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والبحث العلمي
الجامعة المستنصرية

مجلة الفلسفة

العدد ٢٨ كانون الأول ٢٠٢٣

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تعنى بنشر البحوث في مجالات الفلسفة المختلفة
وما له صلة بها في العلوم الإنسانية الأخرى

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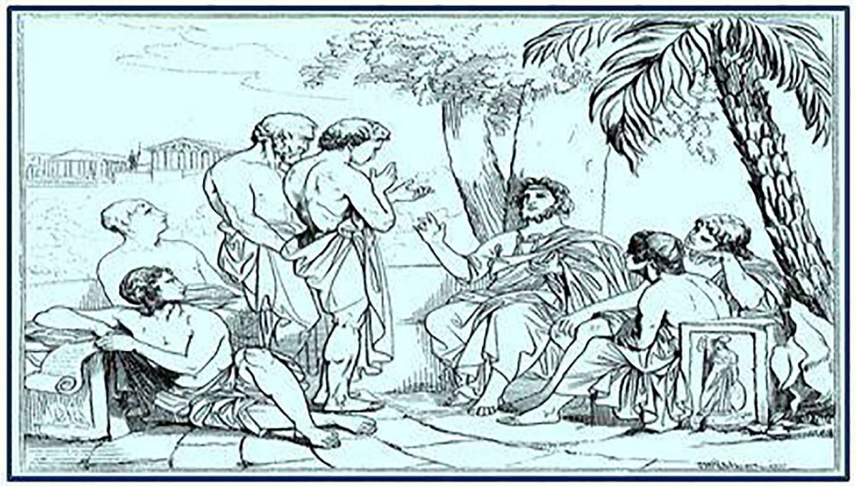

مجلة الفلسفة
العدد ٢٨
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كانون الأول

٢٠٢٣

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مجلة الفلسفة

مجلة فلسفية مُحكّمة نصف سنوية ، تصدر عن كلية الآداب / الجامعة المستنصرية ، وحاصلة على الرقم الدولي (المعياري) ISSN 1136-1992 ، والمعرف الدولي تحت الرقم 10.35284 وتُعنى بنشر البحوث والدراسات الأكاديمية والفكرية العامة في مجالات الفلسفة المختلفة : مجال تاريخ الفلسفة (الفلسفة اليونانية ، والوسيطة ــ مسيحية وإسلامية،والحديثة والمعاصرة (الغربية) ، والفكر العربي والإسلامي الحديث والمعاصر)، ومجال فروعها (الميتافيزيقا والتأويل ، وفلسفة اللغة والدين والمعرفة والتاريخ والجمال والفن والأدب والسياسة والقانون ...) ، ومجال الموضوعات النظرية العامة الأخرى (الناظرة في: العقائد والعرفان والحضارة والمنهجيات ــ المعرفية والبحثية ...) ، وأي موضوع ثقافي أو فكري يتضمن بُعداً تنظيرياً حول الإنسان والهوية والزمان والحدث ...والنشر في المجلة باللغة العربية أو الإنجليزية أو الفرنسية .ومما تتوخاه المجلة ، فضلاً عن خدماتها الأكاديمية المعروفة ، ترصين الثقافة ، ونشر الوعي النقدي البناء ، وفتح السبل أمام التقدم بالفكر والازدهار الحضاري المميز.

مجلة (الفلسفة)

مجلة علمية محكمة تصف سنوية ، تحمل الرقم الدولي (ISSN) 1992-1136. وحاصلة على المعرف الدولي (Doi) تحت رقم 35248-10. وتضم في هيئة تحريرها وعضويتها كبار المتخصصين بالفلسفة من العراق والعالم العربي والاجنبي ممن يحمل الالقاب العلمية العليا.

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1. يجب ان يكون البحث المرسل للمجلة مكتوباً بخط (simple fide Arabic) بحجم (14) للمتن و(12) للهامش ، ومنضداً على (CD) خاص.
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10. ترسل المجلة بعد صدور العدد نسخة بمثابة هدية للباحث ، وان طلب المزيد يدفع (10000)عشرة آلاف دينار عراقي عن كل نسخة .

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المحتويات

كلمة العدد

من استراتيجية النشر التواصلي في مجلة الفلسفة تعزيز الموازنة الدقيقة بين البحث النظري المحض والنظر في قضايا الثقافة التداولية (العقائدية والادبية والسياسية...) وهي موازنة كانت، وماتزال، من أبرز سمات التفلسف الأصيل عند اصحاب إحداث الانعطافات في مسار الفكر الإنساني المديد .

والبحوث التي سيطلع عليها القارئ الكريم وفق محاور هذا العدد الـ(٢٨) في اللغتين العربية والانجليزية ، يمكن أن تُعدّ، أو هكذا اردنا لها أن تكون، مصداقاً على هذه الموازنة والتنوع :-

فمن الفضاءات الواسعة للفلسفة المعاصرة المقاربة النقدية التي قدمها الفيلسوف الفرنسي المعاصر (ليفيناس) لتحويل التذاوت الهوسرلي (التجارب المشتركة للذوات الانسانية)من الجانب الابستيمولوجي، كما هو معروف عند مؤسس الفينومولوجيا، الى الجانب الاخلاقي العملي وفقاً لجدلية الذات والآخر . وهذا ما وضعه في الاعتبار العيني ، وفي اساسه، بحث (نقد ليفيناس لفينمولوجيا التذاوت الهوسرلية)، وبحث أخر يؤكد هذا الجانب العملي ، اذ يتعرض الى الكيفية التي أثرت من خلالها فلسفة كانط الأخلاقية في فكر نيتشه وهابرماس ، وفيها من راهن التأصيل الكانطي لنظرية التواصل الهابرماسية القسط الكثير ، وبحث أخر باللغة الانجليزية ، من فضاءات فلسفة الأدب هذه المرة ، يقدم مقاربة أدبية – نقدية لتآمل الموت التراجيدي من خلال مرثية الشاعرة والفيلسوفة المعاصرة ديفس ايلي المعروفة بعنوان (A part song) (نصف أغنية)،مثالاً للكيفية التي يتجلى فيها أَدب الرثاء المعاصر.

وبحث أخر (باللغة الانجليزية) ينظر في علم الكلام على المستوى الفلسفي والصوفي من منظور معاصر ، قائم على فحص المقاربات الراهنة حول التثبت من أغراض هذا العلم .

وبحث أخر (باللغة الانجليزية كذلك) يفحص ، فحصاً نقدياً مفصلاً مآلات المجتمع المدني ، والسلام في عالم مضطرب يعاني من عدم اليقين ، ولم يُفوّت فرصة المراجعة التاريخية لمفهوم "المجتمع المدني" Civil society (من قبْل الحداثة وما بعدهما) واشكالية العنف في صيرورة هذا النوع في المجتمع ،الذي يتمتع بقيمهِ الدالة والمرشدة إلى بناء السلام ...

ومن المستحدث من المحاور في هذا العدد محور (نصوص في الجمال والأدب الفلسفي) وفيه نصان، الأول ينظر في معنى الجمال (والحسن) في الطبيعة والأعمال الفنية والثاني ، مُعارضة شعرية لعينية فيلسوفنا الأشهر ابن سينا ، وفيها تتجلى أوضح دلالات الأدب المتفلسف وبخاصة عندما يكون القصد ماهية النفس وشوقها إلى عالم آخر بعيداً عن عالم الخلائق.

ومحور آخر (قراءات في نصوص فلسفية) وفيه قراءتان، الأولى تقديم وتقويم نقدي لأخر مستجدات النصوص الكانطية المقروءة بالعربية ، كتاب (نزاع الكليات) ، كليات الفلسفة والقانون والطب... والثانية قراءة مفاهيمية – برادغيمية لإستجلاء مضامين نص من أهم نصوص صاحب اطروحة (ابداع المفاهيم في الفلسفة) ، الفيلسوف الفرنسي المعاصر جيل ديلوز ، وهو نص (ما الفلسفة).

وبهذا التنوع في البحوث والمحاور والفكر بالتالي نأمل أن يُسهم هذا العدد أيضاً في إشاعة الوعي الفلسفي والنظر النقدي لبناء وعي اجتماعي متنوع وحضاري.

رئيس التحرير

Civil Society and Peace in an Uncertain World

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Abstract

This paper argues that the concept of civil society is significant for peace and peace-building, and that it is most useful when articulating the importance, and defending the possibility of public disagreement and discussion when constructing shared ideas of the good society. Its normative power lies not in the specific values which different traditions attach to the concept, but in the general value of aspiring to such a society created through the contested values of what "good" actually means. Potentially, civil society has a deep affinity with "peace," another important idea that is often treated in uncontroversial terms as simply the absence of war. If, on the other hand, peace is conceptualized as a highly complex idea that pertains to the human endeavor of building conditions in which societies can live without violence, it is evident that, like civil society, peace is a site of disagreement as well as the capacity to reach agreements among themselves. The first section of the paper traces the history of civil society ideas. The second explains the five visions of civil society. The third section argues that civil society is conceptually relevant precisely because it concerns a plurality of visions that are articulated in a plurality of ways, all of which ultimately contribute to the peaceful interactions of human beings. Distinctions between the "civil" and the "uncivil" therefore need to be explored and, it is

argued, retained. The affinity of civil society with peace and peace-building becomes clear only if this distinction is clearly understood. A commitment to nonviolent forms of human interaction must surely define a boundary for the idea of civil society if it is to be meaningful to understandings of human progress. Section four focuses on these key distinctions. Section five makes the case for maintaining an explicitly normative, but not hegemonic or homogenous understanding of civil society which aspires to distinguish itself from an uncivil "Other" by exploring the contribution of associations to peace-building in practice. Recognizing the legitimacy and significance of associational dynamics outside of the state has been of vital—though controversial—importance in efforts to build new norms for peace in the world, counter violent actors, and build peaceful outcomes after peace agreements. Civil society is therefore a vital conceptual source of agreement-building around such norms.

Keywords: State, Civil Society, Peace, Peace-Building, Violence, Associational Dynamics

Introduction

The post-Cold War peace and peacebuilding agendas have evolved to place civil society at the center, echoing its progression in the areas of development and democracy. Nevertheless, as many have emphasized, civil society is both a normative construct and one that can be empirically seen (Howell & Pearce, ٢٠١١; Adekunle, ٢٠٢٠, p. ١٠٨). This concept of associational content can both be valued and tallied. Associations may be supported, classified, and included in policy and practice. The issue occurs when attempts are made to design a tool that is neutral and can be used in a variety of circumstances while omitting the normative and empirical components of civil society. As a result of this process, the term "civil society" is used to refer to a variety of different associational life forms and assumes that what "it" should be is the same as what "it" is. Given the Western Enlightenment's roots in

this idea, any claim to universality is actually difficult to support and is susceptible to becoming meaningless, as Colas (٢٠٠٧, pp. ٣٩–٤٠) has noted: "devoid of context, no longer linked to a specific period or a precise doctrine, gushing out of everyone's mouth at once, 'civil society' acceded at the end of the ١٩٨٠s to a sort of empty universality. 'Civil society' today allows individuals to speak without understanding what they are saying, which in turn helps them avoid conflict with one another because it has become a term for all kinds of products and in some cases even a cloak for intellectual emptiness."

Despite these limitations, this paper argues that the idea of civil society is important for maintaining peace and promoting peace, and that it is most helpful when emphasizing the significance of and defending the potential for public debate and disagreement when developing shared conceptions of the good society. Its normative authority comes from the general value of aspire to such a society produced by the debated ideals of what "good" genuinely means, not from the unique values that various traditions attach to the notion. Potentially, civil society has a strong affinity for "peace," another crucial concept that is sometimes described in uncontroversial terms as simply "the absence of war." It is clear that, like civil society, peace is a place of disagreement as well as the ability to come to agreements themselves if peace is conceptualized as a highly complex idea that relates to the human endeavor of creating conditions in which societies can live without violence. Cox (١٩٨٦, p. ١٢) defined peace as "an activity of cultivating the process of agreeing."

The history of civil society ideas is covered in the paper's first section. The five visions of civil society are described in the second. The third section makes the case that civil society is theoretically significant precisely because it is concerned with a range of ideals that are expressed in a range of methods, all of which ultimately support

peaceful interactions between people. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate and maintain distinctions between the "civil" and the "uncivil." Only when this difference is recognized properly does the relationship between civil society and peace and peacebuilding become apparent. If the concept of civil society is to be relevant to perceptions of human progress, then a commitment to nonviolent forms of human interaction must unquestionably determine its boundaries. On these important discrepancies, section four mainly focuses. The argument for preserving an openly normative, but not hegemonic, or homogenous understanding of civil society that aims to set itself apart from an uncivil. "Other" is made in section five by examining the practical role associations play in promoting peace. In attempts to create new norms for peace in the globe, combat violent actors, and create peaceful outcomes after peace agreements, acknowledging the legitimacy and relevance of associational processes outside of the state has been of vital—though contentious—importance.

Therefore, the concept of civil society is crucial for establishing consensus around such rules.

The History of Civil Society Ideas

Greek and Roman philosophers first discussed civil society as part of a broader effort to define a geometry of interpersonal relationships. Instead of viewing "civility" as a matter of good manners or domestic relations, they began to view it as an orientation toward the common good and the requirements of effective citizenship as a result of their tendency to prioritize political issues. This shift culminated in the traditional identification of civil society with the political commonwealth. At the same time, a more nuanced approach that enabled a recognition of social complexity and the boundaries of political life drove toward the realization that life is lived in various arenas, each of which has its own internal logic.

Civil Society as the Organized Commonwealth

Private matters tended to be subsumed under the demands of civic health and moral renewal as a result of Plato's goal to create an unchanging ethical center for public life (Bankole & Adigun, ٢٠٢١, p. ٢٠٤). His inclination for a unitary society made him wary of particular interests and domestic matters, and his quest for the founding ideals that would guide the community's moral existence defined his understanding of civil society. He established the general categories which could assist in an analysis of the particular, but it was left to his greatest student, Aristotle, to craft an understanding of civil society that respected the multiple spheres in which life is lived even as it retained the dedication to a comprehensive political association that defined the moral life of its members.

Aristotle recognized that people exist in a variety of realms, all of which contribute to the growth of moral character and the stability of government. Plato's idea of "the Good" defined what is worthwhile to pursue for its own sake, but Aristotle was aware that preferences and habits constrained the scope of lofty ambitions for moral reformation. After severing his ties with his teacher's preference for unitary explanations, he came up with an idea of civic society based on tolerance for diversity and a desire for comprehensiveness. Even while less developed processes have their own logic, it is also true that their relationship to more evolved wholes, to which they contribute and which define their potential, gives these processes their meaning. Although the political community gives civil society its broadest definition, Aristotle was aware that people behave in specific ways for specific reasons and that lower levels of organization benefit the welfare of the whole. It is true that the polis is the largest of all human groups since it is the only one that exists to promote the "good life," but it is also true that moral activity also takes place in the intimate, productive, and natural spheres. They have a limited impact and are constrained by inequality, dependence, and

necessity, but they contribute to the ethical fabric of the polis and help create the conditions for the full development of human potential.

However, Aristotle's civil society was characterized by the political sphere's deliberation, self-rule, and mutual recognition—an emphasis that reflected the embeddedness of subordinate spheres and the material constraints that prevented the appearance of a distinct arena of self-interested economic life. Aristotle's well-known moral aversion to unrestrained economic affairs, which permeated all Christian thought in the Middle Ages, strengthened his belief that civil society was founded on aristocratic, in-person interactions between friends whose leisurely benevolence led to their discovery and expression of the common good. Aristotle's civic society was made up of the life of noble action, which was fueled by intelligent discussion and populated by a sizable middle class.

Despite its limitations, Aristotle's observation that a polis is a union of dissimilar elements revealed the absence of a single, universally shared idea of excellence. Aristotle's claim that many qualities are appropriate in various circumstances would prove to be his lasting contribution to theories of civil society, in contrast to Plato's search for an undifferentiated unity that would always produce a certain course of action. But it is important to remember Aristotle's maxim that only politics could offer the complete range of opportunities for moral activity and the Good Life. While acknowledging that civil societies are made up of various families, classes, occupations, circumstances of birth, and orders of merit, Aristotle's celebrated classification of states sought to create a moderate constitutional order that could protect public action. Aristotle recognized that plurality served as the basis for unity, which is why he favored a mixed constitution. He was confident that a state with a framework that

considered subordinate spheres would improve citizenship-conditioned subordinate sphere living.

The Roman notion that a universal empire could transcend Greek parochialism was strengthened by the gradual fall and eventual oblivion of the separate city-states that had fostered Plato and Aristotle. The late Stoic vision of a universal civil society governed by reason emerged from an integrated conception of a global community. Cicero attempted to save civic virtue by enshrining justice in a vision of a law-governed nature at a time when perpetual upheaval and instability marked the transition to empire (Adekunle, ٢٠٢٠). He attempted to create a defense of civil society that was grounded in natural law and conditioned the *res publica*, the "people's possession." He was equally antagonistic to self-serving aristocratic corruption and grasping popular movements. Justice served as the guiding principle of civil society, an organization of public power that enabled civilization. It was based on the assumption that all people have the capacity to share in the good reason that is in harmony with nature, exempt from human contingency, and governs the cosmos. By restricting the tendency for the private sector to disintegrate, the demands of a politically constituted commonwealth would continue to push private interests toward the public. For a healthy society, reason and proper thinking were essential, but effective institutions driven by republican values were crucial in the never-ending fight against the urge to pursue personal wealth.

Cicero's main contribution to medieval constitutionalism and ideas of civil society in the Age of Enlightenment was his view that Aristotle's hybrid constitution could preserve specific diversity while coordinating the general good. His idea of the common good in the near term envisioned a civic society based on peasant-soldiers who protected the republic against domestic exploitation and external threat. The Roman concept of a *res publica* soon

meant a *res privata* as a correlative domain, even as it claimed to embody a finality and universality to which other systems of private and public life could not pretend. It delineated the region of close ties and specific interests and was made up of family and property and shielded by a web of rights. Private law developed a legally recognized space for domestic life as well as controlled interpersonal relationships and gave the family and property legal definitions. The later divide between private citizens and members of the public supplied the context for the axiom that Roman law ended at the threshold of the home. Even as it acknowledged a strong private center of gravity, the republican conception of civil society as a space of property, reason, justice, and privacy continued to pursue a universal and public sense of citizenship (Bankole & Adigun, ٢٠٢١). Even if the empire ultimately failed to keep Rome safe, classical ideas of civic society carried on the fight to deliver humanity from barbarism and guarantee its access to the advantages of a politically structured civilization.

A centralized authority supported by the Byzantine Church in Constantinople and numerous territorial kingdoms with tribal foundations in the West progressively replaced the Roman Empire. If the world empire still existed, it was Christianity that gave the West the social and ideological cohesion it enjoyed for a thousand years after the collapse of Rome. By offering a foundation for a shared spiritual community and outlining a coherent conception of the state and civil society as two mutually defining components of an integrated Christian Commonwealth, it was able to accomplish this. In Greece and Rome, religion had been subservient to the demands of the political order, but in the more decentralized Middle Ages, it took on a more independent position. Augustine's powerful attack on the classical ideal of self-sufficiency located dependence at the center of politics, theology, and history.

Theories of universal commonwealths and knowledge

promised to organize all aspects of public and private life into a one, all-encompassing wholeness, while an increasingly centralized Church offered the justification for governmental institutions and political power. However, maintaining a wide framework within which civil society could be understood became more and more challenging as markets grew more expansive, kings became more powerful, and local bodies became more aggressive. The Church's ecclesiastical philosophy ultimately failed to stand up to the corrosive forces of personal gain, the sanctity of conscience, or the calculations of calculating kings. It became untenable for an avowedly religious authority to oversee all aspects of public life as the Christian Commonwealth's conventional idea of two spheres and two powers crumbled in the face of the logic of undivided sovereignty coming from a single source of power. Since religion has long since retreated into the realm of private belief, the spiritual truths that the Church has long proclaimed, protected, and advanced have lost all public appeal outside of the state's capacity for coercion and organization. By the end of the Middle Ages, a more secular understanding of politics and a civil society that was now understood in terms of economics were beginning to emerge.

Transition to Modernity

Niccolò Machiavelli was unable to theorize civil society outside of the conventional Roman republican categories, but his secular economy of power foresaw the emergence of the interest-bearing individual who would serve as the central figure in the bourgeois understanding of civil society developed by John Locke and Adam Smith. It was critical to take note of Rome's lessons in the interim. The hybrid constitution would safeguard the dynamic civic life that might safeguard the republic, assure stability, and arrange a long-lasting politics if political authority kept human affairs together. Class competition and the pursuit of personal benefit will inevitably lead to disagreements, but civic

institutions, a bustling public life, innovative leadership, and "good laws" The sovereignty of the parts and the integrity of the whole can only be preserved by a hybrid constitution that reflects the structure of society. Thomas Hobbes was not entirely certain. He was convinced that only a single point of undivided sovereign power could create civil society and allow his calculating person to spend his life free of mortal peril because he was obsessed with the ongoing prospect of civil war and savagery. Only state power can enable civilization in a society defined by the moral convictions of the individual conscience and the pursuit of personal gain. The "artificial man" was necessary for domestic peace because he allowed real men to create a way of life that was free from the continual threat of extinction. Hobbes sought safety in a state that was concurrent with a civil society that was now seen as the setting in which interest-bearing people pursued their personal purposes. Hobbes was equally disturbed by the English Revolution and the Protestant Reformation. Nothing is feasible until the fear of never-ending war is eliminated if the "natural condition" of humans feeds the "desire of power after power" in a setting of equal vulnerability and widespread insecurity. This requires a “common power” that will enforce standards of behavior and make it possible for people to go about their business in peace. If people can safely anticipate that others will control themselves, then all can surrender their propensity to act as if they were the only people in the world. If they can live with a measure of assurance that they will be safe, they can make the calculation that a mutual and universal transfer of rights is in everyone’s interest.

Hobbes was aware that despite his focus on the need for a single source of sovereign power, respect for the private sphere of human desire and liberty is necessary for the pursuit of economic activity, research, the arts, and literature. He was similarly certain that civil society was a recognizable domain

of self-interested activity with which the state should not meddle until civic order was in danger, even if he made it apparent that it existed at the sovereign's discretion. The distinction he made between the public political arena of power and the private arena of desire marked an important contribution to modern theories of the state and of civil society, even though he was unwilling to infuse the private sphere with the moral content or economic creativity that would characterize Locke. A beginning and an end were marked by Hobbes. The market's expansion coincided with the further splintering of European society and the rise of centralized, bureaucratic political structures. Concepts of royal power and classical republicanism gave way to the icy logic of self-interest as the arguments for an independent and protected economic sector gained currency. Soon enough, the definition of civil society would clearly be bourgeois.

The Civil Society of "Economic Man"

The emergence of a contemporary conception of civil society was announced by Locke. Locke argued that Hobbes did not need a strong state to defend civil society because nature already possessed all the elements necessary for wealth and peace. Our natural state is one of freedom, sociability, and reason, and the decision to create an impartial body to settle conflicts only serves to alleviate the "inconvenience" caused by the urge to take use of the community's strength as a whole to further one's own interests. The state exists to defend the rights of accumulation and acquisition, which were already present and only required an efficient enforcement mechanism, according to Locke's theory of civil society. The lauded "rule of law" is intended to control and safeguard the selfish members of civil society's economic activity. Smith emphasized the bourgeois belief that the rules of economics made it possible to structure civil society around individual interest while giving the benefits of civilization to everyone, drawing

on Locke's writings and Adam Ferguson's moral economy. The political community and sovereign power were no longer the defining factors of civil society, but rather the material processes of social life.

Locke was confident that economic forces could organize civil society if they were permitted to operate in conditions of freedom, if governed by the rule of law, and if safeguarded by a state with minimal coercive authority. Hobbes had given politics a preference in the transition from barbarism to civilization. Locke's assertion that the state was created to defend a set of pre-political inherent rights expanded the boundaries of conceptions of civil society by allowing citizenship to be based on property. Locke acknowledged that political power ordered civilization broadly speaking, but he wanted civil society to be grounded in something more solid than a shared appreciation of the good. He gave private interests first priority, illuminating liberalism's claim that what matters most is how wealth is created, amassed, and used. People with rights might now pursue their interests without being compelled to kill each other thanks to a limited state and the rule of law. According to Chukwuma and Isam (٢٠١٩, p. ٢١٣), the state and economy were gradually distancing themselves from the larger social body. As a result, political authority could now be theoretically separated from the creation, accumulation, and distribution of wealth. If Locke was correct and property was both a natural right and a condition for moral independence and personal autonomy, then it should be possible to develop an understanding of civil society that would reserve pride of place to economic laws and processes.

Smith was the first to present a thoroughgoing bourgeois philosophy of civil society. Modern concepts of civil society as a space of private endeavor separate from the state were foreshadowed by Smith's famed attack on the political regulation of economic affairs, which now

forms the backbone of civilized existence. Smith did not disregard public issues, arguing that political power is required to organize the rule of law, pay for defense, and offer public goods that cannot generate a return for private investors. However, *The Wealth of Nations* is structured around the idea that economic forces shape civil society. Resting as they do on the division of labor, markets allow individuals to multiply and develop their particular skills and apply their inclinations in a way that fosters mutual dependence—particularly in conditions where they do not mean to do so. Through the actions of an "invisible hand" that works behind our backs to achieve outcomes that we do not expect, civil society, the formal expression of the "law of unanticipated consequences," turns the self-interested exchanges of free men into a mutually advantageous civilized life for all. Smith asserted that a natural "propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another" was the true basis of civil society, dispelling the need for contract theory.

Smith agreed with Locke that the true tenet of civil society is not politics, but rather the action of people in the markets. Smith's rupture with mercantilism suggested that strict public supervision was no longer required to organize and defend civil society, despite the fact that the formal division between the state and the economy was more apparent than actual. He did have some concerns about the social cost that market-induced inequality would entail, but it was left to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx to develop a new conception of civil society that would better take into account the economics and politics of modernity.

Beyond Civil Society

Hegel and Immanuel Kant agreed with Adam Smith that economic forces shape and order civil society, but they lacked his level of faith in the market's ability to transform the chaos of individual desires into the common good. Kant aimed to build civil society

on an innate feeling of moral obligation that binds all people, drawing much of his moral inspiration from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, but he also wanted to get past the Scots' simplistic assumption of innate moral impulses. He argued that in order for civilization to function, there must be accessible, universal categories of right. His argument was an attempt to develop a minimal universal ethic suitable for humans who are totally autonomous in matters of morality. The journey from dependence to autonomy is the path toward freedom if rules are demands that people place on themselves. Kant's civil society is based on a coercive and obedience-based basis that is ruled by the law because political institutions and the rule of law can enable the creation of a civil society that can provide universal moral principles. A republic dedicated to openness and rights protection could enable reason to serve the common good, set people free from authority and dogma, and establish a civil society based on mutual recognition in a "kingdom of ends."

Kant, on the other hand, was unable to delve thoroughly into the web of material interactions that made up civil society due to his formalism, while Hegel made a point of showing that equal protection under the law, republican institutions, and civil rights were insufficient to safeguard moral autonomy and freedom. Action must be taken in conformity with the dictates of reason if individual and community life are to be under conscious control. The family, civil society, and the state are today's three spheres of social existence. They are unique structures of ethical development, separate but linked "moments of freedom." Today, interactions in the world are determined by freedom. By transcending the sentimental and loyal relationships that make up domestic institutions yet stifle difference and uniqueness, civil society transcends the moral content of the family. The emergence of

independent consciousness precedes civil society's ethical turning point. Due to its foundation on subjectivity, property, competition, and particularity, its residents always behave in their own best interests and prioritize meeting their own demands. Hegel was familiar with his political economics. The irony of his civil society is that greedy people act selfishly and manipulatively toward one another, yet they are unable to prevent gratifying those desires and furthering their shared interests in the process. Civil society is a period of moral freedom, but it is a constrained and risky period since it strives to become the sole arbiter of social existence. Hegel held the same long-held mistrust of unrestrained economic activity as philosophy. This is what inspired him to turn to the universal state in order to go above the constraints of the "system of needs."

Hegel recognized, like Smith, that bourgeois civil society perpetually produced inequality, demonstrating the paradoxical transition from autonomy, self-interest, and choice to isolation, reliance, and servitude. Ultimately, civil society is a disenfranchised, unfree, and unfair environment where autonomy and freedom are no longer sufficient to provide a moral life deserving of human habitation and ethical self-determination. Hegel believed that poverty and inequality show that Kant was mistaken. Since achieving freedom takes more than just releasing oneself from feudal restraints, civil society cannot defeat nature.

Hegel's theory of the state was converted into a critique of civil society and the bourgeois economic system that supported it by Marx. Hegel had learned from the British political economists that the bourgeois class relations that made up civil society were increasingly characterized by instability, pauperism, and moral degradation. In order to transcend the particularism of civil society and usher in a more all-encompassing moment of liberation, he looked to the "universal" state. However, Marx's

early writings led him to believe that Hegel's state was a false universal that could not usher in the last stage of human freedom. Hegel’s idealism had blinded him. He was right that the great bourgeois revolutions had freed the state from the formal constraints of civil society, but he had failed to appreciate the implications of their freeing civil society from the state. It was equally true that property, religion, and class were now free to flourish in formal isolation from political determinants and limitations even as public life now operated in formal separation from feudal determinations of property, religion, class, and the like. Despite all the true improvements brought about by the major anti-feudal revolutions, their power over the populace had actually increased, as the United States has shown. The official separation of church and state had been mandated by the American constitution as a requirement for preserving religion and shielding it from political influence. The paradoxical result was that the United States was simultaneously the country that was most formally free from the political influence of religion, but was also the most deeply religious in matters of belief.

Marx was propelled beyond Hegel and all preceding ideas when he realized that civil society itself needed to be democratized. His most significant contribution to ideas of civil society is his expansion of liberation from politics to economics, from the state to civil society, and from the formal to the substantial. Marx critiqued the state as a part of a broader criticism of the civil society on which it was based, contrary to Hegel's theory that the state was free from the conflicts and constraints of civil society. The new perspective demanded that private property, which served as the material foundation of civic society, be uprooted. This was a crucial step in the development of modern democratic and socialist thought, for it led directly to the discovery of the proletariat as the alternative to Hegel’s state. Hegel believed that civil society may be

overthrown from without. Marx examined the processes that shape civil society as a whole and discovered the universal class there, represented by the proletariat who lacks property. Nevertheless, he never entertained the notion that merely bolstering the bourgeois state at the expense of civil society would advance human freedom. He was equally hostile to both. He praised the Paris Commune's assault on bourgeois civil society as enthusiastically as its break with bourgeois political understandings and institutions when he proclaimed it as the seed of a communist society. Democratizing civil society requires abolishing it and moving toward an "association" that transcends the chaos, antagonism, inequality, and arbitrariness of market society. Liberalism developed a theory of civil society because it wanted to democratize the state. Marxism developed a theory of the state because it wanted to democratize civil society. The twists and turns of contemporary history would bring them face-to-face in Eastern Europe.

Civil Society and Associations

The argument made by certain dissident East European academics in the ١٩٨٠s that communism's breakdown could only be understood as a "revolt of civil society against the state" is the source of today's interest in civil society. They claimed that a bureaucratized and narcissistic state apparatus continually interfered with society and consistently demonstrated that it was immune to democratic initiative or control because it was driven by the primary socialist urge to change the conditions of material life. Marxism has long been criticized for its alleged lack of boundaries, propensity to politicize everything, mistrust of popular democracy, and desire to control, stifle, or absorb any spontaneous activity arising in civil society. This criticism has culminated in a strong theoretical antagonism to the state. This viewpoint had strong support in the West, where a right-wing

assault on the welfare state was just starting to take shape. Alexis de Tocqueville suddenly supported the idea, as is frequently the case in conservative eras.

The baron de Montesquieu, an opponent of the increasingly centralized French monarchy, put intermediate bodies at the center of his aristocratic theory of civil society by referencing Aristotle and Cicero. Edmund Burke, whose renowned attack on the French Revolution was built around a defense of local privilege and inequality, shared his fear of centralized, leveling political power. But what proved to be especially potent was Tocqueville's well-known assertion that voluntarism united individualistic, self-serving Americans with the general good. In an equal society, Tocqueville was concerned that a democratic state may have too much power, therefore he worked to protect local privilege and strengthen self-government customs. He was confident that the Americans had learned to defend liberty without surrendering to democratic excess precisely because their interests tended to be narrow and parochial.

The European love of routine, consistency, and moderation contrasted positively with a thriving native culture of activity. He had the same belief as James Madison that civil society will promote liberty by reducing the power of any one interest, weakening the majority, and preventing excess. In Tocqueville's broadened concept of civil society as localism, voluntarism, and association, equality, localism, and materialism may coexist. Tocqueville looked on civic society to safeguard freedom in an era where democracy and egalitarianism would pose a threat to it.

Tocqueville was able to bypass the issue that had been so crucial to Hegel, Marx, and others by asserting that American society was characterized by widespread equality. That issue was how disparity of circumstance can prevent those without the time or

finances to engage in free activity from doing so. In such circumstances, civil society transforms into an environment of privilege and inequality that feeds off one another. Although it is debatable if Tocqueville was correct about American equality at the time of his visit, it is undeniable that current circumstances call into question several of his underlying presumptions. The United States is the most unequal advanced country in the world, and simplistic claims that localism and voluntarism give formally equal citizens the chance to improve their circumstances and have an impact on public life have given way to more sober considerations of how civil society may strengthen privilege, serve inequality, and harm democracy (Chukwu, ٢٠٢٢, p. ١٠٥). Despite Tocqueville's fondness for New England town meetings, there is a wealth of evidence that small, close-knit groups suppress disagreement, accentuate existing disparities, and submit to the authority of the already wealthy. There is no convincing evidence that the local and the intimate are necessarily more democratic just because they are small. Indeed, it is entirely possible that the real threat to equality and democracy comes from private power and that the only way to mitigate this threat is through broad, comprehensive regulation and redistribution—exactly the sort of politically driven interference against which much of the contemporary fascination with civil society ranges itself.

A rhetorical antipathy to the state and a promotion of the local have been the cornerstones of conservative rule for thirty years. Now, in an era of limited government and local politics, civil society is expected to revitalize towns, educate residents, foster cooperative behavior, offer an alternative to bureaucratic meddling, and reenergize public life. Due to deregulation, privatization, and regressive fiscal and monetary policies, the state-led redistribution of wealth has been disguised by this

oversimplified perspective. Additionally, it hides the existence of a distinct but equally American tradition of extensive state intervention to address social injustices, a perspective that fueled significant periods of democratic reform beginning with the Progressive Era and continuing through the New Deal, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Great Society. The election of Joseph Robinette Biden might represent a shift in perspective, but efforts to democratize economic life are nevertheless plagued by a constrained view of political possibilities and a limited view of the public good. It is critical to comprehend the issues at hand. We cannot distinguish between Greenpeace, the National Organization of Women, and the White Citizens Council on the one hand, and bowling leagues and neighborhood groups on the other, by viewing civil society as a nonstate, nonmarket domain of volunteer activity. It is insufficient to merely state that a stronger civil society is necessary for democracy. As important as they are, local activity, voluntary organizations, and good manners cannot protect equality or advance democracy in conditions of historic inequality and gigantic centers of private power. They cannot take on the historic concentrations of wealth and privilege that dominate contemporary life and distort democracy. Now as before, there is no substitute for broad, sustained, and democratic political action.

Five Visions of Civil Society

Urban sociability is where the first and most fundamental idea of civil society originates. People communicate, trade commodities or ideas, build relationships, and are particularly sociable in urban areas. Social interaction is not just limited to immediate family, close friends, and members of one particular church. It includes people with whom there are no established definitions of mutuality or dependency, extending over the boundaries of various zones of private life. The individual sitting next to you in the movie theater is probably not kin, but a distant

cousin you have never met is. And during the early modern era there were more and more such public spaces where people mixed with each other—not just theaters but market places, coffee houses, streets, and squares. Along with a rekindled interest in classical culture, which also glorified urban life, such as the Greek polis or Rome itself, urban life was fundamental to the Renaissance. But the degree to which early modern cities brought people together swiftly outpaced that of their classical counterparts. Shakespeare's and Elizabeth I's London played a crucial role in the networks of culture, finance, and markets for products and human migration.

The legacy of self-governance in medieval cities was particularly evident in the form of trade and commercial guilds. They managed social life in a way that was somewhat independent of the feudal system. Likewise, medieval colleges were typically urban places of self-governance and sociability among strangers even if they were hierarchical and connected to the church and drew students and academics from many locations. The notion of self-government through dialogue among roughly equals, with regard for knowledge rather than just inherited position, was fundamental to the republican aspirations of intellectuals like Machiavelli (١٥١٣), and is perhaps most significant. John Locke (١٦٩٠) extended this idea of society forged by lateral communication—initially mainly among elites—beyond its urban roots. But cities remained vital exemplars of the capacity for social self-organization. They drew ever-larger populations of strangers, people of diverse backgrounds and occupations, into interaction that required only a minimum of formal governance.

According to a second account, markets became more significant when large-scale systems of transaction took the place of actual physical locations for direct connection. However, this remained consistent with the

notion that freedom is maximized and the common good is attained by relying as much as possible on individual decisions and diminishing the importance of collective action, large-scale organizations, and government. This viewpoint was famously supported by Adam Smith (١٧٧٦), while modern references to him frequently mock his theory. Markets, he held, made social self-organization possible not only by advancing exchange, reconciling supply and demand, and connecting those with different assets and needs, but also by leading individuals to serve the collective welfare—the wealth of nations—by producing to meet needs as efficiently as possible, and selling at prices set by the effort of each to buy cheap and sell dear. Thus, markets provided a moral benefit by turning even self-interested individual conduct into a community good; in the words of Bernard de Mandeville (١٧١٤), markets transformed private vices into public virtues. For Smith, however, this only functioned as long as all market actors were genuine individuals who were subject to market forces' training. Joint stock companies and unions should both be outlawed as trade restrictions since they compromise the morals and psychological conditioning of markets. Without these distortions, markets provided the public with prosperity and the free flow of products. Moreover, for Smith markets demonstrated that civil society could be self-organizing and operate by its own implicit laws rather than state governance or intervention (though Smith recognized that states were crucial for a variety of purposes where markets performed poorly). However, although markets translated private choices in potential public benefits, they did not in themselves provide the mechanism for self-conscious public choices.

On a third account, civil society, unlike government, is a matter of community choice. The best way to advance the common good is through the direct action of regular citizens grouped into organizations and associations (Edwards, ٢٠٠٩;

Adekunle, ٢٠٢٠). According to this perspective, churches, charities, nonprofit organizations, and self-help movements make up civil society. It is a place where people can take care of their own needs as well as those of their fellow citizens. Here, freedom is manifested through group, voluntary actions as well as individual decisions regarding markets. A neighborhood watch is one example of a group of neighbors who have come together to manage resources like parks or recreational facilities or to ensure mutual protection. Insofar as they work to achieve a greater good than the sum of their narrow interests, citizens of a town or nation may raise money and donate their time for projects that are public. Some examples of such projects include feeding the hungry, managing a recycling program, or sponsoring a public radio station. They might start a social movement to try to convince their fellow citizens that better environmental care, a reduction in poverty, or the end of a war would be in the public's best interest. Of course, some people might think that the public interest is served by war, unequal incentives, or oil drilling rather than recycling. In this view, the essence of freedom lies in the right of people to form such self-organized efforts, with a presumption that where these are not in harmony with each other they will at least each be limited by respect for the others. What distinguishes civil society from the state in this view is pluralism and the absence of any master plan for progress.

According to a fourth perspective on civil society, without a state to ensure cohesiveness and offer a framework for coordinated public action, it is at best insufficient. Even though early models of civil society tended to emphasize the state's differences from it, the majority also considered the two as necessary complements and intertwined. Even while civil society created the majority of the social network within society, the state gave it shape. The state provided laws that supported civil society, giving it a framework for

the contracts essential to commercial relationships and making decisions that balanced the agendas and interests of various civil society actors, such as those who favor more parks with those who favor more housing or industries that generate jobs. Some people, most notably Hegel, emphasized how much the state made society into a cohesive whole that was more than the sum of its parts. This entailed removing the "bifurcation" between markets and family life, which he recognized may be more general in their scope but were founded on particularistic self-interest. He saw markets as being more general in their reach but only integrating at the level of human ties. The direct interpersonal interactions of family, community, and voluntary organization were contrasted with the impersonal and expansive systems of market transactions, and this distinction became fundamental to ideas of social integration. Without the state, on such a view, the market basis of civil society would always be disruptive to forms of social integration like the family, and would always be insulated from ethics by precisely the automatic, systemic character that Adam Smith celebrated as its invisible hand—good for generating wealth, but not social integration or justice.

Culture is the subject of the fifth civil society perspective. Montesquieu (١٧٤٨), a significant figure in the eighteenth century, stressed not merely the letter of the law but also the "spirit" that underlies it and mediates between the material circumstances of various societies, people's interests, and the institutions they create. In contrast to his more general contention that laws and other deliberate efforts to arrange social relations depend on the culture in which they are situated, Montesquieu's specific theories about how this mediation functions are presently less widely accepted (Alexander, ٢٠١٦). At about the same time, David Hume (١٧٣٩–٤٠) developed an influential argument that keeping promises depends not just on good

intentions—say at the moment a contract is signed—and cannot be explained simply by reference to nature (since human nature is all too compatible with evading obligations). Rather, promises and contracts are honored because failure to honor them is subject to widespread disapproval based not just on instrumental interests but on cultural traditions and norms.

Additionally, the anticipation of rejection (or alternatively, respect as a person who upholds his duties) is absorbed into habit rather than just a question of conscious calculation. The phrase "I promise" is therefore a performative action that can only be understood in the context of a common culture that understands what a promise means and offers appropriate reinforcement. This makes keeping promises habitual most of the time and wise when people are conscious of it. Thus, culture has a key role in people's ability to come to agreements, which is fundamental to various concepts of civil society. Members of a society are also connected by culture. This may refer to overlapping fields of cultural engagement rather than just the lowest common denominator of cultural uniformity. Common religion may connect speakers of different languages (or vice versa). People with various political ideologies, musical preferences, etc., may become acquainted through a shared business culture. Importantly, culture is not merely a question of inheritance but also of ongoing innovation. Reproduction processes take into account novelty, permit some customs to go, and change meaning patterns as languages acquire and drop words and adapt to new settings.

For Hume and Edmund Burke, the idea that there was another type of invisible hand of historical trial and error that preserved beneficial habits while allowing others to decay was a supplement to Smith's description of the market. Similar to how Marx would criticize Smith's description of markets, more radical thinkers like Rousseau challenged the notion of

cultural selection. However, they all agreed that power and wealth linkages both maintained behaviors that were harmful to the common good and sped up cultural change in ways that benefited their own agendas. Analysis of hegemonic culture became a cornerstone of a civic society theory according to Antonio Gramsci (١٩٢٩–١٩٣٥). Society is held together not only by markets, formal agreements, and the power of the state but by common culture that underwrites consent. As Gramsci suggested, of course, hegemonic culture can also be contested. Thinking about nature as resources to be exploited may be dominant in a capitalist society but it is not impossible for Christians to contest this by expounding a view of nature as a gift of God demanding stewardship. Culture also has an impact on how civil society is organized. We wouldn't be as likely to think of society as a "nation" without representations in books, museums, and maps, as Benedict Anderson (٢٠١٣) has demonstrated. The market as it is portrayed in the news and viewed as a form of collective reality are two examples of modern social imaginaries that Charles Taylor (٢٠١٤) draws attention to. Voting is another example that depends on a cultural understanding of what actions signify and what to anticipate of others. Similar to how a business corporation's location and even actuality depend on cultural recognition rather than just rules or contracts.

Civil Society and Peace: A Natural Affinity?

It is frequently believed that democracy and civil society support one another. Does peace fit into this as well? Why is this a relevant question given the normative reading of civil society? Clarifying what "civil" can imply is a good place to start for this topic. The word "civil," which comes from the Latin *civis*, or "citizen," has three primary definitions in dictionaries: polite or courteous; associated with the law in noncriminal instances; and ordinary, as in not military or religious. All three definitions are

based on the premise that certain interpersonal interactions reduce conflict and poor behavior and foster an environment of sociability that is free from compulsion and religious authority. There are also echoes of ancient Greek ideas about virtue here, and of the duties that good citizens share with one another. The Aristotelian version of these ideas added the participation of the citizen into the picture as "one who is entitled to share in deliberative or judicial office" (Aristotle, ١٩٨١, p. ٨٧). The Greek *polis* was itself a response to war and the need for villages to come together for mutual protection and to overcome dissension between families or clans.

The first meaning of civil refers to polite or courteous behavior. During the Western Enlightenment, this idea became associated with an emergent ideal of "civility." At the time, however, this ideal developed in the context of an early expansionist Europe and its efforts to distinguish itself from the "uncivilized Other" of the worlds it encountered. Adam Ferguson wrote that "the epithets of *civilized* or of polished properly refer to 'modern nations,' which differ from '*barbarous or rude'* nations principally because of their discretionary use of violence" (quoted in Keane, ٢٠٠٦, p. ٢٠). This served as a counterpoint to the "barbarian" and "savage" of the so-called new worlds and the emerging civic society in Europe. Norberto Elias studied how Western societies, which in the early Middle Ages were ruled by numerous smaller and larger warriors, evolved into the "internally more or less pacified but outwardly embattled societies that we call States" (Elias, ٢٠٠٠, p. xii) during the ١٩٣٠s. He made a connection between this development in Europe and the establishment of governments as well as the decline in violence among elites. As the nobility lost their role in waging war, economic and social dependence increased, and elite social interactions became more polished. This culture filtered through to other social groups and, as the institutions which enforced the

state's monopoly of power become more effective, greater levels of security in social life generated stronger social interdependencies. According to Martin Elsner (٢٠١١), this led to a decrease in elite violence and the growth of financial incentives to curtail violence and maintain a strong governmental monopoly over its use. A "cultural model of the conduct of life, reinforced and reproduced through social institutions" was present along with a long-term drop in adult and male-on-male violence, according to Elsner (٢٠١٨, p. ٣٠١). In Europe, homicide and other forms of violence decreased, but they did not completely disappear.

From the abolition of slavery in the nineteenth century to coordinated campaigns against domestic violence and child abuse in the late twentieth century and beyond, a parallel process saw the formation of organizations and movements against various forms of violence. The process of de-sanctioning various forms of violence has been greatly aided by voluntary associations, and it can be argued that "empirical" civil society, rather than just the state, has made a significant contribution to the task of peace-building, which is understood as the process of creating the circumstances that allow people to live without violence. Equally problematic has been the idea that the state can clearly restrict violence by convincing society that it has the right to monopoly its use. States themselves have been responsible for acts of extreme violence in their attempts to put down revolts, preserve elite rule or ethnic domination, and pacify populations.

The link of the word civil with the rule of law, and more specifically with civil disputes, gives it a second connotation. Originally, the term "civil society" referred to the type of organization that supports and advances the legal frameworks necessary for meaningful citizenship as well as the safeguards against arbitrary use of force. In the eighteenth century, Europe was stuck with a very

constrained understanding of citizenship and the law, which in practice was heavily weighted in favor of protecting white men and property. Emerging concepts of civil and political rights were democratized through the acts of new associations, initially formed in the workplaces of the industrializing globe, in a fight that lasted throughout the twentieth century and is still going on today in many areas of the world. This early struggle in Europe spread from associations that represented male workers in trade unions to groups that represented other facets of society, including women, people of color, and racial and ethnic minorities. However, it was not these protests specifically that developed the concept of civil society. Instead, it was how certain groups' interests were upheld in the name of strengthening democracy and the rule of law for all, not in opposition to other groups. The democratizing and regulating character of empirical civil society has contributed to the diminishing of arbitrary state violence in Europe and elsewhere. Human and civil rights groups, and legal reform organizations, have made a huge contribution to the reduction of violence and to peaceful social interactions, as well as to democratization per se.

The "ordinary" world outside of the state is referred to in the third definition of the word "civil," which was initially based on independence from political and religious authority. This developed into a crucial aspect of the idea of civil society both at its inception—as a space to restrain absolutism and despotism—and during its resurgence in the late ٢٠th century amid challenges to authoritarian, totalitarian, and military nations. Here, the normative idea of civil conjures up the involvement of ordinary citizens in the pursuit of freedom from arbitrary authority and other forms of coercion, an idea echoed in the peace movements that have formed over the course of at least the last century against militarization, the development of war weapons, as well as against war itself.

What can be inferred about civic society from this discussion? As a normative idea, civil society focuses on all the peaceful, civil, and civilizing aspects of interpersonal communication. It offers a prima facie argument for a relationship with peace, at the very least. Its relationship with the specifics of the Enlightenment and the ideal of Western liberalism, however, gravely undermines its claim to some degree of universality and relevance across cultures and countries. Contrary to what the discussion frequently seems to imply, Elias was not advocating that the Western trajectory was superior to other ones or that it was complete. Ernest Gellner, for example, explicitly argued against the idea that ritual-based and communal groups belong in a conceptualization of civil society: "Whatever Civil Society turns out to be it is clearly something which is to be contrasted with both successful and unsuccessful *Ummas*, and also with ritual-pervaded cousinly republics, not to mention, of course, outright dictatorships or patrimonial societies" (Gellner, ٢٠٠٤, p. ٤٣). Instead Gellner turned to "modular man," who combines individualism and egalitarianism and is able to move into and out of his chosen social bonds without societal sanction, while still being able to construct effective social cohesion against the state.

The relationship between civil society and peace is another area in which Gellner's ideas are pertinent. The individual pursuit of self-interest, which was unleashed concurrently with the rise of the market economy, generates new types of competition and conflict in society as the moral ties of communities of neighbors and kinship are loosened when "modular man" is emancipated in the manner Gellner contends. Liberalism has not dealt very well with the conflict, antagonism, and radical disagreement that result (Mouffe, ٢٠١٥), in particular with group as opposed to individual claims to rights (Kymlicka, ٢٠٠٥), but nor has it been very good in cultivating agreement, particularly

moral agreement, as Alasdair MacIntyre (٢٠١٧) has argued. In liberal thinking, civil society is seen as the way in which societies hold together in such contexts by reconciling the pursuit of individual self-interest with the notion that society must be more than a set of individuals, but not, crucially, by building the common good.

Liberal perspectives on civic society did not have to predominate. Around mutualism and collaboration, an alternative but highly potent conception of civil society arose (Black, ١٩٩٤). Even though these concepts were finally relegated to the margins, they continue to exist today in political ideologies like anarchism and some variants of socialism as well as in different conceptions of societal self-organization like cooperatives. This suggests an alternative thread to the liberal notion of civil society, even in the West—one that emphasizes a different set of values to individual freedom as a form of oppression, of defense against the despotisms of either the state or the majority, and of values that encourage the achievement of the common good. Although both understandings of civil society potentially contribute to the human project of civility, rule-bound governance and freedom from oppression—these providing a framework which enable people to live without violence—it is this other thread in civil society thinking which points to the components of the concept which aspire to promote the interests of all rather than those of the self-interested individual or advantaged groups of individuals, and thus construct the conditions for people to live without violence. One interpretation of this idea cannot be given preference above all others due to the conflicting ideals that permeate the civil society debate. Insofar as they are rooted in the ultimate objective of pursuing agreed standards as a required goal, associational processes in civil society do provide a way to address these conflicting values since they function independently from the state, the market, and the family.

Peace is precisely such a goal—universal in its aspiration, but deeply contested in its content.

Civil Society and Violence

It is important to distinguish between the normative characteristics of civil society and empirical realities because the adjective "civil" can be used to describe either war or civilization. This is made more important by the fact that many types of associational existence are rarely civil in the senses covered above. Of course, in order to investigate a concept's normative potential, the empirical must also be utilized. From his historical studies, Michael Mann has drawn the conclusion that "civil society may be evil": In *civil society* theory, democracy, peace and tolerance are said to result when individuals are engaged in vibrant, dense social relations provided by voluntary institutions, which protect them from the manipulations of state elites. This is naïve. Radical ethno-nationalists often succeed precisely because their civil society networks are denser and more mobilizing than those of their more moderate rivals. This was true of the Nazis . . . and we see later that it was also true of Serb, Croat and Hutu nationalists (Mann, ٢٠١٥, p. ٢١).

There is no question that people associate for a variety of reasons, including violence, and there is substantial evidence that associations have served as the breeding ground for violent intentions and uncivil behavior in the service of fascist, nationalist, and revolutionary objectives. After ١٩٢٥, the associational culture of "bourgeois and workers," which had been predominately liberal or socialist before ١٩١٤, became infused with the extreme Right in Germany. Or, to put it another way, "the Nazis conquered German civil society from within" (Ludwig, ٢٠١٦, p. ٨٣). To fully understand these processes, empirical research on associational life is required. The normative ideal that the concept of civil society has symbolized throughout its numerous transformations in political sociology and philosophy should not be confused with this

important empirical study, nevertheless. Therefore, we must unpack what it is that makes civil society "civil" as much as that which makes it "evil."

Social ties are a feature of humans and can be found in all societal settings. In western liberal discourse, civil society contrasts free association and the search for new identities in various associative modalities with those notions of belonging and identity that are fixed from birth. By doing this, liberalism inevitably gives rise to concepts such as emancipated individualism and the ability to take independent, critical social action. At the same time, it strives to set itself apart from the ties of belonging and solidarity that define societies that have either rejected the modernization process or who find themselves caught up in it but at a disadvantage. The appeal of the liberal concept of civil society is that it emphasizes cross-cutting interests, so moving people closer to a less sectarian world view. The danger is that it dismisses all other bonds as unable to contribute to this process by their very nature, although they may in fact be a source of civility and peaceful interaction because they are based on alternative values to liberalism which may be more robust in promoting cooperation and solidarity.

According to statistical analysis, ethnic diversity increases the likelihood of civil war and other violent incidents (Hegre et al., ٢٠١١). However, particularistic solidarities are not always a catalyst for conflict or just a place for "cousinly ritual," as Gellner (٢٠١٤) put it. They can offer the precise bonds that shield individuals from hardship while also supporting the cooperative principles necessary for a more optimistic picture of peace. Because the outer world may be hostile in some way or because they are defending established hierarchies, some particularistic communities may have a propensity to turn inward. Others are hybrids, seeking to support their own group while engaging with the wider world. Overall, it may not be the mode of

associational life that really matters (as Gellner implied) but the values which lie behind it.

The claim that only primordial ties generate violence as well as Putnam's emphasis on the supposedly beneficial social capital that bowling clubs generate were undermined during the ١٩٩٠s and ٢٠٠٠s by participants at civil society conferences reminding attendees that the bombers who blew up a federal building in Oklahoma City in ١٩٩٥ were members of American bowling clubs (Putnam, ٢٠٠٥). It should be noted, nevertheless, that neither the Oklahoma bombers nor the bowling alley themselves were motivated by a desire to defend their establishment. The bombing's mastermind, disturbed former soldier Timothy McVeigh, was responsible for it. His mother had left his father at the age of ten; he was bullied as a child and fascinated by guns; and he was deeply affected by his experiences in the first Gulf war (BBC News, ٢٠٠١). In the West today, there are many acts of violence that reflect an ongoing, unresolved tension between how people design their own individual life journeys and their interdependencies, which are rife with inequality, discrimination, and competition. McVeigh emerged from the socialization process of a specific subculture in the United States. According to Wilkinson & Pickett (٢٠٠٩), there is a direct correlation between high levels of inequality and high levels of violence. Conflict and violence can also result from sociability that emphasizes individualism.

The aforementioned makes it evident that civil society cannot be about all types of social relationships or the trust they foster because trust can develop between individuals who commit acts of extreme violence. In actuality, all types of sociability have the power to foster the trust that Putnam and others have worked so hard to connect with civil society. Therefore, trust can be used for adverse purposes too, as Putnam himself came to acknowledge: “Al Qaeda, for

instance, is an excellent example of social capital, enabling its participants to accomplish goals they could not accomplish without that network" (٢٠١٧, p. ١٣٨). So, what is it about the nature of social bonds that strengthens the relationship of civil society to peace?

This issue is frequently discussed in terms of the types of social capital produced via associational relationships. It is said that "bonding" social capital brings together people who are similar and "bridging" social capital brings together those who differ in significant ways. Putnam (٢٠١٧) contends that these two types of social capital are frequently mistakenly seen as mutually exclusive, as if high levels of bonding and high levels of bridging are incompatible with one another. However, this relies on the values involved. Only when civil society actively contributes to the conditions for nonviolence, encourages nonviolent forms of social interaction, and supports processes for imagining and constructing the common good across social and other divides can it lessen violence and foster the kind of trust associated with peace. This was the result of an important research on ethnic strife and civic life in northern India by Ahutosh Varshney (٢٠١٢). In some places in the region, cross-communal civic activity was crucial in preventing conflicts between Hindus and Muslims from escalating into extreme violence, although such conflicts did occur where such civic connections were lacking. Such civic values do not necessarily translate into either bonding or bridging. Instead, they are anchored in building certain kinds of human interactions and relationships. It is in this sense that Karstedt (٢٠١٦, p. ٥٨), in an essay on the relationship between democracy and violence, argues that it is universalistic bonds that matter when exploring this relationship—not an empty universality but one which explicitly promotes inclusionary and egalitarian values: "The associational bonds that develop within civil society provide mechanisms of outreach and

generalized cooperation that can counterbalance individualistic practices. . . Trust relationships are produced through universal bonds and the inclusionary mechanisms of democracy, with democratic institutions as equally strong providers and enforcers of these bonds. These vital social bonds are endangered by processes like social inequality and ethnic and religious divisions that factionalize society."

Since it has the ability to create peaceful communities, civil society as a normative idea is not inherently "evil." However, there is no guarantee that empirical relationships will lead to either peace or bloodshed. We can only enable civil society to be an impulse for peace-thinking and a stimulant for peace-building in practice by including distinctions into the notion. The idea must inspire us to consider the potential of peace as a shared benefit and an admirable objective. This runs the risk of portraying "uncivil" society as the antagonistic opposite of its ostensibly good-natured "civil" twin, yet the real world is rarely that binary. Determining precisely what constitutes civil society in various settings requires consideration of nuance and complexity as well as extensive discussion and intellectual work. However, the danger of stripping civil society of its content is highlighted by the insistence on the boundary between civil and uncivil. Civil society must be given meaning; it cannot be emptied by particular instances that pass for a universalizing discourse or by failing to provide it with a clear normative compass. When considered in the context of their prospective opposites, the concept's civil dimensions become evidently visible. As a result, civil society should be preserved as a lofty ideal, at least until a better one emerges. This is because it emphasizes the moral principles of civility and nonviolence that are crucial to an effort like establishing peace. Likewise, states that oppress and repress civil society organizations in the name of their rightful monopoly on violence can be held accountable

using a weapon that civil society offers that is both intellectually rigorous and normatively precise. Such moral violations are challenged by a normative understanding of civil society, which also empowers civil society organizations to mount justifiable opposition in the real world.

Civil Society and Peace-Building

Can the normative ideal of civil society provide light on the reality of peacebuilding? Although the complexity behind the norm-building features of empirical civil society has already been recognized, efforts to harness civil society for peacebuilding at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries have hardly ever included this recognition. Instead, peace-building became linked to what has been referred to as the "liberal peace" (Paris, ١٩٩٧; Richmond, ٢٠١٥), a limited vision based on neoliberal market values that many believe has added new sources of rivalry and division into fragile societies recovering from protracted war and violence. Due to the fact that civil society came to be connected with this vision, many people have given up on it as an ideal. However, I contend that the idea should not be fully abandoned and that its normative content should be revived to embrace the ambiguous possibilities that empirical civil society participation in peace-building implies.

In ١٩٩٢, Boutros Boutros Ghali, the then Secretary General of the United Nations, laid forth his "agenda for peace," in which post-conflict peace-building was made a central component of international action following the end of the Cold War and a period of renewed optimism. The emergence of civic society concepts in Eastern Europe and elsewhere corresponded with this new focus. Civil society actors are crucial in ensuring that peace processes do not simply involve armed parties at war, according to peace philosophers like John Paul Lederach (١٩٩٧). Civil society organizations had an unprecedented surge in activity as

a result of the encouragement of the international donor community, and many of them emerged with a focused portfolio of initiatives and an interest in peace-building.

However, as these actions were investigated and assessed, they were frequently found to be lacking. There have been numerous specialized critiques of concrete practice in certain nations and circumstances in addition to theoretical critiques of the overall project (Pearce, ١٩٩٩; Belloni, ٢٠١١; Orjuela, ٢٠١٣; Pouligny, ٢٠١٥; Pearce, ٢٠١٥). The following is how Pouligny (٢٠١٥, pp. ٤٩٩–٥٠٠) summarizes the arguments made in these criticisms: In the end, most outsiders have a tendency to minimize one of any civil society's primary strengths: its diversity. We frequently seek "consensus" or a "common view" in our pursuit of homogeneity, but these things do not exist in any society, let alone one that has just emerged from a war. The protracted and contentious process of constructing a new social compact is the true issue; a so-called common belief is neither necessary nor even desirable for its solution. As historians and sociologists have demonstrated, such processes rarely take place in perfect harmony but rather are the result of several negotiations or even actual conflicts. They also cannot come about through "dogmatic voluntarism" by itself. Yet, most donors and agencies continue to believe in such a process, as shown by the creation and sponsoring of a countless number of consortiums and platforms—not to mention the multiplication of coordination meetings of all kinds that, amongst other consequences, justify the complaints of leaders of local organizations that they no longer have time to actually work!

The availability and directing effects of funding have drawn civil society actors into implementing specific models of peace rather than supporting their efforts to create new spaces, forge connections within and across society, and advocate to the state.

In order to provide further empirical weight to this crucial debate, Paffenholz (٢٠١٩; ٢٠٢١) conducted a three-year study on civil society and peacebuilding that adopted a functional perspective of civil society's role in peacebuilding. It listed seven of them: facilitation, advocacy, socialization, social cohesiveness, protection, monitoring, and service delivery. It also used a wide definition of civil society which included traditional and clan groups as well as professional associations, clubs, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), but its understanding of peace-building was quite narrowly focused on the five to ten years after the end of large-scale organized violence. The study took a more measured view of the contributions of civil society organizations in such contexts than the overly optimistic claims of the donors, specifying the phases and moments in which civil society actors, as opposed to other actors, can play a positive role. It is an effort of a new generation to comprehend the empirical potential of civil society groups in certain postwar contexts and moments of recovery, and it makes the case that these organizations can in fact complement other players in important ways. In this way, the study and others like it help to restore the connection between civil society and peace-building by precisely highlighting the beneficial roles that some civil society organizations play and criticizing others who, for instance, continue to be elite-based and removed from the general populace while providing apolitical solutions to gravely political issues. For instance, after the Peace Accords of ١٩٩٦, donor money flowed into Guatemala, creating a well-funded sector of urban-based NGOs. Some of these NGOs developed became powerful human rights and security sector reform advocates, but they had little ties to the primarily indigenous and underprivileged rural residents who had suffered the worst of the army's atrocities throughout the long-running civil conflict in their nation (Howell & Pearce, ٢٠١١). The state was

unable to carry out the reforms suggested by civil society organizations because it was being undermined from within by criminal and parallel authorities. However, outside of donor financing circles, people continued to organize to, for instance, defend the rights of indigenous women, seek land reform, and defend their communities against mining firms. Some NGOs did manage to retain their roots in these struggles, enabling them to survive the subsequent decline in donor funding, albeit with difficulty.

The case of Guatemala serves as a reminder of the necessity to discern between the contributions made by various organizational structures at various points in history to the creation of favorable conditions for long-term nonviolent coexistence. At least in the context of this discussion, peace-building may involve less highly targeted initiatives and more sporadic operations in the civil society sphere that expose populations to opposing ideas and values that represent the complexity of the search for peace. They might involve challenges to the gender relationships and expectations of masculinity which perpetuate the male-on-male use of violence responsible for the vast majority of deaths and injuries in the world. They might question the assumption that violence in the private sphere is not a problem for the public policy arena. They might build space for new social actors or previously excluded and subordinated groups to feel part of the debate about the future of their society. They might question forms of wealth production, the distribution of resources, and the nature of security provision. They might, in other words, generate debate about the nature of the common good in any particular context. The ability to recognize when empirical civil society is actually capable of influencing people in these directions could be greatly improved by improving our understanding of civil society as a value-producing and value-contesting arena and how it transforms each society's understanding of the significance

of and potential for peace. A shared ethical and moral understanding of peace-building would be made possible by such an unapologetically normative reading of civil society, which would also question some of the liberal interpretations currently associated with this concept. As civilizations turn to peaceful means of resolving their conflicts and creating the conditions necessary to exist without violence, civil society, like peace, may once more enter the political sphere.

Conclusion

The idea of civil society is important for maintaining and fostering peace, and it is most effective when emphasizing the significance of, and preserving the potential for, public dispute and discussion when developing shared conceptions of the decent society. Its normative authority comes from the general value of aspire to such a society produced by the debated ideals of what "good" genuinely means, not from the unique values that various traditions attach to the notion. This paper has argued that as both civil society and the concept of peace center on the creation of the common good, they conceptually have similarities. Both positively—as the process of creating the conditions for people to exist without violence—and negatively—as the absence of, say, war—peace must be understood. In this process, empirical distinctions between social behaviors that foster violence and those that foster peace—contrasting civil and uncivil society—must be created. Therefore, civil society can be described in terms of values that positively correspond with the activities aimed at promoting peace. Such concepts demand continual public discussion and controversy because they are complex and include important values.

In actual civil societies, universality must be produced through a difficult process of conflict and contestation. No outcomes can be guaranteed, but

aiming for a result is a goal in and of itself. The idea of a shared humanity is dependent on the normative content of civil society—the accepted norms of the "good society"—in this endeavor. They must be protected if we are to keep the room and freedom that associational life needs to effectively contribute to peacebuilding.

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