
UNIT 5 STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY INTERFACE

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of state lies at the centre of any meaningful political theorising but there is no unanimity about its meaning, content and definition. It is because of such contesting notions about the state, in the heyday of the behavioural revolution in the 1960s, that David Easton substituted the word system for the state. Most often the state is understood as what it is not. A state is not government as governments change periodically and many times frequently but the state is permanent. A state is distinguished by political theorists from civil society which refers to the whole gamut of organised and permanent institutions and behavioural practices like the economy, churches, religious institutions, schools and centres of higher learning, and cultural centres, places of ordinary day to day activity of the average citizen. According to Weber, a state refers to a fixed political system and an organised community that exercises authority legitimately and authoritatively.

The word 'state' is derived from Latin which means a situation or state of being (Sartori, 1987, p.278). Machiavelli is the first to use the term but did not define what it is. The state is used to convey a historical or philosophical idea, an eternal form of political community, which is a specifically modern phenomenon (Forsyth, 1987, p.503). A state is defined as a political entity that possesses people, territory, a government and sovereignty. A government is a concrete reality of the state, which is an abstraction. Governments change structurally and can be removed without entailing a change in states. A government is the policy deciding body that makes, declares and enforces a law. It can exist and does exist without a state as history and anthropology reveal. An administration is a set of persons and bodies that work under the direction of government to discharge the ordinary public services. A government is the political executive while administration is the permanent executive. Furthermore, the modern state is highly differentiated, specialised and complex upholding the difference between the private and the public space. As a modern phenomenon the state develops with sovereignty as its distinguishing trait. The concept of sovereignty reinforces the public-private divide and also between one body politic and another. Concurrently with the idea of sovereignty—and partly in opposition to

it—grows another idea that distinguishes the state as a modern phenomenon, namely the idea that it is the people as a single entity who rightly decide and constitute the form of rule within the body-politic. This idea was carried further by the American and French Revolutions that established representative institutions and also developed the idea that the proper end of the state is primarily protection of individual rights. The emphasis on ‘pursuit of happiness’ as proclaimed by the American Revolution and the notions of liberty, equality and fraternity as declared by the French Revolution answer the willing obedience of citizens to political authority. ‘The state as a modern phenomenon may, thus, be defined as the institutional representation of the people’s will, enabling it to act effectively in both the normal and extreme situation to secure the defence and welfare of the whole and the rights of the parts—together with this very activity itself (Forsyth, 1987, p.506). The political apparatuses of the modern states are distinct from both rulers and ruled, with supreme jurisdiction over a demarcated territorial area, backed by a claim to a monopoly of coercive power and enjoying a minimum level of support or loyalty from their citizens (Skinner, 1978, pp.349-58; Giddens, 1985, pp. 17-31, 116-21).

A distinction is made between state and some interrelated terms like society, community, association and nation. A society, like the state, consists of people within a given territory engaged in cooperative activity but a society concerns itself with the social order while the state with the legal order. Society is a whole made up of many voluntary associations, each with specific tasks and purposes and includes the family right up to an international forum. Like society, the idea of a community stands for fellowship, personal intimacy and wholeness and is characterised by common ends or feelings. The state is bureaucratic and a government body of institutions and officials with a special purpose of maintaining a compulsory scheme of legal action and acting through laws enforced by direct and positive sanctions. The state, like society, is national in its scope but differs from society in two respects—(a) It consists of all people who inhabit a particular territory and has the power to use legal coercion, the power of enforcing obedience through sanction of punishment, to decree rules of behaviour, (b) other associations because of their being voluntary in nature can enforce social discipline, expect voluntary obedience of its conventions and rules and only in the last resort may expel a deviant member. The state is an association like other associations in the sense that it is a union of human beings that would act as partners to realise the common purpose. However, it is an association with a difference, for it can exercise an all-embracing compulsory jurisdiction within a given territory and is in position to act competently as an umpire to decide between conflicting claims, whether that of individuals or of associations. Michael Walzer characterised the state as a primary association. A people who constitute a nation may differ in religion, race, language and ethnic composition but share the same political system. When people identify with others who live within the state they constitute a nation. Nationalism supplied the reasons for people to set aside the internal divisions within a state, a process that has been going on since the sixteenth century. A state can exist as a juridical entity while a nation needs emotional props.

Aims and Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to understand

- The nature and scope of the concept of civil society
- The Hegelian concept of state
- The meaning of pluralist state and the debates.

5.2 CIVIL SOCIETY: NATURE AND SCOPE

In the works of some of the important political thinkers since the seventeenth century a distinction is made between state and civil society. Hobbes, Locke and Hegel are among those who maintain that civil society is the organised society over which the state pervades. However, such a distinction is not seen as being valid as the state is itself part of the society. Civil society is the framework within economic relationships, family and kinship structures, religious, cultural and educational institutions exist.

Till the mid seventeenth century civil society was used synonymously with the state. Aristotle's *politike koinonia* refers to an ethical-political community of free and equal citizens in ruling and being ruled under a legally defined system of public procedures and shared values. It was between 1750 and 1850 that the term became an important concept in the works of political theorists. The notion originated with the rise of liberalism in an attempt to undermine absolutism in authority and to identify and establish the limits of political authority. The disintegration of the feudal societies and the Protestant Reformation within the Catholic Church brought about the distinction between the political community and the spiritual one. While Hobbes maintains that the state and civil society are identical it is Locke, who reiterates Aristotle and points out to the distinctiveness of the political community from an extended family and that political rule is not paternal. Both Hobbes and Locke interchange features of the existing civil society back into the state of nature in order to demonstrate the natural and rational grounds for establishing a social contract between the individual and a political authority.

In the aftermath of the Industrial and the French Revolutions, the civil society emerged as a network of interaction and exchange formed by individuals exercising the right to pursue the satisfaction of their particular needs in their own way. Montesquieu points out that the advantages of peace and prosperity accrued by commercialism would negate the risks of war and military exploits. Montesquieu's view is reiterated by Hume, Smith, Ferguson and Millar but also add that not only material desire for exchange but also contract which requires trust and justice shape civil society. The Scottish Enlightenment Thinkers break away from the traditional conception of the economy and the political idea of civil society, as adhered to by the social contract thinkers and view civil society as the expanding material sphere of trade and manufacture. The economy is no longer limited but that would expand and benefit from trade and exchange, extension of the division of labour and the market, an idea found in its embryonic form in the writings of Marsilius of Padua.

Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), a leading figure within the Scottish Enlightenment provides the most in-depth analysis of civil society. He considers the civil society not as a sphere of life that is distinct from the state but one that is identical with it. A civil society by means of regular government, the rule of law and strong military defences protects the commercial arts, cultural achievements and a sense of public spirit. Paine provides the next phase of defining civil society seeing as essential to restrict state power. Civil society is unqualified good while the state is a necessary evil. The basis of civil society is common interest that is more powerful than the positive law enacted and administered by governments. According to Tocqueville, the civil society acts as a countervailing force to the despotic power of the state, a problem that confronts modern nations. It is within civil society that citizens learn about their rights and obligations, push forward their claims and become conscious about claims of others, and also learn their interdependence with one another which makes them cooperative and less

selfish, narrow and private, all of which help in consolidating the democratic revolution. He considers the right of association within the civil society as an inalienable right. A self organising and pluralistic civil society that is independent of the state is extremely crucial for democracy. Tocqueville has a three part model that differentiates, although unsystematically between a civil society of economic and cultural associations and publics, a political society of local, provincial and national assemblies and the administrative apparatus of the state.

It is in Hegel's writings that the notion of civil society finds extensive analysis. He stresses that the state proper and the civil society are two different things. Civil society embodies a 'system of needs' and totality of private individuals. With gradual freeing of the Third Estate, the civil society came to be regarded as bourgeois society; a society of private, free and equal individuals with property but without the domination of one group by another. Civil society, for Hegel, represents conflict of interests that can be resolved only by the state representing all interests of society. The Young Hegelians and Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-83) criticise this relationship between the state and civil society. In writings such as *On the Jewish Question*, *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction* and *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, Marx uses the term civil society to make a critique of Hegel and German Idealism. The term disappears in the later writings. For Marx, the civil society is the site of crass materialism, of modern property relations, the struggle of each against all, and egotism. Civil society, he stresses, arises from the destruction of medieval society. In the medieval society, the individual was part of different societies, such as guilds or estates, each of which had a political role and hence there was no need for a civil realm. With the breakdown of these partial societies, individual becomes all important thus giving an impetus to the rise of civil society. The old bonds were replaced by selfish needs of atomistic individuals, distinct and separate from one another and from the community. Law provides the links between individuals but it arises not from human will and dominates them by the threat of punishment. The fragmented and conflicting nature of civil society determines the nature of the modern state.

Antonio Gramsci (1871-1937) writes extensively on civil society and uses the term in a manner different from that of Marx. It is not simply a sphere of individual needs but of organisations that has the potential for rational self regulation and freedom. While Marx stresses the separation between the state and civil society, for Gramsci, the two are inter-related. Civil society consists of private institutions like schools, churches, clubs, journals and parties which are instrumental in crystallising social and political consciousness and political society consists of public institutions like the government, courts, police and the army, the instruments of direct domination. It is in the civil society that the intellectuals play an important role by creating hegemony. If hegemony is successfully created by intellectuals then the ruling class rules by controlling the apparatus of civil society and if they fail then the rule is through coercion. Unlike Marx who places total emphasis on economic relations for Gramsci it is the superstructure that is important. The hegemony of the dominant class is exercised through the civil society, culturally and not through coercion. But this hegemony of the civil society does not exist equally in all societies. Writing about the former USSR, Gramsci observes "in Russia, the state was everything, civil society was primordial and galantines; in the West, there was a proper relationship between state and civil society, and when the state trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The state was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earth works".

The concept of civil society reappears in the neo-Marxist critics- Kolakowski, Mlynar, Vajda, Michnik, Habermas, Lefort, Touraine, Bobbio, Weffort, Cardoso, and O'Donnell of socialist authoritarianism locating the conceptual origins of communist totalitarianism in the young Marx's demand to overcome the distinction between the state and civil society. The separation of civil society from the state makes a decisive break from the Graeco-Roman conception that regards civil society as bound up with the state. The unity between the particular and the general in Hegel's account of civil society and state is also rejected by August Marie Francois Comte (1798-1957), seeking to establish a separate discipline of sociology as positive science of society. Sociology analyses social dynamics and social static with the first deliberating on general law of social development and the second, on the 'anatomy' of society and the mutual interaction between its constituents. Comte's view of interconnectedness of elements of the social system anticipates functionalism.

5.3 THE HEGELIAN STATE

The nature of the modern state is described and analysed by Hegel in detail. The state, for him, represents universal altruism synthesising dialectically the elements within the family and the civil society. It functions in a manner that the interests of everyone are furthered and enhanced. It represents the universal tendencies within the civil society, thus giving rise to the notion of citizenship. It is 'absolutely rational' with a 'substantive will' and realises itself through history and is, therefore, eternal. Hegel perceives the state as an end in itself; it is Mind realising itself through history. He emphasises the public nature of the state, but does not distinguish between the private and the public spheres. The indispensability of the state is demonstrated by the fact that the individual qualities and potentialities of good life can be realised only through the state. It is divine will, 'in the sense that it is mind present on earth, unfolding itself to be the actual shape and organization of a world'. It is the most sublime of all human institutions, the final culmination which embodies both mind and spirit deriving its strength from a synthesis of the individual interest with that of the state. If there is a conflict between the two, the citizen would identify with those of the state rather than pursue one's own interests. The state is the individual writ large.

Hegel examines the different components of the state, namely, the rule of law, the monarchy and the bureaucracy. The law is not merely a code but one that reflects ethical values which governs cultural life. The bureaucracy is the universal class and its importance is because of its commitment to impartiality. Its distinctiveness lies in the fact that it supervises the entire societal apparatus which Hegel calls public business. The bureaucracy and mechanisms of free institutions enable the constitutional state to retain its independence. The Monarchy for Hegel is a functional requirement of the modern constitution based on separation and division of powers. He goes to the extent of saying that the division of power guarantees freedom. Hegel differentiates between the doctrine of the separation of powers from his own innovative theory of inward differentiation of constitutional powers, dismissing the former as a false doctrine as it supports total autonomy and independence of each functioning category. Hegel considers the state as a supreme community because of its comprehensive membership and competence as compared to other associations. It is not only physically supreme but also morally preeminent among the social institutions. It is necessarily right and its opinion will prevail when there is a conflict between its opinion and that of a citizen.

5.4 THE PLURALIST STATE

A Pluralist state is based on the idea that the state has to serve the divergent and at times conflicting interests in society. Rejecting the notion of common good within the classical and liberal theory, as there is rarely an agreement among individuals and groups among ends and even if there is one, there will be disagreements about the means to be employed for the realisation of a given end. In modern societies that are economically and culturally diverse there are bound to be different notions of common good. Citizens are rarely informed or interested in political issues except for those that affect them directly and economically. Within this critique Schumpeter comes up with an alternative model of how the modern democratic capitalist state does and should function. Reversing the notion of the classical theory that power resides in the people who chose their representatives to represent their interests- the general will, Schumpeter makes the deciding of issues by the electorate secondary to the election of representatives who are to do the deciding. The electorate is left with the power to decide which set of leaders it wishes to have and carry out the decision-making process. Schumpeter compares the power of vote to that of money in the market.

Dahl argues further that even though elections rarely reflect the will of the majority they are 'crucial process for insuring that political leaders will be somewhat responsive to the preferences of some ordinary citizens. Power still resides in the voters even though this power is not expressed as majority versus minority 'will'; rather each issue calls forth those voters interested enough in the issue to vote for the politician on the basis of that issue. Political parties translate the diverse political demands and help in forming stable governments which equilibrates demand and supply. Both Schumpeter and Dahl argue that individuals function through multiplicity of groups. Dahl points out that power is distributed and shared by many groups in society representing diverse interests and they defend their particular interests through government, creating a proclivity towards 'competitive equilibrium' that benefits the citizens in the long run. Citizens exert control over leaders through regular elections and political competition among groups, parties and individuals. The rule by a series of minorities, called as polyarchy function within the boundaries stipulated by consensus with none being able to dominate but all having a space for their manoeuvre and bargaining. This emphasis on consensus is in contrast to Schumpeter's view of democratic politics, as managed ultimately by competing elites. The competition among groups is the safeguard of democracy, as the latter does not establish the sovereignty of the majority but a rule by 'multiple minority oppositions'. The more is the presence of competing interest groups, the more secure is democracy.

Marcuse is critical of the democratic pluralist defence of advanced capitalism. He points out that though it is generally conceded that the welfare state has lessened inequalities to a considerable degree by improving standards of the poorer sections, it is acknowledged that far from any indication of the withering away of classes it continues with in-built cleavages giving considerable validity to the Marxist analysis of these societies.

Mills criticises American pluralism by arguing that far from being an independent arbiter of national interest, the state is dominated by the power elite of politicians, military and corporate bosses who shape public policy to suit their own ends. His theory involves a three level gradation of the distribution of power with the executive branch of the national government at the top followed by large business corporations and the military establishment controlling political power, means of production and death, respectively reinforcing

Eisenhower's conception of the military-industrial complex. At the bottom exist the politically fragmented masses (1956, pp.167-68). He tries to distinguish his position from that of what he terms as 'simple Marxian view' that holds economic elite to be the real holders of power and therefore uses the term power elite rather than the 'ruling class' for that implies too much economic determinism (1956, pp.276-77). He also asserts that his analysis is compatible with the Marxist view. Furthermore, he also maintains that the political, military and economic elites are considerably autonomous, often in conflict and rarely act in unity. Miliband thinks that there is no room for debate about details in Mills' account but the background thesis is reasonably satisfactory. Dahl criticises the analysis on the grounds of insufficient data. He notes that a theory, which cannot be converted to empirical evidence, could not claim to be a scientific theory. The burden of such a proof has to be provided by the theorist and not by his critics. Parsons praises the copious data of Mills and agrees that Mills has put it to good use but rejects Mills' claim, as the data is not enough for sufficient empirical grounding. He argues that Mills ignored two very important developments: first, the dynamics of a maturing industrial society; and second the altered position of the United States in the world in the context of the relative decline of Western Europe, rise of the Soviet power and independence of colonies. Sweezy finds the greatest merit in the book in its graphic description of those who ruled America. He considered it to be an authentic voice of American radicalism. However, he also criticises Mills for blurring class relationships in the light of the dynamics of the class system in areas of the process of co-option and the loss of high-class status. In short, even the admirers on the left like Miliband and Sweezy did not consider Mills' account to be rigorously worked out and empirically verifiable thesis of power in contemporary United States.

5.5 DEBATE ON ADVANCED CAPITALIST STATE

Gramsci rightly points out that an advanced state rules by perfecting the ideological apparatus rather than through repressive measures like force and terror. The state consists of two elements: (1) the coercive apparatus comprising of the police, army and judiciary that uphold the authority of the ruling class through force and (2) the other includes various institutions of civil society such as media, church, schools, clubs, parties and trade unions, the instruments of hegemony, the means by which the ruling class secures spontaneous adherence of the rest of the society to comply to its rule. Hegemony allows a ruling group to hold on to power long after it has ceased to be the dominant class. For Gramsci, the tenacity and strength of societal forces within advanced capitalism make it possible for the capitalist class to assert its hegemony. In the process it renders a genuine communist revolution as a virtual impossibility unless carried out in the Leninist manner.

The democratic pluralist view provides the most popular defence of advanced capitalism as a viable and relatively just system. Its major emphasis is that within advanced capitalism there is equality of opportunity, for most, if not all the people, and because of this crucial factor, the concepts of a ruling class, power elite and class politics are largely irrelevant. In these systems 'all the active and legitimate groups in the population can make themselves heard at some crucial stage in the process of decision' (Dahl, 1965, pp.137-38). Since 'the fundamental political problems of the industrial and political citizenship have been solved, conservatives have accepted the welfare state; and the democratic left has recognized that an increase in overall state power carries with it more dangers to freedom than solution to economic problems' (Lipset, 1963, p.443). This

theory of classlessness within advanced capitalism has obvious limitations. Though it is generally conceded that the welfare state has lessened inequalities to a considerable degree by improving living standards of the poorer sections, it is acknowledged that far from any indication of withering away of classes, it continues with inbuilt cleavages. In other words, the Marxist analysis of these societies still retains validity to a very considerable degree.

In recent times, one of the most penetrating class analyses of the welfare state has emerged in the writings of Ralph Miliband, who in his *The State in Capitalist Society* (1969) makes a detailed critique of the pluralist view by asserting the superiority of the Marxist analysis. He begins by examining the concepts of ruling class or the power elite, which the pluralists totally ignore. Advanced capitalist countries are highly industrialised and a large portion of their activity is under private ownership and control. Miliband points out that there is state intervention, of varying degrees, in the economic life. Their economic base is identical, resulting in notable similarities within their social structure and class distribution. A relatively small number of people continue to own a very large and disproportionate share of wealth deriving their incomes from ownership. This class is the ruling class in the Marxist sense. Despite 'all the instances of growing or achieved 'classlessness' . . . the proletarian condition remains a hard and basic fact in these societies, in the work process, in the levels of income, in opportunities or the lack of them, in the whole social definition of existence' (Miliband, 1969, p.16). These affluent societies also carry with them large sections of people who live in misery. Managerial capitalism is not a selfless neutral institution but maintained definite class interests. They appeared social in character but exist largely for private purposes. The social origins of this managerial class are similar to people with large incomes and ownership of property. The elite recruitment is mostly hereditary. Education is very important to rise in the ladder, though the elite institutions are usually accessible to upper and middle classes. The working class students do not get better jobs. The differences among the dominant classes are confined within a given ideological framework. The property owners control the state system. For instance, a very small percentage of the American army officers come from the working class background. It is the same case in Sweden and Japan. The main purpose of the government is to further the interests of capitalism for it, 'genuinely believed in the virtues of capitalism, and . . . have accepted it as far superior to any possible alternative economic and social system' (Ibid, p.70). Contrary to the general belief, the higher civil service is also not neutral. The military maintains close relationships with large-scale business houses. The government appoints judges who in turn appoint conservative judges. All these factors combine to create an imperfect competition. In different ways this process is legitimised. For instance, the bourgeois political parties are in a position to spend more money than the working class ones. Miliband also points out that the most significant political fact of advanced capitalism 'is the continued existence in them of private and ever more concentrated economic power. As a result of that power, the owners and controllers in whose hands it lies, enjoy a massive preponderance in society, in the political system, and in the determination of the state's policies and actions' (Ibid, p.265). The basic fact in these societies is that unequal economic power produces unequal political power.

Miliband's instrumentalist view argues that the capitalists use the state as a means for domination in society. The Structuralists like Althusser (1969) stress the ideological and structural mechanisms that help the ruling class maintain itself in power using both force

and consent. Elaborating on Althusser's basic formulations, Poulantaz (1973) relates it to the major function of capitalism, namely the reproduction of the capitalist society in its totality. The state, along with maintaining the political interest of the ruling class, also performs the functions of ensuring cohesion and equilibrium in society in a manner that blurs class divisions. As a result, social relations appear competitive and individual based. Any notion of class and class struggle disappears in that situation. The competitive party system concealed the contradictions, factions and disunity. It does not allow hegemony of any particular class, including the bourgeoisie. Since the state is not the instrument, as Miliband assumes, of a dominant class, it is a relatively autonomous and a stabilising factor. The Structuralist view, like the instrumentalist one, does not deal with the mechanism of change or the essential reasons for the continuance of the capitalist state, in spite of its irrationality. Marcuse provides an answer to this by accepting the fact of inequalities in advanced capitalism and its irrationalities and yet he concludes that there is no probable escape from it because there is some rationality in these irrationalities which are cherished and valued by all, irrespective of class and status. One of these is the prevailing false consciousness in an overwhelming number which allows disguised violence of the state to continue making the state look legitimate to the majority of the people. But even in this capitalistic order, there are a small number of people constituting the intellectuals, students, the unemployed and the unemployable who keep the torch of dissent and thereby the critical dimension alive within the civil society.

5.6 SUMMARY

Daniel Bell raised a pertinent question with regard to the modern state when he observed that the modern state is too big for small problems and too small for big problems indicating to the fragmentation of politics both within and outside the state. Not only has this led to a situation of more federalising tendencies within the state but also the challenges posed by the global civil society. The state as an all powerful leviathan is a thing of the past as it has to contend with plurality of associations within the civil society. Such associations may not always be critical of the state but instead represent manifold and diverse individual interests.

The concept of state lies at the centre of any meaningful political theorising but there is no unanimity about its meaning, content and definition. It is because of such contesting notions about the state, in the heyday of the behavioural revolution in the 1960s, that David Easton substituted the word system for the state. Most often the state is understood as what it is not. A state is not government as governments change periodically and many times frequently but the state is permanent. A state is distinguished by political theorists from civil society which refers to the whole gamut of organised and permanent institutions and behavioural practices like the economy, churches, religious institutions, schools and centres of higher learning, and cultural centres, places of ordinary day to day activity of the average citizen. According to Weber, a state refers to a fixed political system and an organised community that exercises authority legitimately and authoritatively. The state as an all powerful leviathan is a thing of the past as it has to contend with plurality of associations within the civil society. Such associations may not always be critical of the state but instead represent manifold and diverse individual interests.

5.7 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between the state and civil society in Hegel's theory?
2. Explain the notion of civil society.
3. What are the different theories on the modern state?

SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT 6 CIVIL SOCIETY IN GLOBALISED MARKET

Structure

6.1 Introduction

Aims and Objectives

6.2 Globalisation as a Multifaceted Process

6.3 Changing Relations among Market, State and Civil Society

6.3.1 Conventions theory

6.4 Globalisation, Cold War and Political Regimes

6.5 Neo-liberalism's Advances after the Cold War

6.6 The 'War on Terrorism', Political Regimes and Neo-liberal Globalisation

6.7 Civil Society, Global Governance and Internet

6.8 The Digital Divide and International Governance

6.8.1 Digital Divide to Digital Opportunity?

6.9 Summary

6.10 Terminal Questions

Suggested Readings

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Civil society is one of the most complicated and problematic concepts in the history of social and political thought. Scholars argue that what Montesquieu and Locke, thinkers representing two different traditions, have to say about civil society needs to be given primary consideration when studying the issue. These two thinkers have shown due diligence not to overlook the concept of state when defining civil society. In this context, the cooperation existent in the society started to be defined by the public opinion as the presence of continuous and deep running cultural codes and different organisations. The attempt by political scientists to reconceptualise civil society has been perceived to be politically motivated. Thus, the concepts of civil society and economic society were put forward against the market and the state.

Civil society is also defined as the social interaction between the economy and the state. Its own constitution and novel forms created modern civil society. As these subjective rights, institutionalised and generalised by the laws, trigger social differentiation, theories of civil society started to be defined by the state-society dichotomy to make their many variations visible.

Globalisation is not an entirely 'new' concept. Indeed, it stretches back to centuries if we recall the vast trading empires built around the world. But the present day globalisation is distinct enough. Aided by new markets, new tools, new actors, new rules, shrinking space, shrinking time and disappearing borders, this process is integrating, at an accelerated

pace, markets and economies worldwide. Further, it is linking people's lives more deeply, intensively, immediately, and as we witness today, more disturbingly than ever before. Today's globalisation, driven by market expansion, is outpacing governance of these markets and their repercussions on people. While globalisation has several positive, innovative, dynamic aspects, the overall achievements remain far below the expectations and promises of globalisation. It has proceeded with extremely uneven distribution of benefits and costs across nations resulting in marginalisation in some cases. The exclusion of countries and people from the benefits of globalisation is further compounded by the emerging rules of the game for international economic transactions, which remain asymmetrical in terms of construct and inequitable in terms of outcome. Globalisation is good for both developed and developing countries only if it lives up to its promise of economic efficiency and international division of labour. In order to achieve the desired results, it will be imperative to look beyond mere capital mobility. Labour mobility is integral to the attainment of efficient international division of labour. Undoubtedly, global markets, global technology, global ideas and global solidarity have the potential of enriching the lives of people everywhere. In practice, however, projections of gains from globalisation in terms of faster growth, greater employment opportunities and poverty alleviation have proved overly optimistic. It is clear that the difficulties of harnessing liberalisation and globalisation for the benefit of all have been underestimated.

Aims and Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to understand

- Globalisation as a multifaceted process
- The interrelationship of civil society, governance and digital divide
- The changing relations among the market, state and civil society

6.2 GLOBALISATION AS A MULTIFACETED PROCESS

Globalisation has intensified with changes in the international political system, in the international market economy, and in transportation and information technologies. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War has spawned an international movement towards democracy. Formerly totalitarian regimes that had sustained themselves at least in part by acting as allies to either the United States or the Soviet bloc were suddenly exposed by the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War. They were suddenly vulnerable to their own citizens and their long suppressed demands for democratic regimes, and could find no help from the powers that had once competed for their favour to secure Cold War advantages. The internationalisation of the market spurred by the free movement of capital and technology in pursuit of both labour and customers created new wealth and optimism throughout the world, but also left those at the bottom of the economic and social ladder vulnerable to exploitation even when things were going well, and to dashed hopes when business cycles or economic mismanagement undercut economic growth. The rapid movement of people and information across the globe accentuated the grossly unequal political and material conditions in which the world's diverse populations were living, and stimulated a widespread demand for greater political and economic equality as well as a broader sense of our economic, political, and moral interdependence.

These changes have contributed to a shifting balance in the roles of the state, the market, and the civil society, both in individual countries and in the international political economy. In the past, looking at the international political economy, one would have conventionally said that the dominant actors were sovereign states. They seemed to be in charge of what happened within their borders; what happened across their borders—in the international commons—emerged from interaction among individual states. In the last decade, however, the power of the market has expanded and the role of the state has been reduced in many countries, in the West and North as well as the East and South. The shift to “open macro-economies” has reduced the power of individual states to manage their own economic destinies. And since economic destinies were often important in influencing the stability of political regimes, the vulnerability of political regimes to the international economy has been accentuated. In the face of the increased vulnerability to powerful economic forces that were shaping the world, and the inability of states to offer much protection, movements have arisen to provide some kind of collective response to the changing circumstances. Sometimes these have been grass roots movements in particular parts of particular developing countries. Other times, local grass roots movements have spread to become national movements. Still other times, local movements have made alliances with international organisations to help them achieve national purposes, or to lend their weight to international efforts. The emergence of international NGOs, networks, coalitions, and social movement organisations as potentially important political actors at both national and international levels has been stimulated by the need to create collective responses to threatening circumstances, by the generally favoring influence of democratic ideals, and by the collapse of national capacity to repress these efforts.

Globalisation provides information and perspectives never before available to many people, transporting them to new possibilities of international and cosmopolitan consciousness. The increased flows of information and people contribute to a global homogenisation (“Americanisation?”) of tastes, norms, and concerns. McDonald’s hamburgers are available in Beijing and Buenos Aires, and language and music imports raise the hackles of cultural guardians in Paris and Singapore. At the same time, the assault of external ideas and values can inspire fierce defence of traditional values and styles of life. NGOs may express and help to create cosmopolitan and international perspectives and they may also express and defend the values and concerns of citizens alienated from globalised perspectives and cultural “imports.” Thus NGOs may express or enable globalisation, and they may also ardently resist globalisation in a kind of sectarianism within and across national boundaries.

6.3 CHANGING RELATIONS AMONG MARKET, STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Neo-liberal government policies created in the mid-1980s reduced barriers to the international flow of capital, goods and services worldwide. Value-chain coordination and integration increased. Distribution gained importance over production in the process of accumulation and increasingly controlled the food value. In order to increase capital accumulation, firms negotiated, tested, redesigned, renegotiated, retested and implemented different mechanisms for control of value chains. The new patterns of accumulation disadvantage producers of raw commodities, particularly in the food-based value chains. In the process of becoming more demand-oriented, the conventions around certain commodities changed from the market convention to the industrial convention.

The inability of the producers' organisations to institute a civic convention for coordination of the value chains, despite mobilisation of civil society in response to consolidation of production, further disadvantaged them in setting the norms, regulations, and enforcement that might have enabled them to offer another demand-driven convention, the civic convention.

6.3.1 Conventions Theory

The Conventions theory was developed by French economists in order to better understand coordination in economic, political and social life through chains and networks. Conventions are shared norms and values, standards of uniformity, and the rules and institutions to apply and enforce those standards. Most of the research around conventions theory in agriculture has been around the formation of alternative value chains, built on either the civic convention (particularly looking at organic agriculture and fair trade and the domestic convention or the regard convention).

For much of agriculture, the shift from the market convention, where the value the lowest price per unit, and producers were rewarded for volume with minimum quality standards, to the industrial convention, where multiple values related to specific end users, had dramatic impacts in terms of loss of control of the production process. Incorporation in the new, more integrated value chains based on product characteristics required producers to adopt new mechanisms of production, including more sophisticated record keeping and attention to multiple quality standards in order to participate in the market. While the state may determine and enforce the minimum quality standards around food safety, the environment, and labour, market actors set and enforce the quality standards concerning characteristics of the production process and the product in the industrial convention. The current climate of neo-Liberalism encourages free trade while deregulating land, labour and capital. The market has been the driver, and the state the facilitator. Civil society is often the intermediary, determining how conventions are established and enforced. The struggle is around who sets what standards for which agricultural products and which externalities of the agricultural production process.

6.4 GLOBALISATION, COLD WAR AND POLITICAL REGIMES

The initial decades of globalisation after 1945 were characterised by a conjuncture between production systems and security concerns that reflected three discernible and interrelated patterns: (i) the harmonisation of multiple national development strategies with the internationalisation of capital; (ii) the tolerance and even promotion by Western government of authoritarian political regimes to protect and advance capitalism; and (iii) an unambiguous leadership role by the US in the establishment and promotion of multilateral institutions conducive to the general spread of market systems and international trade. In effect, economic and political regime diversity – so long as it was not hostile to capitalism – was consistent both with the global spread of capital and US economic and political dominance.

Immediately after the war, capitalist consolidation in the West occurred predominantly via protectionist economic policies and the refinement of Fordism. The latter was as much a political and ideological strategy as a production strategy, linking large-scale mechanised production with mass consumption. In part, Fordism relied on rising living standards in Western economies in order to foster expanded consumption and continued growth. But

this rested on a form of social contract that limited industrial conflict and fostered expanded consumption and continued growth. But this rested on a form of social contract that limited industrial conflict and fostered an embrace of consumerism ahead of political demands. Thus, in the West liberal democratic institutions and social democratic movements, including trade unions, accompanied Fordist production systems and were integral to the struggles over the precise content of varied social contracts. Here political regimes were avenues through which conflict was both expressed and contained.

It was in this context that pent-up demand for consumer and capital goods following the war led to investment in industry (and the Marshall Plan assisted this in Western Europe). These developments resulted in a “Golden Age” for capitalism through the 1950s and 1960s, where low unemployment and rising incomes created the increased demand that fuelled production. However, when capitalism expanded to developing economies, the political context differed. In part, this reflected the fact that much investment continued to be driven by a search for the raw materials that fuelled industrial development in the West. In Asia, the fear of communism helped facilitate a range of political regimes with few in the Western liberal democratic mould. In fact, authoritarian regimes, some of them quite brutal – as in Indonesia and South Korea – were encouraged, so long as they promoted political stability, were anti-communist, and protected the development of economic systems that were broadly capitalist. Contrary to the then prevailing Western modernisation rhetoric, it was the threat to capitalism – not democracy – that was the principal driver of foreign policy. Samuel Huntington’s political order theory was, in time, to provide a neat theoretical justification for such a direction, arguing that the building of institutions capable of establishing social and political order and control was paramount in the early stages of development.

So important was the security consideration in the process of safeguarding capitalism that, with significant US facilitation, some exceptional economic models emerged in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore. In these cases, massive injections of aid and foreign investment helped to establish the export-oriented industrialisation models that drove growth, well before these became more generalised as a capitalist investment strategy in response to cost pressures in the developed West. In each case, the state took a critical economic role and except in Singapore, this also involved the strengthening of domestic capitalist classes. Initially, it was East and Southeast Asia that gained the greatest economic benefit from this restructuring. In fact, with sluggish growth in the West, an Asian Capitalism model – characterised by a so-called ‘developmental state’ shaping the costs of different factors of production in an attempt to create comparative trade advantage – was recognised as a viable alternative economic model. Alongside such developmental states – most evident in Northeast Asia – the region saw other departures from the liberal economic model. These departures still involved market intervention, but these were less guided by national strategic considerations than the developmental states, and saw considerable cronyism and corruption, as in Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Yet, as investment poured into these economies, even these regimes appeared viable.

6.5 NEO-LIBERALISM’S ADVANCESS AFTER THE COLD WAR

The end of the Cold War left the US as the sole superpower. This meant that much of the foreign policy security pre-occupation gave way to a more aggressive and focused expansion of international capitalism that was less tolerant of obstacles to capital mobility.

US dominance within multilateral organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, as well as through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade/World Trade Organisation (WTO) and other institutions was used to exert pressure on the domestic policy of individual states to limit those obstacles.

The attempt to forge new institutions to facilitate the deeper incorporation of national economies into the structures and values of neo-liberal globalisation engendered conflicts in the region, although these were by far not uniform across East and Southeast Asia. These conflicts were, at times, in opposition to political and economic elite, while on other occasions they amounted to intra-elite struggles. Where elite embraced the neo-liberal reform agenda, they often did so selectively, and this set in train dynamics with unanticipated consequences for domestic political and economic regimes that often indicated the contradictions between neo-liberal reform and the kinds of institutional arrangements – summarised in the term “Asian Capitalism” – that had characterised economic and political development in the region.

The ideological and policy underpinning of this more mobile phase of global capitalist development was to be set of ideas and policies usually referred to as neo-liberalism. Neo-liberal policies were pursued especially strongly by the international financial institutions, drawing on the experience of neo-liberal reform in the West and, later, in Latin America and Eastern Europe. Neo-liberalism’s core policies emphasise the market, fiscal discipline, trade, investment and financial liberalisation, reduced public expenditure, reduced taxation, deregulation, decentralisation, privatisation, and a reduced role for the state. These were buttressed by laws protecting property and enhancing foreign investment.

Indeed, throughout the Cold War period and beyond, there developed a coherent alternative economic model that challenged the logic of neo-liberalism; this was so called Asian Capitalism, characterised by a high degree of state initiatives to shape the cost of the different factors of production (land, labour and capital) to try and favour particular economic – especially industry – outcomes, rather than leave these to the mercy of the market.

Ironically, this Asian model was made possible through trade access, aid and/or investment from the West during the Cold War period. This support was tied neither to a preferred economic nor political regime. Thus, while Japan was a democracy, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan were firmly authoritarian. So successful was this economic model that it not only generated rapid industrialisation, but also by the 1980s it had created powerful conglomerates capable of competing with those of the West and generated strong outward flows of Asian investment.

However, the brief economic downturn in the early/mid-1980s presented an opportunity for international financial institutions to promote enhanced economic liberalisation reforms in Asia. Recovery was swift, but persistent efforts were made by various interests attached to the neo-liberal agenda to consolidate and extend on such reforms, but it was in Latin America and Eastern Europe, where economic crisis were deeper and prolonged, that neo-liberal policy was entrenched.

For political liberals, the arguments against authoritarian rule were rooted in a philosophical belief in justice, liberty, equity and representation. The promotion of democracy on the part of some Western governments coincided with the heightened political activism in the region that was associated with expanding working and middle classes. However, for

economic liberals, it remained Asian capitalism rather than authoritarianism that was problematic. There is an element of neo-liberal theory that has been emptied of liberal political values, and not all economic liberals ascribe to liberal political values. And, as we have noted, this is even clearer for capitalists who, often welcome the order of authoritarianism and profits over liberal political ideals such as democracy. This is why it was possible for sophisticated and technocratic authoritarian regimes to continually excel in economic freedom league tables and transparency indices and receive the fulsome praise of economic liberals.

The Cold War's end had thus been a critical juncture in the global expansion of capitalism, freeing up resources and energy on the part of the US to lead and support an accelerated neo-liberals push, especially vis-à-vis finance capital. In this context, economic regimes in East and Southeast that stood in the way of the neo-liberal ideals came under increased scrutiny and Western support for authoritarian political regimes was more difficult to rationalise. The advent of another critical juncture, the Asian financial and economic crisis in 1997, intensified pressure on economic and political regimes, introducing new conflicts in neo-liberal globalisation.

6.6 THE WAR ON TERRORISM, POLITICAL REGIMES AND NEO-LIBERAL GLOBALISATION

Following the end of the Cold War, the lack of an obvious security imperative had directed US foreign policy in ways that had emphasised economic policy and placed a limited but important emphasis on liberal political values. This was especially evident during the Clinton presidency. After September 11, however, the 'war on terrorism' raised questions about the continued prospects for the development of economic and political liberalism in Asia and the contexts within which the respective struggles to advance them across the region are likely to take place.

The elevation of security concerns within US foreign policy in the 'war on terror' heralds new challenges for the development of neo-liberal globalisation, which may see political concerns return to centre stage. Whereas the post-Cold War period witnessed an unprecedented privileging of the neo-liberal economic reform agenda, now this is to be balanced by considerations of how to contain terrorism.

It is apparent that the 'war on terrorism' changes the context of neo-liberal globalisation because the interests of US capital in having markets opened are moderated by security concerns. This changed context has empowered neo-conservatives within the US administration, whose perspectives about markets has long been tempered by more traditional foreign policy emphasis – or at least a different appreciation of the nexus between US economic and political power – than had been reflected in the earlier reliance on multilateral arrangements. The point here is that this new arrangement is necessarily hostile to the global neo-liberal economic agenda, but that it has the potential to moderate the momentum for reform and for permitting differential responses in certain countries to pressures for economic reform. In the Asian region, an excellent example of this changed perspectives are recent moves towards bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), some of which have been specifically negotiated in the security context.

6.7 CIVIL SOCIETY, GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND INTERNET

The conjuncture of two major trends has vastly expanded the role of non-state actors in the global decision-making processes. First, the proliferation of economic, social, and political trans-border interdependencies has significantly diminished the autonomy of the nation state and made international co-operation a prerequisite for effective policy-making in many areas. This has given rise to a proliferation of international fora and negotiations which, although primarily state-centred, also serve as focal points and lobby/networking infrastructure for non-state actors.

Second, civil society organisations have gained significant weight in the political process for various reasons including historical ones (their acclaimed role in toppling communist regimes across East and Central Europe in the 1980s), functional ones (growing appreciation as partners for implementing policies, information providers and generators of social cohesion and trust) or normative ones (shifting conception of political legitimacy, which accords a greater role to alternative forms of participation, devolved collective decision-making and self-governance beyond the conventional political process). In other words, both global decision-making and the involvement of non-state actors are on the rise and inspire academic scholarship across various disciplines. Both growing interdependence and the ascent of non-state actors are interlinked with the emergence of a global information and communication infrastructure. Coordinating economic activities on a global scale is predicated upon fast and cheap global communication as is of course the globalisation of the media and the working of international political regimes itself. By the same token, plummeting costs of computing power, the emergence of the Internet as global information space and medium for one-to-many modes of communication have lowered the organisation costs for civil society organisations and boosted their mobilising and lobbying capacities. It is this grass-roots democratisation of communication and information flows, which holds the promise to free civil society from the straightjacket of overzealous state censorship or corporately controlled mass media and equip them to successfully enter the fray of negotiations in international governance regimes.

6.8 THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AND INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE

What does this mean for developing countries and the global digital divide? For a start, it appears quite straightforward to argue that the lack of access to these novel communication and information technologies diminishes the possibilities to get heard and participate *relative* to stakeholders that have the resources to quickly adopt these novel technologies. One would argue that, while civil society in rich industrialised countries is able to catch-up somewhat with governments and transnational business in terms of information competence, civil society in developing countries is falling even further behind.

At closer inspection, this argument needs some qualifications, since it appears to lean precariously towards an overly simplistic conception of communication and information flows. In particular it fails to consider the multiplicity of technical tools and social arrangements that process and move information, the interlocked nature of these arrangements and hence the various organisational possibilities for consolidating and articulating political claims. True, from an idealist democratic point of view the target of

one voice—one computer might maximise democratic participation in electronic communication networks for global governance. It is needless to say that this is not feasible nor would it be a sufficient condition for a substantive democratic process, given other inequities in information access, processing capacities, time resources etc.

6.8.1 Digital Divide to Digital Opportunity?

So far it has been argued that the digital inequities as referred to by the concept of the digital divide do not in themselves significantly alter the existing asymmetric patterns of representation in global governance processes and that it is the domestic conditions for civil society activity that are important in the first place. While this establishes the primary responsibility of domestic policy-making, it also raises the question as to what extent a closing of the digital divide could compensate for an adverse domestic political environment and other constraints. Three interrelated effects, each discussed in more depth below, might be possible. Enhanced endowment with ICT could:

- Help to outmanoeuvre domestic political control mechanisms on the flow of information;
- Stimulate political engagement and civil society activity in general; and,
- Substitute for a possible weak link to international advocacy channels and disintermediate the information flows to the public and other participants in the governance regime.

6.9 SUMMARY

Summing up, policy-makers who are serious about maximising the opportunities from ICT towards a new culture of democratic legitimacy in global decision-making process should be aware of their responsibilities:

- Domestic ones, in order to enable a thriving civil society;
- International ones, in order to increase the plurality and visibility in the global information space; and,
- Global regime ones for the case of global governance reform towards greater public deliberation, transparency and accountability.

Taken together this is the critical political dimension of the digital divide when it comes to delivering on the democratic promise of ICT in global governance regimes. The emergence of global civil society as an idea has also meant the emergence of an accompanying empirical reality. As a result, the transnational nature of the meaning of technological changes, social developments, communication, interaction, and institutional ties started to publicise global civil society. Global civil society can be said to have emerged between international civil society organisations and the state, with the use of the international or global power. In other words, as a collective entity, the global civil society manifests itself through global society and international civil society organisations. The most important manifestation of this is the important role played by international civil society organisations in the making of global policies.

6.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by globalisation? How far has it been successful as a multifaceted process?

2. What are changing equations among markets, state and civil society in the context of globalisation?
3. What is the impact of the 'war on terrorism' on neo-liberal market economies and political regimes? Analyse it in your own words.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT 7 CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLITICAL REGIMES

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7.1 INTRODUCTION

Civil society is a popular, normatively charged concept that does not have a single meaning. The concept of civil society and its perception as a problem or solution to the ills of society and state have varied with intellectual tradition and the prevailing socio-political and economic conditions. Concepts of civil society in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe emerged in the context of the development of the commercial sphere and the modern state. Conceived essentially, but not exclusively, as a sphere of market relations, civil society was viewed by Scottish Enlightenment thinkers and Hegel as a positive development, which nevertheless posed a problem for social order that had to be overcome by appealing to the moral sentiments of society or state guidance and arbitration. Later, Marx viewed civil society as an arena of alienation and exploitation that had to be overcome through revolution. Tocqueville, in contrast, viewed civil society as a positive force in sustaining democracy in a condition of social equality and a weak central government.

The ideal of civil society has travelled far from its origins in Western philosophy to the United States, Latin America, Southern, Central and Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia. Until the 1980s, debates on civil society were largely confined to the history of ideas in Western political philosophy. With the third wave of democratisation, however, especially the dissolution of the USSR and the emergence of the public sphere as legitimate in the post-Soviet Central and Eastern European states, discussion of the proper relationship between the individual, society, state and market came to the fore, sparking widespread debate over the meaning of civil society and its place in politics.

Early European articulations contrasted civil society with society in a state of nature or with despotic government. There was no attempt to distinguish civil society from the community and political society at large. With the development of the commercial state in eighteenth-century Europe, civil society, conceived essentially as a market-organised sphere of production and competition, came to be viewed as a distinct, legally protected public realm, separate from family and state. Modern accounts of civil society usually trace the term to Adam Ferguson, a leading thinker of the Scottish Enlightenment who viewed commerce and trade and more generally the development of the “commercial state” as ending the corrupt feudal system and reinforcing liberty and personal security.

Aims and Objectives

This Unit would enable you to understand

- The relationship between state and civil society
- Various political regimes
- The relevance of civil society in Asia

7.2 DEBATE OVER CIVIL SOCIETY

Despite his articulation of the idea of civil society, Ferguson did not distinguish between civil society and the polity. He believed that “society can not be detached from its form of government, nor can economic man be torn, in practice or abstraction, from the political man.” The German conception of civil society, which drew its inspiration from Ferguson and Adam Smith, did however, make a firm distinction between civil society, the family, and the state. Asserting that civil society is a product of modern state and that its development presupposes a state, Hegel conceptualised civil society as a sphere of market relations, regulated by civil law, intervening between the family and the state. Hegel viewed civil society as prone to periodic instability and conflict, despite its tendency towards a natural equilibrium. To ensure, “civility” and stability, he concluded that state had to order civil society. Hence state intervention to guide and govern civil society was legitimate.

Two contemporary formulations of civil society – that of the New Left and that of the Neo-Tocquevillean, or liberal-democracy, model, although differ in purpose and strategy – both share a positive take on civil society. The New Left conception is rooted in the Gramscian formulation of civil society, which departs from Marx. Orthodox Marxists view civil society, constituted by production class and their attendant social and political relations, as a structural problem to overcome through revolution. Marx, in contrast to Hegel, viewed the state as a superficial structure in the service of the dominant capitalist class and depicted civil society as co-terminus with the socio-economic base of the state. For Marx, therefore, civil society was a problem that had to be overcome, not by the state,

which was its captive, but through a revolution that would put the proletariat in the driver's seat. With the workers party in power, civil society would dissolve into the state, which would represent the true public good. Marx's depiction of civil society as an arena of alienation and exploitation that had to be abolished deprived it of analytic value in orthodox Marxism.

Differentiating state and civil society, Gramsci stressed the crucial role of the cultural and ideological support provided by civil society for the survival of European capitalism. Gramsci's conception of civil society includes all social institutions that are non-production-related, non-governmental and non-familial, ranging from recreational groups to trade unions, churches, and political parties.

The voluntarism and political agency accorded to civil society in Gramsci's account inform much contemporary thinking of the New Left on civil society. Robert Cox, for example, posits civil society as a surrogate for revolution. Others, like Jürgen Habermas, with due recognition of the pluralism that pervades modern society, view civil society as necessary to defend democracy against the threat posed by modern state bureaucracy, which seeks to encompass more and more of social life. Rather than posing a problem, as in earlier Marxist accounts, civil society is now viewed as providing a solution. The self-reflexivity of society and the institutions of civil society are seen as vital to protect autonomous public opinion and the integrity of the public sphere, two pillars of democracy.

The liberal-democratic school and to a lesser degree, the New Left conceive of civil society and its institutions in instrumental terms vis-à-vis the state – protecting the public sphere from the intrusive state, influencing state policy, or altering the regime type – and not as a distinct site for governance and reform that is independent of the state.

7.3 CIVIL SOCIETY AND STATE

The relationship of civil society to the state is often depicted as confrontational and zero-sum. This may be the case in certain situations. But in most cases the state and civil society are mutually dependent for survival. Civil society requires governance to survive and governments, at least democratic ones, draw their strength from civil society. The relationship of civil society to the state can take many forms: co-optation and manipulation of civil society by the state, deep penetration and influence over the state by certain civil society actors, productive tension between the two in a context of overall agreement on the political and economic framework, contestation over certain fundamental issues, alienation and isolation of civil society organisations from the state, or outright rejection of the state by key segments of civil society. Although interconnected, civil society groups must be distinct from the state if they are to influence governance, and the state must have autonomy to protect the rights of all its citizens.

Another important sphere in the continuum between private life and the state is political society. The concept of political society denotes, at least in democratic states, the realm of formal competition for the acquisition and exercise of state power. Political parties, the primary actors in this realm, seek to mobilise public support and to constitute winning coalitions in the formal competition and management of state power through elections and the constitution of legislatures. Civil society is distinct from political society. While they seek to influence the rules of the game and affect policies, civil society organisations do not organise themselves on a partisan basis to aggregate interests and formally compete for state office.

To conceptualise civil society without reference to economic society – especially the market – is to miss crucial insights into civil society and its operation. As observed, eighteenth-century conceptions of civil society in Europe were rooted in the recognition of the market as a distinct public realm and the competition arising from growing specialisation and division of labour as a problem for social order. Subsequently, Marx linked civil society to a particular state in the development of capitalism. Today, New Left intellectuals posit civil society as a defence against the encroachment of the state and the market and the threat of global capitalism. By assuming socio-economic equality or defining civil society as a nonprofit sector, the Tocquevillean and neo-liberal formulations decouple civil society from the economic sphere such as the “material bases of civil society and the negative effects of the market on civil society are erased from view.” The structural inequality of markets has consequences for political and civil societies.

7.4 POLITICAL REGIMES

The term regime is used widely but quite loosely in political science. It is quite often applied to a particular type of government, i.e., democracy, aristocracy, autocracy, dictatorship and so on.

7.4.1 Democracy

Democracy is a legislative system in which all citizens exercise direct and equal participation in the development, proposal and passage of legislation into law. Even though it is identified as government of the people, by the people and for the people, there is no specific definition of democracy. Equality and freedom have been identified as important characteristics of democracy since ancient times. These principles are reflected in all citizens being equal before the law and having equal access to the legislative process. For example, in a representative democracy, every vote has equal weight, no restrictions are applied to anyone wanting to become a representative, and the freedom of its citizens is secured by constitutional rights and liberties.

7.4.2 Aristocracy

Aristocracy is a form of government in which a few of the most famous citizens rule. It largely means rule of the best. The concept evolved in Ancient Greece, whereby a council of famous citizens was commonly used and contrasted with “direct monarchy” in which an individual king held the power. In Rome, The Republic consisted of an aristocracy as well as consuls, a senate, and a tribal assembly. The Republic ended with the death of Julius Caesar on 15th March, 44 BC. Later, aristocracies primarily consisted of an elite aristocratic class, privileged by birth and often wealth. Since the French Revolution, aristocracy has generally been contrasted with democracy, in which all citizens hold some form of political power. In *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes describes an aristocracy as a commonwealth in which the representative of the people is an assembly by part. Simply put, a government in which only a certain part of the general public can represent the public.

7.4.3 Monarchy

A monarchy is a form of government in which all political power is passed down to an individual, usually hereditary, known as a monarch or king, or queen. As a political entity, the monarch is the head of state, generally until their death or abdication, and “is wholly set apart from all other members of the state.” Historically, the notion of monarchy may

emerge under different circumstances. It may grow out of tribal kingship, and the office of monarch (kings) becoming typically hereditary, resulting in successive dynasties or “houses”, especially when the leader is wise and able enough to lead the tribals. A state of monarchy is said to result that reveals the relationships between resources, communities, monarch and his office. Even in antiquity, the strict hereditary succession could be tempered by systems of elective monarchy, where an assembly elects a new monarch out of a pool of eligible candidates. The concept has also been modernised and constitutional monarchies where the title of monarch remains mostly ceremonial, without, or with very limited political power.

7.4.4 Dictatorship

Dictatorship can be defined as a government controlled by one person, or a small group of people. In this power rests entirely on the person or group of people, and can be obtained by force or by inheritance. A dictator may also take away much of its peoples’ freedom. In contemporary usage, dictatorship refers to an autocratic form of absolute rule by leadership unrestricted by law, constitutions, or other social and political factors within the state. In other words a dictatorship is a form of government that has the power to govern without consent of those being governed while totalitarianism describes a state that regulates nearly every aspect of public and private behaviour of the people. In other words, dictatorship concerns the source of the governing power and totalitarianism concerns the scope of the governing power. In this sense, dictatorship a contrast to democracy and totalitarianism and opposes pluralism – wherein the government allows multiple lifestyles and opinions.

7.4.5 Republic

A republic is a form of government in which the people, or some significant portion of them, retain supreme control over the government. The term is generally also understood to describe a government where most decisions are made with reference to established laws, rather than the discretion of head of state, and therefore monarchy is today generally considered to be incompatible with being a republic. One common modern definition of a republic is a government having a head of state who is not a monarch. The word “republic” is derived from the Latin phrase *res publica*, which can be translated as “a public affair”, and often used to describe a state using this form of government.

Welfare State: A welfare state is a concept of government where the state plays the primary role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of its citizens. It is based on the principles of equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth, and public responsibility for those unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life. The general term may cover a variety of forms of economic and social organisation.

7.5 CIVIL SOCIETY’S RELEVANCE IN ASIA

Although it has gained prominence since the 1980s, the concept of civil society has a longer history in Asia than is commonly acknowledged. In Japan, for example, the 1920s and early 1930s witnessed the emergence of new socio-political forces, such as trade unions and “new religions” that were not under state domination, and interest groups mushroomed in the first two post-war decades. Civil society was a widely used term in the post-World War II period. Deploying an idealised notion of civil society in Britain and

France, Japanese historians and social scientists characterised Japanese society as immature and lacking the ethos of civil society. Prescriptions for post-war Japan ranged from the democratisation of family life to the encouragement of free enterprise in the commercial sector through the adoption of modified Western political and civil arrangements.

Beginning in the early 1990s, however, growing distrust of politicians and bureaucrats and the inability of the state and the private sector to respond to social needs contributed to disaffection with government and a re-invigoration of the non-profit or third sector. The dramatic shortcomings of the state in responding to the great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake and the outpouring of voluntary effort boosted the image and role of civil society organisations in Japan.

Although the term civil society itself was not used, self-governing associations that sought to influence state politics and policies were a feature of several Asian countries both during the pre-colonial and colonial eras and in the post-independence period. In India, for example, the origins of civil society may be traced to the emergence of a number of social reform movements in the mid-nineteenth century that questioned the caste system and position of women in the society. In British India, peasants established resistance groups, collected funds for litigation, and sent petitions to the British government of India. Peasant groups, and elements of the exploited classes often organised and mobilised themselves independently – posing a dilemma for the educated bourgeois leadership of the Indian nationalist movement in the early twentieth century and sparking a controversy in the Indian National Congress.

The growing prominence of civil society in democratic transitions throughout the world, including Asia, has stimulated a great deal of thinking about the concept. Civil society has been used as lens to understand politics and deployed as a key variable to explain democratic political change, especially in developing countries. Many analysts view civil society organisations such as Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia and Solidarity in Poland as crucial elements in the collapse of communism. Those who took part in the dramas that unfolded in Eastern Europe have emphasised the importance of civil society. It has been widely argued that civil society is the key to the survival or defeat of totalitarian political regimes.

Most of the best works on civil society are grounded in the experience of the southern, central, and eastern European countries. Experiences in Latin America inform some of the major works on democratic transition and consolidation and indirectly, civil society.

7.6 THE ASIAN CRISIS AND REGIME CONVERGENCE

The onset of the Asian economic crisis in 1997 had profound implications for ideas about alternatives to economic and political liberalism in the region. The crisis instantly generated confident attacks on “Asian Capitalism” the developmental state and authoritarian regimes. These assaults came from both within and beyond the region and involved a conjuncture of forces for economic and political liberalism, sometimes intersecting with each other’s reform agenda but not always.

For neo-liberals, the crisis was seized upon as evidence that finally “Asian Capitalism” had failed. Led by the imperatives, they embarked on a drive to promote a range of market-oriented reforms. This was ironic, given that accelerated exposure to international market forces as a result of liberalising reforms in banking and financial sectors during the 1990s

had played a role in producing the crisis. However, a neo-liberal argument quickly surfaced that laid the blame on the inadequacy of the supervisory, regulatory and other governance institutions. The term “crony capitalism” was quickly adopted as a depiction of corrupt state-business relationships. It was suggested that capital flight reflected concerns about the absence of predictability and credibility in governance regimes in the region.

As neo-liberals saw it, the crisis had demonstrated the need for a convergence towards the same institutional arrangements to be found in the advanced capitalist economies. Asian political and economic arrangements were now derided as a system that was incompatible with the requirements of globalised markets. In particular, however much “Asian Capitalism” may have managed some reconciliation with industrial development, these economies were now embarking on structural transformations that involved mobile finance capital and far more stringent institutional preconditions.

The IMF and like-minded institutions led the economic critique of the Asian model. Following the crisis, a modified neo-liberal position acknowledged that markets alone were unlikely to generate desired economic outcomes but required supporting institutions. The emphasis shifted to the need for “good governance”, transparency and related institutions that were expected to rein in rent seekers and the developmental state.

Politically liberal critics, many having little in common with the neo-liberal economic camp, also seized on the crisis for evidence of a link between political liberalism and the sustainability and advancement of capitalist markets, rendering authoritarianism redundant. The idea grew out of a modernisation theory of the 1950s and 1960s but had been challenged by the capacity of various authoritarian regimes to preside over increasingly sophisticated market systems. Following the crisis, however, the absence of developed civil societies, media freedom and other liberal political institutions subjecting powerful elite to scrutiny and accountability were considered to have contributed to the crisis. Improved market information and more effective market discipline, it was argued, required the dismantling of authoritarian regimes and further democratisation in Asia.

In the countries most affected by the crisis, economic turmoil was accompanied by political tumult. There were changes of government in Thailand, South Korea, and Indonesia and in Malaysia, while the ruling coalition held, political struggle saw Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim arrested and jailed. In all of this, the opposition of Dr Mahathir, with his apparent rejection of the IMF, attacks on hedge funds, and his destruction of those who favoured Anwar’s “neo-liberal” policies, has been overdone. The deeper level of opposition revolved around the shape of political regimes, the role of the state and national development strategies and was widespread.

7.7 WAR ON TERRORISM AND POLITICAL REGIMES

The elevation of security concerns within US foreign policy in the ‘war on terror’ heralds new challenges for the development of neo-liberal globalization, which may see political concerns return to centre stage. Whereas the post-Cold War period witnessed an unprecedented privileging of the neo-liberal economic reform agenda, not this is to be balanced by considerations of how to contain terrorism.

It is important to note that, while the renewed security emphasis represents a return of sorts to the Cold War era of political and economic concerns, there is at least one

significant difference: the interests of capitals in Western Europe and East Asia are not necessarily congruent with either US economic or military dominance, as was the case in that earlier era. The US's post-Cold War period emphasis on the role of the multilateral institutions dominated for managing globalisation had some appeal for Europeans. However, the terror/security emphasis has seen the Bush administration de-emphasise these institutions, suggesting a further site for conflict.

It is apparent that 'war on terrorism' changes the context in which neo-liberal globalisation because the interests of US capital in having markets opened are moderated by security concerns. This changed context has empowered neo-conservatives within the US administration, whose perspectives about markets has long been tempered by more traditional foreign policy emphases – or at least a different appreciation of the nexus between US economic and political power – than had been reflected in the earlier reliance on multilateral arrangements.

In other words, the 'war on terrorism' indicates that an economic-security nexus has emerged. This is evident as Iraq and the West Asia more generally are so critical for the oil supplies that drive US economic expansion that they become a security concern.

It is evident that political regime type was to matter little in rewarding supporters in the 'war on terrorism', as the US found itself requiring the co-operation of assorted authoritarian regimes. Reminiscent of the Cold War period, the US-sponsored 'fight for freedom' meant that political democracy could wait while the 'war on terrorism' was fought. Indeed, this has already seen a strengthening of anti-democratic forces in the region. Not only did authoritarian regimes in Malaysia and Singapore become strategic sites in opposing terrorism, but the exercise of official powers of detention and surveillance expanded considerably in the region and beyond.

7.8 TRENDS IN REGIME TYPES, 1990-2005

There has been an overall increase in democracies as proportion of total regimes (a 13 percent gain from 1990 to 2005). This shift (in which the proportion of democratic regimes in the world reached 50% for the first time in history) is a consequence of not only the third wave of democratisation and the end of the Cold War, but also a 5 percent increase in democratic regimes between 1999 and 2005. Most of the increase in democratic regimes, however, has been due to a rise in electoral democracies, the modal regime type from 1992 onwards. There has not been a corresponding rise in liberal democracies, which have barely increased since 1990.

Similar to the democratic regimes, there has been important variation in the trajectories of different types of authoritarian regimes. The number of closed authoritarian regimes has declined precipitously between 1990 and 2005. Most of the drop in closed authoritarian regimes was due to the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. But the downtrend continued between 1999 and 2005. In contrast to closed authoritarian regimes, hegemonic authoritarian regimes rebounded after the end of the Cold War, more than doubling from 1992 to 2005.

More volatile have been competitive authoritarian regimes. This type surged after the end of the Cold War as incumbents of closed or hegemonic authoritarian regimes, facing incredible international and domestic pressures, were forced to open their political systems.

Once a regime becomes a liberal democracy, it is almost guaranteed to remain one. Electoral democracies have proved similarly durable. But there have been even fewer incidences of electoral democracies becoming liberal democracies. In other words, once a country has reached the level of an electoral democracy, it rarely slides backwards—but it even more rarely improves to the level of liberal democracy.

7.9 THE DECLINE IN CLOSED AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES AND THE RISE OF HEGEMONIC AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES

One of the striking trends illustrated by mapping the post-Cold War regime types is the steady decline in closed authoritarian regimes. The key initial driver for this trend, of course, was the end of the Cold War itself and the global spread of democratisation. Part of this is due to the stabilisation (or partial stabilisation) of war-affected countries, such as Liberia, Rwanda, Congo-Brazzaville, Haiti, Uganda, Yemen, Sierra Leone, and Sudan. Rulers of these countries sought to hold multi-candidate elections as a means to legitimate and consolidate their political control (which many initially gained by force). These rulers, however, exploited the recent and ongoing instability to squelch the opposition and ensure they prevailed overwhelmingly in the election. Consequently, many of these regimes became hegemonic authoritarian regimes, contributing to the corresponding rise in this regime type. It is also these regimes that explain why, perhaps surprisingly, African countries made up a plurality of hegemonic authoritarian regimes since the 1990s.

7.10 SUMMARY

Political regimes have evolved over a period of time. But it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that political regimes were associated with states. After Aristotle who talked of state and regimes, perhaps the most profound analysis of political regimes was given by Rousseau, Locke and Hobbes. The political regimes have ranged from autocracy, monarchy, democracy, dictatorship and so on. The evolution process has brought the democratic welfare state system as the most stable and benevolent form of regime that encourages people's participation in administration amongst other things.

7.11 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the different types of political regimes? Examine them at length.
2. What is the relevance of civil society in Asia?
3. Discuss the trends in various regime types.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT 8 CIVIL SOCIETY, RESISTANCE AND PROTEST

Structure

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

If any one term of art can be said to encapsulate the convergence in intellectual interests among students of democracy since the fall of Communism, that term is ‘civil society’. The concept of “civil society” arose at the very dawn of the modern age, as a theory of political economy and market capitalism in the writings of Locke, Rousseau, Smith, and Hegel. After Marx subsumed it under his analysis of “bourgeois society,” a linguistically identical term in German, the concept remained bound to its evil twin from then until the 1980s. Scholars then revived and redefined it, drawing on Habermas’ account of the public sphere and Tocqueville’s analysis of the voluntary association. Gramsci’s theory of hegemony and Foucault’s concept of discourse, both popular in the 1970s and 1980s, had pointed a way out of Marxism by drawing attention from economics to culture as the central locus of contestation and power in civil society. Meanwhile, the rise of gender studies—perhaps the most consequential site of scholarly innovation into the 1990s—offered a host of ways to embed civil society’s history in private life and public ideologies. Today, interest in civil society forms a cornerstone of the new inter-disciplinary arena, embracing historians, sociologists, and political scientists working on all regions of the modern world.

Traditionally, for Plato the civil society coordinates the activities of people with different skills and aptitudes. An understanding of the division of labour lies at the centre of his political and psychological theories and informs his epistemology as well.

Aims and Objectives

This Unit would enable you to understand

- The concept of civil society in the pre and post-modern history
- The concepts of resistance and protest
- Some of the early and recent protest movements.

8.2 THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The relation of law and “civil society” begs an important question: what is civil society? And what is its relationship with resistance and protest? There have emerged over the past three centuries a variety of responses. In recent years, Ford Foundation has pointed out at least three significant definitions that have taken a centre stage:

- Civil society as part of society – in the form of associations, groups of people operating within society at large;
- Civil society as a kind of society – value based creating ‘good’;
- Civil society as a public sphere – the arena for public debate and argument, a public space in which differences between community, cultural identity and public policy are debated.

As we look at it, ‘civil society’ describes that element of society outside of government and business sectors, both organised and essentially disorganised, that represents the workings of people among, and with one another to achieve their aspirations, meet their needs and live creative, active and healthy lives. To define the term much more precisely actually works to limit it, when in fact the essential character of “civil society” is its unlimited quality. As per the traditional definition of civil society, it is composed of the totality of civic and social organisations and institutions that form the basis of a functioning society, as distinct from the force-backed structures of a state.

From a historical perspective, the actual meaning of the concept of civil society has changed twice from its original, classical form. The first change occurred after the French Revolution and the second during the fall of Communism in Europe.

8.2.1 Pre-modern History

The concept of civil society in its pre-modern classical republican understanding is usually connected to the early-modern thought of Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century. Generally, civil society has been referred to as a political association governing social conflict through the imposition of rules that restrain citizens from harming one another. In the classical period, the concept was used as a synonym for the good society, and seen as indistinguishable from the state. For instance, Socrates taught that conflicts within society should be resolved through public argument using dialectic, a form of rational dialogue to uncover truth. For Plato, the ideal state was a just society in which people dedicate themselves to the common good, practice civic virtues of wisdom, courage, moderation and justice.

The Middle Ages saw major changes in the topics discussed by political philosophers. Due to the unique political arrangements of feudalism, the concept of classical civil society practically disappeared from mainstream discussion. Instead, conversation was dominated

by problems of just war, a phenomenon that would last until the end of Renaissance. The Thirty Years' War and the subsequent Treaty of Westphalia heralded the birth of the sovereign state system.

Thomas Hobbes underlined the need of a powerful state to maintain civility in society. For Hobbes, human beings are motivated by self-interests. Moreover, these self-interests are often contradictory in nature. Therefore, in the state of nature, there was a condition of a war of all against all. In such a situation, life was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. John Locke had a similar concept to Hobbes about the political conditions of England. It was the period of Glorious Revolution, marked by the struggle between the divine right of the Crown and the political rights of Parliament. In Locke's view, human beings led also an un-peaceful life in the state of nature. However, it could be maintained at the sub-optimal level in the absence of a sufficient system. From that major concern, people gathered together to sign a contract and constituted a common public authority.

The Enlightenment thinkers argued that human beings are rational and can shape their destiny. Hence, no need of an absolute authority to control them. Both Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant argued that people are peace lovers and that wars are the creation of absolute regimes. As far as Kant was concerned, this system was effective to guard against the domination of a single interest and check the tyranny of the majority.

8.2.2 Modern History

G W F Hegel completely changed the meaning of civil society, giving rise to a modern liberal understanding of it as a form of market society as opposed to institutions of modern nation state. For Marx, civil society was the base where productive forces as social relations were taking place, whereas political society was the superstructure. Agreeing with the link between capitalism and civil society, Marx held that the latter represents the interests of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the state as superstructure also represents the interests of the dominant class; under capitalism, it maintains the domination of the bourgeoisie.

This negative view about civil society was rectified by Antonio Gramsci. Departing from Marx, Gramsci located civil society as co-terminus with the socio-economic base of the state. Rather, Gramsci located civil society in the political superstructure. He underlined the crucial role of the civil society as the contributor of the cultural and ideological capital required for the survival of the hegemony of capitalism. Rather than positing it as a problem, as in earlier Marxist conceptions, Gramsci viewed civil society as the site for problem-solving. Agreeing with Gramsci, the New Left assigned civil society a key role in defending people against the state and the market and in asserting the democratic will to influence the state.

8.2.3 Post-modern History

The post-modern way of understanding civil society was first developed by political opposition in the former Soviet bloc East European countries in the 1980s. However, in the 1990s with the emergence of the non-governmental organisations and the New Social Movements on a global scale, civil society as a third sector became a key terrain of strategic action to construct an alternative social and world order.

By the end of the 1990s, civil society was seen less as a panacea amid the growth of the anti-globalisation movement and the transition of many countries to democracy; instead, civil society was increasingly called on to justify its legitimacy and democratic

credentials. Post-modern civil society theory has not largely returned to a more neutral stance, but with marked differences between the study of the phenomenon in richer societies and writing on civil society in developing states.

8.3 RESISTANCE AND PROTEST

Resistance

When Mohandas K Gandhi was born in 1869, India was a colony of the British Empire. The Gandhi family lived in a region of India that had not been greatly influenced by Western Culture. People of that region followed the same customs and traditions as their ancestors had for generations. The life of young Mohandas centred on his mother, who taught him about the Hindu doctrine of *ahisma*, the refusal to do harm and the duty to do good. This belief was foundation for the bold and courageous acts that led to Gandhi's fame as a proponent of non-violent resistance.

Gandhi called the non-violent resistance the satyagraha, which means the "force contained in truth and love," or "nonviolent resistance." The philosophy of satyagraha required that a person who decided to break a law considered unjust must accept the consequences of that decision.

Resistance functions to restructure the society in that new leadership emerges, traditional authority patterns are challenged and anti-colonialism provides for integration and cohesion among diverse ethnic and religious groupings. The Bissau (West Africa) dock-workers' strike in 1958, for example, illustrated urban economic resistance which had widespread influence and ultimately led to the mobilisation of the rural peasantry into a nationalist movement which struggled for the independence of Guine. Thus resistance within the indigenous populations of our areas of concern can be viewed as an embryonic stage of nationalism.

Protest

Non-violent protest and persuasion is a class, which includes a large number of methods, which are mainly symbolic acts of peaceful opposition or of attempted persuasion, extending beyond verbal expressions but stopping short of non-cooperation or non-violent intervention. Among these methods are parades, vigils, picketing, posters, teach-ins, mourning and protest meetings.

Protest may be manifested as a complaint, objection, disapproval or display of unwillingness to an idea, course of action, or social condition. Protest, it may be argued, stems from an active desire for change, while the process of developmental change frequently originates from the impact of protest. Protest may be the outcome of exposure to the materialistic and other benefits that an anticipated "better" life can produce. Protest activity may also be the direct result of institutional failure to accommodate immediate and local demands, as in the situation described in India's freedom struggle particularly non-violent protests. When rising expectations are not satisfied or demands for change are not met by suppression, rejection, and non-integration, protest is likely to follow the path of increasingly unstable and irrational means to accomplish goals.

Protest and Resistance

Protest and resistance may lead to crisis, an unstable state of affairs in which a decisive change may be impending. Crisis relates to physical and human problems. In one country,

for instance, crisis may be the result of droughts or floods. It may also be caused by structural changes in the regional economy or by the successes and failures of attempts to find solutions to problems through welfare policies, the migration of people from area to area, and so forth. Crisis might also be result of a class conflict and differences between oligarchic rulers and the mass of followers in a particular society. Crisis may well be related to the tensions and alienation of people who see themselves as nonparticipants in the decisions that shape a community.

The concepts protest and resistance relate also to opposition and conflict. Opposition is a manifestation of protest or resistance against the control and use of power in society and occurs when those subject to it experience shared feelings of exploitation and oppression. Exploitation is dependent on social expectations, those of the group or groups subject to the power, which determines how they react to given demands for obedience, and those of the group in power, which determine the extent of their demands for submission. Conflict may be the result of such expectations. Conflict basically means the incidence of disagreement over fundamental values in society. Such conflict may relate to major cleavages that have historically affected society, among which might be identified cleavages emanating from differences in social and economic class, religious sects, ethnic groups, ideological divisions, and geographical regions. From this we might generalise that the more issues defined in cleavage terms the greater the likelihood of political conflict. Also the larger the number of cleavage-related issues that might be resolved simultaneously, for example, the unstable the political system.

8.4 NON-VIOLENCE: AN ATTRIBUTE OF PROTEST AND RESISTANCE

Non-violence means abstaining from the use of physical force to achieve an aim. As an ethical philosophy, it upholds the view that moral behaviour excludes the use of violence; as a political philosophy it maintains that violence is self-perpetuating and can never provide a means to a securely peaceful end. As a principle, it supports the pacifist position that war and killings are never justifiable. As a practice it has been used by pacifists and non-pacifists alike to achieve social change and express resistance to oppression. For pacifists, of course, all demonstrations of their view and protests against violence may by definition be non-violent.

Historically, non-violent practices have included civil disobedience, non-cooperation, passive resistance or non-resistance and non-violent direct action in the form of protests. The first American Quakers, whose religion was pacifist, practiced civil disobedience when they refused to pay taxes supporting the British war effort during the American War of Independence. During the Second World War, Danish shipbuilders practiced non-cooperation when they feigned misunderstanding and worked so poorly that their ship could not be used in war. Passive resistance, “turning the other cheek” and refusing to hit back, has been practiced and promoted by followers of both Jesus and Buddha. Tolstoy preached non-resistance in its pacifist sense, meaning that one should rather die than kill. Non-violent direct action has recently become a high profile manifestation of non-violent principles, as when protesters damage public property to make them heard.

Mahatma Gandhi used non-violence to successfully free India from the British rule. He called his ideas Satyagraha, meaning intensely active yet non-violent resistance. He believed that non-violent resistance focused on the power of the spirit, while violent

resistance focused on the power of the sword. From this belief and the belief that the spirit is stronger than the sword, Gandhi came to a conclusion: “I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment.”

Martin Luther King, Jr, used non-violent resistance to reconcile his religious belief with his passion for social justice, and this enabled him to make great advances within the United States towards racial equality. Over his lifetime, he had read books written by Marx, Temple, Nietzsche and others. None could completely explain how King’s religious and civic duties should coincide until he discovered the works of Gandhi. Years later, he wrote:

“The intellectual and moral satisfaction that I failed to gain from the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill, the revolutionary methods of Marx and Lenin, the social contracts theory of Hobbes, the “back to nature” optimism of Rousseau, and the superman philosophy of Nietzsche, I found in the non-violent resistance philosophy of Gandhi”.

In modern times, non-violence has become a powerful tool for social protest. There are several examples of its use in non-violent resistance and non-violent revolution, including Gandhi leading a decade long non-violent struggle against British rule in India, Martin Luther King’s adoption of Gandhi’s non-violent methods in the struggle to win civil rights for African Americans and Cesar Chavez’s campaigns of non-violence in the 1960s to protest the treatment of farm workers in California. The 1989 Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia that saw the overthrow of the Communist government is considered as one of the most important non-violent revolutions of 1989. Most recently, the non-violent campaigns of LeymahGbowee and the women of Liberia were able to achieve peace after 14-year civil war.

8.5 NON-VIOLENT ACTION

Non-violent action generally comprises three categories: Acts of Protest and Persuasion; Non-cooperation; and Non-violent Intervention.

8.5.1 Acts of Protest and Persuasion

Non-violent acts of protest and persuasion are symbolic actions performed by a group of people to show their support or disapproval of something. The goal of this kind of action is to bring public awareness to an issue, persuade or influence a particular group of people, or to facilitate future non-violent action. The methods of protest and persuasion include speeches, public communications, petitions, symbolic acts, processions and assemblies.

8.5.2 Non-cooperation

Non-cooperation involves the purposeful withholding of cooperation or the unwillingness to initiate in cooperation with an opponent. The goal of noncooperation is to halt or hinder an industry, political system, or economic process. Methods of non-cooperation include labour strikes, economic boycotts, civil disobedience, and general disobedience.

8.5.3 Non-violent Intervention

Non-violent intervention, compared to protest and non-cooperation, is a more direct method of non-violent action. Non-violent intervention can be used defensively – for example, to maintain an institution or independent initiative – or offensively – for example,

to drastically forward a non-violent struggle into the opponent's territory. Intervention is more often more immediate and effective than the other two methods, but is also harder to maintain and more taxing to the participants involved. Methods of intervention include occupations (sit-ins), blockades, fasting (hunger strikes), and dual sovereignty/parallel government.

8.5.4 Non-violent resistance

Non-violent Resistance (or non-violent action) is the practice of achieving socio-political goals through symbolic protests, civil disobedience, economic or political noncooperation, and other methods, without using violence. It is largely synonymous with both non-cooperation and non-violent intervention and blends the better of the two.

8.6 SOME RECENT PROTEST MOVEMENTS

8.6.1 Egypt

Protest in Egypt has consisted mainly of strikes and labour sit-ins not sanctioned by the official, government-controlled labour unions and professional associations or syndicates. Egypt experienced more than 1,000 episodes from 1998 to 2004, with more than 250 social protests in 2004 up from 200 in 2003.

After the 2005 elections, protest activities continued to gain momentum in number and scope. Egypt's daily newspaper *al-Masry al-Youm* reported 222 strikes, labour sit-ins, and demonstrations in 2006 and 580 in 2007.

In 2007, strikes even extended to public sector employees, with 55,000 real estate tax collectors striking for weeks in Cairo to demand wage parity with other collectors. At the same time, episodes of socioeconomic protest increased. 2008 witnessed over 400 instances of workers' collective action involving an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 workers.

The most important event was a massive general strike led by young activists and workers' groups that took place on 6th April 2008. In the face of continuing socioeconomic protest, the government gradually shifted from repression to a policy of making targeted concessions to the protesting groups. Wages and salaries of state workers and employees were raised several times, while prices of basic foods were strictly controlled.

The most recent episode of protest against the ruling government has brought the curtains down on President Hosni Mubarak's decades long regime in Egypt.

8.6.2 Jordan

The country experienced successive waves of protest for over twenty years, some sparked by economic conditions, others by political events. In general, however, political and economic protests are much more closely intertwined in Jordan than in Egypt. There was widespread protest in 1989 following the introduction of economic measures, including privatisation policies that affected the employees of the state sector. The Jordanian government understood that the discontent was not purely caused by economic hardship but also by political grievances, and responded by easing restrictions on political activism and allowing the opposition to participate in parliamentary elections. This resulted in an increase in the number of seats held by the Islamic Action Front. When protest started again in January 2011, in part a response to the uprising in Tunisia, however, the

government responded not by relaxing political controls, as it had done in the 1990s, but by pledging U.S. \$283 million to reduce taxes on fuel and food products like rice and sugar.

8.6.3 Morocco

Morocco also experienced successive waves of protest, particularly in the last decade. Noticeable in some incidents was the presence of labour unions, which at times even included government-aligned ones. The high point of protest in Morocco was in 2007, when 945 protest episodes took place between January and October as labour unions, professional associations, and young activists took to the streets to voice frustration at unemployment, high prices, and poor labour standards. Protest, however, subsided in the subsequent years.

8.6.4 Gulf Countries

Citizens' protests have been a rarity in Gulf countries. The only two countries to have experienced numerous episodes are Kuwait and Bahrain and in both the motives and demands were political. In Kuwait, episodes of protest centred on political and civil rights and were driven by middle and upper class professionals rather than by workers. In 2006, more than 4,000 young protesters loosely organised in what came to be known as the Orange Movement, succeeded in forcing the government to cut the number of electoral districts in the country from 25 to 5.

The reduction in the number of voting districts was considered by many in Kuwait as essential for curbing vote buying and the influence of tribal loyalties in the elections in order to get elected in large districts, the argument went, candidates would have to appeal to a broad cross section of voters and would find it difficult to buy enough votes to determine the outcome. Although the desired electoral legislation was passed and new parliamentary elections were held, however, vote buying and tribal loyalties continue to play a major role.

8.7 ANTI-NUCLEAR PROTEST MOVEMENTS

After the U.S. government's atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, recognition of the dangers that nuclear war posed to human survival sparked the development of an anti-nuclear movement in the United States and abroad. The Manhattan Project scientists—some of whom had opposed the use of nuclear weapons during World War II - organised the Federation of Atomic Scientists (which later became the Federation of American Scientists) and the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists, with Albert Einstein, Leo Szilard, and Eugene Rabinowitch playing leading roles in a crusade for nuclear disarmament. A burgeoning world government movement also warned of the menace of nuclear war, as did pacifist groups like the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the War Resisters League, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. A communist led antinuclear campaign, focused on the Stockholm peace petition, surfaced as well. With the deepening of the Cold War, however, American attitudes grew more hawkish and the protest movement dwindled.

In 1954, though, another wave of protest began, stimulated by the terrible destructiveness of the newly developed hydrogen bomb and by the atmospheric testing of this weapon, which showered the planet with radioactive fallout. Joining with British philosopher Bertrand Russell, Einstein issued a dramatic appeal to world leaders to halt the nuclear

arms race. Subsequently, meeting in Pugwash, Nova Scotia, scientists launched the periodic Pugwash conferences of scientists from East and West to discuss nuclear issues, while chemist Linus Pauling began a scientists' petition calling for an end to nuclear testing. In 1957, Norman Cousins, editor of the *Saturday Review*, and other nuclear critics organised the National Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy (SANE), a group that placed antinuclear ads in newspapers, held public meetings and demonstrations, initiated petition drives, and soon had 25,000 members. Established in 1959, the Student Peace Union mobilised college students against the nuclear menace and introduced Britain's nuclear disarmament symbol in America. Two years later, Women Strike for Peace, founded by Dagmar Wilson and other concerned mothers, brought thousands of women into the streets, demonstrating for an end to nuclear testing and the nuclear arms race. These dramatic protests played an important role in convincing previously reluctant governments to negotiate the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1963), banning atmospheric tests. Reassured, many concerned citizens turned to other issues.

8.8 SOME EARLY RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS AND CONTEXTUAL RELEVANCE

8.8.1 Albania

Faced with an illiterate, agrarian and mostly Muslim society monitored by King Zog's security police, Albania's Communist movement attracted few adherents in the interwar period. In fact, the country had no fully-fledged Communist Party before World War II. After Fan Noli fled in 1924 to Italy and later the United States, several of his leftist protégés migrated to Moscow, where they affiliated themselves with the Balkan Confederation of Communist Parties and through it the Communist International (Comintern), the Soviet-sponsored association of international communist parties. In 1930, the Comintern dispatched Ali Kelmendi to Albania to organise communist cells. But Albania had no working class for the communists to base their ideas on, and Marxism appealed to only a minute number of quarrelsome, Western-educated, mostly Tosk, intellectuals and to landless peasants, miners, and other persons discontented with Albania's obsolete social and economic structures. Paris became the Albanian communists' hub until Nazi deportations depleted their ranks after the fall of France in 1940.

8.8.2 Denmark

During the World War II, Denmark was invaded in 1940 and the Danes saw that military confrontation would change nothing except the number of Danes left to be occupied. The Danish government therefore, adopted a policy of official cooperation they called "negotiation under protest." On the industrial front, Danish workers subtly slowed all production that would feed the German war machine. On the cultural front, Danes engaged in the symbolic defiance of organising mass celebrations of their history and traditions.

On the legislative front, the Danish government insisted that since they were officially cooperating with Germany, they had an ally's right to negotiate with Germany, and then proceeded to create bureaucratic quagmires which stalled or blocked German orders without having to refuse them outright. Denmark also proved to be conveniently inept at controlling the underground Danish resistance press, which at one point reached numbers equivalent to the entire adult population. The Danish government also gave room to underground groups involved in sabotage of machines and railway lines needed to extract Danish resources. Even when their government was dissolved entirely, the Danes managed

to block German goals without resorting to bloodshed. Underground groups smuggled over 7,000 of Denmark's 8,000 Jews temporarily into Sweden at great personal risk. Workers went on mass strikes, refusing to work for an occupier's benefit on an occupier's terms. After an initial response of greatly increased repression, the war-distracted Germans abandoned strike-breaking efforts in exasperation. The Danish resistance against the Nazis proved highly effective.

8.8.3 France

In 1971, the French government announced their intention to extend the military camp on the Larzac plateau, an arid area in southern France where they claimed that "almost nobody lived". Local farmers strongly disagreed with this assessment and, inspired by the example of Lanza del Vasto (a philosopher and follower of Mahatma Gandhi who had gone on hunger strike for two weeks in their support), they embarked on a campaign of non-violent resistance.

In 1972, the farmers' struggle attracted worldwide media coverage when they brought their sheep to graze on the lawn under the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The issue became a famous cause among many groups, from ecologists to conscientious objectors, and in 1973, 100,000 people attended a demonstration in Paris in support of the farmers of Larzac. The fight lasted until 1981, when the new socialist government decided to abandon the project.

8.8.4 Palestine

Despite the common mischaracterisation of Palestinian resistance as a wholly violent or radical, there is a long and rich history of non-violent actions and campaigns, as well as a large number of contemporary ones. For instance:

1. In 1902, the inhabitants of three Palestinian villages – al-Shajara, Misha and Melhamiyya – held a collective peaceful protest against the takeover of 70,000 hectares of agricultural land by the first European Zionist settlers.
2. In 1936, Palestinians held a six-month-non-violent industrial strike against the British Mandate's refusal to grant self-determination to Palestine. The ultimate aim of the strike was to make Palestine ungovernable by anyone but the Palestinians themselves.
3. Fifty years later, in 1986, Hannah Siniora, the then editor of the Jerusalem Arabic Daily, called for Palestinian civil disobedience by boycotting Israel-made cigarettes. This led to a full-scale Palestinian boycott of Israeli soap, food, water, clothes, and other consumer durables.
4. The 1987-1993, First Intifada was largely conducted non-violently. Palestinians held mass public demonstrations, refused to pay taxes, and sought out local alternatives to Israeli facilities. Community leader Mubarak Awad initiated olive tree planting on Palestinian land about to be confiscated by Israeli settlers. The Israeli law prohibited any construction on land dedicated to growing fruit. Awad used non-violent resistance, and Israel's own laws, to challenge the encroaching settlements. Currently, and especially, since construction of the separation Wall began on 16th June 2002, Palestinian villages across the West Bank have cooperated in non-violent resistance. The communities of Jayyous, Budrus, Bil'in, Nil'in and Umm Salamonah have all non-violently resisted the Wall being built around them. Weekly non-violent demonstrations against the Wall were held in cities of Bil'in and Nil'in, which brought together Palestinians and Israelis.

Contextual Relevance

Gandhi had coined the term Satyagraha that is defined as the force of truth and love. This was a term that he used in preference to “passive resistance”. Martin Luther King Jr, understood this distinction when, following Gandhi, he rejected “passive resistance” as a misnomer. Satyagraha, King wrote, “avoids not only external physical violence but also violence of spirit. The non-violent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but he also refuses to hate him....In the struggle for human dignity, the oppressed people of the world must not succumb to the temptation of becoming bitter or indulging in hate campaigns....Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. This can be done by projecting the ethic of love to the centre of our lives.”

Gandhi’s political theory, at its most original, contributes two ideas that are quintessentially his own: the first, for which he is renowned, his conception of the power of non-violent or Satyagraha; the second, integrally related, is his theory of freedom or swaraj. It was for civil disobedience Gandhi spent three months in a Pretoria prison.

The power of Gandhi’s new style of leadership was restorative, therapeutically designed to recover India’s spirit and identity. The twenty-eight year national movement that followed the Amritsar massacre mobilised the country in three successive civil-disobedience campaigns. These occurred then years apart: the first non-violent non-cooperation campaign (1919-22); the mass civil disobedience movement of the “salt satyagraha” (1930-31); and the wartime resistance or “Quit India” movement against the government (1942-44). Each of these targeted specific issues, such as the salt tax in 1930, but all had the general aim of attaining swaraj.

Gandhi’s originality as a thinker and political leader appears most dramatically in his theory and practice of non-violence. No one before in history had conceived of non-violence and applied it to politics like him. Although Gandhi was inspired by the Hindu concept of ahimsa (literally, non-injury), as well as by Christianity and the writings of Tolstoy and Thoreau, none of these influences provided a blueprint for him to follow when he developed his conception of satyagraha. Conceptual connections between non-violence and truth, swaraj and satyagraha, as well as defence of non-violent resistance as a courageous method capable of succeeding where violence must fail, appeared first in Hind Swaraj. Here they were sharpened as they were applied to the freedom struggle in India. The ancient idea of ahimsa assumed unprecedented forms.

8.9 SUMMARY

As Albert Einstein wrote, “In our age of moral decay, Gandhi was the only statesman who represented that higher conception of human relations in the political sphere to which we must aspire with our all powers. (Einstein on Peace, edited by Otto Nathan and Heinz Norden, Avenel Books, New York, 1981). Martin Luther King words, “I could never reach the standard of morality, simplicity and love for the poor set by the Mahatma...Gandhi was a human without weaknesses,” still resonate (New York Times, 30th January, 1995). Aung San Suu Kyi, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her non-violent resistance to government tyranny in Myanmar, “acquired her lasting admiration for the principles of non-violence embodied in the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.” (SuuKyi, Freedom From Fear, Penguin, New York, 1991). His Holiness, the Dalai Lama

of Tibet, relates the inspiration of Gandhi: “I had and still have unshaken faith in the doctrine of non-violence which he preached and practiced. Now I made up my mind more firmly to follow his lead whatever difficulties might confront me. I determined more strongly than ever that I could never associate myself with acts of violence” (*My Land and My People*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1962). Gandhi thus lent much credence to the methods and techniques of non-violent protest in the history of mankind.

8.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. How did the concept of civil society evolve during the pre, modern and post-modern historical context?
2. Analyse atlength the methods of resistance and protest. Give few examples supporting your analysis.
3. Examine some of the early and the recent non-violent protest movements.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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