of reason as the deontological basis of his theory of the public sphere. Yet albeit being the precursor of the

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 117.

⁵⁶ Jaspers, 1962, p. 111.

understanding that practical reason manifests itself through the critical discourse among citizens outside the boundaries of the state which has the site of political power, Kant sat squarely in the natural law tradition. Bobbio's interpretation of Kant's distinction between private contract and law is instructive in this sense.⁵⁷ He argues that for Kant, the emergence of a sovereign standing over private individuals, suppressed the state of nature along with private contract which pertained thereof. Both the state's relation to its subjects and subjects' relations among themselves came to be regulated by "a law whose binding force derives from the possibility that the coercive power of the state belonging exclusively to the sovereign will be exercised on its behalf."⁵⁸ As it is mentioned above, this was in line with the Hobbesian understanding which conceived the formation of civil society coterminous with the formation of the state.⁵⁹ Still, Kant dismissed Hobbes on the crucial issue of rights of people vis-à-vis the sovereign power.⁶⁰ Even though they could not be enforced, for Kant, people had undeniable rights against the sovereign and, likewise, the sovereign had duties towards its subjects. Yet again, since these rights and duties could not be enforced, as enforcing was the prerogative of the sovereign, Kant was unable to suggest a conception of civil society against the state politically. Unlike Locke's understanding which alluded to people's right to dissolve a state which did not respect their rights, Kant was vehemently against rebellion. For him civil society dissolved once the sovereignty of the state is revoked by popular disorder. Hence, insofar as state civil society relation is concerned, one might argue that Kant is located in the natural law conception which considered them coterminous.

To conclude, in the classical conception of civil society ranging from Aristotelian *koinonia politike* to the Commonwealth of the natural law tradition, the state was considered the precondition of the social existence of individuals. In the former, civil

⁵⁷ Bobbio, 1997, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 7.

⁵⁹ Hence, Seligman's (1992, p. 41) assertion that Kant articulated the distinction between the state and civil society misses this point entirely and takes Kant's distinction between legislation and execution of laws as a distinction between state and civil society.

⁶⁰ Jaspers, 1962, p. 112.

society was considered natural society; the natural form of existence for human beings for being a free human being meant being the citizen of the polis which was a self-ruling community. In the natural law tradition, the natural bond between the individual and the polity was broken. Individual was naturally solitary and collective existence was possible as an external and artificial consequence of the motivation for self-preservation. Civil society implied the suppression of the natural condition of human existence with the emergence of a sovereign which would suppress and discipline the asocial impulses of individuals and enforce a lawful social existence. The birth of civil society was a political act; the form of civil society was the Commonwealth. The theoretical differentiation of civil society from the state would have to reconsider political obligation as the source of the social existence of human beings. Two theoretical moments seems to have been crucial in this reconsideration. First, Hume's rebuke, directed towards the unity of morality and reason in natural law tradition, established the individual desires and passions as the only source of action and denied a conception of common good which can be deduced by reason. This shook any understanding of universality which would pertain to a commonwealth independently of the particularism of its individual members. Secondly, Locke's exposition against Hobbesian Commonwealth which declared that property was a pre-political phenomenon that belonged to the state of nature was a serious indicative of the emerging explanation of sociability as preceding state intervention. Upon these assumptions, the classical political economy established the conception of civil society distinct from the state as a more adequate approach in comprehending the autonomisation of the economic relations from the state with the development of capitalism.

2.2 The Emergence of Political Economy and Differentiation of Civil Society

Hume's critique of the natural law tradition and separation of morality from reason had a lasting effect on the conceptualisation of civil society. Seligman identifies this as the dissolution of the ethical representation of society with reference to a common

good.⁶¹ For natural law tradition, civil society was a necessity; it was dictated by reason which was embodied in the individual. The individual and social good were coincident and both were enshrined in civil society-cum-commonwealth which was a form of rule and community of subjects simultaneously. In the new era, stripped from its holistic deontological content, civil society came to be comprehended with reference to concepts such as interests and calculative reason which were still considered manifest in the solitary individual. However, this time, a universal common moral law that bound individuals together was lacking. For some thinkers, there lingered on the need to explain and justify the sociability of human beings with reference to a commonality which, unlike self-interested solitude, bound them to a common good.

Adam Ferguson's intervention is located in this conjuncture. He is commonly referred to as the thinker who signalled a new era for the conception of civil society which was from his time and on conceived increasingly apart from the state, even though his conception overall maintained the unity of the two.⁶² For Ferguson, self-seeking was not the only motivation that belonged to individuals, and it could not explain why they formed societies. Indeed, he argued that society was the natural form of human existence, not an artificial construct of isolated individuals who came together in order to survive.⁶³ Human sociability was based on a common "love of mankind", a consideration of one's fellow human beings which entailed feelings of solidarity and altruism. Benevolence was as much natural for human beings as self-seeking; it was not something they developed or forcibly adopted in society. However, Ferguson's conception of civil society depended as much on the innate sociability of individuals as an historical understanding of material progress. Bobbio draws attention to difference of the meaning of civil in Ferguson's conception of

⁶¹ Seligman, 1992, p. 44.

⁶² Keane, 1988, Cohen & Arato, 1992, Shannon C. Stimson & Murray Millgate, *The Rise and Fall of Civil Society, Contributions to Political Economy*, 23, 2004, pp. 9-34.

⁶³ Ehrenberg, 1999, p. 91.

civil society.⁶⁴ In Ferguson's use, civil meant civilised society, implying that material civilisation distinguished modern civil society from the primitive society. Civil society in this sense was associated with

a society of less barbarous manners, a society which practised the cultivation of mind by arts and letters. Civil society was seen as one in which urban life and commercial activities flourished. Adam Ferguson regarded associations for commercial ends, associations which were not primordial, as characteristic of civil society.⁶⁵

Yet for Ferguson, the advancement of material civilisation was a Janus-faced process. The development of commerce and production which went hand in hand with division of labour might have resulted in material abundance, development of "commercial arts", and technical innovation which were unprecedented.⁶⁶ Yet the accompanying desire for profit and love of luxury corrupted moral qualities of individuals. Division of labour exacerbated social fragmentation as the society came to consist of different groups and orders vying for power and competing among themselves for profit. Since interest in issues concerning the public compelled individuals to get actively involved in the political matters, state despotism intensified when public spiritedness was impaired by political apathy.⁶⁷ This last point alluded to supervision of state power by some form of social control mechanism which Ferguson deemed located in civil society. When, due to self-interested conflict within civil society, these mechanisms were found wanting, state power could become despotic as rulers, since they were also self-seeking individuals, were prone to abuse their power.

Ferguson's account of civilisation was progressive; yet it was not teleological or unidirectional. Two points should be noticed as to his convictions thereof. First, as it is touched upon above, Ferguson distinguished material progress from moral

⁶⁴ Bobbio, 1997, p. 38.

⁶⁵ Edward Shils, *The Virtue of Civil Society, Government and Opposition*, 26(1), 1991, pp. 3-20, p. 5.

⁶⁶ Stimson & Millgate, 2004, p. 18, Keane, p. 41.

⁶⁷ Cf. Keane, 1988, p. 42.

progress which he associated with civilisation and civil society respectively. Secondly, he argued that the relationship between the two was not predetermined. It was rather contingent upon social interaction and self-interested actions of individuals and groups in a context of unequal distribution of resources. Here is the backbone of his law of unintended consequences which is significant in terms of explaining his understanding of progress. Ferguson believed that civil society was not an outcome of conscious design or a determinate institutional framework. It was rather the consequence of myriad individual actions and social interactions. Individuals acted in certain ways and took paths without the complete knowledge of their actions' consequences on the development of civil society.

Every step and every movement of the multitude, even in what are termed enlightened ages, are made with equal blindness to the future; and nations stumble upon establishments, which are indeed the results of human action, but not the execution of any human design... No constitution is formed by concert, no government is copied from a plan.⁶⁸

Yet Stimson & Millgate draw attention to Ferguson's distance from a conception of spontaneous order as in a Hayekian interpretation.⁶⁹ They argue that for Ferguson, social relations which existed at a certain point in time gave shape to the future possibilities of progress. They could as much lead to material and moral progress as they could breed disorder and moral decay. This is why he considered politics central in reconciling the consequences of contradictory processes of development. In this vein of his thought, he was closer to the earlier tradition of civil society whereby political power was constitutive of civil society. Nevertheless, his stress on the determining influence of socio-economic relations and systemic frameworks in society paved the way for conceiving civil society as a self-standing network of social practices centred on economic processes of production and exchange. It is in this respect that Keane's treatment of Ferguson's account in terms of the differentiation of civil society is one-sided. Ferguson's conception of state despotism

⁶⁸ Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995), pp. 122-3, quoted in Ehrenberg, 1999, p. 94.

⁶⁹ Stimson & Millgate, 2004 pp. 19-20, Cf. Ehrenberg, 1999, pp. 94-6.

and the need to balance political power through civil associations –“a civil society within civil society”-⁷⁰ located outside the state was related to his consideration of socio-economic relations as affecting the double processes of progress in civilisation and civil society. His insights into the workings of civil society as an amalgam of various systems of socio-economic relations embodied in interdependent economic and cultural processes and a framework of associative group interactions prefigured the development of differentiated disciplines of knowledge which would concentrate on various orders of differentiated social spheres. Stimson & Millgate register this development with regard to conceptualisation of civil society:

The move to a consideration of society in an enlarged framework of systemically interrelated activities of production, distribution and exchange with its own internal and undirected dynamic was decisive. It ushered in new philosophies of explanation and science to the ferment that was civil society in 18th century.

The metaphor of the imagined machine, with all its Newtonian inflections, served to present the domain of commercial society as autonomous, and subject to the operation of regular, persistent, casual processes. Civil society, in short, had its own inherent organisation and extra-political identity. It is this view that was developed explicitly not only in Adam Smith’s writings on political economy, but also those on moral theory, jurisprudence and scientific method.⁷¹

It was Ferguson’s account on civil society, then, which inspired the early political economists in terms of the distinction of civil society from the state. Conceptually distinguished from the state were the differentiated sphere of economic relations and the organisational framework of autonomous voluntary organisations outside the state which, insofar as England was concerned, consisted mainly of commercial institutions.⁷² This contrasted the continental tradition where the state and civil society were still considered coterminous. Ferguson’s stress on the development of

⁷⁰ Keane, 1988, p. 44.

⁷¹ Stimson & Millgate, 2004, p. 20.

⁷² Ibid. p. 10.

commerce and division of labour and the moral character of social relations he situated in exchange relations with regard to the civilised character of society provided emerging classical political economy with important assumptions. Cohen & Arato are rather perceptive towards the analytical distinction Ferguson foreshadows between state and civil society. They associate him, along with the rest of the figures of Scottish Enlightenment, with the beginning of a tradition which

came to understand the essential feature of civil or ‘civilized’ society, not in its political organization but in the organization of material civilization. Here a new identification (or reduction) was already being prepared: that of civil society and economic society, reversing the old Aristotelian exclusion of the economic from the *politike koinonia*.⁷³

It is fair to argue, then, that the Scottish Enlightenment announced the end of the natural law tradition which articulated the conception of civil society as established and maintained by political power. Civil society came to be associated with the self-reliant economic and cultural processes which were located outside the state. In other words, the emerging state-civil society distinction seemed to register the differentiation, within what had been conceived as civil society in the natural law tradition, of state as the coercive political institution which stood above a social sphere conceived increasingly self-regulating. Through his law of unintended consequences, Ferguson alluded to the conception of self-regulation of civil society by imputing to it a determinate force beyond the will of individuals. After Ferguson, the emergent theories of political economy explicitly identified civil society with the autonomous mechanisms of market exchange. Adam Smith provided the link between Ferguson’s account and political economy by modelling social relations that fall beyond political institution of state upon the exchange relation. In doing this, he strove to derive the social bonds between individuals from the simple relation of market exchange as opposed to the state or political society. His main theoretical adversary was the mercantilist doctrine which espoused the view that the economic development depended on an active state which conditioned internal and international trade.

⁷³ Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 90.

Mercantilist doctrine contradicted the emerging conception of civil society, conceived as the economic structure of the society, as a self-regulating sphere independent of the state. It considered the prosperity of the nation coterminous with that of the state and associated it with the amount of stockpiled precious metals which were limited in quantity.⁷⁴ Thus, economic well being was a product of foreign trade and military conquest, both of which depended, in turn, on political power. The state was to ensure a favourable imbalance in foreign trade, stimulating exports and restricting imports in industrial products. The industrial monopolies were to be supported against international competition and backed by military power. The state was also to regulate internal economy thoroughly so that the production of industrial products for export expanded whereas agricultural production maintained the level sufficient for the subsistence of the population. Strong bonds between monopoly industries, state bureaucracy and guilds were promoted, the rigidity of which increasingly contradicted the widespread commodification in factors of production. Mercantilist vision of economic policy, then, was conditioned by the earlier conception of civil society where the state was constitutive of social relations at every level. The systematic attack on this conception of state-economy relations came from the Physiocratic doctrine which postulated that the economy had its own intrinsic laws that could be isolated and studied scientifically. The discovery of the autonomous laws of the economic life went hand in hand with the theoretical move to separate civil society from the state.⁷⁵ Smith would elaborate the Physiocratic position further and stress the determining force of economic relations for social progress.

For Smith market exchange was built upon two fundamental qualities of individuals. First, he argued that the individuals' propensity to exchange depended on a striving

⁷⁴ Stimson & Millgate, 2004, *passim* Mark Neocleous, *Policing the System of Needs: Hegel Political Economy and Police of the Market*, *History of European Ideas*, 24(1), 1998, pp. 43-58, *passim*.

⁷⁵ Stimson & Millgate, 2004, p. 23.

for social recognition.⁷⁶ Secondly, the mutual material dependence of individuals on each other necessitated relations of exchange.⁷⁷ Like Ferguson, Smith believed that individuals did not exist in isolation from each other and did not enter the social arena with given personalities. What constructed the individual were the relations of exchange inherent in the society towards which individuals were naturally inclined by virtue of their desire for recognition. Hence, the “enlightened self-interest” was not a type of reason detached from passions or desires. If the desire for recognition was the source of individuals’ inclination towards exchange, inequality of skills and resources made exchange a necessity. Smith developed Ferguson’s insights as to the unequal distribution of resources and talents among people and division of labour it entailed. Division of labour, Smith argued, immensely enhanced the productivity of the individuals and promoted material progress. Yet as division of labour intensified and expanded, people become more and more dependent on each other’s labour as no one could alone produce those goods necessary for one’s own subsistence. Hence, propensity to exchange and individuals’ mutual dependence on each other’s labour brought about and expanded the market, which, for Smith provided the fundamental principles of social existence. Since material progress and social development went hand in hand, he argued, the state restrictions on trade should have been abandoned. Progress was the consequence of myriad individual interactions in the market and putting external limits on it could only be detrimental for the civilisation. Individual freedom to exchange labour made the building blocks of society; its limitation meant the limitation of progress of civil society as a whole. Yet, unlike the Physiocrats, Smith did not completely dismissed state’s intervention in the workings of the economy. Stimson & Millgate show that his theory of invisible hand, a refined version of Ferguson’s law of unintended consequences, envisioned a harmonious relationship between market exchange and state policy.⁷⁸ Invisible hand, they argue, imply how the relationship between individual action and social progress looked

⁷⁶ Seligman, 1992, pp. 27-8, 32-3.

⁷⁷ Ehrenberg, 1999, pp. 98-102.

⁷⁸ Stimson & Millgate, 2004, p. 23-4, Cf. Ibid., p. 98.

*from the perspective of the uninformed individual in the marketplace.*⁷⁹ That individual action in the market was oblivious to its own consequences for the entire civil society was the principle of the invisible hand which determined development from below. Yet Smith recognised state policy as having its own principle of operation acting on the market from above.

If those two principles coincide and act in the same direction, the game of human society will go easily and harmoniously, and is very likely to be happy and successful. If they are opposite and different, the game will go miserably, and the society must be at all times in the highest degree of disorder.⁸⁰

It is clear in the passage that Smith accentuates Ferguson's embryonic distinction between the state and civil society. Not only does he argue that the real drive behind civilisation is exchange relations of the market as opposed to state policy, but he also stresses the distinct principles of operation which pertain to these spheres. Civil society operates by the invisible hand which implies social progress independent of will whereas the state, where coercive power is located, operates in servitude to a particular will. Furthermore, Smith distinguished state from civil society in terms of its utility as well.⁸¹ In addition to being partial, the state was parasitic on the wealth created in civil society through production. State was not productive, yet it had crucial functions to serve in terms of facilitating the market relations within civil society. For Smith these functions consisted of the enforcement of law, protection of property and undertaking infrastructure investments which would yield public benefit and yet were too large in scope to be provided for by the market. Particularity, non-

⁷⁹ Ibid., This stress on perspective militates against the consideration of market as inducing spontaneous growth. In Smith's conception, the mechanism of the invisible hand could be made visible objectively. Indeed, it was the task of the science of political economy to discover the effects of those autonomous forces belonging to civil society. Hence, Smith's account on the invisible hand overall seems to produce a distinction between the subjective and objective aspects of action. This crucial issue problematises contemporary reconsiderations of classical political economy's and Hegel's conceptions of civil society –and system of needs- along social and system integration duality. See the next section.

⁸⁰ Adam Smith, *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, edited by A. L. Macfie and D. D. Raphael, [Being Vol.1 of A. Smith, *The Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith*, The Glasgow edn, Oxford, Oxford University Press.], 1975, p. 243, quoted in Ibid. p. 23.

⁸¹ Ehrenberg, 1999, pp. 106-8.

productiveness and coercive force, in the end, distinguished the state from civil society yet at the same time allowed it to be construed as potentially compatible with and facilitating the working of civil society.

With the classical political economy, the separation of the state from civil society was complete on both analytical and political terms. Smith's account postulated the pre-political existence of civil society with its distinctive laws of operation, conceived as the spontaneous mechanism of the market. The laws and principles of operation specific to civil society were essentially distinct from those characterise the state, namely, the spontaneity and universality conceived as anonymity and coercion and particularity respectively. With universality situated firmly within the anonymous operation of the market, the political normative character of the state civil society distinction of the classical liberal tradition took its most developed form. The state was a "necessary evil" which "should" be kept at bay by making sure it did not act for goals other than facilitating the smooth functioning of the market. The self-regulating or pre-political understanding of civil society would be taken up by Hegel only to be criticised as being disposed imminently to bring its own end.

2.3. Critique: The End of Civil Society?

As it is outlined above, the distinction between state and civil society in the Western political thought emerged as the latter came to be conceived as a self-standing and self-regulating sphere which precedes the state, meaning that it did not require a political moment in its generation. The tradition of early political economy, through its critical engagement with the mercantilist doctrine, postulated this feature of civil society as it pinpointed the basis of social existence in the non-political relations of the market. Hegel and Marx would elaborate on this line of thought, firmly establishing the non-political character of social relations based on the exchange relations of the market. Yet they would declare civil society ultimately unable to sustain itself against its self-generated crises. Hegel would conclude with civil society's inability to become the ethical representation of universality and stress the

necessity of its subsumption by the state for the sustenance of social order and the attainment of true universality. Marx on the other hand, would deepen Hegel's insights as to the crisis-ridden nature of civil society but would contest his statist solution in favour of a resolution which would imply civil society's collapse unto itself. Consequently and interestingly enough, Hegel (and Marx on similar terms) would be considered as both marking the beginning of the analytical distinction between the state and civil society⁸², and signalling the end of the use of the term civil society⁸³ until its contemporary revival.

Hegel's philosophy in general strove to surpass the separation of ethics and reason as first proposed as a critique of natural law by Hume and developed as two incommensurable sources of action for individual by Kant.⁸⁴ Hegel dismissed the Kantian distinction between the empirical-historical and intelligible-moral and took off from the assumption that they were imbricated in the concrete institutional structures of the social existence of human beings.⁸⁵ Hegel's endeavour, then, was to develop a philosophy of absolute knowledge which would rearticulate ethics and reason in their concrete unfolding in human interaction. For him, reason did not exist independently of its manifestations in concrete practices which make up the human history. He vehemently opposed Kant's separation of reason from the concrete institutions of civil society which, he thought, obliterated the ethical qualities of these institutions.⁸⁶ In this respect, his account provided an historical understanding of the development of civil society from the medieval conception of estates to the modern understanding of corporations rising above a system of needs differentiated from political relations. In addition to this historical moment of development, Hegel saw civil society as a moment within the progress of individual consciousness from

⁸² Bobbio, 1997, *passim*.

⁸³ Seligman, 1992, *passim*., Keane, 1988, *passim*.

⁸⁴ Seligman 1992, pp. 44-7.

⁸⁵ Ehrenberg, 1999, pp. 122-3, 130.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, cf. Raymond Plant(b), Hegel and Political Economy - II, *New Left Review*, 104, 1977, pp. 103-13. p. 106.

the particular to the universal located between the moments of family and the state, the most complete form of universality.⁸⁷ The state's ethical universality was manifest in the family and civil society in incomplete form. Family expressed a restricted form of universality through assigning the individual duties which forced him to transcend his own personal good for the good of the whole family. Civil society, on the other hand, was the moment where the individual became free from the family to pursue his self-interests within a normative framework of abstract rights. As in Smith's understanding, in civil society, individuals sought recognition from other individuals and engaged in exchange relations in the system of needs. It was only in the state that duty and right were reconciled and individuals received recognition from the universal subject.

The system of needs in this respect was the first social sphere where the human beings were recognised as individuals. This recognition was the product of exchange relations which presupposed an abstract right to property.⁸⁸ Labouring individuals in the system of needs were assumed to already possess the abstract right to property which was a more developed form of appropriation and possession. For the right to property to take place, appropriation and possession should be recognised which was possible only by virtue of a common normative framework which expressed this recognition. Here lies the crux of Hegel's assumptions regarding the relationship between the individual and society. Possession of property, which meant the assertion of individuality, required to be universally represented if individuality was to be complete. "A seemingly individualistic activity or institution is shown to presuppose an integral, necessary social dimension."⁸⁹ Like Smith and Ferguson, Hegel thought that individuality was constructed in the society where it was located in a mutual relationship of recognition. For the facilitation of this recognition, Hegel's civil society included a mutually recognised normative order which formed the basis of civil law besides the system of needs. In this respect, Bobbio argues that

⁸⁷ Seligman, 1992, p. 44-5.

⁸⁸ Raymond Plant(a), Hegel and Political Economy – I, *New Left Review*, 103, 1977, pp. 79-92. pp. 86-7.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Hegel's conception of civil society was an inferior form of state, that which preceded the emergence of the complete state as the universal moment of *Sittlichkeit*.⁹⁰ In Bobbio's commentary, Hegel's three-part understanding of the society consisting of the family, civil society and the state fused the earlier distinctions between the family and civil society of the antiquity and the state of nature civil society distinction of the natural law tradition. Hegel's civil society covered the earlier contractarian tradition's understanding, especially that of Locke, which had conceived civil society as the regulation of the relations between individuals through a legal order which had facilitated the contractual exchanges thereof. Hence, in Hegel's conceptualisation, civil society consisted of the system of needs, identified as the totality of production and commerce, civil law, which regulated the relations between individuals, and police and civil service, which was established by the state in order to enforce civil law and maintain general order and stability thereof. Shils registers the central status of the system of needs in Hegel's conceptualisation of civil society by conceiving it as "the market, the commercial sector of society and the institutions which were necessary to the functioning of the market and the protection of its members."⁹¹

Cohen & Arato argue that Hegel's conception of the system of needs included three levels of systemic integration.⁹² The first category was that of needs which were historically and socially specific occurrences and multiplied as civil society developed, and became more and more abstract as they were made commensurable through the medium of money.⁹³ The second level of integration was work whereby a certain form of mediation between the particular individual and universal society took place. Any individual labour expended became products which were

⁹⁰ Bobbio, 1997, pp. 31-2.

⁹¹ Shils, 1991, pp. 5-6.

⁹² Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 98-9.

⁹³ Cohen & Arato thus separate Hegel's conceptions of need and work into distinct categories whereas Plant (a, 1977) relates the multiplication and abstraction of needs to the dialectical process of labour whereby the pure biological needs are subsumed through labour. Through labour, human's create needs which transcend the pure biological need -pertinent to every other animal species- to become new needs not biological but social in character (p. 91). "Needs" described as such, then, become abstract and multiply rapidly as opposed to "biological needs" which are given and static.

commensurable with every other kind of product. Furthermore, a la Smith, Hegel assumed that division of labour made individuals dependent on each other, functioning as another form of integration. Finally, three occupational groups (business, agricultural, and administrative) were ordered hierarchically as estates whereby members of the civil society were integrated through a structured organisation of status. This stratification was based on the skills the work demanded, forms of consciousness produced in carrying out tasks.⁹⁴ Plant argues that the conceptualisation of estates on the basis on forms of consciousness allowed Hegel to comprehend system of needs as yielding social integration.

It did this in two ways: in the first place, an individual is bound together with members of his society with whom he has certain things in common, based upon labour and the skills attendant upon it; secondly, these specific classes yielding different types of consciousness and ethos stand together, not in opposition but in a system of mutual or functional interdependence.⁹⁵

Consciousness developed within the estates was crucial in terms of individual's grasping of universality. In the system of needs, one was entirely driven by one's selfish needs. Estates organised as corporations contributed to the development of individual's consciousness towards a higher form of *Sittlichkeit*, which implied for Hegel, noticing its own universality. Becoming member of a social estate enabled one to become conscious of one's own individual position amongst universality, learn to consider others and hence transcend one's own particularity. Yet this universality was still partial in the sense that it was merely about a level of consciousness bound to sectoral interests of the corporations. Indeed, such a limited level of consciousness could not grasp the common good of the society as a whole regarding problems which went beyond the horizons of particular corporations. The most pressing social problem demanding a higher level of universality for solution was the problem of poverty which resulted in pauperisation of the working class and imminent social conflict which would destroy the foundations of civil society.

⁹⁴ Plant(b), 1977, p. 106.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

In Hegel's account, the pauperisation of the working class was the most important consequence of the system of needs. It was a natural and systemic consequence thereof for two reasons. First, workers could not be properly integrated in any of the three levels of the system of needs.⁹⁶ In terms of satisfaction of needs, they were the least advantaged group, as their lower income would fail increasingly to satisfy even the most basic needs as the needs constantly multiplied and advanced. Regarding work, division of labour caused sharpening of particular skills of individual workers at the expense of other skills which caused one-sidedness and a deprivation from the benefits of civil society in terms of intellectual and moral development. Finally, the working class was unable to organise as an estate, for it lacked many properties which were required for it, such as unearned income. The second condition which rendered civil society ultimately unable to solve the problem of poverty was that the latter was directly correlated to the development of industry and commerce.⁹⁷ In Hegel's conception, poverty did not stem from under-development of civil society. Quite the contrary, it was the consequence of the development and expansion of the system of needs. Constant expansion of needs and production in satisfying those needs would ultimately result in overproduction. In this case, a particular group of workers who had become specialised –due to increasing division of labour- on producing that particular product would lose their jobs, the only means of integration available to them. Poverty would result ultimately in an alienated rabble of paupers who were contemptuous of the wealthier classes who became, in their turn, increasingly richer.⁹⁸ In the end, civil society could lead to nothing but class divisions hostile to each other and hence failed to become a universal ethical community of free individuals. This was the reason it needed to submit to a higher authority which could solve its problems.

⁹⁶ Cohen & Arato, 1992, pp. 98-9.

⁹⁷ Plant(b), 1977, p. 111-2.

⁹⁸ Ehrenberg, 1999, p. 128.

The state was to further the partially ethical character of civil society by connecting individuals to the collective welfare of the whole public, a level at which it was the state's prerogative to induce individuals to relinquish their individual well being and even life, for the welfare of the society as a whole.⁹⁹ In this respect, the state was the highest form of *Sittlichkeit* and the only moment the true universality could be attained. For the state was not driven by partial interests; it transcended all particularities. Neither was the state responsible for an unconditional protection of individual right since it could demand their subjects sacrifice their own individual interests. This was the reason the state implied complete freedom because it forced its subjects to transcend their immediate interests. It cannot be overemphasised in this respect that the state's relation to civil society was one of sublation, *Aufhebung*. The particularistic nature of civil society expressed through sectoral representation of interests through corporations and lack of integration of the working class required the negation of this moment by the state. Such a negation did not imply civil society's dissolution or destruction. Rather the social relations it gave rise to were surpassed but at the same time retained within the higher universality of the state.¹⁰⁰ The state represented the higher unity of the whole civil society as a universal community. Neocleous draws attention to the fact that in Hegelian language there are two senses of the term state.¹⁰¹ The first sense is the abovementioned universal ethical community considered as a totality of the moments of family, civil society and the political state. The strictly political state, on the other hand, implies a restricted conception of state pertaining to the composition of the crown, the executive and the estate assembly. In the universal state, the political state and civil society are connected with respective interpenetrating mechanisms even though they are separate. The police and the bureaucratic estate comprise state's penetration into

⁹⁹ Bobbio, 1997, p. 34.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Keane 1988, p. 50.

¹⁰¹ Mark Neocleous, *Administering Civil Society, Towards a Theory of State Power*, Hampshire and London, Macmillan, 1996, pp. 2-3.

civil society whereas the estate assembly is civil society's penetration into the political state.¹⁰²

Cohen & Arato derive two types of integration from this interlocking structure of state and civil society.¹⁰³ They argue that "statist" and "solidarist" types of integration are in a continuous tension in Hegel's understanding of state civil society relations. Accordingly, police-bureaucracy-executive-crown continuum represented a "statist" form of integration and implied forced integration from top to the bottom. The first two moments were the statist forms of integration within civil society. Cohen & Arato argue that locating bureaucracy, as the universal estate, within the civil society could not disguise the fact that it was ultimately statist. Even though Hegelian bureaucracy was modern in the sense that membership was not restricted to a particular social group and salaried income replaced the office itself in terms of income generation, its statism is manifest in two respects: First, it was created by the state and secondly it was represented in the state in the executive instead of the estate assembly. The second statist form of integration within the civil society was the police which implied the general maintenance of order which comprised tasks of economic intervention and public welfare in addition to the crime prevention. Cohen & Arato here distinguish two kinds of police action: reactive intervention which implied those remedies to the ills of system of needs such as price control, crime prevention and proactive intervention which included general surveillance and public services such as education and charity. The proactive intervention was detrimental, Cohen & Arato argue, in terms of social solidarity, replacing horizontal social relations with vertical, top-down state initiative. They intimate that Hegel's account

¹⁰² Neocleous (Ibid.) considers all corporations as penetration of civil society by the state as he stresses the necessity of legal recognition in their construction. This will be discussed shortly.

¹⁰³ Cohen & Arato, 1992, pp. 100-10. In Cohen & Arato's use, social integration is the substitute for Hegel's *Sittlichkeit*. They justify this substitution with reference to their effort to downplay the "statist" strand of Hegel's thought. "If we are not to accept from the outset that the only important line of thought in Hegel assumes the state . . . as the highest, most complete and universal level of social integration, the issue of mediation should be put differently. On a more abstract level, it should already be clear that mediation is between *Antisittlichkeit* and *Sittlichkeit*. On a more concrete level, however, it is the distance between *private* and *public* that is to be mediated, if we understand the former as the vanishing point where the social integration of the family is dissolved before the mediations characteristic of civil society begin." (p. 96)

in this respect prefigured contemporary forms of state intervention, epitomised by the welfare state.

On the other hand, the family-corporation-estate assembly-public opinion continuum expressed a solidaristic form of integration whose determining principle is the “self-integration of society”. In Cohen & Arato’s interpretation, even though, for Hegel, the moment of universality was the state, he was reluctant to depict an unmediated relation between it and the individual. Unlike the natural law tradition, especially its republican interpretation, Hegel valued an intermediary sphere between the individual and the state so that the latter’s power would not be absolute. “[Hegel] feared the powerlessness of atomized subjects and sought to control the potential arbitrariness of the state bureaucracy.”¹⁰⁴ Hegel’s corporations (except for the universal estate) in this respect were the place where individuals learned to consider interests other than theirs while defending their own particularity simultaneously. Further, Hegel’s corporations were not based on ascriptive membership as in medieval estates. Not only was membership voluntary, but individuals also retained their individual rights while they were members. Hence, the public character of corporations was a result of spontaneous actions and deliberations of individual members, unmediated by political power of the state. This spontaneous social solidarity, Cohen & Arato argue, was carried further to the level of the state through the estate assembly and public opinion. Inevitably, for Cohen & Arato, the resolution of the tension between statist and spontaneous-solidary conceptions of integration ultimately depends on the type of *political regime* one prefers characterising the state.

Much depends on, of course, on whether the conception of the state implied here is based on a public, parliamentary generation of identity or a bureaucratic-monarchic imposition of unity. ... The question we must consider is whether, in Hegel’s theory, the estate assembly and *public* opinion or the executive bureaucracy or *public* administration is the locus and source of the highest level of social integration and will formation.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 107.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. pp. 107, 109.

In the end, Cohen & Arato admit that their interpretation of Hegel's understanding of state-civil society relation, as involving an unresolved tension between statist and solidaristic strands, is susceptible to being criticised on the grounds regarding whether in Hegel's theory such an antinomy exists or not.¹⁰⁶ However, the real issue lingers much less on the existence of such an antinomy than the suggested nature of the antinomy, namely its political nature. Cohen & Arato's conception of social integration, in the way they impute to Hegel, is a one-sidedly political one. The reason they end up in the narrow, *politician* antinomy of republic vs. monarchy, which seems tangential to the entire problematic of mediation, is, a la Keane, their misconception of the economic roots of the distinction between the state and civil society, as conceived by Hegel. Despite the fact that Hegel's general philosophical problematic -the sublation of the particular within the universal expressed as the mediation of the private and the public through state-, is ultimately 'statist' in orientation, in terms of what Cohen & Arato conceive as the embryonic form of a social theory of state civil society relations, Hegel's stress is on the disintegrating (i.e. particularistic) tendencies of civil society which stem from the structural features of the system of needs. Even though Keane¹⁰⁷ and Cohen & Arato concede that the disintegration lies in the system of needs, they single-mindedly stress selfish individualism as its source. It follows from both reconstructions that the state is the necessary moment of social integration *because* Hegel saw nothing in the system of needs but selfish individualism. It also follows that any reconstruction of Hegel which reduces civil society to the system of needs -i.e. selfish individualism- (as Marx allegedly did) ends up with 'statism' as the path for re-integration.¹⁰⁸ It should be argued that this is a gross misconception on two grounds. First, while Hegel's conception of the system of needs did depend on *bourgeois* individual as a self-seeking monad, for him this did not *directly* entail disintegration. On the contrary, if Hegel saw particularity inherent in the egoistic competitive aspects of the system of

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. pp. 115-6.

¹⁰⁷ Keane, 1988, pp. 50-4.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Bobbio, 1997, pp. 30-1.

needs, he also viewed the market interaction and legally recognised property relations, as of themselves, as a partial moment of universality. As mentioned above, he conceived of individuality as one which is constructed socially through the universal recognition the market exchange provided. In this respect, he followed Ferguson and Smith's approaches (approaches victimised by same misinterpretation) closely. Hence, pace Keane, Kumar¹⁰⁹ and Cohen & Arato's interpretations, the system of needs, the site of egoistic competition did involve, indeed presupposed, a form of universality; put in terms of Cohen & Arato's framework, it bore a socially integrating character.¹¹⁰ One should remember here the dialectical nature of Hegel's argument in which, as Ehrenberg notes, the universality represented in its complete form in the state was represented partially in the family and civil society. The moments of family, state and civil society should not be conceived in this respect as self-standing spheres but rather interrelated elements of a totality which mutually condition each other's existence. Hence, pace Cohen & Arato, Hegel's "statist" philosophical argument did not contradict his "solidarist" social theoretical analysis. Rather, Hegel's statism –i.e. the necessity of political mediation- was imbricated with his *un*-solidarist analysis of social integration inherent in socioeconomic relations of civil society. Arguing otherwise would imply the separation of different moments of universality (or social integration) or worse, its relegation to particular moments (state vs. corporations) which impoverishes Hegel's conception of the complexity of the social relations in modern societies. The second problematic result of associating statist social integration with selfish individualism of the system of needs is that it obliterates Hegel's crucial exposition regarding the true cause of disintegration which stems from the system of needs. As Plant and Neocleous show, and Cohen & Arato do notice, for Hegel, the system of needs created systemic poverty. The pauperisation of the working class was an inevitable consequence of the system of needs. Further, both because of poverty and constant threat of losing their

¹⁰⁹ Kumar (1993, pp. 378-9) also reduces the system of needs to individualistic competition. It is this assumption which leads him to criticise 'economic' understandings of Hegel's conception of civil society.

¹¹⁰ Needless to mention, the misinterpretation of classical political economy's and Hegel's understandings of civil society will obscure the specificity of Marx's critique of these thinkers, an issue which will be touched upon shortly.

jobs, members of the working class were ultimately excluded from the mechanisms of integration in civil society. Both general authority, which Hegel located in civil society but related to state, and the state as the ultimate authority in forcing individuals to sacrifice their partial interests were in large part necessitated as a remedy for the disintegration resulted from exclusion of the working class.¹¹¹ This fact is indirectly related to the characterisation of the system of needs as a site of selfish-individualism, that is, the problem of disintegration of the working class is not one and the same with the problem of disintegration due to particularism of selfish individualism. Missing this fact leads to a partial –i.e. politician- understanding of Hegel’s conception of integration through state.

One may conclude this rather lengthy discussion with stating the fact that the one-sided interpretation of Hegel’s conception of state-civil society relations through political categories goes hand in hand with a partial understanding of his conception of the system of needs. In effect, the connections Hegel established with different elements of state and civil society are disregarded. The system of needs is isolated as the site of selfish-individualism in favour of arguing for the autonomy of Hegel’s corporations as an embryonic form of civil society as a privileged site of social integration. The next section will establish that such an attitude on the part of the commentators reviewed in this work is not a trivial misconception but indicative of their own standpoint -and its flaws- in the contemporary debate on state civil society relations.

For Hegel, then, the distinction between the state and economy had to be politically mediated. In this sense, Neocleous locates him between the earlier tradition of cameralism, (which comprised the doctrine of social regulation functions of the absolutist states and pertained to the era in which state and society were considered coterminous) and classical political economy. He differed from the former by acknowledging the self-regulating character of the market whereas he was convinced that autonomous workings of the economy was doomed to bring its own destruction

¹¹¹ Cf. Neocleous, 1996, pp. 9-12, Plant (b), 1977, pp. 111-3.

unless its dysfunctions were mediated by the state.¹¹² Marx would develop his rejoinder to the issue of state civil society distinction by targeting Hegel's position. He would argue that the political mediation of the distinction between the state and civil society could not resolve the contradictory consequences of separation. Nor would he agree that the resolution of the contradictory particularities of civil society in the state brought about the realisation of universal freedom. To the contrary, the injunction that the political overcoming of particularities of civil society via membership in the state presupposed their prevalence within civil society would be the foundation of his conception of the relationship between the two.¹¹³

On Jewish Question is commonly cited as Marx's rejoinder to the early-modern debate on the state civil society relationship. There, he contested the Hegelian interpretation of the French Revolution and the corresponding conception of state (or politics) as the moment of true universality, of human beings' emancipation from the yoke of particularisms such as religion and property. Concentrated as the argument might have been on religion, Marx's actual target was the conflation political emancipation with human emancipation in general. Accordingly, he posited that the former, articulated by Hegel as membership in the state, could only be partial emancipation for it merely displaced the source of domination from the state to the civil society. With political emancipation, the true source of particularity and domination, which lay at civil society, was not eliminated.

[Political emancipation] is not, indeed, the final form of human emancipation, but it is the final form of human emancipation *within* the framework of the prevailing social order. It goes without saying that we are speaking here of real, practical emancipation.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Mark Neocleous, Policing the System of Needs: Hegel Political Economy and Police of the Market, *History of European Ideas*, 24(1), 1998, pp. 43-58, passim.

¹¹³ Karl Marx, On Jewish Question, in R. C. Tucker ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, New York, Norton, 1978, pp. 26-52, passim.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 35.

Through political emancipation, human beings experienced their species-being, their communal existence unmediated by particularities of religion, status and the like, only within the imaginary community of the state. Yet their existence in civil society still carried those burdens within the image of the particular, egoistic and atomistic individual. A constant tension ensued, characterising the relationship between human being's existence in the state and civil society, irrespective of the distinction one experiences in civil society. "The contradiction in which the religious man finds himself with the political man, is the same contradiction in which the bourgeois finds himself with the citizen, and the member of civil society with his political lion's skin."¹¹⁵

The differentiation of state and civil society in the wake of feudalism implied for Marx, as much the liberation of civil society from politics as it implied liberation of civil society from state.¹¹⁶ In the feudal order the social relations were "directly political", meaning that relations of property, family and production were organised politically as caste, guilds, lordships and the like. This ultimately implied a fragmented social-political structure for social institutions were connected to the state (i.e. universal community) via these feudal political units. The relations of property, production and family did not cohere into a single community but remained "*distinct societies within society*". In political terms, the individual was thoroughly separated from the state. Feudal political relations mediated individual's relation to the state such that the "particular relation which existed between his corporation and the state" became his relation to the society as a whole. Such a separation of the private from the public through political fragmentation also involved the central political power which was imbricated with the personal household of the ruler. The differentiation of state meant its liberation from the personal patrimony of the ruler. In a corollary manner, due to the dissolution of the previously communal-cum-political economic and cultural relationships and universalisation of the political community, individuals came to enjoy a more direct relation with the state.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. p. 34.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 44-6.

The political revolution which overthrew this power of the ruler, which made state affairs the affairs of the people, and the political state a matter of *general* concern, i.e. real state, necessarily shattered everything – estates, guilds, privileges- which expressed the separation of the people from the community life.¹¹⁷

On the other hand, with political relations relegated to the state, civil society became thoroughly dissolved into its particular elements. The property relations, family, religion became prerogatives of the individuals and enjoyed unprecedented prevalence in civil society. The universalisation of politics was accompanied by profound particularisation of civil society.

[T]he consummation of the idealism of the state was at the same time the consummation of the materialism of civil society. The bonds which had restrained the egoistic spirit of civil society were removed along with the political yoke. Political emancipation was at the same time an emancipation of civil society from politics and from even a semblance of a general content.¹¹⁸

For Marx, the differentiation of political and social relations was the source of the distinction between the political rights and civil rights, both of which were announced following the French Revolution. The political rights could be enjoyed only in the imaginary community of the state. These rights “-the rights of the citizen-” regulated individuals’ participation in the community; they sanctioned political liberty. The individual possessed civil rights, on the other hand, as a member of civil society. Civil rights –“rights of man”- belonged to the solitary individual separated from community. As such, they testified to this separation and consolidated it by defining individual freedom as opposing other individuals’ freedom. “Man is far from being considered in the rights of man, as a species-being; on the contrary, species-life itself –society- appears as a system which is external to the individual and as a limitation of his original independence.”¹¹⁹ In *On Jewish Question*, Marx

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 45

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 43.

concluded that the real emancipation must overcome the separation of political society from civil society so as to establish individuals' communal existence in his real relations in civil society.

Human emancipation will only be complete when the real, individual man has absorbed into himself the abstract citizen; when as an individual man, in his everyday life, in his work, in his relationships he has become a *species-being*; and when he has recognized and organized his own powers (*forces propres*) as social powers so that he no longer separates this social power from himself as *political* power.¹²⁰

As mentioned above, Marx established his conception of civil society through a critical engagement with Hegel's approach. Like Hegel, he was convinced that the development of capitalism entailed the depoliticisation of social relations and de-socialisation of politics. He also followed him in conceiving of civil society as an unstable social sphere constantly on the verge of breakdown. Yet he thought that Hegel's resolution of the contradictions of civil society in the state as the universalisation of the idea of freedom was not only inadequate in terms of real emancipation, but it also disguised the persistence of inequality and conflict which characterised civil society. His criticism of the Hegelian understanding of political mediation testified to his stance.¹²¹ He took issue with Hegel's understanding as to the corporations mediating the separation of the state from civil society. He argued that unlike medieval estates which were civil and political simultaneously, the corporations and police were mediations which were the result of the separation of state and civil society. As such, in the modern society, "the estates are nothing more than the factual expression of the real relationship between state and civil society, namely one of *separation*."¹²² In his later work, Marx developed Hegel's insight regarding the decisiveness of the emergence of political economy in the

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 46.

¹²¹ Neocleous, 1996, p. 5, Neocleous, 1998, passim.

¹²² Karl Marx, 'Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State', in K. Marx, *Early Writings*, introduced by Lucio Colletti (Harmondsworth: Penguin, in association with New Left Review, 1975), p. 141, quoted in Neocleous, 1996, p. 5.

differentiation of state and civil society in a way going beyond Hegel. The density of his preface to the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* captures the fundamental pillars of Marxian understanding of civil society.¹²³ For Marx, the development of legal and political forms of social relations as differentiated from civil society could not be accounted for by referring to the development of consciousness or universalisation of some idea of freedom. Their explanation rather laid in their material conditions of existence which were to be sought in the political economy as the true “anatomy” of civil society. The arrow of explanation of political and legal forms of social relations along with cultural relations as manifestations of consciousness was hence reversed, as they were comprehended as the superstructure rising above the “totality of the relations of production” as the economic structure of the society. If certain definitive forms of consciousness and political relations corresponded to a particular “mode production of material life conditions”, their transformation was a result of the emergence of a non-correspondence yielded by the changes in the economic structure. Social relations which comprised the economic structure could be analysed scientifically and since they comprised the basis of political and ideological superstructures, this form of scientific explanation –i.e. the critique of political economy- expressed a unified methodology in accounting for social relations in their entirety. In the end, Marxist materialism evinced a critical framework which strove to unify the dualities of earthly-heavenly, morality-reason, material-ideal, scientific-philosophical which have characterised the above-summarised history of thought. This effort was paralleled in its political project which ultimately aimed at surpassing separation of economic and political relations characteristic of the bourgeois society. In criticising these dualities scientifically,

¹²³ Karl Marx, *Ekonomi Politiğin Eleştirisine Katkı*, Ankara, Sol Yayınları, 1993, pp. 21-6. That Marx’s formulation in this short text is the basis of his whole approach is controversial within as well as outside Marxist tradition. The outline of the base-superstructure model of social formations provided in this text is considered as the manifesto of a crude form of economic reductionism, and/or technological determinism. (See Neocleous 1996, passim. 1998, passim. and Jean L. Cohen, *System and Class: The Subversion of Emancipation*, *Social Research*, 54(4), 1978, pp. 789-843.) The controversy regarding this single text comprises one of the main axes of the debates among alternative “One-Marx” positions which defend particular interpretations of Marx’s works as evincing unified theoretical and methodological frameworks. That before publishing the *Contribution*, Marx replaced the “Introduction” with his later “Preface” only aggravates the controversy. As an exposition on these debates within Marxist tradition, see Ali Rattansi, *Ideology, Method and Marx: Contextualising a Debate*, in A. Rattansi ed, *Ideology Method and Marx*, London, New York, Routledge, 1989.

Marx's general theoretical practice comprised unearthing what Derek Sayer refers to as 'materialistic connection' which unites the apparently separate -material and ideal-orders of reality.¹²⁴ This is associated with his attempt to unify theoretically, the empirically separate institutional orders state-civil society within the categorical determinations of the mode of production. This being so, Marxist understanding of social formations were to be accused of economic reductionism, a charge which relates to the current discussion by asserting that in both normative and analytical bases, it has obliterated a those social relations which are autonomous from the state and non-economic. His endeavour of devising a unified methodology in explaining economic and political phenomena, taken together with his effort to surpass the science/politics, reason/morality dualities, allegedly leads to a not only a reductionist vision of social change but also a totalitarian vision regarding the destination of progressive political struggle. His depiction of the proletariat as the agent of this unifying revolutionary project would become the centre of criticism. The section on social movements in the next chapter will take up this issue in detail.

Asserting the economic reductionism of Marx's theory of society relations is now a commonplace. His explanation of modern societies based on capitalist mode of production is purported to allow no consideration of autonomous 'civil' organisations and progressive social movements apart from the proletariat. In this respect, the commentators so far reviewed in this work refer to Antonio Gramsci as the figure who effectively surpassed the crudeness of Marx's framework so as to conceptualise civil society as an autonomous sphere between state and civil society. As it is outlined above, Marx reversed the Hegelian understanding of social formations by shifting the explanatory primacy from the state to civil society. In his understanding, social relations which he assigned to civil society became the determining force which shaped the political relations in the state. It is commonly argued that civil society, which wanes and gradually disappears in his later work, is replaced with the economic base which was analysed with reference to the terms mode of production and relations of production. According to the civil societarian

¹²⁴ Derek Sayer, *Science as Critique, Marx vs. Althusser*, in John Mepham & David-Hilel Ruben eds. *Issues in Marxist Philosophy*, v. 3, Sussex, Harvester Press 1979 passim.

critique of Marxism, this had four detrimental results for the idea of civil society. First, lumped in the superstructure, which meant that they were a mere reflection of the economic relations, non-economic social relations did not have real efficacy but were determined by the socioeconomic relations of the capitalist mode of production. Secondly, they were all relegated to the superstructure and lost their specificity. It became impossible to distinguish on an analytical level, for instance, cultural relations from political relations. Hence, reducing all social relations to economic base obliterated forms of domination other than economic exploitation along with social movements apart from the working class. Thirdly, and most importantly in terms of the debate on civil society, the classical conception's sensitivity to state despotism as a sui-generis form of domination was lost. Criticism of the state became the subordinated supplement of the political struggle of the working class. Finally, and in line with the last consequence, the accompanying political project of socialism attempted to remove the barrier between the state and civil society, mesmerised by a fantasy of a vague, utopian conception of classless and stateless society which was oblivious to any form of regulation thereof. Identification of democratic emancipation with a total revolutionary transformation of state society relations through capturing and utilising state power came to justify the totalitarian governments of state-socialist countries which were not only a far cry from the utopian image of classless society, but also dispensed with the political freedoms of liberal democracy. All these alleged dire consequences of Marxist theory were attempted to be remedied by referring to Gramsci's work, whose reconstruction reflected this spirit.

The specificity of Gramsci's concept of civil society within the Marxist tradition is generally related to his allusion to the Hegel's conception rather than Marx's.¹²⁵ This implies that his stress on civil society as an intermediary sphere between the state and economy seems to have its reference in Hegel's understanding of corporations

¹²⁵ Norberto Bobbio, *Gramsci ve Sivil Toplum Kavramı*, in John Keane (ed), *Sivil Toplum ve Devlet*, Avrupa'da Yeni Yaklaşımlar, İstanbul, Ayrıntı, 1993, pp. 111-9, pp. 103-4, Cohen & Arato, 1992, pp. 142-3, Anne Showstack Sassoon, *Family, Civil Society State: Is Gramsci's Concept of Societa Civile Still Relevant*, *The Philosophical Forum*, 29(3-4), 1998, pp. 206-17, p. 210.

and civil law. In this respect, it is assumed that Gramsci reversed Marx's conception of civil society as he conceived it not as the material base of the society but relegated it to the superstructure. For Gramsci, civil society, along with the cultural ideological sphere, was the site where the hegemony of the ruling class was constructed. Nevertheless, Cohen & Arato note that Gramsci was ultimately unable to break with the functionalist conception of Marx as he associated hegemony with the reproduction of bourgeois domination which was still conceived in class terms.¹²⁶ On the other hand, however, they argue that he developed crucial insights which should be retained in surpassing Marxist reductionism in the reproduction of social relations. Significantly enough, he clearly distinguished between coercion and consent which he tended to associate, though equivocally, with state (political society) and civil society respectively. The stress on consent was a momentous move according to Cohen & Arato, as Gramsci's conception of civil society declared its independence from both the economy and the state. Gramsci recognised the political importance of modern, differentiated institutional framework of civil society which included churches, unions, clubs and political parties. Furthermore, he conceived civil society in terms of the sphere of activity for social movements although social class exhausted his conception of the latter. Stripped of their direct identification with the state and economy, Cohen & Arato argue that the institutions of civil society, as Gramsci understood them, became a neutral site where different classes struggled for hegemony. For them this opened up his account to the possibility of arriving at a different conception of "progressive" politics, one that is "radically reformist".¹²⁷ Such a political stance would value the civil society as of itself and would strive to maintain its independence from the state. Yet, they note that Gramsci was not sensitive towards a politics of society against the state. Rather, he conceived civil society in functionalist and instrumentalist terms. Functionalist for he associated modern civil society with the manufacturing and reproducing bourgeois rule and instrumentalist as he ultimately utilised the autonomy of civil society for a counter-hegemonic struggle of the working class. Once the battle in civil society was won, it

¹²⁶ Cohen & Arato, 1992, pp. 143-5.

¹²⁷ Ibid. pp. 149-50, 154-7.

was to be destroyed through a total revolutionary transformation of state-society relations if only to be recreated in a socialist way.

Like their reconstruction of Hegel, Cohen & Arato also see an inherent antinomy within Gramsci's account of civil society, one between the abovementioned disposition to "radical reformism" and Marxian functionalism. Yet there is a significant point which problematises Cohen & Arato's interpretation of Gramsci's account, namely his conception of what Buci-Glucksmann refers to as the extended state, which they completely miss.¹²⁸ Extended state includes both coercion and consent, and encompasses civil society in this respect. According to Buci-Glucksmann, this understanding of the state was how Gramsci made sense of the expanding functions of the state into the civil society and economy prevalent at his time. For her, the extended state is a conceptual device in making sense of state intervention. It also testifies to the fact that for Gramsci clear lines of demarcation between state, civil society and economy did not exist. The distinction between state and civil society for Gramsci was a methodological distinction rather than an organic one. Sassoon also draws attention to the historical sensitivity of Gramsci's conception of state and stresses, with Buci-Glucksmann, its capacity to illuminate the complexity of state society relations. In this respect, she notes that Gramsci's state drew attention to the mutually conditioning nature of state and society in terms reminiscent of Hegel's conception of the ethical state. In terms hegemony, on the other hand, Perry Anderson draws attention to the limitations of identifying consent solely with civil society as opposed to state.¹²⁹ He thinks that Gramsci was keenly aware of the ideological function of the parliamentary democracy and his emphasis on the hegemonic function of the state testified to the impossibility of separating ideological and coercive aspects of bourgeois rule. Hence, Cohen & Arato's consideration of Gramsci's account is, again, one-sided. Three points should be

¹²⁸ Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Hegemony and Consent: A Political Strategy*, in Anne Showstack Sassoon ed. *Approaches to Gramsci*, London, Writers & Readers, 1984, pp. 116-26. pp. 122-4. Sassoon, 1998, p. 210.

¹²⁹ Perry Anderson, *The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci*, *New Left Review*, 100, 1976, pp. 5-78, p. 28-9.

mentioned in this respect. Their lack of attention to his concept of integral state, the analytical nature of which is outlined above, reads into his account an essential distinction between state and civil society. By taking narrow identifications coercion-state and consent-civil society as the whole of his framework, they narrow his conception of the state to the administrative apparatus which was more than that. Secondly, Cohen & Arato tend to reduce Gramsci's analytical framework of state-society relations to a pragmatist-strategic exposition deriving from his own political project.¹³⁰ This obscures the analytical nature of his theory and misses the fact that Gramsci's theory, as a theory of capitalist social formation, did not construct state, civil society and economy as independent spheres.

2.4. A Final Reconsideration of Historiographies

As it was mentioned on the outset, the historical accounts on the concept of civil society are determined by differing standpoints of the authors who pursue the historical transformation of the meaning of civil society. Regarding the crucial question of the differentiation, different commentators provide different accounts and differing turning points in line with their own stand in the current debate on civil society. This seemingly trivial fact is important in coming to terms with the conceptions of civil society currently espoused by different authors. This section will provide a brief and general critical assessment of these historiographies by referring to outline of the historical development of the idea of civil society provided above. It should be stressed before beginning that this assessment is not based on a pretension that a *true* interpretation of the history of the term exists which could be isolated as a yardstick in evaluation. This reservation equally concerns the interpretations of individual major thinkers as it does the term's history in general. Rather, the effort of this section will concentrate on certain strategic omissions and emphases of the authors who reconstruct the accounts of major thinkers of civil society in order to understand the approaches of the former to the contemporary debate on civil society.

¹³⁰ For a similar remark regarding Bobbio's interpretation of Gramsci, see Stuart Hall, Bob Lumley & Gregor McLennan, *Siyaset ve İdeoloji: Gramsci*, Ankara, Birey ve Toplum Yayınları, 1985, p. 7.

2.4.1. The problem of origins

Depending on the choice in stressing the descriptive or evaluative senses of distinction between the state and civil society, the opinion regarding the origin of the distinction is divided within the literature. Preferring an evaluative-political use of the term, John Keane maintains that the distinction of civil society from the state originated in the early 18th century in the “Anglo-American world where in contrast to the continental European thought, ‘the state’ was rarely seen as an impersonal institution which acts, and therefore (periodically) requires the complete obedience of its subjects.”¹³¹ In diametrically opposing terms, Bobbio and Seligman see the origination of the distinction in the German tradition. Basing the distinction on the difference between *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* and political society Bobbio claims, “it cannot be overemphasized that for the use of ‘civil society’ in the sense of the sphere of social as distinct from political relations, we are indebted to German writers (especially Marx and Hegel...)”.¹³² The contradiction stems from the fact that the authors cited above consider the issue of differentiation from different perspectives. Keane’s stress is upon the political-normative attributes of state and civil society distinction. In his use, the distinction between state and civil society becomes the means to distinguish despotic rule from democratic rule.¹³³ This is the reason he can locate the distinction of state and civil society in the contractarian natural law tradition (epitomised in his account by Paine) where the state is not considered a separate entity differentiated from society but an artificial, human construct. In this characterisation, even though civil society is prone to become defensive against state sovereignty, especially with Locke and Paine, the state (a “legitimate state” to be precise) in essence is considered nothing more than “a delegation of power for the common benefit of society. The more perfect civil society is, the more it regulates its

¹³¹ Keane, 1988, p. 37.

¹³² Bobbio, 1997, p. 23.

¹³³ Cf. Kumar, 1993, p. 377-8.

own affairs and the less occasion it has for government.”¹³⁴ Here “government” seems to be conceived rather as a function within civil society than something which exists beyond it. Notwithstanding the political discourse against state despotism, Paine (and Locke’s) conceptions are located in the natural law tradition which still conceived state and civil society coterminous.¹³⁵ Both the state and civil society are manifestations of individual actions; the former corresponds to the needs the latter to the “wickedness” of the society.¹³⁶ Hence, even though the state and civil society can be located in a confrontational relation in political terms, in analytical terms the state and civil society are not considered distinct entities. Rather the distinction is made between civil society and political society and reflected upon the bifurcated conception of the individual as a “*citoyen*, who attends to the public interest, and ... the *bourgeois* who takes care of his or her own interest.”¹³⁷ Hence, the political-evaluative distinction does not necessarily assume an analytical distinction in a manner which conceives state and civil society as distinct entities. On the other hand, in the continental tradition, represented by prominently by Marx and Hegel, the analytical separation of the state from civil society occurs once it is reduced to the economy which is differentiated from the state with the emergence of an economic model based on the self-regulating market. Indeed, insofar as the ‘distinctness’ of the state from civil society on the analytical level is concerned Keane quotes Hegel for whom the state cannot be reduced to a contract between the members of civil society.¹³⁸ In this understanding, the analytical separation has also its corollary on the evaluative axis of the distinction; but this time civil society is denigrated as the site of a selfish individualism and exploitation. Two respective remedies to the ills of civil society are proposed by Marx and Hegel. Hegel, associating civil society with

¹³⁴ Keane, 1988, p. 45.

¹³⁵ Cf. Bobbio, 1997, *passim.*, and Bobbio, 1993, *passim.* Bobbio persistently considers Locke and Paine as distinguishing state of nature from civil society. Keane (*Ibid.* p. 51) alludes to such a characterisation by referring to Paine’s *naturalism*.

¹³⁶ Keane 1988, p. 67n, Bobbio, 1997, p. 23. Both writers here refer to the same statement of Thomas Paine.

¹³⁷ Bobbio, 1997, p. 5.

¹³⁸ Keane, 1988, p. 52.

either partial or anti-*Sittlichkeit*, redeems the particularism of civil society through its universal representation in the state whereas for Marx, emancipation meant the eventual merging of the civil with political society through a revolutionary transformation of the relationship between the two. Keane interprets the Hegelian property centred conception as a ‘statist’ reaction to the separation of civil society from the state.¹³⁹ Marx’s approach on the other hand is commonly denigrated as all too eager to dispense with civil society in favour of an undifferentiated society which entails a totalitarian, regulated society. In the end, both Hegel and Marx’s solutions to the ills of civil society end up with putting an end to an autonomous civil society. The choice as to whether the political and analytical conceptions of the civil society should be employed is, hence, based on their respective evaluations of civil society and the political implications of these evaluations. Arbitrariness in terms of reconceptualising early modern conceptions of civil society ensues.

To disguise this arbitrariness, as it were, Keane justifies his conceptualisation of the distinction between state and civil society with the claim that the theoretical differentiation of the latter was as much related to a political sensitivity developing against state despotism as the need to come to terms with the emergence of the capitalist market as a distinct sphere theoretically. He argues that those accounts which miss this fact and reduce the differentiation of civil society to the emergence of capitalism (property centred accounts) are ultimately simplistic.

Like all monistic interpretations of the alteration of political language, they selectively –that is one-sidedly- scrutinize and emphasize only *one* characteristic dimension of the breakdown and subdivision of the classical concept of civil society. Other dimensions of the same process of conceptual transformation are suppressed arbitrarily or illegitimately judged to be of little or no ‘relevance’¹⁴⁰

This one-sidedness, he argues, obfuscates the early modern perceptiveness regarding the complexity and “organizational *heterogeneity*” of civil society and disregards the

¹³⁹ Ibid. p. 39.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 64.

“patterns of harmony or (potential) conflict between civil society’s privately controlled commerce and manufacturing and its other organizations, including patriarchal households, churches...” Secondly, he argues that property centred conceptions are oblivious to early modern conceptions’ “anti-bourgeois sentiments and normative implications” of civil society vis-à-vis the emergent capitalist economy. Finally, he postulates that

the fundamental point missed by property-centred accounts of modern civil society is that the transformation of the idea of *societas civilis* was stimulated primarily by a specifically *political* development: the fear of state despotism and the hope (spawned by the defeat of the British in the American colonies, as well as by the earliest events of the French Revolution) of escaping its clutches.¹⁴¹

Leaving aside, for the moment, the blatant idealism of such a position, it is doubtful whether Keane’s prominent reconstruction of the early modern history of the term civil society does adequate justice to the thinkers he considers. His one-sided treatment of Ferguson’s account, mentioned in the previous section is a case in point. In his endeavour of emphasising the political-ideological *essence* of the state civil society distinction, Keane overlooks the emergent early-modern conception of property relations as the pre-political source of sociability as hinted by Locke, developed by Scottish moralists and formed the fundamental assumption of the classical political economy (the first and third being conveniently omitted from his historical survey).

2.4.2. Functionalist retrospection

Cohen & Arato’s and Keane’s treatment of Marx and Hegel, and indeed the tradition of classical political economy, imputes to them a conception of economic relations which can hardly be sustained when the assumptions of these traditions thereof are considered in their depth. The functionalist perspective espoused by Cohen & Arato, (and indeed to a certain extent Keane as will be shown further) operates with a

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p. 65.

conception of economy as limited to the systemic logic of capitalist market whereby the individual action and its outcomes are determined by the objective mechanisms of the exchange relations, independently of the social relations between actors, be them individuals or organised social groups. It should be stressed on the outset that such a conception of civil society as reduced to the objective mechanisms of the capitalist market is susceptible to being labelled reductionist and dismissed on the grounds proposed by these writers. However, neither Hegelian and Marxist nor even Ferguson and Smith's accounts of civil society deserve such a label. Cohen & Arato's re-conceptualisation of these accounts through system-social integration duality imputes to them a functionalist conception of economy as a closed system, operating behind the backs of the individuals, which is hardly there. In both Smith's and Hegel's accounts, the explanation of market exchange is based on clear and detailed presuppositions regarding the will and consciousness of the actor in the market, and what is more, the organised social groups which comprise Hegel's corporations are categories which rise above such a conception of market. Hence, not only is it too hasty to re-construct the conception of civil society as devised by Smith and elaborated by Hegel as implying solely a systemic type of integration, but such a reconstruction also testifies to the fact that a civil society conceived autonomous from economic relations does espouse a reductionist conception of economy, consisting solely of the objective mechanisms of the capitalist market. Such a conception of economy, as argued by Stimson & Millgate, was espoused by the neo-classical economics whereby the economic laws were conceived as purely abstract economic categories utterly separated from social relations.¹⁴² Smith and Hegel do account for both integration and disintegration caused by the market mechanism by reference to the subjective perspective of the actor as well as their objective consequences for what would pass for systemic integration.¹⁴³ Furthermore, as it was mentioned above, from Ferguson through Smith to Hegel, exchange relations of the market was considered constitutive of social relations, i.e. yielding social integration.

¹⁴² Stimson & Millgate, 2004, p. 28-31.

¹⁴³ The functionalist methodology, which utilises social and system integration with regard to the objective and subjective aspects of social phenomena, and its application in contemporary debate on civil society will be covered in detail in the next chapter.

The division of the social formation into different spheres of economy, state and civil society on the basis of system and social integration is a specific methodological operation Cohen & Arato utilise in their own approach to civil society. This creates problems when it is utilised retrospectively to reconstruct early modern thinkers' conceptions of state civil society relations because of the single decisive fact that this methodology entails its own ontological assumptions regarding society, which were hardly mainstream in 18th and 19th century political theory.¹⁴⁴ The most obvious incompatibility thereof is that political economy was the dominant mode of explanation of the sociability of individuals which informed the accounts on civil society from Ferguson to Hegel. Marx's critique of political economy was, in part, the deepening and radicalisation of this fundamental assumption. Indeed, if the tradition of political economy explained the social existence of individual with recourse to economic categories, Marx's critique of the fetishism of these categories re-constructed them as social relations. Both conceptions, then, militate against a restricted understanding of economy conceived as a functional 'system' which is beyond social interaction. Conversely, one might argue that the specificity of 'social' relations in a restricted sense, ontologically different from economic and political relations has very much to do with the emergence of the discipline of sociology and the functionalist school thereof.¹⁴⁵ The restricted understanding of economy as a closed system and the corollary conception of the social as essentially non-economic are, in fact, contemporary efforts which concern civil societarians' desire to conceptualise civil society as essentially distinct from the economy.

¹⁴⁴ Marcus Perkmann, Social Integration and System Integration: Reconsidering the Classical Distinction, *Sociology*, 32(3), 491-507, 1998 (web source first draft: <http://spiral.imperial.ac.uk/bitstream/10044/1/1340/1/Perkmann%201998%20Social%20and%20System%20Integration.pdf>, pp. 1-14) .

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Neocleous, 1996, pp. 19-20.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONTEMPORARY RADICAL CONCEPTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The contemporary literature on civil society is massive. The use of the term cuts across -otherwise incommensurable- theoretical approaches and contradictory political positions. It is employed in every level of abstraction, from the most metaphysical to the most practical. This thesis cannot be remotely ambitious as to impute coherence to the every particular conception of the term or every political project which revolves around a particular use of it. In an unqualified state, the term is meaningless, and so is every piece of work which fails to take this into account. Before one engages a theoretical debate, then, one should substantiate the particular meaning of civil society one uses. In fact, even specifying a particular content for civil society so as to operationalise it is hard labour given the multitude of connotations it acquired throughout its theoretical history. As a starting point in specifying the content of civil society, in line with the general trend, a negative definition, that is what civil society is not, is useful.¹⁴⁶ The radical democratic approach, which this thesis takes issue with, defines civil society in contradistinction to state and economy. That is, the civil nature of this social domain stems from its characteristics which deny the economic and statist-administrative forms of conduct. On more positive terms, one might refer to a prominent representative of the radical conception who categorically distinguishes three distinct types of approach to the term.¹⁴⁷ First, the term is utilised in analytical terms meaning that it is applied in

¹⁴⁶ Norberto Bobbio, *Democracy and Dictatorship*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1997, p. 22, Bob Jessop, *Approaches to the Analysis of Civil Society and State* - unpublished paper at www.ritsume.ac.jp/kic, 2000.

¹⁴⁷ Keane 1993, pp. 24-43. As a matter of fact, Keane here differentiates three approaches to the state-civil society distinction, not civil society per se. Hence, its current reproduction somewhat distorts his actual account with an interpretive extraction of the meaning attributed to civil society.

order to “develop an explanatory understanding in analysing complex socio-political realities”.¹⁴⁸ Keane stresses the specificity of the radical conception vis-à-vis conventional economy centred approaches and clearly opts for the former. He argues that those approaches which identify the state-civil society distinction with the emergence of capitalism tend to identify the latter with the capitalist market and, hence, are oblivious to the non-economic aspects of civil society. These approaches, he argues, have difficulties in accounting for those aspects of civil society which resisted state despotism *and* capitalist commodity relations. He opts for an ideal typical positive definition of civil society which sees it as the social sphere which contains a complex web of social movements, independent public spheres, political parties, economic organisations, disciplinary organisations, etc. which is reducible to none of them. Secondly, civil society is utilised in a strategic-political sense. Keane isolates two broad categories thereof: a political liberal sense of civil society against state despotism and a socialist project striving for the elimination of state-civil society distinction. Keane, as other radical civil societarians, opts for the former strategy. What he does not stress here, however, involves civil society’s strategic importance against the capitalist market which is a trademark of the radical conception. Civil society in this radical sense can be identified as the social sphere which is not only distinct from the state and economy, but it is also of strategic value in resisting despotic-statist and capitalist-economic expansions.¹⁴⁹ Finally, Keane draws attention to a normative approach to civil society. In this respect, the existence of an autonomous civil society becomes a value in itself as it is considered a “sine qua non of democracy”.¹⁵⁰ Civil society in this sense becomes the representation and guarantee of democratic values of freedom, equality and plurality. Yet it would be an oversimplification to state that the radical conception of civil society is content with the mere existence of a social sphere outside state and economy. Accordingly, civil society has a normative essence understood as ‘civility’ connoting values of

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 25.

¹⁴⁹ Jeffrey Alexander, Introduction, in Jeffrey Alexander (Ed.) *Real Civil Society: Dilemmas of institutionalization*, London: Sage, 1998a, passim.

¹⁵⁰ Keane 1993, p. 39.

solidarity, mutuality and pluralism. Those social movements or ideologies which are in conflict with these values are considered un-civil.

In the light of abovementioned characteristics and senses of the term, an operational definition of the radical conception might be constructed. Accordingly, civil society is defined as a social sphere which is organised as an amalgam of free-associations of citizens and social movements, regulated by an autonomous civil legal code, emerged/gained salience as an actor in the latter half of the 20th century in response to the transformations which took place in the polities of a plurality of geographical regions and exerts some form of influence on formal mechanisms of political rule and capitalist market.

3.1. Autonomous Civil Society

Radical civil societarianism as it conceives itself the new democratic leftist political project, chides Marxism on two related grounds. First, it is argued that Marxist analysis of social formations reduced all social relations to economic relations. In its attempt to account for the state and civil society in strictly economic terms, Marxism failed to specify forms of domination other than economic exploitation and mechanisms other than class struggle for the democratic transformation of modern societies. Secondly, this partiality resulted in the direst of consequences. The objective of dispensing with the exploitation in redeeming the working class via total revolutionary transformation of state civil society relations resulted in a communist utopia which meant a complete loss of autonomy for not only the working class, but for the whole society. In the former Soviet Union and remaining state-socialist countries, Marxism has played and still plays the role of justifying totalitarianism. In developed capitalist countries, an equally outmoded derivative of the Marxist problematic, social democracy, has vied for a type of reformism which also turned to state for the relief of inequalities created by the capitalist economy and hence promoted former's further expansion. This also resulted in the loss of individual autonomy, decrease of 'civic consciousnesses' and decline of civil-societal

mechanisms of trust and solidarity.¹⁵¹ Because of the expansion of the state and utter politicisation of every nook and cranny of social life, people turned to politically cynical and passive receivers of welfare benefits. The traditional left had already been paralysed once the disillusionment with Marxist and social democratic reformism/revolutionism exacerbated the relentless rise of neoliberalism which capitalised not only this disillusionment, but also the reaction to the suffocating expansion of the state in both the West and East. Yet there is still hope according to the liberal-left. The critical potential of the left can be revitalised by the emergent discourse of civil society. What needs to be done, this time, is to refurbish the concept of civil society such that it furthers the democratic potential it gained while combating state domination in Eastern Europe, Latin America and, indeed, the bureaucratic welfare state of the developed world.

The radical conceptualisation civil society assumes a three-part model of social formation. Even though the widespread rise of the discourse of civil society manifested overwhelmingly an opposition to state -as historically it is considered the prime obstacle before the development of civil society-, the radical conception of civil society distinguishes itself from its neoliberal counterpart in its sensitivity to distinguish the economy from civil society. Indeed, it sees civil society as a panacea, curing both state domination and injustices of capitalism. It is in this respect that radical project of civil society strives for becoming the alternative of social democracy and Marxism in terms of combating the economic injustices created by capitalism. The problem is considered to be civil society's subsumption by the state and economy, so the remedy is its reassertion against both. Yet economy and state's relation to civil society are conceived in analogous terms; that is, both state and capitalist economy are attributed with a propensity to expand at the expense of civil society. Capitalist market is identified with the logic of exchange which is disposed to commodify social relations, and thus expand into civil society. The state on the other hand, is characterised with a homogenising coercive-bureaucratic code which is also disposed to subsume social relations with increasing its activities into the

¹⁵¹ Pierre Rosanvallon, Toplumsal görünürlüğü'n çöküşü. in John Keane (Ed.). *Sivil Toplum ve Devlet, Avrupa'da Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, İstanbul: Ayrıntı, 1993, passim. Cohen & Arato, 1992, passim.

aspects of social life which are otherwise characterised by solidary relations. In this respect it connotes the liberal political tradition's understanding as to society as a self-standing and self-regulating entity which does not require the state for its internal operation. This is the most prominent aspect of the current revival of the term, as it was mentioned above introduction, which is captured in the phrase, "civil society against the state". The development of the concept in this respect generalises aspects of the Central and Eastern European dissident movements and the reaction against the welfare state in the developed world. The radical conception of civil society in this respect is characterised by the sensitivity against the bureaucratic aspects of state rule which is deemed predisposed to subvert social relations in the civil society via central steering in which case political power replaces solidary social relations. Though it considers state a coercive entity which should be limited for a democratic form of state-society relations, the radical conception positions itself firmly against neo-liberalism whose anti-state attitude serves the expansion of the capitalist market. The assumption that civil society is –and ought to be- a sphere distinct from the state stamps this discourse as a liberal one whereas its sensitivity to the social inequality that is created by the capitalist market and its proposition that the latter should somehow be regulated forms its leftist appeal. Within this project, civil society is conceived as the social sphere where a plurality of demands/identities is inherent and able to synthesise a public front against the un-civil incursions of state and economy.

Central in the contemporary literature on the concept civil society is, then, the issue of differentiation. As mentioned above, the very definition of the contemporary concept of civil society comprises first and foremost its differentiation from something else.¹⁵² The issue of delimitation to be drawn upon in current discussion is the double differentiation of civil society from both the economy and state.¹⁵³ This choice might sound odd for the majority of writers identify civil society as

¹⁵² Cohen and Arato, 1992 p. ix, Keane, 1988, p. 38, Seligman, 1992, p.3, Kumar, 1993, p. 383, Jeffrey Alexander, *Introduction*, in Jeffrey Alexander ed. *Real Civil Society: Dilemmas of institutionalization*, London, Sage, 1998, p. 14.

¹⁵³ Cohen & Arato, 1992 *passim*.

differentiated first and foremost from the state. Yet, insofar as civil society's relation to democratisation is concerned, even dualistic conceptions tend to refer to so-called non-economic or indirectly economic features of civil society such as solidarity, publicness, and associability. The dualistic understandings which fit into this scheme are those which have the underlying assumption that the economic forms of social relations are distinct from non-economic relations in civil society. Even though the dualistic conception of civil society includes the capitalist market, the abovementioned conception of commodification of social relations assumes that civil society includes non-economic social relations located outside the capitalist market. Simply put, the chief endeavours of the contemporary theorisation of civil society are a) locating and identifying an independent/autonomous sphere of civil society from both the bureaucratic state and capitalist market and b) defending that such independence is a pre-requisite for the institution of a democratic and vigorous civil society.¹⁵⁴ That is to say the problem of delimitation has both analytical and normative dimensions. Predicated on the normative dimension of maintaining the autonomy of civil society is its virtue as a progressive and democratic sphere. In civil society, individuals and/or groups are free to pursue their own ends (defined not in a narrowly economic basis); they are autonomous in the mutuality of their dealings with other members of civil society.¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, the spheres of economy and state are characterised by money and power as determining relationships that necessarily are unevenly distributed.¹⁵⁶ Hence civil society is characterised by equality, mutuality and autonomy whereas the economy, by inequality and selfishness; and state, by power and heteronomy. On a normative basis, then, civil society should be independent or autonomous from the economic and political realms for: a) This directly determines its "civility", that is, it is civil insofar as it is cleansed from the "un-civil" influences of state and market and b) it can manifest its

¹⁵⁴ Cohen & Arato, 1992, passim. Andrew Arato, Civil society and political theory in Luhmann's work and beyond, *New German Critique*, 61, 1994, pp. 129-42 and Alexander, 1998a, passim.

¹⁵⁵ Seligman, 1992 passim.

¹⁵⁶ Cohen & Arato, 1992, passim. Claus, Offe The Utopia of zero option: Modernity and modernization as normative political criteria in *Modernity and the State: East West*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996a, pp. 3-31, p. 46.

progressive potential in terms of influencing the un-civil spheres insofar as its independence is assured. In other words, its independence is required for its internal purity and external efficacy in its self-realisation. The latter injunction implies that the democratic function of civil society is twofold; first, the autonomy of civil society secures its internally democratic character against the intrusions of power or money. Secondly, by virtue of its internally democratic character, it can produce an unfettered public opinion moulded in free and open discussion and influence the other spheres, indirectly controlling their functioning. Hence, the democratic function of civil society is essentially related to the problematic of autonomy.

As a position taken against Marxist determinism, the radical conception assumes that social relations which characterise civil society are autonomous from the capitalist economy. This argument can be elaborated such that the citizens' associations, collectivities and social movements comprise a sphere not reducible to the economic categories of mode of production. Here, an apparent bifurcation within the radical conception is at stake. For Cohen & Arato,¹⁵⁷ Jeffrey Alexander¹⁵⁸ and Claus Offe,¹⁵⁹ who employ structure-functionalist social theory, civil society is thoroughly distinguished from the economy (conceived as a functional system) as a social sphere. For Cohen & Arato, the economic organisations such as firms and partnerships are not members of civil society per se but are rather relegated to an intermediary sphere between the economy and civil society, namely the economic society. The democratic function of civil society vis-à-vis the economy becomes the indirect control practiced via the influence exerted through the economic society. Similarly, Alexander mentions "civil repairs" against the obstructive effects of capitalist market mechanism on civil society. Claus Offe also utilises a functionalist demarcation of the society whereby state and economy are conceived as functional systems. Like Cohen & Arato, in his use civil society connotes sphere of associative

¹⁵⁷ Cohen & Arato, 1992 *passim*.

¹⁵⁸ Alexander, 1998a *passim*., Jeffrey Alexander, Robust Utopias and Civil Repairs, *International Sociology*, 16(4), pp. 579-91, 2001, *passim*.

¹⁵⁹ Offe, 1996a, *passim*. & Claus Offe, Civil Society and Social Order: Demarcating and Combining Market, State and Community, *Archives Europeennes de Sociologie*, 41(1), pp. 71-94, 2000, *passim*.

relations upon which the normative framework and solidary relations of the society develop.

John Keane¹⁶⁰ and Michael Walzer¹⁶¹ on the other hand, do not directly utilise a functionalist three-part understanding of social formation as economy-civil society-state. John Keane chides the Habermasian approach of the three-part differentiation of the state civil society and economy. He thinks that this conception is misleading for two reasons.¹⁶² First, the separation of the civil society from the economy deprives the former from the vital economic resources in expanding its power; reference is made to the workers movements in Eastern Europe. Secondly, he argues that the degradation of the economy to a mere system of needs isolates the economic relations as if they were not social relations themselves. Finally, Keane posits that the economic actors always draw upon socially generated stock of values which arise out of social forms of interaction such as friendship, mutual recognition, trust etc. However, the difference of his framework from that of Habermas's is not decisive. The difference Habermas posits between social and system integration is founded upon the difference between the steering mechanisms which pertain to system and lifeworld.¹⁶³ The media of interaction Habermas attributes to the life-world are similar to those put forth by Keane. The argument that the economic actors draw upon socially generated resources does not preclude the specificity attributed to the economic action vis-à-vis other modes of social action. He clearly identifies civil society as distinct from the economy. His depiction of the relationship between the economy and civil society outlined above implies that the capitalist economy, though parasitic on civil society, is distinct from it. On a closer look he identifies the threats capitalism poses to civil society, conceived as consequences of its own dysfunctions,

¹⁶⁰ Keane, 1993, passim.

¹⁶¹ Michael Walzer, Sivil toplum düşüncesi: Toplumsal yapılaşmaya doğru bir adım, Birikim, 37, 1992, pp. 33-41. passim.

¹⁶² Keane, 1998, pp. 16-9.

¹⁶³ Deborah Cook, *Adorno, Habermas and the Search for a Rational Society*, London, Routledge, 2004, pp. 18-25. Nicos Mouzelis, Social and System Integration: Habermas' View, British Journal of Sociology, 43(2), 1992, pp. 267-88, pp. 269-71.

in terms similar to those argued by Cohen and Arato. The similarity is striking in this passage:

market forces tend to spread into every nook and cranny of social life, thereby violating its plurality of voices and identities, which (as debates over good quality education and childcare facilities demonstrate) are themselves nevertheless indispensable to the functioning of market forces.¹⁶⁴

Walzer similarly sees the market as a differentiated sphere within civil society and suggests a similar implication for its inclusion, that is, its propensity to expand and subsume non-economic spheres.¹⁶⁵ He differentiates such social values of solidarity and mutuality and identifies “social” relations as possessing a character from capitalist relations. His assertion that man is a social before an economic and political animal testifies to this conception.¹⁶⁶ All figures deploy their theories of civil society against neoliberalism which is labelled, with Marxism, as an economistic conception, and stress civil society’s function in exercising some form of control over the capitalist market. Cohen & Arato, Offe and Alexander sustain their frameworks of differentiation on a structure functionalist account of modernisation which means that the emergence of civil society is associated with the differentiation of economic and political spheres as functional sub-systems of market and state. Insofar as they are ‘modernist’ in this sense they deem differentiation as crucial in the democratic re-reproduction of society. That is to say, if the modernity and democracy of society is to be secured, differentiation should be maintained and the border relations between state, civil society and economy, in Alexander’s terms, gain normative importance in this respect. In this sense, inasmuch as civil society needs to be protected against the incursions of the economy, which has especially become a significant threat with the contemporary rise of neoliberalism, the autonomy of system logics of economic and administrative spheres should also be maintained.

¹⁶⁴ Keane, 1998, p. 19.

¹⁶⁵ Walzer, 1992, p. 36.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 40.

To summarise, in all of the accounts mentioned above, civil society is defined, in negative terms, as a social sphere located outside the capitalist market and state. In positive terms, social solidarity and a normative framework which upon which the civil legal code which guarantees associative relations rises becomes what defines civil society. In modern societies solidary relations are assumed to be built upon a rational normative structure which is autonomous from the state and capitalist market. The norms of civility are assumed to enable social interaction among social actors and groups organised as voluntary organisations. There are two trends within this thinking which tends to essentialise the distinction of civil society from the state and economy. First, the normative, strategic and analytical senses of the differentiation of civil society tend to be unified in these accounts.¹⁶⁷ This leads to conceiving economy, civil society and state as anthropomorphic entities possessing their own contradictory motivations and are in an antagonistic relation with each other. Secondly, the specificity attributed to social solidarity and the normative structure, which is informed by the ethos of civility, are ontologised as existing outside and prior to the state and economy. In order to discuss the essentialisation of the differentiation of civil society, a section on the functionalist theorising which is frequently adhered to in the theoretical grounding of differentiation is in order. It should be mentioned before proceeding that this methodology is not unanimously shared among radical civil societarians. Keane and Walzer for instance, are notable exceptions. Yet the way they construct their conceptions, as argued above, is based on similar conceptions of state, economy and civil society. Hence the conviction of this discussion is that the implications of the following discussion concern their accounts as well as others who explicitly refer to the functionalist method.

¹⁶⁷ Keane is aware of this danger and persistently warns against uniting different application of the term civil society. See Keane, 1993(a), pp. 65-6 Keane, 1993(b), p. 24. Yet his own account also falls prey to this reification. Keane's account fluctuates between essentialism and non-essentialism in this regard. As Kumar rightly points out, when he strives for a 'non-essentialist' account, his framework of state-civil society distinction adds nothing to the classical liberal normative understanding of the limited state. See Kumar, 1993, p. 385. When Keane qualifies the state-civil society distinction, he also tends to reify the distinction.

3.2. An Excursus on Functionalism

3.2.1. Differentiation in functionalism

The sense of civil society as an analytical category designates the attempt to delimit a sphere of social relations distinct or autonomous from economy and state. It was argued in the end of the previous chapter that distinguishing civil society from economy requires more than designating it as a residual non-economic sphere. Counteracting “economic determinism” requires an alternative social ontology which bases the foundation of society on assumptions different from those of political economy. This entails a search for an understanding of social existence alternative to those based on property-market interaction and “production of the material conditions of existence”. As opposed to the economy or state centred accounts, the contemporary radical conception of civil society is sustained, as Cohen & Arato put it, on a “society-centred model”.¹⁶⁸ Significantly enough, this alternative “society-centred model” is relies on a functionalist sociological understanding of society as developed by Talcott Parsons which ‘surpassed’ economic reductionism in accounting for social transformation, understood this time as modernisation. As opposed to Marxist understanding of historical transformation of social formations, which is the economistic account of differentiation par excellence, Parsons’ account of modernisation was centred on differentiation and rationalisation of the normative framework of social integration. Alexander’s brief account on the development of the term civil society testifies to how economism is surpassed in its theorisation. He identifies three broad categories of uses of the term civil society in this respect.¹⁶⁹ The first use originated in the post-medieval Europe and signified an ethical-normative unity distinguished from the state. In this use, civil society was not differentiated from the economy, but on the contrary, the capitalist nature of the latter which comprised the free exchange of commodities established its ethical standards.

¹⁶⁸ Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 411.

¹⁶⁹ Alexander, 1998, pp. 3-8.

“Capitalism was understood as producing self-discipline and individual responsibility. It was helping to create a social system antithetical to the vainglorious aristocratic one...”¹⁷⁰ The second use of the term identified civil society more radically with capitalism and, to Alexander, depending on the evaluation of the latter, it justified either economist or statist types of political positions. The economist stance, espoused today by the “ideologists of the new right” dispenses with any form of social control for the effective functioning of the economy and see no need for institutions alternative to those induced by the market in promoting democracy. On the other hand, the leftist version of identifying civil society with capitalism entailed turning to state and abolishing the market itself in favour of “authoritarian bureaucratic control”. It is only with surpassing these respectively idealist and reductionist senses of civil society that it is being recognised “as a sphere that is analytically independent of –and, to varying degrees, empirically differentiated from” the state and the market. In this view, the emergence of civil society as an autonomous sphere is a historical product of modernisation. One should note that the ‘emergence’, in this understanding, does not mean ‘generation’. The values and forms of consciousness that inhere in the modern concept of civil society are assumed to be already there in the communal life of the pre-modern world. The ‘society’, as a unified ethical-communal entity which comprises moral codes of obligations and duties towards others and values of solidarity, already existed in the pre-modern Europe.¹⁷¹ What modernisation means is the differentiation/autonomisation of economy, state and other subsystems such as religion and science from society. Offe’s conception suggests that modernization implies the dual processes of intra-social differentiation between actors, social organisations and subsystems, and the decay of pre-modern fetters on action such as traditional commitments, beliefs and expectations. Taken together, these processes mark the spectacular expansion of the options available in the differentiated fields of

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 3.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p. 7. Cf. Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 120.

material production, cultural reproduction, political participation and bureaucratic domination.¹⁷²

At the culmination of modernisation thus defined, is located the social context within which the contemporary radical conception of civil society emerges. Cohen & Arato and Offe draw upon Habermas' system/lifeworld duality which presupposes this conception of modernisation in theorising civil society. The duality provides the groundwork of identifying first society, then civil society in positive terms as distinctly non-economic and non-political. As such it plays a key role in the analytical accounts of differentiation of civil society. Before moving to the problems of this conception, a more detailed outline of its affinity with the Parsonian functionalism is in order.

Both Alexander's above-summarised exposition and Habermas' conception of systemic differentiation draw upon Parson's functionalist expositions on social order and modernisation. Related to these issues, Bausch isolates two corresponding basic theoretical endeavours in Parson's social theory pertaining to social action and social evolution respectively.¹⁷³ For social action to be possible, acting individuals must surpass what Parsons identified as the problem of "double contingency" which implied the mutual lack of knowledge on the part of the actors regarding the motivations of their counterparts. Shared social norms and values provided actors with reasonable expectations regarding each other's tendencies and hence made social action possible. In this respect, value consensus, which arbitrated intra social disputes, maintained equilibrium within society upon which social solidarity depended. Arguably then, for Parsons, social action presupposed a particular conception of social order based on value consensus. Yet Bausch argues that when Parsons strove to explain social change as opposed to stability, he employed a systemic type of explanation as opposed to the former action oriented explanation. His subsequent account of societal evolution prioritised system over action and

¹⁷² Offe, 1996a, p. 6

¹⁷³ Kenneth Bausch, *The Emerging Consensus in Social Systems Theory*, New York, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001, pp. 10-12.

personality. This systemic explanation was the basis of his understanding of modernisation. For Parsons, modernisation implied the gradual differentiation of social relations in response to growing social complexity whereby certain social functions condensed into different social subsystems. In other words, social evolution was explained in terms of creation of functional subsystems which specialised on dealing with different functions within society. Each functional subsystem had its intrinsic principle of organisation and action coordination. In this scheme the four functional subsystems, namely adaptation, goal achievement, latency and integration which corresponded to the economic, political, cultural and solidary functions of the society had their respective principles which conditioned action. These principles were materialised as the “symbolic media of exchange” which dictated different types of action in each subsystem. With the relegation of the normative and solidary functions of the society to the latency and integration subsystems, in Parsons understanding of modernity, systemic steering took the place of individual agency even in the solidary sphere. Cohen & Arato draw attention to the inherently conservative account of Parsons in this respect.¹⁷⁴ According to them, from his earlier conception of social order and on, Parsons’ conception of societal community stressed normative consensus as determining social solidarity as opposed to creative potential of social agency. In the structuralist understanding of his theory of social evolution, he conceived agency mainly in terms of disrupting systemic integration and “short circuiting social change”. Similarly, Mouzelis implies that in Parsons’ account, social subsystems does not simply obliterate agency but replace it:

The reason why Parsons often treats institutional subsystems or even whole societies and their core values as mysterious anthropomorphic entities deciding and regulating everything on the social scene is, of course, that his functionalist scheme leaves no conceptual room for collective agencies as producers of their social world.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Cohen & Arato, 1992, pp. 124-5.

¹⁷⁵ Nicos Mouzelis, Marxism or Post-Marxism, *New Left Review*, 167, 1988, pp. 107-23. p. 111.

Parson's functionalism, then, had two interrelated aspects. First, it concentrated on normative consensus in the institutionalisation of social relations and was oblivious to the possibility of conflict thereof. Secondly, the tendency for discrepancy was accounted for in systemic i.e. structuralist terms such that when conflict did occur it was conceived as an incompatibility on the side of the actor with its role. Despite their reservations regarding these issues, Cohen & Arato appropriate Parsons' account of modernisation and rationalisation of the normative consensus from the perspective of social solidarity.¹⁷⁶ Accordingly, modernisation understood as differentiation of functional systems is a process of mutual differentiation between the societal community (the integrative system) on the one hand and economic, cultural and political subsystems on the other which strengthens both the functional subsystems and solidary sphere. Given their aversion to the structuralist and conservative understanding of social order and agency in Parson's framework, however, they adopt Habermas' conception of modernisation which replaced societal community with the lifeworld.

Habermas' account regarding the modernisation of solidarity is captured in his account on the rationalisation of the lifeworld. Like Parsons, Habermas also believed that modernisation was not determined by the development of capitalism but rather the development of a rational form of solidarity. Cook's reconstruction of Habermas' conception of modernisation shows that for him, the evolution of the solidary framework of social integration was prior to the emergence of capitalism.¹⁷⁷ In Habermas' account, before the differentiation of the economy as a self-sufficient subsystem, lifeworld had to become rationalised.

In brief, rationalisation refers to a learning process in which individuals progressively distinguish between the objective, social (normative) and subjective domains of experience and develop argumentation procedures for discursively redeeming validity claims for each.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 120-4.

¹⁷⁷ Cook, 2004, p. 17.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

This understanding is based on the priority of the “speech act” over normative and solidary social structures such as kinship and religion.¹⁷⁹ Habermas identified a process of the “linguistification of the sacred” whereby the non-reflexive rules governing communicative action are being progressively challenged and externalised through discourse. Once the external normative authority of kinship structures thereof diminished and religious and cultural normative orders differentiated from the life world, communicative action emerged as the chief medium of social solidarity. For Habermas, then, rationalisation of social solidarity was the result of de-institutionalisation of traditional means of integration based on normative consensus.¹⁸⁰ As it was in Parsons’ account, in Habermas’ conception of social transformation, then, the lifeworld plays the determining role. Not only the differentiation of the economic and political spheres is determined by the structures of the lifeworld, but once differentiated, lifeworld still plays the key role as the “anchor” or “base” of both the economy and state.¹⁸¹ The primary status of the lifeworld in determining social evolution provides the contemporary radical civil societarians the “non-reductionist” basis upon which civil society can be theorised.

Habermas’, Alexander’s and Cohen & Arato’s understandings, then, are somewhat different from Parsons’ original scheme on two grounds. First, whereas Parsons viewed the integrative aspects of society as a functional system which conditioned action, for Habermas and Cohen & Arato solidarity is secured on the intersubjective understanding of communicative action which pertains to the lifeworld. Similarly, Alexander integrates the insights of a linguistified conception of the constitution of the social whereby the solidary sphere of social interaction involves a discursively constructed normative framework determined by discursive interaction.¹⁸² In this way the systemic nature of Parsonian conception of solidarity is surpassed to

¹⁷⁹ Bausch, 2001, pp. 77-9.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Nicos Mouzelis, 1992, p. 270.

¹⁸¹ Cook, 2004 p. 21.

¹⁸² Jeffrey Alexander, *Citizen and Enemy as Symbolic Classification: On the Polarizing Discourse of Civil Society*, in Jeffrey Alexander ed., *Real Civil Society: Dilemmas of institutionalization*, London, Sage, 1998(b) pp. 96-114.

accommodate social interaction between actors. Secondly, for Habermas and Cohen & Arato solidarity in modern societies does not involve consensus on substantive values but the proceduralist consensus of “discourse ethics” upon which communicative action is based. Yet in one crucial respect these conceptions express continuity with the Parsonian understanding, namely the conceptualisation of functional subsystems. If a normative framework, be it substantial or formal, is the source of solidary social relations prevailing in either lifeworld or societal community, the functional subsystems, differentiated from this sphere, are conceived as autonomous spheres organised around their respective principles of operation. In this respect, Habermas, Cohen & Arato and Alexander largely agree with the Parsonian framework.¹⁸³ The two fundamental subsystems, the state and economy, possess their respective means of action coordination, namely power and money which are counterpoised to the spontaneous solidarity prevalent in the integrative sphere of the lifeworld. What distinguishes their conception from Parsons’ is their understanding of solidarity which is conceived as an intersubjective process as opposed to being determined by systemic integration.

The different conceptions of modernisation summarised above stress the need to distinguish between social solidarity and systemic steering in remedying the overly structuralist and conservative aspects of Parsons’ normative functionalist account of modernisation. The distinction between social and system integration introduced by David Lockwood provides the theoretical justification of this move.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Yet it should be mentioned that the latency subsystem is conceived differently by these authors. For Alexander, it is further differentiated as religious and scientific subsystems. For Habermas and Cohen & Arato, it is included in the lifeworld. For Habermas’ criticism of Parsonian systemic understanding of integration and latency subsystems and ensuing reasons for Habermas’ preference to include them in the lifeworld, see Mouzelis, 1992, pp. 277-82. Further, Cohen & Arato state that Parsons’ schema put too much of a stress on the self-regulation and boundary maintenance that it failed to conceive the propensity of the state and market to enlarge at the expense of civil society. Other than that however, a la Habermas, they maintain Parsonian systemic understanding of economy and state. See Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 426.

¹⁸⁴ David Lockwood, *Social Integration and System Integration*, G. K. Zollschan and W. Hirsch eds., *Explorations in Social Change*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, pp. 244-57, 1964, *passim*.

3.2.2. Social and system integration

The inherent conservatism of overly structuralist “normative functionalist” scheme initially attracted criticism from conflict theory. In his highly influential work Lockwood argued that conflict theorists concentrated their whole effort on the duality of consensus and coercion and stressed the unequal distribution of latter within the society and its crucial importance in societal reproduction. They denounced normative functionalism’s stress on consensus and maintained that power and social conflict was as crucial inputs in the institutionalisation of social relations as were moral values. Consensus might be morally sustained but it was ultimately coercive. While welcoming conflict theories’ stress on conflict and power in accounting for social change, Lockwood argued that, they missed in their denouncement of normative functionalism, general functionalist insights regarding the relations between the systemic parts of the society.¹⁸⁵ It is for this reason, he observed, that the explanatory viability of their framework was limited in cases, for instance, where high levels of social conflict was accompanied by institutional durability. For Lockwood, even though coercion and conflict were valuable in explaining social change, one-sided emphasis on actor oriented conflict could not solve the problems of normative functionalism. It is on these grounds that he introduced his distinction between social and system integration. Social integration referred to “the orderly and conflictual relationship between the *actors*” and system integration to “orderly or conflictual relations between the *parts* of a social system”.¹⁸⁶ For Lockwood, this “artificial” distinction provided for an analysis of social processes in terms of both actor and system categories.

Mouzelis interprets this duality as a methodological distinction between perspectives.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 248-50.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 245.

¹⁸⁷ Mouzelis, 1992, pp. 267-8.

Social integration refers to an ‘internalist’ perspective that focuses on actors’ or participants’ views and strategies, and on the way their *orientations* are coordinated. System integration, on the other hand, refers to an ‘externalist’ perspective that focuses on the point of view of an observer who sees social practices from the outside, so to speak, from the point of view of the system and its maintenance requirements¹⁸⁸

In this interpretation, social and system integration are irreducible to each other. However, as the distinction is strictly heuristic, it presupposes that any social phenomena under investigation can be approached from both perspectives. In other words, the distinction between social and system integration, to Mouzelis, does not justify conceiving systemic-objective and actor based-subjective processes as separate social phenomena. In this respect, Mouzelis points at Habermas’ misuse of the distinction by associating it with his system/lifeworld duality. Accordingly, Habermas’ qualification of social integration as involving consensus (either normative or communicatively achieved) and his corollary association of system integration with media steered action goes beyond the heuristic application of the distinction. In effect, the perspectivism of Lockwood’s original formulation is left aside.

Perkman underlines that Lockwood’s perspectivism relates to two problem areas in social theory.¹⁸⁹ First issue concerns the problem of social order. The second relates to the major theoretical problem of structure/agency dichotomy. Regarding the first issue, whereas normative functionalism’s stress on value consensus implies that social integration is constitutive of social order, classical Marxism saw the articulation of forces and relations of production decisive on class conflict. In classical Marxism according to Lockwood, although social and system integration were clearly differentiated, social change was the consequence of “not the *power* conflict arising from the relationships in the productive system, but the *system* conflict arising from the ‘contradictions’ between ‘property institutions’ and the

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 268.

¹⁸⁹ Perkman, 1998, *passim*.

‘forces of production’”.¹⁹⁰ For Lockwood, classical Marxism provided an understanding of systemic integration which was lacking in those conflict theorists who criticised normative functionalism’s stress on social order. Perkmann sees the relative stress on social or system integration indicative of how social order is conceived in the first place. “The precise relationship between social and system integration is already implicit in the specific meta-perspectives on society adopted.”¹⁹¹ He interprets Lockwood’s suggestion that social and system integration perspectives should be integrated as indicative of Lockwood’s preference a conception of society in which two types of integration were interrelated. Hence, for Perkmann, Lockwood’s distinction involves more than the methodological level, but signals a relation between the actor-based social relations and systemic components of the society.

With Perkmann and Mouzelis’ accounts, one might argue that the Habermasian distinction between the system and lifeworld, based as it is on his distinction between the instrumental and communicative forms of rationality, produces an account of social order whereby social and systemic forms of integration are considered to take place in different social spheres. His conception of the colonisation of the lifeworld indicates this view. “The thesis of internal colonization states that the subsystems of the economy and state become more and more complex as a consequence of capitalist growth, and penetrate ever deeper into the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld.”¹⁹² Accordingly, the lifeworld, which is conceived as the totality of the solidary relations and the “linguistified” normative structure, is colonised when media steered action which pertains to the systems replaces communicative action of the lifeworld. As such, colonisation involves the distinct processes of commodification and bureaucratisation of the solidary relations of the lifeworld.¹⁹³ Cook and Mouzelis point at the problems of the segregation of the system and

¹⁹⁰ Lockwood, 1964, p. 250.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁹² Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action* Vol. II: *Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1987. p. 367 quoted in Cook, 2004, p. 30.

¹⁹³ Cook, 2004, p. 31-2.

lifeworld in Habermas' thinking. Both writers argue that Habermas' basing of his distinction between the lifeworld and system on social and system integration is misleading. Cook cites Habermas' own words to the effect that the lifeworld might well include mechanisms of systemic integration whereas the social integration might take part in systems.¹⁹⁴ Similarly, Mouzelis argues that the association of social integration with "a *normatively* secured or *communicatively* achieved consensus and system integration with a non-normative regulation of individual decisions that extend beyond the actors' consciousness" is problematic.¹⁹⁵ This is because social integration, which in its original Lockwoodean sense meant the "participant's internalist perspective" does not necessarily imply communicatively reached consensus. Settings based on power and coercion can well be considered from the perspective of those who are oppressed, that is how they make sense of their condition and how they cope with it, their strategies of resistance etc. all concern issues regarding social integration. For Mouzelis, then, Habermas tends to reify the methodological distinction of social and system integration. Later on, Mouzelis argues that Habermas' redressing of the distinction incapacitates his account in making sense of "institutional systemic contradictions" with reference to macro-social actors.¹⁹⁶ Yet Cook argues that Habermas, by adopting Parsonian functionalism, purposefully dispensed with collective subjects as a theoretical move against Marxism.¹⁹⁷ Indeed, she argues that Habermas' understanding as to the action coordination taking place in the economic system is reminiscent of Adam Smith's invisible hand. Accordingly, the functional reproduction of the economic system operates through aggregating and intermeshing the unintended consequences of individual actions. His choice to conceptualise the economy and state as subjectless, functional systems, Cook mentions, was based on his two objections to Marxian conception of class. First, he thought that any notion of collective subjectivity would hypostatise social organisations as subjectivities. Secondly, he averted to a

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁹⁵ Mouzelis, 1992, pp. 268-9.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. pp. 282-5.

¹⁹⁷ Cook, 2004, p. 18-9.

philosophy of history which would postulate a single, fixed subject. “For reasons both theoretical and historical, then, the economic and political subsystems must remain independent of the collectivities or groups generated within the lifeworld.”¹⁹⁸ If Perkmann’s suggestion that different conceptions of social order presuppose determinate forms of relationship between social and system integration is remembered, one can conclude that Habermas’ conception of social order is predicated on the differentiation of the lifeworld and systems on the basis of different types of societal integration. The social integration, meaning for Habermas’ harmonization of the orientations of social actors through mutual understanding entailed by communicative action, characterises the social relations in the lifeworld.¹⁹⁹ Indeed, it follows from the quotation above, Habermas relegates to the lifeworld not only the social interaction between actors, but the constitution of actors as well. This signals a definitive break from the Marxist conception. On the other hand, system integration, meaning functionalist coordination of the consequences of actions is assigned to the spheres of economy and the state. In this case, the structural determination of action becomes absolute within the state and economy. Parsonian functionalism resurfaces characterising state and economy, precluding any meaningful consideration of agency to the effect that

the tensions between the lifeworld and system, between social- and system-integration mechanisms of action co-ordination, cannot *explain* social stability or change. At best, this tension *describes* a certain state of affairs; at worst, it turns the notions of lifeworld and system into reified forces or mysterious entities fighting each other for the control of human soul.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 19.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 18.

²⁰⁰ Mouzelis, 1992, p. 283.

3.2.3. A re-consideration of autonomy

The appropriation of the sociological understanding of the autonomy of civil society from the economy and state imports its problematic aspects outlined above. As it was mentioned previously, a non-negative definition of civil society, that is one which does not merely conceive it as a residual social sphere outside the state and economy, hypostatizes spontaneous social solidarity as autonomous from the capitalist social relations of the market and coercive, bureaucratic mechanisms of the state. Such an understanding is clearly visible in Rosanvallon's conception of modern societies as state-market duality.²⁰¹ Having observed that a straitjacket of state or market characterises the main axis of the debates in the wake of the demise of the welfare state, Rosanvallon argues that the two options actually re-produce each other. He argues that the intervening, omnipotent state is imbricated in the very liberal conception of the society, composed of atomistic individuals. If the society is nothing but an association of atomised individuals, the state becomes the only means of socialisation. The lack of means other than state for individuals to socialise restricts the answers to the questions of satisfaction of needs to either state or the market. This in turn further obliterates alternative ways of satisfying needs such as societal forms of solidarity and mutual aid. Rosanvallon identifies the process of "re-socialisation" as one which manifests the expansion of civil society towards the domains that has been smothered by the welfare state. Accordingly, the welfare state formalised the mechanisms of socialisation via taking up socialising functions. As the universal apparatus of welfare or relief, it disrupted the genuine, authentic mechanisms of social solidarity and substituted face-to-face relations of mutual aid with anonymousness. On the other hand, he dismisses a "theoretical" answer to the question of "reconciling the desire for autonomy [characteristic of modernity] and new non-state forms of mutual support." "There is no need for constructing a sociological ideal type which is neither society nor community... One should not conflate formulating a [particular] social policy with describing a sociological

²⁰¹ Rosanvallon, 1993. pp. 236, 240-2.

concept.”²⁰² Yet what he actually dismisses is not *any* theoretical endeavour as to conceptualising civil society but the one which identifies society with a collectivity of individuals. He mentions the existence of societal “shock absorbers”, alongside the welfare state, which serve the function of alleviation of economic crises where the state fails. In this respect Rosanvallon proposes the modification of socialist or social democratic responses to the current crisis informed by these social trends.²⁰³ If the stage is not to be left to the neo-liberal alternatives of the welfare state, a new form of “post-social democratic” consensus between workers, employers and the state should be devised. He means that these spontaneous intermediary reactions of the society could be utilised in considering alternatives to the welfare state.

In terms of the Habermasian problematic of colonisation, what Rosanvallon identifies as the diminishing visibility of society is a process of subsumption of solidary social relations by the state. That is to say, he hypostatizes the existence of a form of sociability defined outside the parameters of the state and market which requires an institutional-legal space to develop and become a coordinating mechanism in order to surpass the state-market duality. Domination is conceived as the existing subordination of the solidary imperatives to the functional dependency between the state and the market. Indeed, Rosanvallon explains the lack of reaction from the working class to the dismantling of the welfare state with reference to the sense of weariness vis-à-vis the mechanisms of collective regulation. What is needed in revitalising the working class subjectivity is enhancing the spontaneous solidary relations by means of opening up a space outside the state and market. Interestingly enough, Rosanvallon notes that capital is eager to prey on the said sense of despair and fragmentation of the working class and utilise it in “regulating the social costs economically.”²⁰⁴ With this injunction he implies that the domination of capital which currently thrives in the institutional mechanisms of collective bargaining could somehow be alleviated in civil society through devising a new social contract.

²⁰² Ibid. p. 230.

²⁰³ Ibid. pp. 240-2.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 236.

Rosanvallon seems to assume that since the objective domination of capital is insinuated into the structures of state and economy, civil society as a sphere beyond them, characterised by shared meanings and social solidarity, carries the potential of overcoming the asymmetry existing in these spheres. Civil society, then, becomes a social sphere lacking objective mechanisms of domination where the relations between social actors can unfold free from them. In other words, civil society is characterised by an unconditional voluntarism whereas economic and political systems by total structural/functional determination.

The unrealism of this dualistic outlook, forcefully argued by both Cook and Mouzelis, aside, the real problem, as Rosanvallon duly recognises, appears once one considers the actual process of change which would determine the possibility of the opening up of this autonomous space. Rosanvallon argues that since spontaneous social solidarity already exists beneath the reified structures of state and economy, all it needs is legally recognised mechanisms of expression which would ultimately be granted by the state, even though he admits that voluntary withdrawal on the part of the state is unlikely. On the other hand, he draws attention to the rise of the neo-liberal discourse of individualism which has initiated a real process transformation towards a social model which is a far cry from the civil societarian project he advocates. This dilemma is a due indicator of the inability of comprehending actual mechanisms of social transformation via the dualistic conception which separates actor based social relations and systemic-structural mechanisms as different orders of social reality.

3.3. Self-Limiting Radicalism

Self-limitation has three different but interrelated senses with regard to the radical conception of civil society. First, it is related with the normative stance taken vis-à-vis the conception of modernity discussed above. In this respect, it is conceived in direct relation to the general political attitude which is deemed pertinent in characterising the autonomy of civil society. As modernity of contemporary civil

societies is predicated on its differentiation from the economy and the state self-limitation signifies the maintenance of the boundaries between these spheres from the side of social actors.²⁰⁵ This sense the term originated in the Eastern European dissident movements, especially in the experience of Polish Solidarity.²⁰⁶ The constant threat of Soviet invasion was a significant factor in devising self-limitation as a political strategy on the part of the dissidents. As such, it implied creating a “parallel polis” alongside the state rather than vying for capturing state power. What the dissidents in Poland strived for was the democratisation of civil society via its autonomisation. This strategy became the hallmark of the contemporary conception of civil society as it implied the existence of state and civil society as separate but related spheres. That the forces of the society could unite against the state without aiming for acquiring state power is considered a paradigm case of contemporary politics of civil society. The origination of self-limitation in the Eastern European countries was particularly meaningful as the movements organised around this notion had the first hand experience of the adverse consequences of revolutionary transformation for civil society and democracy.

The postrevolutionary or self-limiting revolutions of the East are no longer motivated by fundamentalist projects of suppressing bureaucracy, economic rationality or social division. Movements rooted in civil society have learned from the revolutionary tradition that these fundamentalist projects lead to the breakdown of societal steering and productivity and the suppression of political plurality, all of which are then reconstituted by the forces of order only by dramatically authoritarian means.²⁰⁷

Cohen & Arato re-formulate the concept in this sense as characterising the political strategies of new social movements which are conceived confined to civil society. It is argued that new social movements strive for the autonomy of a social sphere from the despotic and commodifying incursions of the state and capitalist economy respectively. By implication, Cohen & Arato argue, the form of politics advocated by

²⁰⁵ Cohen, 1985, p. 664.

²⁰⁶ Cohen & Arato, 1992, pp. 15-6, 31-3, Cf. Egrenberg, 2000, p. 173.

²⁰⁷ Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 16.

the new social movements represents the modern and democratic ideals of civil society by striving for differentiation and internal democratisation of civil society. As such, they remain modern insofar as their struggles do not target the autonomous existence of the state and economy as functionally steered spheres. Cohen & Arato's conception of civil society is particularly pertinent for politics of self-limitation for they explicitly stress the necessity of limiting democracy to civil society.²⁰⁸ In their account, the functionalist differentiation, discussed in the previous section, gains normative value. They argue that democratisation does not have limits in civil society. However, political and economic systems have their functional requirements for effective operation and hence, participatory democracy in these spheres cannot progress without jeopardising their functioning. In the political sphere, the requirements of the bureaucratic rationality for an effective administration should be autonomous from democratic influence.

[I]nsofar as the economy or, rather, economic society is concerned, the requirements of efficiency and market rationality can be disregarded in the name of democracy at the cost of both. Here the levels of representation and participation need to be reconciled with the social needs of production and consumption. Forms of economic democracy need not be as inclusive as those of the polity.²⁰⁹

Welfare state's expansion and the ensuing conception of "ungovernability" similarly address self-limitation from the perspective of crisis of modernity. Accordingly, in the course of modernisation, the growing needs and demands on the functional spheres causes their relentless expansion. Offe proposes three elements of crisis inherent in modernisation.²¹⁰ First, the differentiation of the sub-systems makes each

²⁰⁸ Ibid. pp. 415-6.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 416.

²¹⁰ This account of crisis is, in fact, a broader application of Offe's earlier explanation regarding the crisis of the Keynesian welfare state. See, Offe, C. *'Crisis of Crisis Management': Elements of a Political Crisis Theory*. in John Keane (eds.), *Contradictions of the Welfare State*. (London, Hutchinson, 1984). pp. 35-64. In his earlier work, Offe identified systemic crises as the crises of coordination between social subsystems. Yet he accounted for the systemic dependencies and incompatibilities between state and economy as a crisis of capitalism. In other words he conceived both crises of accumulation (first order) and systemic (second order) crises as crises of capitalism. It seems in his later work he takes his cue from Habermas when reconstructs the two-tier crises heuristic

one of them more dependent and vulnerable against the others. Secondly, the problem of maintaining societal reproduction requires effective mechanisms of coordination between subsystems. Thirdly, the inflexibility in terms of structural alternatives makes devising and applying effective regulative mechanisms even more difficult. He outlines the paradox of modernity as follows:

There is rather the appearance that the ‘modernity deficit’ of the society grows larger to the extent that the subsystems become more modern, and that at this macro level the helpless experience of blind fatalities becomes the rule to the extent that the rational increase of the subsystems advances. It appears that the modernization of the parts come at the cost of the modernity of the whole.²¹¹

Offe argues that modern societies have become “risk societies” in the sense that the damage inflicted by development can no longer be conceived solely with reference to class exploitation.²¹² The contemporary problems of modernity rather cause “collective self-injury” whereby every actor has its share on both the infliction and suffering of the damage. Even though, the damages might be unevenly distributed among social groups, the relationship between superior and subordinate social groups becomes one of transferring the costs and damages of development from the former to the latter. Unlike the situation where such relationship is one of exploitation of some by the others, in the case where everybody is both the perpetrator and the victim, albeit to varying degrees, there is no Archimedean point which would punish the advantaged groups and vindicate disadvantaged ones.

[I]f social conditions approximate a state of collective self-injury, then everybody involved gains and loses (more than he or she gains) at the same time. In addition, marginalized social categories may accumulate losses but their suffering may not profit others. Under these conditions, there is nothing that can be done to combat this completely irrational

as the ‘crisis of modernity’. For Habermas’ break with Marxism in this respect, see Cook, 2004, pp. 53-6. Mouzelis, 1992, p. 272.

²¹¹ Offe, 1996a, p. 9.

²¹² Claus Offe, Bindings, shackles, brakes: On self limitation strategies, *Modernity and The State: East, West*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996b, pp. 31-57, pp. 32-4.

structure from the executive heights of state politics (be they conquered by revolution or reform).²¹³

So the dilemma of modernisation for the modern social contexts, to Offe, consists of ensuring the effective coordination and compatibility of functionally differentiated spheres of life without jeopardising the “emancipatory possibilities of rational subjectivity”.²¹⁴ If one-sidedness that is inherent in modernisation problematises societal reproduction by inducing crises of compatibility and coordination, the remedy lies in the selection and application of regulatory principles which would effectively coordinate inter-systemic relations. Offe cites the state, market and community as the prevalent answers hitherto provided to the question of regulating social relations in this sense. He dismisses the statist option for the innate circularity regarding its handling this task which stems from the simple fact that the state cannot precede the conception of order it is supposed to maintain. On the other hand, he chides the liberal remedy of maintaining systemic independence via separation of state and civil society by pointing at the “constitutive function of political domination in economic processes and ... social power, social classes and political conflict which emerge from the economic processes.” Finally, he dispenses with the communitarian option for its anti-modernist and authoritarian resonances. For Offe, a viable way of alleviating the crisis of modernity involves unburdening the social systems.²¹⁵ This implies that the demands on social systems must be diminished. The unburdening of the systems is predicated on a strategy of rational self-limitation according to Offe. This is similar to the

The debate on new social movements comprises a significant pillar of the issue of self limitation as understood by the contemporary radical conception of civil society.²¹⁶ As to the politics of civil society, new social movements are considered model social actors for two fundamental reasons. First, they enunciate demands not

²¹³ Ibid. p. 34.

²¹⁴ Offe, 1996a, p. 10.

²¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 24-6.

²¹⁶ Offe, 1996b, pp. 31-57.

reducible to conventional conceptions of interest as the basis of collective action. Rather it is argued that their demands centre on struggle for autonomy, that is, they strive for de-statisation and decommodification of daily life which is not only distinct from interest based politics, but it subverts its commodifying and bureaucratising consequences. Secondly, these movements are issue based movements, lacking strong ideological commitments and totalising political projects. This feature makes them compatible with a pluralist conception of politics of civil society. Self limitation in this respect, it is conceived as a civil value par excellence which guarantees the plurality of civil society by assuring that no social group or ideology strives for totalising/dominating civil society. The need to maintain the pluralism within civil society implies that no social group should vie for dominating, or totalising civil society. This is inseparably related to the 'public' character of civil society which means that it should not be defined in terms of a 'particularity'.

It is mentioned above that the radical conception of civil society which identifies with a type of social solidarity autonomous from the objective mechanisms of domination and exploitation which are associated with the state and the market ends up with a dualistic conception of social and system integration. That is to say, social interaction between actors is associated with civil society whereas objective mechanisms of domination and exploitation are considered to condense in the state and economy. Consequently, an unconditional voluntarism characterises civil society whereas capitalist economy and bureaucratic state manifest total functional determination.

CHAPTER 4

RADICAL CIVIL SOCIETARIANISM IN TURKEY

4.1. From Centre-Periphery to State-Civil Society: Theoretical Background of the Turkish Debates

The Turkish debates regarding the development of civil society in relation to democracy have developed upon an intellectual terrain in which a particular understanding as to the nature of state society relations in the Turkish context is dominant. This understanding draws upon a Weberian approach, specifically his conceptualisations of oriental despotism as a form of patrimonialism pertaining to the eastern social formations and the emergence of the modern state.²¹⁷ Şerif Mardin is the pioneering figure of this approach²¹⁸ whereas Metin Heper elaborates, on the same vein, on the emergence and development of the modern state in Turkey and its relation to the society.²¹⁹ The road opened by these important figures and followed by others in due course leads to the development of a discourse of the importance of an autonomous civil society for democracy and its emergence against the state. For, even though one of the chief assumptions of this approach is that the unique nature of the Ottoman-Turkish case comprises a form of development of state society relations fundamentally different from its western counterparts, and hence requires different

²¹⁷ See Ilkay Sunar, *State and Society in the Politics of Turkey's Development*, Ankara, Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1974. p .4.

²¹⁸ Mardin, 1973 passim.

²¹⁹ Heper, 1985, passim.

theoretical frameworks in analysing it,²²⁰ the aforementioned primary problem before (further) democratisation stands as the common ground. That is, according to the contemporary literature on civil society and democratisation, since in both cases (East and West, advanced and developing countries) the state is the primary obstacle before the development of civil society and hence democratisation, the process of democratisation is conceived in identical terms, both analytically and normatively, as the development of an autonomous civil society. The dominant paradigm on Turkish state-civil society relations underlines the underdevelopment/non-existence of a civil society in the historical experience of Turkey and posits the specific nature of the state-society duality therein as the factor which explains it. Mardin and Heper posits in similar terms that in Turkey the modern state emerged via suppressing and/or dominating the society, or rather the social elements which would have formed a civil society in the modern sense in which it appeared in the Western European experience. In this chapter I will elaborate on this line of argument and establish the fundamental aspects thread it has set, upon which the contemporary conceptualisation civil society develops.

4.1.1. The Ottoman Heritage

In his seminal work, “Centre-Periphery Relations: A key to Turkish Politics”, Mardin proposes a conceptual framework in approaching the state civil society relations specific to the Ottoman-Turkish political history. He posits that the trajectory of the development of Turkish polity is of a different nature from its European counterparts. In the latter, one observes a parallel development of social forces alongside the state²²¹ whereby the primary social cleavages were among these. In the feudal order of the Western medieval history, the centre could not practice absolute domination over the periphery in political and economic terms. The feudal estates maintained a degree of autonomy in terms of managing surplus extraction and could raise a

²²⁰ Cf. Yalman, 2004, p. 47.

²²¹ Cf. Heper, 1992a, p. 143.

contingent of their own military force and hence on both grounds could confront the centre. In the feudal form of state society relations, the feudal lords commanded their own state-like local communities in contrast to the sultanist-patrimonial model, which characterised the Ottoman experience, whereby the local administrators were servants of the sultan and simply conveyed the centre's domination to the provinces of the periphery.²²² The centralisation experience of the western absolutist states occurred simultaneously with the integration of the autonomous feudal estates and other social groups with the state. Yet throughout this process of integration, the autonomous status of the estates as foci of social power helped them retain a form of legal autonomy vis-à-vis the state. Given the complexity of the multiple social confrontations and their gradual integration to the centre, the Western European polity gained a form of flexibility whereby different sections of the society found accommodation in the emerging political society; "medieval estate found place in the parliaments; the lower classes were accorded the franchise".²²³

However, the trajectory of the development of the Ottoman-Turkish polity stands in sharp contrast to the Western model.²²⁴ In the former, the centralisation of the imperial state, from the beginning and on either eliminated or left largely autonomous the alternative power centres and social groups in the society. In none of the two cases the peripheral forces were attempted to be integrated with the centre. The pre-Ottoman nobility was largely eliminated whereas those remained and certain particular ethnic or religious groups were loosely tied to the centre, maintaining a degree of autonomy (disintegration might be a more appropriate term). "Thus in the more general ecological sense, the centre and the periphery were two very loosely related worlds."²²⁵ The state's approach to the periphery expressed an intervention from *outside*, maintaining its separation from the periphery by not trying to transform those relations fundamentally and favouring localism. The connections between the

²²² Sunar, 1974, p. 4.

²²³ Mardin, 1973, pp.170.

²²⁴ Ibid pp. 171-175.

²²⁵ Ibid. p. 171.

centre and periphery comprised a reciprocal network of patronage rather than simply depending on brute force exerted by the centre.²²⁶ This implies that the relationships were arbitrary, not institutionalised and depended rather on the charismatic authority of the Sultan as the papa figure. Notwithstanding the loose character of connections between the centre and the periphery, the state exerted a tight control on the social and economic relations. The bureaucratic control the centre exerted over the periphery was based on *adab*, which implied a secular set of rules and standards of ruling based on reason and necessity and formed the general outlook of the ruling strata.²²⁷ The separation of the state from the periphery was manifest on the status of the perpetrators of this control (*kul*'s).²²⁸ They were distinguished from the periphery by every means possible. Individual official's upbringing consisted of a closed system of education and socialisation into the ruling elite, no instance of which (except the religious education) was shared with the members of the ruled. Their economic status was also wholly different. They were exempt from tax but their means of accumulating wealth was restricted. Finally, the ruling class (the centre) was culturally unified in contradistinction to the heterogeneous periphery, through its monopoly over the cultural codes of the officialdom and its distinct structure of education. Consequently, the state's domination of the periphery was all about maintaining: i. the separation between the ruling elite and the periphery and ii. the given fragmented structure of the society as it was.

The sharp separation of the centre from the periphery, or state from the society and the accompanying domination and tight control of the former on the latter, hindered the development of the complex relations of confrontation and compromise among the various forces of the periphery and between the periphery and the centre which in the Western context gave rise to a legally secured autonomous civil society. Put differently, in the West, the periphery became civil society by virtue of the generation of a contractarian understanding between the centre and the forces of the

²²⁶ Sunar, 1974, p. 5.

²²⁷ Heper, 1992a, p. 150.

²²⁸ Mardin, 1973, pp. 170-1, Heper, 1992a, p. 149.

periphery. In contrast, in the Ottoman polity such an understanding could never develop –or started developing rather late- and the periphery could not gain an autonomous status guaranteed by the legal enforceability of such a contract.

In his later work Mardin traces the factors that conditioned the lack of an autonomous civil society, which arose in the West upon the tradition of contractarianism, in the Islamic ethos within which the Ottoman state-society relations developed.²²⁹ The peculiar historical unfolding of the state society relations involved the persistent tension between the state and the congregation.²³⁰ The Islamic community did not entail a relegation of political affairs as opposed to its Christian counterpart. The political and religious questions were not considered separately in the initial years of the Islamic polity. This “paradigm” was to be shaken however with the development of the Islamic state and the proliferation of its “secular” exigencies which were gradually differentiated from those of the community that were strictly determined in Quran. The tension between the secular and religious exigencies which characterise the Ottoman social formation disseminated into the Ottoman state as the religious elite was incorporated to it. The Religious *ulema* was divided into two categories, that which “lived among the people and was the communicator of its wills” and the official *ulema*.²³¹ The former group was to be important in terms of the proliferation of social movements which defied the state. The bifurcation of the religious elite became a ground upon which the centre-periphery, read the contradiction between the state and Islamic community, cleavage manifested itself. If the centralisation of the Ottoman state, then, required the co-optation of the religious elite into its bureaucratic centre and securing some control on popular/heterodox Islamic elements, the bifurcated nature of the former rendered

²²⁹ Şerif Mardin, Türk Toplumunu İnceleme Aracı Olarak Sivil Toplum, in Şerif Mardin, Türkiye’de Toplum ve Siyaset, İstanbul, İletişim, 1992, pp. 21-33 and Şerif Mardin, *Civil Society and Islam*, in John A. Hall (ed.) *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995, pp. 278-300.

²³⁰ Mardin, 1992, p. 22-6.

²³¹ *Ibid.* p. 26.

it precarious. As a result of this precarious process of centralisation, the sharia law was relegated to the sphere of private law as “different but equal”.²³²

Mardin argues that the existence of a somewhat autonomous sphere of private property guaranteed by the sharia law signifies a partial existence of elements of civil society in the Western sense. Yet the emergence of such civil society, in its full sense was incompatible with the Islamic lifestyle of the Ottoman society. Apparently, the western values that are associated with it such as freedom, the progressive belief in the perfectibility of the human being through knowledge and the development of a secular legal code which regulates the social interactions of individuals and social groups do not translate into the Islamic culture notwithstanding the existence of the sharia as the Islamic version of civil law. The non-existence of a secular legal code implied that the Islamic (by implication the Ottoman) understanding of justice had to rely on the charismatic authority of a just prince to fill in the gaps in the religious law which could not, as of itself, be practiced unequivocally. According to such a notion of justice the Sultan occupied a niche which connected God’s will, the society (welfare of the subjects), the army and the state. Any frustration with the existing form of justice led to a feeling of yearning for a mythical ‘golden age’ rather than a conscious reform project. The un-development of legality depended on a number of “cultural” factors which opposed the development of the above mentioned values which secured the emergence of civil society in the West. First, a compassion for the individual as emanating from its divine nature, contrasted to belief in the capacity and hence freedom of the individual acting in a way which would make man and his life better. Secondly, a “respect for justice seen as the harmonizing of rival claims” prevailed rather than a secular morality which established the individuals’ or social groups’ rights vis-à-vis the state or among each other. And finally the belief that the absolute truth is divine and is not for the common man to reach prevented the development of a sceptical and progressive understanding of knowledge.²³³ These factors all contributed to the failure of emergence of a secular civil code in the

²³² Ibid. p. 28.

²³³ Ibid. pp. 286-8.

Ottoman-Turkish polity through which the horizontal ties among the forces of the periphery could be established and integrated with the centre. In contractarian terms, Mardin claims that even though in the Ottoman polity a tacit contract existed between the sovereign and the people, in contradistinction to the Western model of Leviathan, it was not legally enforceable.²³⁴ Hence, the autonomy of the peripheral forces in the Ottoman polity was a *de facto* autonomy;²³⁵ when they could retain some control over social or economic relations, this was either granted to them by the centre out of necessity, or was merely indicative of the weakness of the system of rule the centre attempted to maintain. If the centre felt that it was necessary, it could have arbitrarily annulled such a status, provided it had the necessary means and strength.

As noted, according to the centre-periphery paradigm, even though the Islamic ethos which dominated the Ottoman society produced an understanding of justice which depended ultimately on the obedience to the authority, a perennial tension between the centre and periphery did exist. Mardin argues that this tension failed to provide a source for an understanding of commonality among the forces of the periphery that would unite them against the state. In fact, the instances of contention with the state always took parochialistic and heterodox forms, the only commonality between them being the negative attitude towards the state.²³⁶ With the Islamic culture, whose characteristics are summarised above, being pervasive in the Ottoman society, the lack of development of civil society becomes a consequence of the structural features of the Ottoman *periphery* itself in addition to the hampering of the centre's domination. The primary feature of the Ottoman society in this respect is its fragmented nature. Mardin points at the peculiarities of the Ottoman city to view the segmented structure of the Ottoman society.²³⁷ Accordingly, the religious, ethnic and occupational fragmentation in the Ottoman city hindered the development of a

²³⁴ Ibid. p. 288.

²³⁵ Mardin, 1973, p. 170.

²³⁶ Ibid., p. 174.

²³⁷ Mardin 1995. pp. 286-7.

unified and autonomous urban identity. Moreover, the mercantile interests could not develop to their full extent because of both the facts that the dominant Islamic code of the society was indifferent, if not hostile, towards commerce, and the Ottoman state did not support the merchant class through some variant of mercantilism.²³⁸ Consequently the city could not develop to become the autonomous and countervailing force against the palace.²³⁹ The Ottoman city is, hence, both a geographical unit where the fragmentation of the Ottoman society manifests itself, and a peripheral element dominated by the centre.

In short, the particular features of Ottoman *society*, its fragmented structure, the underdevelopment of urban life and the role Islam played on these factors among others were not conducive to the emergence of a civil society in the Western sense of the term. Insofar as the Ottoman state is concerned, as a state founded upon a contradictory conjuncture of a religious form of legitimacy –Islamic conception of justice and individual- and secular tendencies of statecraft –the word of the Sultan and later the reformism of the bureaucracy- it vacillated between dominating the periphery and having to delegate authority to local power-holders. Neither case allowed the establishment of a polity, or a political society where the civil elements are integrated but also retain their autonomy through a legally binding contract. Put differently, the un-development of a civil society in the Ottoman-Turkish context,

²³⁸ As the centre-periphery paradigm assumes, the state rather prioritised the subsistence of the population and extraction of the surplus to the centre. The latter goal is inferred from the economic policy of the Ottoman centre which favoured the imports vis-à-vis exports through heavier taxation of the latter. Heper, 1992a, p. 148, Heper 1985, p. 101. For the tight control Ottoman state maintained on exports see also Çağlar Keyder, *Türkiye’de Devlet ve Sınıflar*, İstanbul, İletişim, 2001, pp. 23, 32-3.

²³⁹ Yet, following Mardin, the tension between the sedentary urban population and nomadic rural population constitutes an important dimension of the centre-periphery cleavage (1973, pp. 170-1). The contempt the urban population had for the nomadic lifestyle formed the basis of the “Ottoman cultivated man’s stereotype that civilization was a contest between the urbanization and nomadism, and that all things nomadic were only deserving of contempt.” Mardin’s account also implies that the tension between religious doxas, or rather the centre’s suspicion of the Islamic heterodoxy also had such a geographical dimension, the nomadic population being the principal social basis of heterodox Islam and the provincial centres being the source of rebellions which were organised around such religious contentions. Hence, in cultural terms of urbanism and Islamic orthodoxy, the city does become a ‘central’ element. This highlights the difficulties of accommodating certain social phenomena, such as the city, within the strictly dualistic scheme of centre and periphery (see the next section).

one infers, is caused by the nature of the Ottoman *periphery/society* itself in addition to the domination of the centre.

4.1.2. The perplexity of Ottoman-Turkish (under-)modernisation and (non-) emergence of civil society

In the approach conditioned by the centre-periphery paradigm, the wave of modernisation which the Ottoman state underwent came about as the territorial expansion of the empire came to a halt. The traditional system was largely sustained through an economy depended on conquest rather than commercial revenues and hence the military incompetence ruptured the sustenance of the Ottoman state.²⁴⁰ The declining economy reflected to the periphery as the state intensified the surplus extraction from the peasants. This exacerbated the centre-periphery conflict, as rebellions have become widespread.²⁴¹ The crisis was perceived by the ruling establishment as the breakdown of the traditional system of rule and the efforts at reformation were thus carried out with the aim of ‘saving the state’. This was of course in line with the particular type of Ottoman tradition in which the state was paramount. The Ottoman bureaucracy was the source of the reform movement and they had to secure their independence from the Sultan to initiate the reform programme.²⁴² The bureaucrats saw that the superiority of the West was the reason of the decline and reform meant for them the incorporation of those elements which enabled the West to become superior to the Ottoman state. The Leviathan and the nation state became the examples which stood before the Ottoman modernisers to model the state accordingly. The development of civil society in the West which secured individual rights made them conscious about their own rights to be defended against usurpation by the Sultan. Hence, initially the reformers failed to extend such a conception of rights to the periphery, which they still saw as comprised of subjects

²⁴⁰ Cf. Heper 1992a, p. 148.

²⁴¹ Mardin 1973, p. 175.

²⁴² Mardin 1995, p. 292, Heper, 1992, p.146.

rather than citizens. Their defence of constitutionalism and, later on, republic was still marred by residues of this outlook. The cultural alienation between the ruling elite and the periphery hindered the integration of peripheral elements to the reform programmes. Lacking any footing in the periphery, the reforms became top-down efforts which sustained the traditional rift between the centre and the periphery and re-produced the domination of the latter by the former, this time, in the name of modernisation. Ironically, modernisation was a reform effort towards a model which was in its original (Western) context avoided the centre-periphery contradiction. However, the Ottoman-Turkish style modernisation, which included first and foremost the efforts of the Ottoman modernising elite in bringing coherence to the periphery and followed by a constitutional integration of peripheral elements to the centre through a system of representation²⁴³, was plagued by its centralist character and inevitably reproduced the contradiction of the centre with the periphery. How the emerging elite undertook the task of modernisation and its particular position as the state elite was the transmission belt of the centre-periphery conflict to the republican era. In fact, the whole modernisation experience became yet another case which postulates the lack of civil society as the latter did not have any role to play in the top-down reformism of the state elite.²⁴⁴

The foundation of the republican regime and initiation of constitutional rule seems to have provided some form of a mechanism of integration for the peripheral forces into the political centre.²⁴⁵ Yet the centre-periphery cleavage reappeared from the beginning of the republican rule, this time represented by the conflict between the

²⁴³ Mardin 1973, p. 175.

²⁴⁴ According to Heper, the reformism of the state elite has slightly different loci between different periods. It was mainly the Ottoman-Turkish military-bureaucratic elite which formed the backbone of the modernising elite which initiated the reform process, established the republican regime and later the multi-party system. With the intensification of the party conflict, the bureaucratic-intelligentsia became fragmented and defected to the periphery along with the Republican people's Party, in which case the military became the sole protector of the modernisation and regime, that is the sole locus of the state elite. Heper, 1992a, pp. 156-7 and Metin Heper and Aylin Güney, *The Military and the Consolidation of Democracy: The Recent Turkish Experience*, *Armed forces & Society*, 26(4), 2000, pp. 635-657, p. 637.

²⁴⁵ Mardin 1973, pp.181-7.

Kemalist elite which was by and large continuation of the reformist bureaucracy of the Ottoman Empire and a group of peripheral notables and certain members of the bureaucracy who adhered to decentralist and religious views. The reformist Ottoman tradition of maintaining a strong centre was reproduced by the Kemalist elites. Even though the new republic had to rely on local notables in strengthening the state, decentralist tendencies of the latter were resented. The people were backward and were to be enlightened before integrating them fully with the polity. This attitude, which favoured top down integration, resulted in the aversion towards popular mobilization on the part of the ruling elite. In consequence, the peasantry remained by and large in control of the local notables who were to establish ties with the Democrat Party. As the contradiction the bureaucratic centre and the notable-peasant alliance of the periphery intensified, the two sides aligned with the Republican People's Party and Democrat Party respectively. The latter strengthened its ties with the periphery through a politics of patronage which became the hallmark of Democrat Party style *mobilization*, which, Mardin argues, initiated a "meaningful relation" between the centre and periphery as a form of integration.

Mardin stresses the two fundamental factors which delimit the periphery, within the unfolding of the centre-periphery cleavage:²⁴⁶ consisting of primordial groups and being anti-official. He argues that even though, as a consequence of the degree of economic and political modernisation the country had undergone, the periphery started to be differentiated within itself, its counter-position to the centre is still its primary defining characteristic. That is, notwithstanding the differences or contradictions between various groups within the periphery, they are united in contesting and opposing the westernised-secular bureaucratic culture and domination of the Kemalist elite. However, the modernisation project of the centre paradoxically yielded certain results to its own detriment: The state-fostered nascent bourgeoisie came to demand liberalisation and an Islamic paradigm of civility, which flourished as a result of a limited integration into the centre through the multi-partyism, started

²⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 187.

asserting itself as an alternative model of civic culture and form of life.²⁴⁷ The centre-periphery conflict exacerbated around contradictions of secularism vs. Islamism and bureaucratic-etatism vs. economic liberalism. Hence, during the republican era the process of Turkish modernisation still revolved around the duality of centre and periphery though appearing in a different guise from the one that marked the Ottoman context.

As a prominent account upon which the strong state-versus weak civil society dichotomy understanding rises, Heper's approach underlines the state's determining influence upon the foundation of the modern Turkish polity. Accordingly, the Turkish state should be distinguished from other emerging modern states in its: i. development "alongside and autonomous from" the societal groups or power centres, and ii. capacity, throughout this development, in hindering the development of autonomous power centres within the society which might threaten its authority in due course.²⁴⁸ In the republican context the initiation and fostering of democracy expressed the state elite's project which was predicated upon its aim to maintain its autonomy from and potency over civil society. Thus, in the Turkish case, the advent of democracy does not manifest the gradual emergence of a balance between the particularistic interests within civil society and universal interests of the state elites.²⁴⁹ The state elite's defence of a "rational democracy" defined by a minimum of free and honest elections and the secular-modern character of the regime against the primordial, religious or particularistic threats from the society forms the centre's suspicion of the periphery. This suspicion leads to the reluctance of the state elites in allowing the direct integration of peripheral elements to the polity. Hence the state scrutinised the forms of organisation of the social groups and how peripheral demands were represented. This scrutiny hindered the development of autonomous organisation on the part of the periphery. Consequently, the political party became the sole organisation which mediates between the state and society.

²⁴⁷ Mardin, 1995, pp. 294-5.

²⁴⁸ Heper, 1985, pp. 98-9, Heper, 1992a, p. 145.

²⁴⁹ Heper, 1992a, p. 142.

Heper argues, à la the statist institutionalist approach, that, to the detriment of those theoretical frameworks which attempt to account for the state-society relations via “socially determinist” conceptions, the state might at times appear as a determinant upon how certain social groups are formed, how their political capacities develop and how they act.²⁵⁰ In the Turkish case, since the state is the only or dominant locus of political integration, various power groups within civil society have formed direct vertical relationships with it so as to pursue their interests and in turn have become dependent on it.²⁵¹ “Indeed, Turkish civilians have always organized their lives around an omnipresent and ... an omnipotent state”.²⁵² The entrepreneurial class was subordinate to the state for it was the centrality of the state and a political stratification of the society that was paramount.²⁵³ In this respect, the emerging bourgeoisie could not gain autonomy from the state and could not transcend its particularistic interests to develop a general public notion of interest. Lacking channels alternative to the direct vertical integration, i.e. through patron-client relations, with the centre, the periphery could not articulate various interests to provide for a civil conception of universality. The consequence was the development of individual manipulation in policy implementation which established the political parties as the centre of political activity. Yet political parties, as facilitators of patronage, were largely autonomous from the social groups and functioned rather as the media of elite conflict. This conflict involved the two sides of state vs. political elites. The latter consisted, initially of those members of the state elites who were discontent with the modernisation project of the state elite and defected to align with the local notables and peasantry. Yet they were equally distinct from these peripheral forces and rather turned to the periphery to garner votes and capture the power from the state elite through elections. In this respect, the attitude they had vis-à-vis the

²⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 143-4.

²⁵¹ Ibid. p. 150.

²⁵² Ibid. p. 147.

²⁵³ Heper, 1985, p. 102-5.

peripheral demands was a pragmatic. This is traditionally the prime motive behind their accommodation of a political discourse which involves Islamist elements.²⁵⁴

These are the primary conditions of the characterisation of the Turkish polity as fluctuating, at different periods, between an excessive authoritarianism and debilitating pluralism. Put differently, the strong-and-autonomous state tradition and autonomy of the state as a feature of the nature of the Turkish polity, leads to the state becoming either too strong or too weak at different occasions depending upon the balance between the state and political elites.²⁵⁵ This is because the political elites which represent the interests formed within civil society fail to maintain prudence or responsibility, acting overly responsive to the demands coming from civil society. This predisposition of political elites stems from the fact that their development, as the development of the loci of interest in civil society which they represent, is marred from the beginning by the prevalence of vertical integration. In the long run this renders the power relation between the state elites and political elites a zero-sum game in which the latter will either ‘hijack’ the state in fulfilling their own ends through clientalistic relations, or making it a scene of debilitating pluralism which expresses a disruption of the balancing and/or reconciliation of conflicting interests. The strength of the state is the determining foundation in this respect for it is responsible from the underdevelopment of independent power centres within civil society which, if existed, would have: i. balanced the state elite’s power, ii. impute coherence to the multiple and otherwise incoherent demands emerging from civil society. Heper infers further that in the Turkish case, the development of democracy is predicated not upon the uneven distribution of resources required for political mobilisation among different social groups, as socially determinist accounts would claim, but rather upon the “degree to which generalised power ... can be de-generalised or ‘particularised’”. “[A] viable democracy”, Heper concludes, “needs not only autonomous political parties, but also autonomous social groups” with enough political capacity to counterbalance state elites’ universalising projects with

²⁵⁴ Heper and Güney, p. 638.

²⁵⁵ Metin Heper and Fuat Keyman, *Double-Faced State: Political Patronage and the Consolidation of Democracy in Turkey*, Middle Eastern Studies, 34, pp. 259-77, 1998.

the particularism inherent in civil society without having to aim at usurping the state power.²⁵⁶ The reason the democratic values affiliated with the “bourgeoisie-as-public” could not develop in the Ottoman-Turkish context is that the dominance exerted by the state over the social groups and the latter’s subsequent inability to develop horizontal relationships among themselves to articulate a universality contending that which imposed by the state elites.²⁵⁷ Instead, the sole form of confrontation between the centre and periphery takes place when the political elites confront the bureaucratic intelligentsia, or the political party which represents this group, by making direct appeal to the masses.²⁵⁸ This approach is predicated upon the condescending and dominating attitude of the political elites in their relations with the socio-economic groups. Consequently, the political elites cannot establish an efficient control over the demands coming from the periphery and subordinate them to a formulation of general interest that emerges from a social consensus. Hence the political elites fail to oppose the transcendentalist state tradition and inevitably reproduce it when they are able to take power.

4.1.3. The implications of the centre-periphery paradigm for civil society debate

Mardin’s and Heper’s accounts seem to share the assumption that the rift between the state and society which characterises the Ottoman-Turkish polity prevented the emergence of civil society in the sense it appeared in the west. However, there are differences as to the conceptualisation of the duality between the two understandings. It appears from the summary above that Mardin seeks the explanation of the centre-periphery contradiction and the lack of the development of civil society it entails in a particular understanding of the socio-cultural characteristics of the Turkish-Islamic

²⁵⁶ Heper, 1992a p. 147.

²⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 150, Heper and Keyman, 1998, p. 261. For a very similar account on the lack of development of a bourgeois conception of civil society see Keyder, 2001, pp. 269-73.

²⁵⁸ Heper, 1985, p. 106, Heper and Keyman, 1998, p. 265.

community.²⁵⁹ Accordingly, the inbuilt tension between the religious and secular sources of authority which characterises the genesis of Islamic states culminates in a dual structure: authority is effectively stripped from the society to be located in the secular rule of the Sultan whereas the religious-normative framework which characterise the social and economic relations becomes dependent on the former. Contrary to orientalist considerations of western scholars according to Mardin,²⁶⁰ in the Ottoman society, structured forms of economic relations and a legal framework pertaining thereof were extant. What distinguished the Ottoman society from the conception of civil society understood in the Hegelian sense was the lack of a type of authority distinct from that of the state in maintaining order in society. In other words the sultanic rule was the single preeminent source of authority in the Ottoman Empire. Hence, in terms of the maintenance of order in society, the centre had to dominate every aspect of life. In this respect, a form of social contract different from the one which characterised the Western understanding was pertinent to Ottoman society. Contrary to Hobbesian conception, in the Ottoman case, Mardin implies, sovereignty did not stem from a social contract among individuals. Rather, the tacit contract which existed between the state and society was unilateral in the sense that it depended on the power of the centre in securing social order and ensuring justice. The state had duties towards the society in terms of preserving the well being of its subjects and upholding the divine law, yet the society lacked the authority recognised by the state with which to make sure the state observed them.

Mardin's account, then, draws upon a socio-cultural cleavage between religious and secular exigencies, which eventuated in the rift between the state and society, as the explanan in conceiving the distinction between the centre and the periphery. For Heper on the other hand, that the social cleavages which characterise the Ottoman-Turkish society are cultural rather than "functional" is to be sought in the state tradition, that is, how the state tradition conditions the political cleavages and actors. In his work in which he evaluates the status of civil society in Turkish context with

²⁵⁹ Şerif Mardin, Turkish Islamic exceptionalism yesterday and today: Continuity, rupture and reconstruction in operational codes *Turkish Studies*, 6(2), 2005, pp. 145-65.

²⁶⁰ Mardin, 1992, passim.

regard to democratic consolidation, Özbudun clarifies this point. Accordingly, he enumerates the political culture and the existence of the strong state tradition as the primary factors which explain the underdevelopment or weakness of civil society in Turkey. A la Heper, Özbudun associates the predominance of cultural cleavages, or status conflicts over functional or economic conflicts within Turkish polity. This stems from the fact that the domination of the state in the Ottoman Empire precluded the emergence of strong social classes which could confront the state.²⁶¹ Accordingly, the economic development in the Turkish context was state induced under the aegis of westernisation as opposed to being a spontaneous development of horizontal relations between social forces.²⁶² At times when the rational imperatives of the project of modernisation pursued by the state elites were disrupted by the political elites' rise to power, patronage politics dominated. The latter type of state-society relation, characterised by the condescending and pragmatic attitude of the political elites, was also vertical, meaning that it was not conducive in terms of inducing the participation of social actors in policy making.

As noted, the approach which is outlined above provides the ground which the major positions on the contemporary Turkish debates on civil society rise. Notwithstanding the differences between Mardin and Heper's modes of explanation, the dualistic understanding of centre-periphery relations, which they share, assumes that in Turkey the periphery could not become civil society in a western sense. Two main lines of circumstances which are detrimental to such transformation are provided. First, one can derive from the Mardin's account that the Islamic cultural code which was dominant in the Ottoman society was in some important respects antithetical to the Western values of autonomy and freedom of the individual upon which rested the modern understanding of civil society. Thus these values could not develop indigenously; and later when they were to be imported by the modernist state elites, the same Islamic ethos resisted their dissemination. In the phase of modernisation,

²⁶¹ Ergun Özbudun, The state, civil society and new challenges to democratic consolidation, in *Contemporary Turkish politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000, pp. 125-47, pp. 126-8.

²⁶² Heper & Keyman, 1998, p. 261.

with the secularisation of the state, the prevalence of the religion was relegated to the society and the (secular) state-(traditional) society became the main axis of the centre periphery conflict. Secondly, both Mardin's and Heper's accounts establish that the extreme autonomy the state enjoyed in the Ottoman-Turkish tradition and its suspicion regarding the autonomous representation of various interests in the periphery were detrimental factors for the emergence of mediating mechanisms which in today's civil societarian parlance identify the civil and political societies. Civil society, as autonomous organisation of the social forces, was constantly undermined by the state throughout the republican history for it was suspected of obstructing the modernising reforms of the state elite. On the other hand, the initiation of the multi-party regime failed to produce a viable political society as mediating between the articulated interests of the society and the state as the political parties could not establish organic links with the society. The multi-partyism led at best to a contest between the state elites and political elites whereby the latter further obstructed the emergence of civil society by concentrating on capturing the state power -hence not aiming at transforming its transcendental nature- and favouring patronage politics which reproduced the fragmented nature of the periphery.

It seems that, according to the dominant paradigm in reading the state-society relations in the Turkish context, the emergence of an autonomous civil society as representing a 'civil' universality which would contest and balance the state lies at the centre of democratisation. In fact the conceptualisation of the centre-periphery conflict implies a teleology such that the resolution of this single-most important axis of contradiction would imply the emergence of a civil society which has overcome its fragmented, particularistic nature under the universal norms of political and economic liberalism, balancing the omnipotent state and putting an end to its omnipresence by asserting itself as an alternative locus of social power. In simplified terms, the theoretical framework outlined above reads the entire Ottoman-Turkish history as a history of the centralisation of the state and society's attempts at escaping state-control. Other than that the object of the contradiction between the centre and the periphery is never clarified. This implies that any social tension throughout Ottoman-Turkish history could be read as a manifestation of this

contradiction regardless of its particular characteristics such as the demands articulated by the protagonists. But what does the “periphery” struggle for? What does the centre want from the periphery? From Mardin’s account, the answer to these questions implies a perennial contradiction between centralisation and decentralisation; that is, the peripheral loci of power struggle for their autonomy whereas the centre is reluctant at best to allow it. Indeed, Mardin’s perspective is built upon a dualistic “ontology” of the centre and periphery. As Fethi Açıkel aptly argues, the centre-periphery cleavage, as a theoretical construct, involves an inevitable tendency to become a transcendental –read ontological- feature of state-society relations in Turkish context and reduce its whole history to a perennial struggle between two incommensurable entities.²⁶³ Neither has any meaningful existence outside of the contradiction of centralisation and decentralisation. That is to say, in such a dualistic conceptualisation, there is virtually no possibility for dislocation or convergence of the elements which are fixed into the categories of centre and periphery. One might add that when conceived in terms of this duality, all the particularisms within the periphery melt into a single subjectivity under the struggle for autonomy. The ontology of the periphery implies that the particular positions –local notables, heterodox religious groups, congregations and ethnicities- which together comprise it stand side by side. The contradictions between them are unrelated or secondary to the fact that they comprise the anti-state ‘lump’ of the periphery. It is a ‘lump’ since the particularistic peripheral elements fail to establish horizontal ties between them to form a unified stance against state domination.²⁶⁴ On the other hand, the ontology of the centre entails that the state’s sole motive is centralisation, that is, the dissemination of domination over the periphery. This is apparent when one considers the transmission of the state domination of the Ottoman times to the Republican era with the Kemalist bureaucratic elite. In both cases, the centre fails to establish sustained and institutionalised ties with the periphery to the detriment of the sustenance of a form of legitimacy which is predicated upon the

²⁶³ Fethi Açıkel, *Entegratif Toplum ve Muarızları: ‘Merkez-çevre’ paradigması üzerine eleştirel notlar*, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 105, 2006, pp. 30-69, p. 34.

²⁶⁴ Heper 1985, p. 99, Heper 1992a, p. 150.

latter's legally secured channels of representation. Finally, within the contours of the conceptualisation of the centre-periphery conflict, motives of the centre and the periphery for defending their respective positions and, by implication, a possible resolution of such a contradiction becomes oblivious.

Around contemporary parameters of the centre-periphery conflict the statist resolution of the contradiction manifests a trajectory initiated by the emergence of the state elite, undergone a Western education and influenced by the Leviathan and the nation state.²⁶⁵ This elite gained autonomy from the patrimonial rule,²⁶⁶ initiating the reforming of the Ottoman-Turkish polity along the secular Western standards of a "rational democracy". This implies that the resolution of the centre-periphery conflict, as a peculiarity of the Oriental despotism of the Ottoman social formation, means nothing but the abolishment of itself and its replacement with an Occidental model by those privileged actors who were capable of importing it. This amounts to the fact that the Ottoman-Turkish periphery is a static communal entity which is unable to produce change as of itself; and thus the only hope of transformation is importing it.²⁶⁷ However, this centrist project inevitably assumes the subjugation of the periphery whose very nature contradicts westernisation. This being so, the peripheral resolution of the contradiction would imply the re-assertion of the Islamic notion of civility to the detriment of the modernisation project of the centre. Yet since such a form of civility militates against those Western values which construct the 'civil society', and hence democracy, this would mean a return to the pre-modern state of affairs which produced the centre-periphery rift in the first place. What emerges is a deadlock. The ontological fixing of the centre and periphery as determining the behaviour of all social and political -would be- actors leads to the predicament where the perennial contradiction becomes a perpetual and irresolvable antagonism.

²⁶⁵ Mardin 1973, p. 169.

²⁶⁶ Mardin, 1995, p. 292 Heper 1993, p. 246.

²⁶⁷ For a critique of this Orientalist understanding see Rifat-Ali Abou-el-Haj, *Modern Devletin Doğası*, 16. Yüzyıldan 18. Yüzyıla Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Ankara, İmge Kitabev, 2000, passim.

In fact, with the possibility of agency denied to the particular social actors/forces, the centre and periphery becomes subjectivities themselves. As argued by Mitchell regarding the state, the reification of the centre and periphery or state and society is produced via imputing a generalised form of consciousness, desires and motivations “distinct from their material or social world”.²⁶⁸ So far as periphery is concerned, such an imputation implies that the resistance to state domination and drives for autonomisation are not only distinct from the particularities which comprise it but envelopes them as well. To repeat, the dualistic ontology implies that the centre-periphery contradiction tends to permeate every political conflict that the Ottoman-Turkish social formation produces.

As noted, the ontology of the centre and periphery is established upon the respective subjectivities attributed to the parts of the duality. As such, the categories of state and society are conceived in idealistic terms as though they possess anthropomorphic qualities of motivations or desires. This conception is reflected upon the culturalistic explanation which prevails in the literature. An important axis of the debate regarding the state-civil society relations in Turkish context concerns the cultural/ideological divide between the centre and the periphery or the form of cultural socialisation the state implies for the bureaucratic elite and a form of primordial-religious ethos which pertains to the periphery and contradicts the former. In fact, it is argued that throughout the Ottoman-Turkish history of state society relations, this proved to be the major, if not the exclusive, cause of the rift between the centre and the periphery. In the republican context, the centre is characterised by the secular-Western modernist ideology of the state elite and its representation of a notion of general-national will.²⁶⁹ On the contrary, a religious-primordial ideology

²⁶⁸ Tim Mitchell, The limits of state: Beyond statist approaches and their critics. *American Political Science Review*, 85(1), 1991, pp. 77-96, p. 88.

²⁶⁹ For a prominent account which supports this view upon which the autonomous character of the Turkish state is rises see, Theda Skocpol, Bringing the state back in: Strategies of analysis in current research, in Peter Evans, et. al. (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 3-44, passim. Her conception of delimiting state via attributing to it an ideology-consciousness implies conceiving of it not only as a ‘distinct entity’ but also an antropomorphic subjectivity. In this way it neatly fits into the categorisation of statist institutionalist literature criticised on these grounds by Mitchell.

characterises the periphery with an emphasis on particularism which negates the universalism of the centre. The peripheral forces were stigmatised by the Kemalist state elites as first and foremost as backward and reactionary; the purported Islamic ethos that was dominant within the periphery was the source of this repugnance. The underlying view that prevailed among the Kemalist elite was that the Islamic character of the Ottoman polity was the single most important reason behind the decline of the state and it confronted, once more, their project of modernisation as its arch-enemy. This contradiction stamped on Kemalist modernisation its secular-positivist orientation. For Heper, the prevalence of such a cultural form of cleavage vis-à-vis functional (economic) cleavages was manifest in the elitist character of the Turkish polity, where the contradiction between the state and political elites, distinguished on the basis on their ideological commitments, exhausted politics.²⁷⁰

In terms of the problematic pursued in the previous chapters, two significant points emerge with relation to the debates as to the existence of civil society in Turkey. First, even though the theoretical frameworks which guide the discussion in the Turkish and Western contexts are significantly different, there are certain points of convergence. The conception of modernisation which is common in two contexts concentrates on the rationalisation of the cultural-normative structure which characterises the state society relations and deems it a fundamental requirement for the development of civil society. In other words, in conceiving the development of civil society, explanatory primacy lies in the cultural modernisation as opposed to the development of capitalist economy which guided the early modern conceptions of civil society. Both Heper and Mardin's accounts establish that the chief contradiction, and the principle dynamic of change which characterises the Ottoman-Turkish society is the cultural rift between the centre and the periphery and the ensuing underdevelopment of a rational normative framework which would establish civil society as an autonomous centre of social power against the dominating state. Secondly, the process of modernisation is conceived as differentiation between the state and civil society by both Mardin and Heper. This according to both writers

²⁷⁰ Heper, 1985, p. 99.

never materialised in the Turkish context. The state's extreme autonomy from the society caused its being the single preeminent centre of authority. If the modernisation implied in the Western world differentiation and reciprocal strengthening of state, economy and civil society as contentious spheres of society, in the Turkish context, the total domination of the centre/state precluded the differentiation. As a consequence of the accounts of Heper and Mardin, to sum up, civil society in the western sense of the term failed to emerge in the Turkish context due to the i. the dominance of the society by the state as the single source of authority ii. the lack of modernisation in the society which would enable a rational, i.e. civil normative framework which would unite the social forces as an alternative source of authority against the state.

4.2. Contemporary Debate on Civil Society

The discussion pursued in this chapter up to now has established the fundamental presuppositions of the contemporary debate on civil society in Turkey. This debate revolves around the centre-periphery paradigm developed by Mardin and state tradition approach advocated by Heper. Virtually all positions which opt for a politics of civil society in terms of democratisation in Turkey conceive the centre-periphery or state-society contradiction as the principle contradiction which characterises the Turkish polity. A superficial consideration of this understanding, if juxtaposed with the global debates on civil society would indicate a convergence. After all, the global revival of politics of civil society is predicated on a conception of politics of society against the state. That the principle contradiction which has characterised the Ottoman-Turkish polity is the one between the state and society seems ready to be conceived with regard to the politics of civil society against the state. On the other hand, one should remember that both Mardin and Heper's accounts are predicated on the assumption that the Ottoman-Turkish polity is unique in the sense that it defies being analysed with recourse to the "Eurocentric"

conceptual frameworks.²⁷¹ What Yalman identifies as the “relativist paradigm” which alleges that the Turkish polity has a distinctive ontological essence which would “require a particular epistemological position”, as it finds expression in Mardin’s and Heper’s accounts, asserts the non-existence or weakness of the horizontal social cleavages as the very expression of that essence. Another way of putting it, what distinguishes the Turkish case from the Western model of development, according to the discussion so far, is the non-existence of civil society due to the dominance of a vertical contradiction between the state and society defined in cultural terms. What characterises the effort of debating civil society in the Turkish context, then, is a grave paradox. The remaining discussion will try to show how this paradox appears in different guises. Its particularly perplexing manifestation in the radical civil societarian understanding of (crisis of) modernity will be taken up below. Before that a summary of certain general contours of the contemporary debates is in order.

Notwithstanding the paradoxical feature of the state tradition argument in terms of the conceiving the emergence of civil society in Turkey, it is frequently appropriated, though with reservations. In his work in which he evaluates the status of civil society in Turkish context with regard to democratic consolidation, Özbudun provides an account of various aspects of civil society in Turkey which indicates the continuity of the strong state vs. weak society conception.²⁷² Accordingly, he enumerates the political culture and the existence of the strong state tradition as the primary factors which explain the underdevelopment or weakness of civil society in Turkey. The domination of the state also resonates in the political culture which characterises both “Ottoman-Turkish political thought and perceptions of the people. The state is valued in its own right, is relatively autonomous from the society and plays a tutelary and paternalistic role.”²⁷³ With Heper, Özbudun associates the predominance of cultural

²⁷¹ Yalman, 2004, pp. 46-7.

²⁷² Ergun Özbudun, *The state, civil society and new challenges to democratic consolidation*, in *Contemporary Turkish politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000 pp. 125-47, pp. 126-8.

²⁷³ *Ibid.* p. 128.

cleavages, or status conflicts over functional or economic conflicts within Turkish polity. This stems from the fact that the domination of the state in the Ottoman Empire precluded the emergence of strong social classes which could confront the state. Similarly, Ersin Kalaycıoğlu thinks that the rift between the state and society stems from the cultural divide between the centre, associated with the modernising republican elites, and the periphery, associated in turn with the traditional local elites and their political representatives and subsequently with the religious and ethnic movements which confronted the political centre, vying for recognition.²⁷⁴ Throughout republican history, the transcendental perception of the state has hindered the emergence of a public interest as 'civil society as public'. The modernising centre has considered the social dynamics of the periphery with suspicion, with the ever-existing threat of sedition, as the popular masses were assumed to be ignorant and short-sighted. Yet, according to Kalaycıoğlu, the image of the state as transcendental and omnipotent should be critically appraised for political structures tend to change. More importantly, in an attempt to break with the fatalistic conception of the state tradition approach, he argues that the Turkish state seems to have low capacity in manipulating the behaviour of those who are under its rule and eliciting obedience effectively.²⁷⁵ Drawing on Migdal's conception of state strength which is identified as the state's capacity to mobilise resources and enforce a regulatory framework over the society, he argues that the Turkish state is relatively weak. According to Kalaycıoğlu, the weakness of civil society in Turkey, then, needs to be accounted for with reference not to the strength, but the weakness of the state. He argues that the weak capacity of the state in coordinating society and maintaining the rule of law, leads to its authoritarian handling of contending social groups or organisations. The mutual suspicion between the centre and the periphery exacerbates not only the authoritarian character of the state, but the fundamentalist inclinations within civil society as well. Emre Toros follows Kalaycıoğlu in asserting

²⁷⁴ Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, State and civil society in Turkey: democracy, development and protest. in Sajoo, Aryn B. (ed.) *Civil Society in the Muslim World: Contemporary Perspectives*, New York: I.B.Tauris, 2002b pp. 247-272.

²⁷⁵ Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Civil society in Turkey: continuity or change?* in Brian Beeley (ed.) *Turkish transformation: new century-new challenges*. Walkington: The Eothen Press, 2002a pp. 59-78, passim.

the need to go beyond the approaches which argue that the state tradition hindered the development of civil society in Turkey in coming to terms with the development of voluntary organisations and social movements from 1980s and on.²⁷⁶ However, Toros' approach is somewhat more voluntaristic as he sees the civil society itself as the agent of democratisation which is able at times to force the state in enacting reforms, at least in terms of agenda setting. Whereas for Özbudun and Kalaycıoğlu the development of civil society is required for democratic consolidation, Toros considers existing civil society as a potent actor in democratic consolidation, though he thinks it needs further development.

The downplaying of the state tradition in terms of hindering the development of civil society which characterises the democratic consolidation literature notwithstanding, certain problems regarding the existing civil society are identified. The endurance of the strong state as an obstacle before the further development of civil society, and a political culture characterised by authoritarianism and lack of mutual trust have already been mentioned. What remains as a problem which perplexes democratic consolidation which stems from civil society is the existence of fundamentalist movements. The trend of development of civil society in a manner conducive to democratic consolidation is threatened by the rise of political Islam and Kurdish nationalism, according to Özbudun.²⁷⁷ Even though, he argues, these movements seem to derive from civil society, the organisations associated with them cannot be considered "bona fide" civil society organisations as their fundamentalist motives threaten the autonomy of other civil society actors and/or defies the democratic regime and rule of law. Özbudun conceives the rise of both movements as determined by the process of globalisation which exacerbated fundamentalist ethnic and religious movements and increased demands for recognition. Further, following the socio-economic frustration caused by the erosion of the welfare state, the economically deprived groups become susceptible to the influence of political organisations or parties of such persuasions. In the discussion on radical civil

²⁷⁶ Emre Toros, Understanding the role of civil society as an agent for democratic consolidation: The Turkish case. *Turkish Studies*, 8(3), 2007, pp. 395-415, passim.

²⁷⁷ Özbudun, 2000, pp. 141-5.

societarianism below, the problems of existing civil society as conceived by the civil societarian literature will be taken up in more detail.

4.2.1. Radical Civil Societarianism in Turkey

4.2.1.1. Situating Radical Civil Societarianism in Turkey

As it was stated in the third chapter, it is hard to draw boundaries between different positions in the debate on civil society. Arguably, in the Turkish case, the prevalence of the conception of state-civil society confrontation outlined above further blurs the boundaries between different positions. In fact, in the secondary literature, the distinction between different theoretical accounts on civil society is usually maintained with reference to the explicit political commitments of the reviewed authors expressed as the strategic value attributed to civil society.²⁷⁸ Indeed, the vagueness of the lines of demarcation between say liberal and self-declared socialist or radical conceptions of civil society themselves at times become the very criticism of the latter.²⁷⁹ This work also employs a similar type of distinction based on self-declared political-strategic positions with one reservation: it should be noticed that the political commitments of the reviewed authors do have impacts on their theoretical choices which, in turn, have significant political consequences. Hence, this section embarks upon a critique of the particular use of civil society as an analytical category and as a signifier of a radical democratic project. The goal is to consider the political-practical resonances of the term via examining critically its construction as an analytical category. The most important and prevalent, if not trivial, question around which the discussion of civil society revolves is, as it is discussed in detail in previous chapters, the question of autonomy. It is also established that for the radical conception of civil society, the question of autonomy

²⁷⁸ Funda Onbaşı, *Civil Society Debate in Turkey: A Critical Analysis*, Phd Diss. Middle East Technical University, 2008, *passim.*, Erdoğan, 1999 *passim.*

²⁷⁹ Sungur Savran's chiding label 'left-liberal' is a case in point. Quoted in Erdoğan, 1999, p.108.

has two dimensions, namely civil society's autonomy from the state and economy. The theoretical question to be tackled then, concerns as much the autonomy of the state and economy from each other as civil society's autonomy from the two.

The state-civil society distinction and confrontation, whose theoretical foundations were discussed above, forms the main axis of virtually all different positions on the civil society debate in Turkey. The radical conception is not exempt from such an underlying assumption. In fact, those authors espousing the utilisation of the radical conception of civil society can be categorised as a variant of the liberal-pluralist position rather than Marxism or conventional social democracy.²⁸⁰ Even those authors who explicitly identify themselves with a socialist political outlook construct their accounts on a state civil society duality as it informs the liberal pluralist conception. The prevalent application of the discourse of civil society in this respect, invokes John Keane's conception as a meta-language, overarching different ideologies and capable of accommodating various political positions including socialism. A discourse on democracy-democratisation is considered synonymous with the development of civil society as autonomous from the state. Indeed, the autonomisation of civil society is postulated as the prerequisite of any democratic transformation including the socialist one. By implication, the conceptual references of the authors reviewed below do not involve Marxist categories of critical political economy but rather the political-liberal distinction of state and civil society. The problematic of autonomy is conceived in political terms whereby civil society is conceived as a non-state sphere but retaining a political function, that of countering the state power which is disposed to dominate social life in its diverse aspects.

4.2.2.2. Crisis of Modernity or Under-Modernisation: How to Explain the "Emergence" of Civil Society in Turkey

A fundamental characteristic of the radical conception of civil society in the Turkish debates is very much informed by a conception of modernisation similar to that

²⁸⁰ Onbaşı, 2008, p. 196.

which was outlined in the previous chapter. Whereas this conception of modernisation is very much related to the process of differentiation between state and civil society, the specificity of the Turkish case comes to the fore with its defects thereof. In this respect, the radical conceptualisation agrees in large part with the dominant account of Turkish modernisation as an unfinished process. That is to say, it assumes that the peculiar experience of Turkish modernisation, which was dominated overall by the agency of the state and a stratum of intelligentsia with organic links thereof, precluded the development of aspects of modernity within the society. This under-development has two significant dimensions which come to the fore in different accounts of civil society. The first aspect, which might be referred to as the structural aspect implies that the domination of Turkish modernisation by the state precluded the separation of socio-economic and political relations which is a central feature of modernisation as experienced in the west. In effect, civil society as an autonomous sphere of the social failed to emerge because the state never allowed the latter's autonomisation. In somewhat paradoxical terms, one might argue that statist modernisation project was inherently anti-modern.

A prominent way of explaining the emergence of the discourse of civil society and democratisation relates them to the frustration with the state regulation of socio-economic relations in the 'fordist' alignment of state society relations which corresponded to the Keynesian welfare state in the developed world and import substituting development strategies of the developing world.²⁸¹ This configuration of state society relations was organised around the coordinating agency of the nation state, both as a political institution and as a territorial unit.²⁸² Corresponding to this configuration of state society relations, liberal parliamentary democracy was the dominant understanding of democracy which defined the parameters of membership and participation of the individuals in the ruling of their societies.²⁸³ The dominant

²⁸¹ Cf. Keyman, 2000(a), pp. 8-11.

²⁸² Keyman, 2000(a), p. 2.

²⁸³ Fuat Keyman & Ahmet İçduygu, Globalization, Civil Society and Citizenship in Turkey, *Citizenship Studies*, 7(2), 2003, pp. 219-34. and Keyman, Fuat & İçduygu, Ahmet. (2000).

status of the nation state in this respect reflected to the self-representation (or identities) of individuals whereby membership in the state and membership in the nation were imbued to become the privileged position. This was so in both developed and developing countries, the difference between the two being whether citizenship or nationalism was stressed. It is argued that in the developing world the ruling elites have undertaken modernisation with recourse to authoritarian nationalist ideologies.²⁸⁴ In the Turkish case for instance, a dominant assumption is that citizenship has always been subordinated to being a member of the Turkish nation, whose socio-cultural characteristics have been defined authoritatively by the state. The Turkish republican conception of citizenship put the emphasis on the duties of the citizen against the state and rights of the state rather than rights of the citizens and duties of the state.²⁸⁵ An authoritarian interpretation of secularism and a holistic conception of nationalism which conceived the nation as a homogeneous entity lacking class divisions were integral in the modernist paradigm which guided the state in ruling the society. Holistic nationalism also conceived of nation in unity with the state epitomised in the phrase ‘indivisible unity of the state with the land and the nation.’ As it was discussed above, the fundamental assumption of the dominant understanding in the debate on civil society in Turkey is that the confrontation between state and society crystallises around the secularism vs. Islam dichotomy. This dichotomy, according to proponents of the radical conception of civil society, has been the main reason behind the authoritarian nature of the republican regime.²⁸⁶ Autonomisation of civil society was suspected to bring about Islamist resurgence and hence every effort was paid to prevent it. Throughout the republican era, “Islamism, Kurdish identity, leftist ideology and liberalism” became the antagonists of the state. This type of enforced modernisation was detrimental in terms of a genuine,

Globalleşme, anayasallık ve Türkiye’de vatandaşlık tartışması. In Fuat Keyman & Ali Yaşar Sarıbay (eds.) *Global Yerel Eksende Türkiye*, Istanbul: Alfa, pp. 171-89.

²⁸⁴ Cf. Seligman, pp. 160-5.

²⁸⁵ Levent Köker, *Kimlik Krizinden Meşruluk Krizine: Kemalizm ve Sonrası*, Toplum ve Bilim, 71, 1996, pp. 150-65, p. 158.

²⁸⁶ Nilüfer Göle, *Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics: The case of Turkey*, in A. R. Norton (ed.) *Civil Society in the Middle East*, Leiden, New York, Brill, 1995, pp. 19-22.

spontaneous form of modernisation which characterised western countries. The defects of Turkish modernisation, according to Insel stems from the lack of spontaneous development of modernity from within the society.²⁸⁷ In Turkey, modernisation, understood as the transcendence of traditional social institutions and worldviews, was imposed by the state which situated itself firmly outside and above the society. Göle agrees with Insel and identifies the lack of indigenous capacity for modernisation as “weak historicity” and argues that it results in a “cultural schizophrenia.”²⁸⁸ Insel sees enforced modernisation of the society by the state as an attribute of the republican regime as opposed to the Ottoman state elites for whom the object of modernisation was the state. Even though the Ottoman state also situated itself above the society, it left the latter on its own. In the republican Turkey, however, the state dominated every aspect of society in the name of modernising it from above. Nevertheless, Köker argues that the holistic conception of community, which had been expressed as the unity of the state and religion in the Ottoman era was taken over by the Kemalist elite and reproduced under its own conception of the unity of the nation with the state.²⁸⁹ In this respect, the modernising ideology of the Kemalist elite has expressed a contradictory unity of progressive ideals of liberty and equality and an inherently conservative understanding of the moral unity of the nation. In fact, the holistic conception of the nation became the basis which legitimised the Kemalist reformism based on progressive ideals of the enlightenment. In its confrontation with the pre-modern elements within the civil society the Kemalist elite espoused an aggressive modernist worldview which brought a positivist commitment in science, technology and a centrally organised, ordered progress, which was deployed against the religious elements in the society, together with a solidarist, unitary conception of nationhood expressed through the category of

²⁸⁷ Ahmet Insel, Giriş, in Ahmet Insel ed. *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı*, İstanbul, İletişim, 2001. pp. 7-15.

²⁸⁸ Göle, 1995, p. 22.

²⁸⁹ Köker, 1996, *passim*.

“national will” which was a reflex towards fragmentary tendencies within the society.²⁹⁰

Following the 1980 coup the holistic understanding of nationhood lost credence as it became apparent that different social groups which could not be accommodated within this conception existed.²⁹¹ The Kemalist republican state faced a serious legitimacy crisis as a rift emerged between the conception of citizenship and accompanying conception of nationality and the society which increasingly became a hotbed of fragmentary identity politics. Two sets of factors are utilised in explaining this development. Göle stresses the importance of the socio-economic development of the country in the republican era and resultant upward social mobility. In addition to these ‘internal’ factors, Keyman & İçduygu stress the impact of globalisation which eroded the privileged position of the nation state in terms of organising political life.

The analytical accounts concentrate more on the process of Turkish modernisation as a state driven, and hence, deficient process. Nevertheless, in Turkey as well the revitalisation of civil society is conceived in similar terms which stress a general crisis of modernity. In Turkey, then, explaining the emergence of civil society is caught up within the dilemma of deficient modernisation vs. crisis of modernity. Ultimately, a particular sense of globalisation is called upon to account for the transformation of state-civil society relations with exacerbating identity politics and the legitimacy crisis of the republican state. EU becomes a significant actor in this respect. According to Kubicek, the strong state vs. weak civil society dichotomy and the ensuing lack of “social self-organization to provide leadership and essential services”,²⁹² which characterises the Turkish case is on the verge of being transformed as from early 1990’s and on, with the effects of economic liberalisation, “Turkish civil society became more visible and vocal, often demanding greater

²⁹⁰ Levent Köker, *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi*, İstanbul, İletişim, 2004, pp. 222-6.

²⁹¹ Köker, 1996, passim

²⁹² Paul Kubicek, *The European Union and grassroots democratization in Turkey*, *Turkish Studies*, 6(3), pp. 361-77, 2005, p. 367.

political liberalization.”²⁹³ Islamic organisations, business community, and socio-cultural groups such as Alevis and Kurds were particularly effective in this process. Notwithstanding the growing civil society and awareness of democratisation, Kubicek is sceptical when he considers the “political culture” prevalent in civil society. He intimates that the same “logic of conditionality” characterises a significant part of the Turkish public, meaning that the democratic reforms were welcomed by Turkish people insofar as benefits of full membership were at stake. Other than that, especially regarding the sensitive issues such as those concerning cultural and linguistic rights of Kurdish people, the reform efforts were sparsely supported by the grassroots organisations. “[T]he most important point, perhaps, is that they were have been adopted despite the lack of support from the mass public. One might suggest that this reaffirms ... that Turkish society is fundamentally weak.”²⁹⁴ It seems that insofar as the EU induced democratisation is concerned, the weak civil society is conducive rather than obstructive. The “political discipline provided by the EU prospect” it is argued strengthens those actors within the civil society which opt for the democratic reforms against both the state and so-called “Eurosceptics” within civil society.²⁹⁵ In a way, the dominant understanding that social change is exogenous in the Turkish context is reproduced in the radical perspective.

4.2.2.3. Politics of Civil Society or Self Limitation?

Another significant factor which characterises the radical conception in Turkey is the ambiguous stance taken vis-à-vis the existing status of civil society. While welcoming the rise of Islamist and Kurdish politics (along with more ‘civil’ new social movements) in terms alluding to a society against the state perspective, the fundamentalist nature of these movements are considered a threat for democracy

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 373.

²⁹⁵ Diba Nigar Göksel & Rana Birden Güneş, *The Role of NGO’s in the European Integration Process: The Turkish Experience*, *South European Society & Politics*, 10(1), 2005, pp. 52-72. passim.

simultaneously. This problematises the analytical grounds of radical civil societarianism insofar as it lacks a conceptual vocabulary which would differentiate between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ social movements with reference to civil society.

An explanation of the weakness of civil society in Turkey turns towards the political culture. Accordingly, the “Turkish political culture remains largely traditional. That is respect for authority is stressed over citizen empowerment and participation, and democracy has been shallow, imposed from above by the Westernizing elites on largely peasant, passive society.”²⁹⁶ Kubicek notes, a la Heper, that the mentioned character of the political culture was preserved as such by the state’s attitude towards the civil society which was distrusting and subordinating. The state corporatism in terms of interest representation of social groups was the order of the day. Together with the étatist tenet of Kemalism, both labour and capital failed to emerge as significant social actors autonomous from the state. Since the functional cleavages, in Heper’s terms, did not develop alongside cultural cleavages, the most significant social force which directly confronted the state, from the transition to the multi-party rule and on was the Islamist groups. However, the rise of the political Islam and other social groups which were not directly co-opted by the state exacerbated the conflict between the state and society and was not necessarily conducive to the emergence of civil society, as the state’s reaction to these movements was increasing authoritarianism vis-à-vis emerging civil society.²⁹⁷ The second significant aspect of the process of modernisation, then, involves the accompanying conception of political culture dominant in society, which is deemed irrational and fundamentalist. The political culture is irrational in the sense that religious, cultural or ideological commitments dominate over interest (or class) based politics.²⁹⁸ On the other hand, Turkish political culture is fundamentalist because different ideological positions constantly strive for dominating politics. The domination of the state explains this status of political culture as well. The totalising, modernist-nationalist ideology

²⁹⁶ Paul Kubicek, *The earthquake, civil society and political change in Turkey: Assessment and comparison with Eastern Europe*, *Political Studies*, 50, 2002, pp. 761-773. p. 762.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 763-4.

²⁹⁸ Ali Yaşar Sanbay, *Yurttaşlık ve Kılımcı Demokrasi*, *Birikim*, 32, 1991, 17-24, *passim*.

imposed on society leads to a resignation-submissiveness on the side of people. Lacking any meaningful opposition springing from civil society, the official ideology becomes further consolidated. What is more, the fundamentalism of official ideology becomes the example for social movements in the eventuality that it is challenged. As a result, those positions which contest the official ideology within society also become fundamentalist and totalising discourses. Furthermore, the perception of the state as the sole medium of politics among conflicting social movements leads to an instrumentalist understanding of politics in which social movements strive for aligning with state power against their rivals. Taken together, the irrational, submissive and fundamentalist political culture precludes development of a pluralist understanding of politics in which different interests and identities can represent themselves publically within civil society.

If the stress on state-civil society distinction and assumptions regarding the problematic nature of Turkish modernisation characterise the contemporary debates on civil society, one might ask what it is that distinguishes the radical conception. Two main lines of argument can be isolated in this respect. A significant set of assumptions which distinguish the radical conception of civil society from the classical liberal and conventional pluralist perspectives is its sensitivity to the so-called postmodern condition.²⁹⁹ A particular conception of globalisation, which shook the nation state as the modernist political project par excellence, is seen as determining the rise of civil society and the pluralist understanding of politics it represents. Accordingly, the conventional understanding of political community, conceived as coterminous with the nation, was obliterated with the emergence of identity politics. The fragmentation of this community led to a disjuncture between the nation state and the society it ruled, leading to a lasting legitimacy crisis of the conventional conceptions of politics and citizenship. Hence, the new alignment of socio-political positions and problems requires political understandings somewhat different from those provided by conventional liberalism or republicanism. The

²⁹⁹ See among others, the edited works E. Fuat Keyman, *Türkiye ve Radikal Demokrasi*, Istanbul, Alfa, 2000, Fuat Keyman & Ali Yaşar Sarıbay eds. *Global Yerel Eksende Türkiye*, Istanbul, Alfa, 2000 and Fuat Keyman & Ahmet İçduygu, 2003.

Kemalist project of modernity is considered, this time, as the paradigm case of modernist nation state and hence liable to become the target of such a criticism. It should be noticed in this respect that Turkish radical civil societarian position converges with the global trend of the criticism of the nation state. This seemingly trivial theoretical terrain shift has one significant upshot: the deficient state-centric Turkish modernisation is now considered complete as the Turkish state is to be criticised with the same terms that apply to Western states. More significantly, globalisation and global rise of identity politics would somewhat implicitly become the means to explain (the possibility of) the emergence of civil society in Turkey.

Radical civil societarianism in this respect takes a critical stance against post-modern identity politics as well as modernist project of the nation state. This is because the former is considered disposed to give way to fundamentalism if it does not articulate with a (radical) democratic understanding of state society relations.³⁰⁰ In this respect, Islamist and Kurdish movements are considered critically as fundamentalist movements ultimately incapable of contributing to the development of a pluralist civil society in Turkey. Furthermore, nationalism, in its different guises as a significant element of the official ideology and ‘social’ political culture, aggravates the fundamentalist tendencies of these movements. Hence, fundamentalism (religious or otherwise) both represented within and outside the state comes to the fore as a major obstacle before the development of an autonomous and democratic civil society. Consequently, radical civil societarianism displays an ambiguous attitude towards really existing civil society in terms of its capacity to become an agent of democratisation. One might argue that a sense of disillusionment replaces the initial enthusiasm in welcoming the development of a vigorous associational life and social movements once the current situation is analysed “realistically”.

A significant aspect of this “culturalist” approach for the purposes of our argument is that it divides the contemporary positions on civil society debate. Those who

³⁰⁰ Fuat Keyman, *Küçülen ve Parçalanın Dünyada Siyaseti Anlamak*, in Fuat Keyman, *Türkiye ve Radikal Demokrasi*, İstanbul, Alfa, 2000(a), pp. 1-40 passim.

approach to the problem from the (religious) right, tend to consider such an Islamic ethos as, following Mardin, a distinctive form of civility which contests the Western understanding of civil society. Yet the contemporary form the Islamic concept of civility takes is markedly different from the one existed in the Ottoman times.³⁰¹ With the modernisation the society has undergone since the late 19th century, the Islamic references within the periphery have been partly modernised by virtue of the education system and development of mass media. The foundation of faculties of theology and religious secondary education (İmam Hatip schools) and the emergence of liberal and religious mass media brought together the primordial religious world views with modern forms of cultural re-production. The emergence of an Islamic entrepreneur class and their organisations facilitated the convergence of the Islamic worldview and capitalism. Finally, the establishment of the State Directorate of Religious affairs and rise of the Islamic political parties to the status of prominent political actors, the same Islamic ethos were partly integrated to the political-organisational forms of modernisation. All these factors distinguish the contemporary guise of the Islamic conception of civility from its primordial Ottoman predecessor.³⁰² It is in such a context that the Islamic conceptions of democracy and civil society emerge and find their place in the contemporary debates on state-civil society relations.³⁰³ The response to the Islamic approach to the questions of civil society and democracy from among radical civil societarians is twofold.³⁰⁴ Some takes off from the view that Islamic identity was oppressed by the state and hence perceived the former's reaction as a manifestation of a democratic struggle.³⁰⁵ Rather

³⁰¹ Göle, 1995, pp. 38-9. Mardin, 1992, passim. Açıkel, 2006, passim.

³⁰² Mardin (1973) sees the religious institution of the Ottoman polity on the borders between the centre and the periphery and argues that it descended into the periphery with the advent of the secular modernisation of the Kemalist elite. It appears, with the factors enumerated here, religious institutions are once again problematise the centre-periphery duality. See Açıkel, 2006 passim.

³⁰³ See Ali Bulaç, *Medine Vesikası Üzerine Tartışmalar I*, Birikim, 47, 1993; Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *İslami Popülizm ve Sivil Toplum Arayışı*, Birikim, 47, 1993 passim.

³⁰⁴ Nebilay Erdoğan, *Türkiye'de Sivil Toplum Kavramı: Sağ ve sol sivil toplumculuk*, Mürekkap, 13, 1993, pp. 102-26 passim. and Gunter Seufert, *The Impact of Nationalist Discourse on Civil Society*, in Stefanos Yerasimos et. al. (eds) *Civil Society at the Grip of Nationalism*, İstanbul, Die Deutsche Bibliothek, 2000, pp. 25-49, passim.

³⁰⁵ Taner Akçam, *Türkiye için yeni bir toplumsal projeye doğru*, Birikim, 42, 1991, pp. 7-17.

perceptive to a paradigm of identity politics, this view postulated that the Islamist reaction was conducive to the democratisation insofar as it confronted the state's domination of civil society which was equally repressive towards political left. The resolution this side proposed implied the need for a more inclusive polity which would be achieved if the secularist military-bureaucratic elite relaxed its tight control over politics.³⁰⁶ Whereas a second view saw the authoritarian tendencies intrinsic to the Islamists and/or the authoritarian reaction they could incite in the state elites as a threat to democracy and civil society. This position was critical of the Islamists as well as the state and called for moderation and tolerance.³⁰⁷ Nevertheless, both the Islamists and different positions among the liberal left communicated around a common discursive track as all the sides perceived the contention through the binary opposition of state vs. civil society or, in this particular case, centre vs. periphery.

³⁰⁶ Göle 1995, pp 37-40.

³⁰⁷ Binnaz Toprak, *Civil Society in Turkey*, in A. R. Norton (ed) *Civil Society in the Middle East*, Leiden, New York, Brill, 1995, pp. 87-118, pp. 106-11.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

A critical evaluation of the contemporary revival of the idea of civil society as it was appropriated by the radical democratic commentators has been the endeavour of this thesis. The discussion commenced with a critical summary of the reappropriation of the conceptual history of the term from the western political thought. The assumption was that the different considerations of the theoretical history of the term are determined by a contemporary engagement with the classical works, and as such, by notions and problematics pertaining to contemporary debates. In this respect, the first chapter attempted to understand which aspects of the classical conceptions came to characterise the contemporary meaning of the term. Two fundamental tendencies were observed in the literature in this respect. First, a normative-ideological disposition to counterpoise spontaneous social solidarity to state power is associated with the theoretical distinction between the state and civil society. In this regard, civil society is identified with an innate propensity of individuals to form societies without recourse to state power. In other words, civil society implied publicity, a form of universality in Hegelian terms, which was located outside and, as opposed to Hegelian conception, conflicted with the state. This understanding contrasted the earlier conception of civil society which had been considered coterminous with the state. Epitomised in Hobbes's conception, the earlier sense of civil society as commonwealth was predicated on political coercion which bound individuals together in peaceful existence. The emergent distinction between state and civil society was separation in the sense that the state power was considered merely to regulate a pre-given social collectivity from outside. Yet the classical conception of the distinction between the state and civil society as a self-regulating entity was based on the emergence of economic relations liberated from the political "yoke" of the feudal social relations. What constituted the basis of spontaneous social order, in

Scottish enlightenment and classical political economy, was the market. In this respect, contemporary radicals' stress on the political character of the distinction between the state and civil society becomes crucial for it either neglects this fact or rebukes it as economic reductionism. The radical conception of civil society, then, develops as opposed to the liberal conception of the distinction between the state and the market and alleged Marxist reduction of all social relations to the exigencies of the mode of production. As opposed to both the liberal and Marxist versions of reductionism, the appropriation of the classical heritage by the radicals indicates a desire to ground a conception of spontaneous social order independent of political power upon social relations distinct from economic relations. The attempt to differentiate civil society is predicated on the assumption where state power and economic relations are associated with state despotism and capitalist exploitation respectively.

In this respect the second theoretical move in interpreting the classical history of the idea of civil society comes to the fore. The construction of civil society as distinct from political power and capitalist exchange assumes restrictive conceptions of economy and state. Accordingly, politics becomes identified with the administrative-bureaucratic power of the state whereas capitalist social relations are assumed to be exhausted by the egoistic relations of the market. Civil society is construed as an intermediary sphere of societal organisation located between the economy and the state, being autonomous from both. The restricted conceptions of economy and state are read into the theoretical history of the development of the term which results in partial or misinterpretations of different theoretical accounts. Not only the contemporary ideological understanding of the "society against the state" but also restrictive conceptions of economy and state are attempted to be imputed to the classical accounts. The line of thinking which stretches from classical political economy via Hegel and Marx to Gramsci, whose main characteristics which conflict with these conceptions, are one-sidedly interpreted. The discussion in the first chapter attempted to show, contrary to the contemporary commentators' interpretations, that Hegel, Marx and Gramsci's accounts forbid the separation of civil society from the state and economy but conceive them as moments of a totality

of social relations which cannot be conceived outside their interrelation. The conceptions of economy and state these writers employ defy the contemporary restrictive, functionalist conceptions which respectively reduce them to instrumental rationality/exchange and bureaucratic rationality/coercion so as to open up space for civil society conceived as a social solidary sphere uncontaminated by power and exploitation. It is no coincidence, then, that none of the classical accounts mentioned above could justify a politics of civil society against the state and/or capitalist economy.

The discussion of the first chapter established that the radical conception of civil society seeks a conception of social relations distinct from capitalist economy and located outside the state in the history of theorising civil society. The second chapter took issue with the radical conception in this light. It was observed that the attempt to differentiate civil society from economic and political relations was predicated on asserting the specificity of a normative basis of sociability or social solidarity vis-à-vis these relations. Even though the radical conception construes civil society as a social sphere autonomous from both the economy and the state, it is predicated on the assumption that this autonomy is precarious. Paradoxically, it seems, civil society, though autonomous, is under the threat of being smothered by the state and capitalist economy. The coercive bureaucratic intervention of the state is considered the primary threat against the civil society, regardless of the difference in historical and social circumstances of state society relations. Indeed, the diverse social-historical contexts from the early modern era of absolutism in Europe to the post-war, to Keynesian welfare state, and to the communist Eastern-Central Europe the state's expansion at the expense of civil society is conceived in similar terms: the propensity of state despotism to expand versus the potential or actual defence mechanisms of civil society. The glaring ahistoricity³⁰⁸ of this conception is indicative of the generalised normative-ideological sense of civil society justified by John Keane as the "language of civil society" as a "post-foundationalist" meta-

³⁰⁸ Cf. Göran Therborn, *Beyond civil society: Democratic experiences and their relevance to the "Middle East"*. in Elisabeth Özdalga and Sune Presson (eds.) *Civil Society, Democracy and the Muslim World*. Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, pp. 45-53, p. 47.

discourse against despotism.³⁰⁹ Yet the radical conception is at pains to distinguish itself from the liberal (and contemporary neo-liberal) understanding which identifies civil society with the free market and opposes state intervention to the economy so as to eliminate every social or political barrier before capitalist accumulation.³¹⁰ Even though the radical conception of civil society is attempted to be deployed against the capitalist economy as well as the state, the capitalist nature of the economy is implicitly (at times explicitly) endorsed as an economic structure which is to be regulated/influenced externally by the state and civil society. Arguably, the conception of civil society pursued by the radicals is defensive in this respect meaning that the solidary social relations inherent in this sphere are to be protected against the propensity of capitalism to expand through widespread commodification toward relations of solidarity.

Frequently, the autonomy of solidary social relations in civil society is attempted to be grounded analytically in social theoretical terms on a sociological account whose contours are drawn by the normative functionalist understanding of Parsons. This is in line with a desire to confront the reductionist theories by asserting the autonomy of those social relations which are considered civil vis-à-vis political and economic spheres. Hence, the second chapter attempted to comprehend the problems of asserting an ontological essence to civil society uncontaminated by exploitation and domination through a critical engagement with the theoretical grounds of this approach. Accordingly, the normative-integrative structure of society, considered distinct from the economic and political relations, as maintained by the normative functionalist school, provides the ground upon which rise the solidary social relations endeared by radical civil societarians. Normative functionalist conceptual framework which is to surpass the economic reductionism of the liberal and Marxist conceptions of civil society, then, provides the theoretical references in constructing civil society as an autonomous social sphere. In functionalist understanding, modernisation means the progression from the kinship structures of the primitive societies via the gradual

³⁰⁹ Keane, 1998, pp. 32-42, 55-6.

³¹⁰ Alexander, 1998a, p. 5.

differentiation of economic, political, cultural-religious and normative-solidary functions into their respective systemic spheres. These spheres operate in accordance with their own functional requirements which dictate certain forms of organisation and means of action coordination. The differentiated spheres grow and expand as modernisation progresses. As a result of being differentiated from other social relations in this process, the normative structure which enables social solidarity becomes rationalised. The radical conception of civil society assumes that the autonomous civil legal framework, which guarantees the civil rights and formal equality of individuals and enables spontaneous organisation among citizens, and a common adherence to democratic norms of pluralism and deliberation among civil-social actors become the manifestation of this rationalisation. However, Parsonian functionalism needs to be modified in this respect as it is considered overly conservative and structuralist. Radical conception takes recourse to a particular interpretation of the distinction between social and system integration introduced by David Lockwood. Habermasian reinterpretation of the distinction becomes particularly convenient in conceiving civil society as an autonomous sphere of social solidarity. In going beyond Parsons' functionalism, Habermas dispenses with the functional determination of his integration and latency subsystems and combines the two sets of social relations in his conception of the lifeworld. His association of social integration with lifeworld, which consists of social solidarity and a linguistically determined normative structure which is amenable to and conducive to the development of discourse ethics, becomes the analytical grounding of civil society. On the other hand, Habermas' conception allows the theorisation of economy and the state as autonomous functional subsystems, possessing their respective mechanisms of action coordination. Commodification and bureaucratisation of social relations, understood as the dissemination of functional imperatives into the lifeworld, becomes the means to comprehend the expansion of state and capitalist economy to threaten the autonomy of spontaneous solidary relations existing in the civil society. Such a theoretical construction suggests a

conception of politics of civil society as one which is associated with the concepts of “border maintenance”³¹¹ and “problems of coordination”.³¹²

As Mouzelis’ and Perkmann’s works indicate, the particular relationship Habermas suggested between the social and system integration as an attempt to overcome the problems of Parsonian functionalism in conceiving actor-driven social change, leads to problems in conceiving the relationship between economy, civil society and state. First, once the socio-political conflict pertinent to the modern societies which informs the radical conception is identified as the subsumption of spontaneous solidary relations by the systemic imperatives of capitalist economy and bureaucratic state, the social-system integration distinction itself becomes reified as the social contradiction upon which the politics of civil society is based. This means that the allegedly analytical distinction between the economy, civil society and the state is reified. The separation of the systemic imperatives of the state and economy from the normative-solidary framework which characterises civil society and asserting the former’s propensity to expand and smother the latter, lead to conceiving civil society, state and economy as “mythical” homogeneous entities in an antagonistic relation.³¹³

More importantly, the radical conception of civil society constructed thus has grave consequences regarding politics of civil society. With the economy and state conceived as systemic structures beyond social integration, they are not only thoroughly separated from civil society but from actor driven social change as well. The theoretical move which attempts to open up space for autonomous social integration further reifies the economic and political relations as functional imperatives which exist “behind the backs of social actors.”³¹⁴ Once the capitalist economy and the state are conceived as immutable structures, it becomes impossible to construe any kind of mechanism of change insofar as the internal functioning of

³¹¹ Alexander, 1998a passim. Alexander, 2001 passim. Cohen & Arato, 1994, passim.

³¹² Offe, 1996a, passim. Offe, 1996b, passim. Offe, 2001, passim.

³¹³ Cf. Mouzelis, 1992, p. 283.

³¹⁴ Cf. Perkmann, 1998. passim.

these spheres is concerned. Parsonian functionalism which absolutises existing set of social relations as systemic imperatives, with all its problems, endures, albeit, as characterising merely the economic and political relations. The desire to avoid economic reductionism leads to an altogether different form of reductionism whereby civil society is conceived as a sphere of boundless freedom where social movements are not restricted by any kind of constraint. This creates a serious analytical difficulty as it dispenses with any means to conceive asymmetrical power relations between social actors within civil society apart from ideologically defined and contingent “fundamentalism” and “violence”.³¹⁵ Correspondingly, the spheres of state and economy are conceived as immutable structures closed to any form of modification by social agency. The desire to conceptualise civil society as a sphere without domination and exploitation leads to conceiving capitalist economy and state as spheres of absolute exploitation and domination.

Yet this conception does not merely involve analytical difficulties but it also problematises the conception of democracy built upon it. Two issues need mentioning. First, the conception of civil society as a sphere of spontaneous social solidarity involves circularity in terms of democratic politics.³¹⁶ Once excessive voluntarism becomes the hallmark of politics of civil society, limitation has to be introduced normatively. Since social movements are assumed to be capable of accomplishing every project within civil society, politics of self-limitation, as advocated by radical civil societarians becomes their principle normative injunction. Violation of the norm of self-limitation explains the normative dissatisfaction with those social movements which are deemed fundamentalist. If there are no objective limitations for social action in civil society, the normative distinction between “civil” and “anti-civil” discourses loses coherent conceptual grounding.³¹⁷ That is to say, if civil society is presupposed to lack domination and exploitation, there is no solid

³¹⁵ Keane, 1998, *passim*.

³¹⁶ Cf. Björn Beckman, Explaining democratization: Notes on the concept of civil society, in Elisabeth Özdalga and Sune Presson (eds.) *Civil Society, Democracy and the Muslim World*. Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1997, pp. 1-7, p. 2.

³¹⁷ Cf. Nicos Mouzelis, Post-Parsonian theory, *Sociological Forum*, 14(4), 1994, p. 730.

basis to differentiate between “good” and “bad” social movements. Normative definition of civility becomes wholly arbitrary, externally imposed to social actors. Secondly, conceiving economy and the state as closed systems and reducing them to logics of power and exchange as dictating action leads to the necessity to define democracy external to these spheres. Indeed, any comprehensive consideration of democracy which would comprise the state and economy is summarily dismissed as dedifferentiation. Cohen & Arato’s conception of the plurality of democracies is a case in point.³¹⁸

In the Turkish context, the debate on civil society is dominated by Şerif Mardin’s centre-periphery paradigm and Metin Heper’s state tradition approach. Notwithstanding the difference between their respective theoretical premises the two accounts end up conceiving the central axis of contradiction of the Turkish context as one between the centre and the periphery in Mardin’s, and the state and society in Heper’s terms. For both writers, the contradiction between the state and society is identified as a cultural contradiction which materialises as the conflict between the secular-modernist ideology of the state elites and the traditional-Islamic culture prevalent in the society. Furthermore, both accounts argue that the dominance of the centre-periphery conflict caused the underdevelopment of social differentiations based on functional –read economic- contradictions which makes a class based analysis irrelevant for the Turkish context. Even though its conceptual references are significantly different, this approach converges with the abovementioned sociological account in one important respect. Like the Parsonian understanding, for the centre-periphery paradigm, social transformation is conceived with reference to an evolutionary conception of modernisation which involves the rationalisation of the normative structure of society. In the Turkish context, since a functional differentiation between the state and economy has never been complete, economic actors, notably bourgeoisie, could not emerge and thrive as autonomous social actors. This hindered the emergence of civil society (read bourgeois society) as evincing a rational, contractarian normative structure. With the lack of functionally defined

³¹⁸ Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 416.

groups in civil society, cultural, notably the Islamic, groups became the most important force which contested the state power.

The dominant view outlined above creates a theoretical problem for those who aim to explain the emergence of civil society which is to be surpassed as both theories are concerned with essentially distinguishing the Ottoman-Turkish context from the Western cases. The perplexing consequence of these accounts regarding the discussion on civil society is their conception of the Turkish polity as a socio-political context in which the vertical political relations are dominant over horizontal social relations. This means that the development of horizontal social relations which culminated in the emergence of civil society in the West was non-existent or secondary in the Turkish context. The problem for civil societarians in Turkey, then, becomes explaining the emergence of civil society in Turkey, despite the theoretical presuppositions of the dominant paradigm. The democratic consolidation literature prominently represented by Ergun Özbudun³¹⁹ and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu³²⁰ take note of this problem. Yet they fail to provide a plausible explanation apart from vague references to a process of democratisation starting with the initiation of the multi-party rule and economic liberalisation of the early 1980's. Notwithstanding Kalaycıoğlu's injunction that social structures tend to change over time, both accounts are predicated upon the continuity of the centre-periphery cleavage. Furthermore, Kalaycıoğlu's corrective to the understanding of the strong state tradition which argues that Turkish state is weak in terms of enforcing a regulatory structure over and eliciting obedience from the society is already predicated on the assumptions in Heper's approach.

A more pronounced explanation is provided by radical civil societarians. For them, the central category which explains the transformation of state society relations in Turkey which allowed the development of civil society is the crisis the ruling Kemalist ideology has undergone in the last decades of the 20th century which is

³¹⁹ Kalaycıoğlu, 2002a, *passim*.

³²⁰ Özbudun, 2000, *passim*.

identified as a legitimacy crisis.³²¹ The global trend of the rise of identity politics is considered the key mechanism which was expressed in Turkey in the emergence of political Islam and politicisation of other identity groups within society. The crisis the Turkish state has undergone towards the end of the 20th century was identified with the crisis of the conception of citizenship the Kemalist state espoused. Accordingly, with the processes of cultural globalisation, local cultural and ethnic ties became pronounced and culturally and ethnically defined communities came to characterise the politics of civil society on a global basis. The expression of this process in Turkey was the politicisation of the Islamic and Kurdish identities which came to challenge the secular-nationalist understanding of citizenship of the Kemalist state.³²² This position expresses a peculiar reinterpretation of the centre-periphery approach whereby the categories no longer refer simply to the state and forces of the society per se. Since there emerged groups within civil society who adopted the secular-nationalist ideology of Kemalism,³²³ the cultural division which previously pertained solely to the dispute between the state elites and social elites, came to characterise a cleavage between various segments of civil society. The rise of the Islamist business groups as organised actors within civil society is considered indicative in this respect.³²⁴ This novel division came to be comprehended as the cleavage between the conventional and emerging middle classes.³²⁵

The radical conception of civil society in the Turkish debate seems to diverge from the general radical conception discussed in the third chapter of the thesis in one significant respect. As a consequence of the adherence to the conception of strong state vs. weak society characterising the Turkish state-society relations, civil

³²¹ Köker, 1996, passim. Keyman, 2000a, passim. Keyman & İçduygu, 2000, passim.

³²² Keyman, Keyman & İçduygu, 2000, p. 179.

³²³ Kubicek, 2002, p. 768.

³²⁴ Vorhoff, 2000, pp. 185-8, Fuat Keyman & Ergun Özbudun, Türkiye’de kültürel küreselleşme: Aktörler, söylemler stratejiler, in Peter L. Berger and Samuel Huntington (eds.) *Bir Küre Bin Bir Küreselleşme: Çağdaş Dünyada Kültürel Çeşitlilik*, İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2003, pp. 314-8.

³²⁵ Bağımsız Sosyal Bilimciler, Siyaset ve söylem: AKP iktidarı ve toplumsal gerçeklik, in 2008 Kavşağında Türkiye: Siyaset, İktisat ve Toplum, İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2008. pp. 17-26, p. 24.

society's autonomy from the economy is not particularly pronounced. In this case it seems that Turkish radicals prefer a two-part differentiation between state and civil society. However, that civil society is a social sphere irreducible to capitalist economy is an assumption which Turkish radicals share, even though its autonomy as such is never concretely theorised. The reason behind the lack of interest seems to be the general theoretical assumption, which is a trademark of the centre-periphery paradigm, that explanations based on social class (or "functional cleavages") are not relevant for the Turkish context. As it is mentioned, the central assumption of the approaches reviewed in this thesis is that the culturally defined centre-periphery conflict precludes the development of functional cleavages, be them defined as interest or class based. Another element of the radical civil societarian framework which disputes the relevance of class analysis is the stress on the rise of identity politics in the post-modern era of globalisation mentioned above.

Identity politics and cultural cleavages within civil society are considered a double-edged sword by the radical conception of civil society. On the one hand, the crisis of legitimacy the Kemalist regime undergoes shakes its hegemony and carries forth the possibility of opening the space within which civil society might thrive. Radical civil societarians think that this process has the potential to promote democratisation of the state society relations in Turkey. On the other hand, the current unfolding of the centre-periphery conflict as the exacerbation of the identity politics tends to provoke fundamentalism and authoritarianism on the side of the social groups and the state respectively. The lack/weakness of civil society in the Turkish context, this time, appears as the lack of a democratic political culture and civil virtues as establishing a common ground between different actors within civil society. In this respect, the radical civil societarian discourse turns into a normative position taken vis-à-vis the existing social groups and movements. These movements are evaluated according to a pre-determined conception of civil society; hence their occasional labelling as fundamentalist. The problematic of self limitation appears in the discourse of Turkish civil societarians in this respect. Similar to the general radical civil societarian position discussed in the third chapter, since civil society is conceived as distinct from the state and economy and thus lack objective mechanisms of domination and

exploitation, in the Turkish case as well, extreme voluntarism characterises conceptualisation of contradictions within civil society. Thus, even though civil society in its current status is recognised to contain social differences and a conflict potential, these conflicts are attributed to the fundamentalist and authoritarian ideologies of social actors. Any means of analysing concrete mechanisms of domination and exploitation within civil society is thus excluded, the radical conception of civil society simply amounts to an amalgam of arbitrarily defined normative postulates. Göran Therborn argues that civil society's

strongly normative character makes the concept little apt for analytical purposes. Indeed, its application to the empirical world tends to veil a number of social and political features, turning the concept into a false ideology. Its non-reflexive stipulating character also means that the notion of civil society has little to offer people concerned with prospects and strategies of democratisation.³²⁶

This rather condensed critique of the contemporary revival of the discourse of civil society, points at the consequences of the weak analytical grounding of the normative content of the radical conception of civil society as well. The conviction of this thesis, in conclusion of the discussion so far provided, is that the radical theorists' analytical attempts at theorising civil society presupposes rather than explains the autonomy of civil society from the state and economy. The presupposition is based on the alleged fact that societies possess forms of solidarity and cultural-normative essences distinct from political and economic relations. Civil society is a particular unfolding of this essential character of society. The presupposition of autonomy notwithstanding, when it is deemed that in a given social context autonomy is lacking, the radical character of civil societarians comes to the fore: the task of the democratic forces of the society is to achieve or reinstate autonomy. They should limit their strategies to achieving or maintaining the differentiation of civil society from the state and economy. They should not vie for state power at the expense of their social adversaries but unite with them against commodification and bureaucratisation which are subjectless mechanisms of domination and exploitation.

³²⁶ Therborn, 1997, p. 47.

What Erdoğan & Üstüner identify as the “post-political” discourse, could be considered the expression of the discourse of self-limitation in the Turkish context. In their understanding, the post-political discourse is a means to deal with social conflicts “not by coercing multiplicity to order but by articulating, neutralising and absorbing social conflicts-the economic doxa left unchallenged...”³²⁷ The authoritarian discourse of consensus Erdoğan & Üstüner explicate, it can be added, goes hand in hand with excluding economy and state as targets of democratisation. Democratic existence is hence effectively limited to “civil society” where it is destined, it seems, to be limited by the fundamentalist inclinations of social actors indefinitely.

³²⁷ Necmi Erdoğan & Fahriye Üstüner, Quest for hegemony: Discourses on democracy in Turkey in the 1990’s., in Neşecan Balkan & Sungur Savran (eds.) *The Politics of Permanent Crisis: Class, Ideology and State in Turkey*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2002, pp. 195-213, p. 208.

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