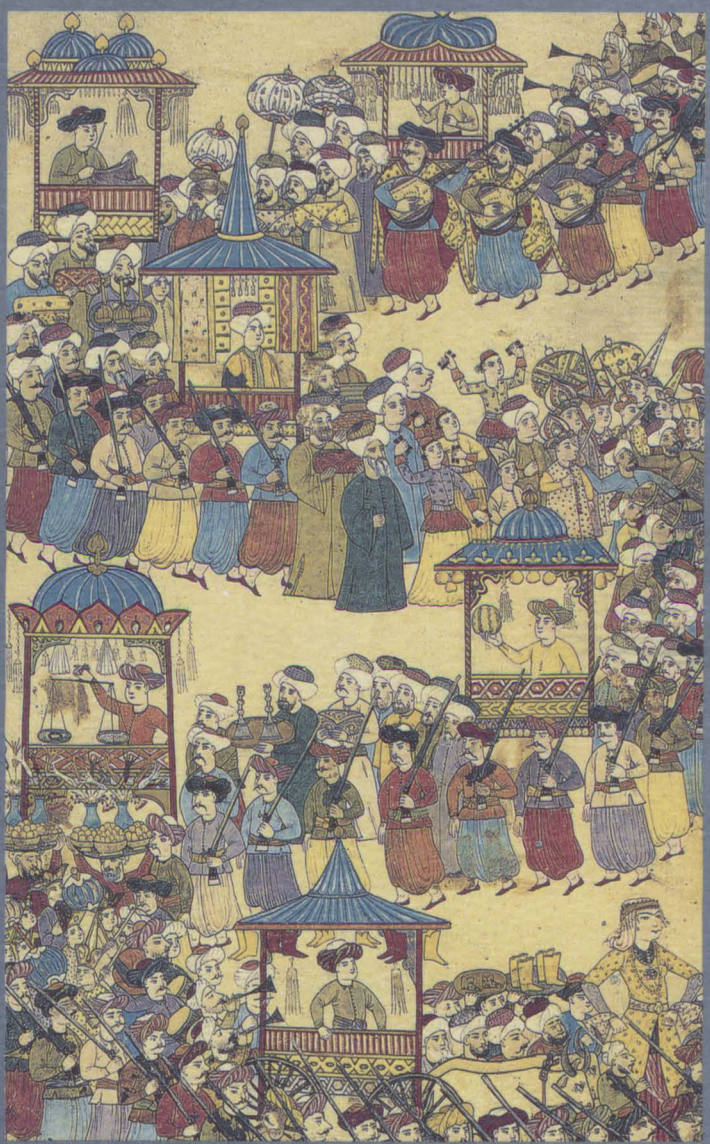
CIVIL SOCIETY DEMOCRACY AND THE MUSLIM WORLD



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Papers Read at a Conference Held
at the Swedish Research Institute
in Istanbul, 28-30 October, 1996

Edited by Elisabeth Özdalga and
Sune Persson

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Preface

At the Barcelona Conference held in Spain on 27 and 28 November, 1995, the fifteen member states of the European Union, eleven Mediterranean countries and the Palestinian (National) Authority decided to set up a new form of partnership. The so-called Barcelona Declaration, adopted by the 27 participants, aims at creating long-term stability based on three pillars: a political and security dialogue that emphasizes human rights; economic and financial incentives to create a free-trade zone covering Europe and the Mediterranean countries by the year 2000; and the establishment of relationships among the people of the region themselves to foster the values of civil society. The participants also agreed on the importance of improving mutual understanding by promoting cultural exchanges. Officials and experts should meet in order to make concrete proposals for action. Support, it was declared, would be given to periodic meetings of representatives of academics and others concerned.

The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with the Swedish Institute, arranged the first Euro-Islam Conference in Stockholm, 15-17 June, 1995. As a follow-up of the successful Stockholm Conference, a second Euro-Islam Conference was convened at Al al-Bayt University, Mafraq, Jordan, 10-13 June, 1996.

In accordance with the intentions of the Barcelona Declaration, as well as of the Euro-Islam Conferences, the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Göteborg (Gothenburg), Sweden, and the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul convened a conference on the complex relations between civil society and democracy in Istanbul, 28-30 October, 1996.

The concept of a "civil society" appeared as early as in John Locke's Two Treatises of Government, first published in 1690, after the English "Glorious Revolution" of 1688. The concept remained in currency until de Tocqueville's analyses of democracy, i.e. roughly until 1850. After a long period of almost complete silence, the topic of "civil society" reappeared in the 1970's in Eastern Europe, amidst the drive there for a democratization of the Soviet-style political systems.

In the Middle East too, the question of "civil society" has become a hot issue during the last one or two decades. Weak states with strong militarization has impeded the growth of intermediary social structures which could serve as a kind of a buffer zone between the state and the individual. Individual liberties have not been anchored strongly enough to secure the formation of democratically based organizations and social movements, and even when such movements have developed they have often done so in the name of ideologies favouring communitarian rather than liberal values.

In the light of the above mentioned considerations, the main topics discussed at the Istanbul conference were: What are the conditions for the emergence of a reasonably autonomous civil society? How does the deepening of a civil society, based on individual liberties, affect democratization?

The conference was covered by nineteen participants, five from Turkey (Bahattin Akşit, Levent Köker, Ergun Özbudun, İlkay Sunar, and Elisabeth Özdalga), one each from Syria (Sadik Jalal al-Azm), Egypt (Saad Eddin

Ibrahim), India (Sona Khan), Iran (Mahmood Sariolghalam), and Syria/Germany (Bassam Tibi), while the remaining nine scholars were Swedes (Björn Beckman, Inga Brandell, Ann-Kristin Jonasson, Bengt Knutsson, Rita Liljeström, Åsa Lundgren, Sune Persson, Göran Therborn, and Olle Törnquist). Bo Rothstein, Sweden, could not take part in the conference. A detailed list of the participants is given on pages 141 and 142.

The conference was organized around three themes. The first session covered two papers, by Björn Beckman and İlkay Sunar, on conflicting perspectives on the concept of "civil society". The second session dealt with civil society, democracy, and Islam. Four papers, by Bassam Tibi, Sadik Jalal al-Azm, Mahmood Sariolghalam, and Saad Eddin Ibrahim, were presented under this heading. The remaining three sessions included various regional perspectives, with eight papers: Göran Therborn (Middle East), Åsa Lundgren (EU versus Turkey and Poland), Ergun Özbudun and Levent Köker and Elisabeth Özdalga (all on Turkey), Olle Törnquist (Indonesia), and Inga Brandell (North Africa).

Conference organizers were Elisabeth Özdalga, Program Director at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, as well as Professor of Sociology at the Middle East Technical University, Ankara; and Sune Persson, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Göteborg, and Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Göteborg. Ann-Kristin Jonasson, Ph.D. student at the Department of Political Science, University of Göteborg, did magnificent work as conference secretary.

The organizers of this conference convey their heartfelt gratitude to all participants of the conference and to the hosts at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, first and foremost to its eloquent Director, Professor Bengt Knutsson. We are grateful for the generous financial support given by the Swedish Institute, Stockholm, the University of Göteborg, and by the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul. We also owe the copy-editors Adair Mill, Çağatay Anadol and Hamdi Can Tuncer of the History Foundation many thanks for their patient work. Finally, we also thank the HSFR, the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Stockholm, for providing the funding necessary for the publication of this conference report.

Göteborg and Istanbul, September, 1997.
Elisabeth Özdalga, Sune Persson

Contents

Explaining Democratization: Notes on the Concept of Civil Society

BJÖRN BECKMAN, Stockholm University

1. Extricating "civil society" from the liberal agenda

The concept of civil society has established itself at the center of current concerns with the preconditions for democratization in societies with authoritarian states, including questions about how the process can be sustained, reproduced, and deepened, once some level of formal democracy has been achieved.[1] In this paper I approach the issues primarily from the perspective of the study of third world politics, although most of them are of a more general relevance. In Western political theory, the notion of civil society has a history of ambiguity and it is not clear to what extent it provides a useful point of departure for theoretically grounded empirical work. My own attempt to familiarize myself with this history has reinforced a picture of an ideological rather than an analytical construct.[2]

Should not "a concept with this degree of elusiveness", asks Gordon White, "be sent back to its coffin in the crypt of the great church of political theory"?[3] He is clearly tempted to do so, but feels that this diversity of traditions has been overtaken by a far broader use of the term in contemporary "conventional development discourse". Most current uses of the term, according to him, share the idea of "an intermediate associational realm between state and family populated by organizations which are separate from the state, enjoy autonomy in relation to the state and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests or values".[4] A more elaborate but essentially similar formulation is offered by Larry Diamond.[5]

I am not convinced as yet about the potential of civil society as a theoretically grounded concept but I have come to accept it, like many others have, as an empirical shorthand referring vaguely to associational life. Its tremendous diffusion and popularity as an analytical metaphor, however, if not as a theoretical problematic, warrant that the problem of conceptualization should be taken seriously; the more so as the spread of the term as a seemingly innocent empirical short-hand tends to insinuate theoretical and ideological assumptions into the analysis which are far from unproblematic.

I argue in this paper that the problem lies with the way in which the concept of civil society has been incorporated into a liberal political agenda in a way that reduces its usefulness, theoretically and analytically. It generates forms of circular reasoning which are incompatible with good theory; it promotes a dichotomized

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1 For a useful discussion of the recent surge of interest in the term, beginning in Eastern Europe, see Gibbon (1996).

2 See, Keane (1988); Cohen & Arato (1992); Dahlkvist (1995).

3 White (1994), p. 378.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 379.

5 Diamond (1994), p. 5.

view of state-society relations which obstructs an understanding of the way in which they mutually constitute each other; it tends to downplay the existence of a variety of civil societies, their internal contradictions, and the fact that they are not necessarily supportive of democratization, in a liberal sense.

2. Does civil society promote democracy? The problem of circularity

My point of entry into the debate was a critique of the use made of the term civil society in developmentalist (World Bank) ideology and its association with neo-liberal political theory.[6] I noticed, for instance, that those social forces which were in favour of a particular variety of liberal economic reform were considered "civil society" and in need of "empowerment" while others, who were less welcoming or outright hostile were spoken of as "vested" or "special" interests that needed to be kept in check. Organized groups which had emerged as part of the national development programmes of the post-colonial state, such as industrial and public sector workers' unions, were often seen as features of the state and not of civil society. The lack of civil society in such a context was posed in terms of the lack of social forces supportive of the liberal economic agenda.

This seems equally to be the case in much of the discussion of civil society as a precondition for democracy. Prevailing usages tend to build a commitment to liberalism, of one sort or the other, into the very definition of the concept. Diamond, for instance, claims that the "pluralistic and market oriented nature of civil society" makes it incompatible with religious, ethnic, revolutionary or millenarian organizations that seek to "monopolize a functional or political space in society". Organizations must also "eschew violence and respect pluralism" as an "irreducible condition" for qualifying as "civil".[7]

The prospects of liberal democratization is explained in terms of the growth of civil society. But only features of associational life that are thought to be supportive of the liberal project are considered as civil society proper. This undercuts the scope for generating non-circular explanations of the presence or absence of the desired liberal features at the level of the state. If civil society is defined as the aspects of society which are supportive of the emergence or sustenance of a liberal democratic political order, no theory is required to explain why civil society matters for democracy. More seriously, it obstructs an analysis of the composite and contradictory range of the ideological orientations of actual social forces.

The argument needs to be opened up for addressing the social basis also of non-liberal political regimes, allowing for the possibility of patriarchal, Islamic, communist, and fascist civil societies. Even if we restrict ourselves to looking at groups in society which we think have a particular potential for supporting democracy, we need to have an open mind on their contradictory and changing nature. They may at different points in time either be supportive, indifferent, or hostile to the democratic project. For instance, a group may oppose military dictatorship but may decide to work with factions of the military which are considered more sympathetic to its group interests. Most likely, such a line will be contested both within the organization and from outside. So, who is to be considered part of civil society and who is not? It seems more useful if such contested positions and ambiguities are addressed as the complexities of civil society itself rather than as an awkward basis for determining what civil society is at any particular time.

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6 See, Beckman (1992) and (1993).

7 Diamond, *op. cit.*, p. 6-7.

3. Dichotomizing state and civil society: Misplaced contradictions

The concept of civil society needs to be disengaged from its incorporation into a liberal theory of state-society relations, where state and civil society are juxtaposed as separate and conflicting spheres. The nature of the relation should be removed from the definition of civil society and be a matter for empirical investigation. Relevant theory must be able to handle the alternative modes in which the relationship is constituted in different societies at different times.

Much of the contemporary argument is trapped within a polarized state-versus-society problematic which obscures the dialectics of state-society relations. It orders and counterpoises societal features into separate spheres, at the expense of an understanding of the way in which they are mutually and jointly constituted. It encourages a theoretical and empirical preoccupation with separateness, rather than with interrelatedness. This analytical bias is naturally associated with an anti-statist ideological agenda.[8] However, it has wider implications as it tends to be diffused to those who have no primary commitment to anti-statism, even if they dislike authoritarian political regimes, especially their own. Many have innocently, often after original hesitation, accepted the concept of civil society as a convenient short-hand without realizing the controversial theoretical load that it tends to carry. Of course, even those who are anti-state on principle need good social theory to be able to advance their cause, as scholars rather than as ideologues. The civil society argument is therefore problematic, not just in its weak theorizing of associational life but because of its underlying, implicit more often than explicit, theory of the state.

Both state and associational life are constituted within the parameters of conflicts with a variety of roots, in the social organization of production, in territory, ethnicity, gender, religion, ideology etc. The conflicts are constituted, not primarily in the relation between the interests represented by the associations and the state but between these interests themselves, for instance, between capital and labour, landowners and tenants, between communities who feel threatened or disadvantaged, women and men, movements with competing world views and strategies for society. The uneven power relations in society are reflected at the level of the state, influencing what groups have access and have their interests protected and promoted, and what groups are marginalized, victimized and repressed. State institutions are formed and transformed in the context of such struggles over access and protection. The struggles are fought out within the institutions of the state as well as in the organizations of civil society, involving a wide range of complex strategic choices, including accommodation, participation, engagement, compromises, and concessions as well as resistance, withdrawal, rejection, imposition, and repression.

We therefore need to look outside the state-civil society dichotomy in order to be able to locate the constituting features of civil society. Associations, social movements, and other agents of civil society cannot be seen as constituted primarily in relation to the state but within arenas of conflicting interest in society. Even if we, by virtue of our problematic, as when we concern ourselves with the social basis of democratization, have good cause to focus on state-civil society relations, we must be able to address these relations in the context of such primary, constitutive conflicts. Some organizations of civil society, however, are constituted specifically within the state-vs-society nexus, with a primary objective of resisting tyranny and promoting civil and political rights, as was emphasized by Inga Brandell in the discussion of my paper at the Istanbul conference. These must, of course, be given particular attention when studying the preconditions of democratization. However, for

8 Cf. Beckman (1993); Dahlkvist (1995).

associational life as a whole, it is rather the way in which political demands (e.g. rights of association, speech, and assembly) are articulated with the pursuit of group interests that seems to be decisive for understanding the democratic potential (or lack of it) of a particular civil society.

4. Whose autonomy, whose influence, whose state?

Central to the civil society argument, and closely coupled to the state-vs-society construct, is the concern with autonomy of associational life vis-à-vis the state. In fact, this becomes a key defining characteristic of civil society as well as a normative goal. Diamond speaks of civil society as "the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state".[9] White speaks of an associational realm between state and family that is populated by organizations which are separate from the state, and "enjoy autonomy in relation to the state".[10] Taylor argues that civil society exists in a "minimal sense" where there are "free associations, not under state tutelage" and in a stronger sense "only where society as a whole can structure itself and co-ordinate its actions through such associations that are free of state tutelage".[11]

If autonomy from the state is built into the definition of civil society, the logic that follows is that the degree of civility depends on the degree of autonomy. This may be a useful normative platform for social forces that are struggling to expand the space for autonomous organizations vis-à-vis an authoritarian state, as illustrated, for instance by the Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies in Cairo and its magazine *Civil Society*, represented by Saad Eddin Ibrahim at the Istanbul conference. However, if autonomy is attributed to the concept of civil society by definition, its usefulness in explaining democratization is undermined. The extent to which autonomous associational life helps explaining democratization is an empirical matter that is far from obvious. For instance, it is difficult to account for the demise of the old authoritarian order in Eastern and Central Europe in terms of the strength of autonomous organizations. In most cases they were extremely weak. The role played by the autonomous workers' movement in Poland is an exception rather than a rule.[12]

In the Western European context, the argument "neo-corporatism", "social" or "democratic" corporatism has encouraged a certain awareness about the complex dialectics of the relations between state and organized interest in society.[13] Taylor suggests that such integration, as for instance in the Swedish case, represents an "interweaving of society and government to the point where the distinction no longer expresses an important difference in the basis of power or the dynamic of policy-making".[14] He notes that the activation of the idea of civil society in that context tends to have an anti-corporatist edge.[15] In a developmentalist context, White acknowledges that the boundaries between state and civil society are blurred in practice and the autonomy of civil society organizations is variable. Yet, he takes autonomy to be part of the attributes of civil society "as an ideal type concept".[16]

However desirable such autonomy may be in the context of concrete political struggles, the empirical question of whose autonomy vis-à-vis what must be

9 Diamond, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
10 White, *op. cit.*, p. 379.
11 Taylor (1990), p. 111.
12 Przeworski (1991); Rueschemeyer (1992).
13 Cawson (1986).
14 Taylor *op. cit.*, p. 96.
15 *Ibid.*, p. 98.
16 White, *op. cit.*, p. 380-81.

addressed in the context of the nature of the conflicting interests and the balance between them, in society at large, at the level of the state, as well as in terms of the various strategic options available. The question of autonomy is supposedly related to the capacity to define and assert one's interests independent of another party. It is therefore an issue which needs to be addressed in the context of the conflictual relationship which constitutes the interest that goes into forming associations and movements.

In one society, in a particular political and economic conjuncture, labour organizations, for instance, may allow themselves to be deeply involved with a state which they consider labour-friendly, prompting it to intervene on their behalf in order to protect their interests and autonomy vis-à-vis the employers. At another time, in another place, the main preoccupation may be to fight off intervention and protect autonomy vis-à-vis a hostile state *allied* to the employers. In both cases, issues of autonomy may be involved, but relating to capital as much as to the state. "Incorporation" is not just the strategy of states seeking to dominate civil society. It also involves social forces seeking to secure access and extract protection from the state. An element of autonomy may be lost as part of a bargain which may be more or less advantageous to the group, depending on the balance of forces, in society at large and within the state. Tunisian women, for instance, have obtained more liberal family laws than elsewhere in the region, by, some of them, accepting for themselves (their organizations) a supportive role within the one-party arrangement (AFTURD 1992).

Who depends on whom, who seeks autonomy from or control over whom are all empirical issues that should be kept outside the conceptualization of civil society if we wish to account for the variety of strategies pursued by associations in seeking to promote the interests of their members and their own power and influence in society, which may or may not be the same thing.

5. Conclusions: Civil societies, citizens, and publics

The way in which civil society is defined ideologically and juxtaposed to the state allows it to be endowed with aggregate attributes, like strength, weakness, density, etc. which misrepresent the conflictual nature of civil society and the manner in which the state is part and parcel of these conflicts. We need to think in terms of rival civil societies where groups compete among themselves in maximizing access to and control over the state. The power exercised by the state reflects both the history of such struggles and the constraints provided by the current balance of forces. States actively intervene to promote the segments of civil society which are supportive of its own political projects, undercutting or repressing those who have a different agenda.

It has been suggested that the problem with the concept of civil society is that it is "Western". Partha Chatterjee says in his critique of Charles Taylor that he wishes to "send back the concept of civil society" to where he thinks "it properly belongs - the provincialism of European social philosophy".[17] My own instinct is rather to see if it can be rescued from the constraints of a particular theoretical tradition which is less, perhaps, "provincial" than tied to a particular mode of production and its ideologies, both of which have since long transcended their provincial origins.

The question remains, if the notion of civil society is historically part and parcel of a liberal political agenda, is it justified to rob it of a number of its defining, liberal characteristics? I think it is, and my argument pursues three lines. Firstly, it is not in the interest of the liberal agenda to encourage analysis that is circular. Secondly, I

17 Chatterjee (1990), p. 120.

agree with Gordon White, that the massive adoption of the concept in contemporary arguments has generated its own dynamic and requirements, whether Locke and Hegel agree or not. Thirdly, if we wish to legitimize our own conceptualizations in terms of the history of the concept, that history is varied enough to have something for everyone. Gramsci, for instance, has a conception of civil society which opens it up for ideological contestation by groups with different agenda.[18]

Still, what remains of value in the concept of civil society after this attempt to disengage it from the liberal agenda? It is clearly a weak concept, but does not need to be discarded as long as one is aware of the theoretical pitfalls. Also, there may be no harm in using it as an empirical shorthand for associational life or whatever specific empirical referents one wishes to agglomerate. Nor do I see any problem in going in search of the features of civil society which are considered conducive or harmful for a particular political project, democratization, state capacity building, welfare state policies, or whatever, as long, of course, as the assumed relation is properly theorized and empirically investigated, which is something different from building the relation into the very definition of the concept, as happens now.

We need to broaden the concept so as to make it less subservient to the liberal agenda and capable of organizing more complex as well as illiberal social realities. Rejecting the mode of dichotomizing state-society relations associated with the recent rise of the civil society argument does not mean abandoning the analytical focus on that relation. We need to pursue alternative openings. One could be to focus on the notion of citizenship as a relation to the state and the formation of "publics" for the exercise of that citizenship. This could activate central elements in the "Western" conceptual tradition while retaining an empirical openness with regard to the different forms and normative preoccupations of such publics. It may help in making the concept more useful in analyzing a variety of political publics, such as those of the market place, the bazaar, the church, and the mosque. The upsurge of social activity and associational life centered on the latter, which is characteristic of the current Islamic revival, is one good reason why we may benefit from disengaging the notion of civil society from prevailing "Western" ideal types. As the current debate in Turkey demonstrates, the question of the role that such emerging Islamic civil society may play in democratization is highly contested and should be addressed empirically and not be foreclosed at a conceptual level.

This paper has been concerned with the concept of civil society and its usefulness in analyzing the preconditions for democratization. In conclusion, we need to recall that the current preoccupation with civil society is a recent phenomenon which has invaded an analytical field with a record of relevant alternative perspectives, much of which now seem to be conveniently forgotten or marginalized. I am thinking, for instance, of Barrington Moore's work *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1966) and the debates to which it has given rise.[19] This is not just a question of alternative approaches which may be more or less fruitful. They need to be combined. For the civil society argument on democratization to be meaningful, the agents of civil society and their mode of operation need to be situated in the context of a wider analysis of social forces.

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18 Hall (1991), p. 27; Bobbio (1979).

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Civil Society and Islam

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As a first approximation, civil society can be defined as the intermediate domain between the state and the individual–a domain in which deliberation and association take place without constraint and coercion. In a stimulating book on civil society, the late Ernest Gellner claims that the survival of civil society hinges on avoiding three dangers to liberty: centralized authoritarianism, stifling communalism, and anemic atomism. Civil society consists of a plurality of institutions, but this is a pluralism of a certain kind. When plurality consists of segmentary communities, the tyranny of centralized power is avoided at the cost of another kind of tyranny: a stifling kind of communalism in which identities are not chosen but ascribed–whereas at the core of civil society lies the "unconstrained and secular individual, unhampered by social or theological bonds, freely choosing his aims..."[1] It follows that centralized authority cannot monopolize all power, fuse it with some understanding of transcendental (or immanent) truth and bind the individual and society to itself. Finally, civil society is possible when it avoids not only stifling communalism and centralized authoritarianism but also avoids the political enfeeblement of society and the individual through atomization by "forging of links which are effective even though they are flexible, specific, instrumental".[2]

The formation of civil society in the West, Gellner claims, was the outcome of a "miracle" which brought into existence a zone of freedom free of stifling communalism, despotic authoritarianism and "emasculating" atomism. Gellner then suggests that we can best understand civil society by looking at its "rivals": Islam, Marxism, and nationalism (of a certain kind). Since our main concern is civil society in the Middle East and the Islamic world, I shall exclude Marxism and nationalism from my discussion except when they are relevant to the discussion of civil society and Islam. And, since Ernest Gellner has not only written a book on "Civil Society and Its Rivals" but also a very provocative one on "Muslim Society", I will address the question of whether civil society can accommodate Islam, or, whether Islam can accommodate civil society, in dialogue with Gellner and his thesis on the subject.

Islam as the Rival of Civil Society

Gellner's major reason for viewing Islam as a rival form of social order to civil society is his contention that whereas civil society requires the privatization of religious belief, Islam is "secularization-resistant". Islam is unique among world civilizations for its resistance to secularization and for its undiminishing vigor. According to Gellner, Islam derives its contemporary vigor from the fact that its elective affinity with the defining features of modernization and modernity, namely, industrialization and the industrial order, allows it to be a truly local response to the challenge of global, industrial modernity. This local response, however, while it is

1 Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals*, London, 1994, p. 9
2 *Ibid.*, p. 100.

industrialization-friendly, on the one hand, is no friend of civil society and liberty, on the other. It is, in other words, a model for modernization and modernity but of an authoritarian kind.

According to Gellner, industrialization-friendly Islam is one variant of Islam, for Islam is a soul with two bodies. Lived Islam has always been two: it is the scripturalist "High" variant that is industrialization-friendly, whereas this is not so for the folksy "Low" one. The rising "fundamentalism" in the Islamic world, forged in the image of the High variant, can best be understood not just as opposition "to alien unbelief, or to bowdlerizing reinterpretation" but as a "deep" concern with "countering folk distortions of Islam, illegitimate superstition, and ritual accretions".[3] Clearly, for Gellner, it is what he calls the "High Culture" of Islam that lends itself not only to industrialization but to fundamentalism as well. Fundamentalism is really the "enthusiastic" version of High Islam within which a zealous commitment to High Islam is also a passionate commitment to modernization and modernity. Hence, fundamentalists can "have their cake and eat it too"; they are not only a solution to the problem of modernization posed from both outside and inside Islam, but they are also a local, native solution. This is what makes Islam so very vigorous in our day.

While (High) Islam is friendly to industrialization in its formal structure, it is unfriendly to civil society and liberty in terms of its "normative Ideal" which does not differentiate between "transcendent Law" and society:

> ...divine truth is not only a matter of doctrine about the nature of the world, but also, and perhaps primarily, a matter of quite detailed law concerning the conduct of life and society...As for political authority, it is charged with enforcing divine law, rather than specifically or paradigmatically exemplifying it, let alone creating it. [4]

This is what Gellner calls the "Model" of "*umma*", a term which acquires the generic meaning of "ideocracy" with two variants: the religious Islamic version and the secular Marxist version.

There are two lived variants of Islam, and then there is the normative Ideal or Model. All are old as Islam itself. The High Islam (scripturalist, rule-governed, egalitarian and puritanical) constituted the culture of the urban centers whereas the Low one (ritualistic, magical, ecstatic and saint-mediated) was more suitable to everyday rustic existence of the rural, tribal periphery and the urban poor. Although the two cultural systems interpenetrated each other much of the time,

> There remained a latent tension which would come to the surface from time to time in the form of a puritan revivalist movement, aiming at transforming the Lower in the image of the Higher, at implementing seriously an ideal which had never been renounced, yet was not properly practiced either.[5]

This was the world of Ibn Khaldun where the tribal rustics mobilized by a discontented saint would attack the lax and corrupt city and take over the government in the name of purification forged in the image of the normative Ideal of High Islam and fuelled by the energy of tribal *asabiyya*. "These movements triumphed from time to time, though they never succeeded permanently, prior to modern times..." The neo-puritans once in power would in time succumb to the temptations of urban luxury and laxity while the rustics (and the urban poor) given the "exigencies of rural life and psychic needs of urban poverty would in due course" revert to the "persistent use of magic, ritual and personal mediation", and the cycle would start over again. This was the "Permanent or Recurrent but ever-reversed Reformation" of traditional Islam: "in each cycle, the Revivalist puritan impulse would in the end yield to the contrary social requirement." [6]

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3 *Ibid.*, p. 16.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
5 *Ibid.*, p. 20.
6 *Ibid.*

"But under modern conditions the rules of the game have changed." This recurrent cycle was broken under the impact of the colonial and post-colonial state when the "society was politically centralized and effectively governed by the centre", when tribes were subdued and their autonomy destroyed, and when "population explosion, urbanization, urban domination" and mobility led to the "general atomization of the society". In these circumstances, puritanism and fundamentalism symbolize not only "promotion from the status of rustic backwardness and ignorance to urban sophistication and propriety"[7] but also societal progress: Fundamentalism "aiming at transforming the Lower in the image of the Higher, at implementing seriously an ideal which had never been renounced, yet was not properly practiced either", represents catching up with modernity and acquiring international dignity in local terms.

Islam and Christianity as Mirror Images

In Europe too, the home of civil society, Christianity had industrialization-friendly and unfriendly variants: what is "miraculous", however, about Western Europe is that the industrialization-friendly version has ended up as the friend of liberty as well. What accounts for the difference between the two industrialization-friendly variants of Islam and Christianity; why did the Reformation in the West befriend both industrialization and liberty while protestant-like Islam of the East befriended but one of them?

The secret lies in the mirror-image like positioning of industrialization-friendly versions of Islam and Christianity. In Islam, the friendly, urban, High variant of Islam "prevailed at the center, not always endowed with power, it was nevertheless ascribed normative authority".[8] The unfriendly, communal, and superstitious Low variant was fragmented, peripheral and popular. Gellner does not spell it out clearly, but there were actually two variants of urban, High Islam: the lax ("not properly practiced") one, and the enthusiastic, zealous kind. The lax, relaxed Islam grew in the commercial and civilized soil of urban centers and was incapable of governing itself. The enthusiastic one was engendered by the combination of tribal *asabiyya* and the normative ideals of High Islam and provided governance to the lax, atomized urban residents enfeebled by commerce and affluence.

In Christianity, the superstitious, modernization-unfriendly variant "prevailed in the central single organization, claiming a monopolistic link to the Founder of the faith and source of unique revelation". The friendly–scripturalist, puritan, mediation-repudiating, enthusiast–variant was at the margin and disunited. "It was this mix", Gellner claims, "which engendered by some strange internal chemistry the modern world" friendly both to industrialization and liberty. He adds,

> This mix, plus the fact that the great confrontation between superstitious centre and enthusiastic periphery ended in a draw and in some places in deadlock, eventually meant that the modern world was produced.[9]

So it is the "strange" chemistry plus the "balance of power" between the superstitious and the enthusiasts that accounts for the conversion of Christian enthusiasts into friends of liberty. The enthusiasts not only fail to prevail but also

> their efforts to impose righteousness on earth if necessary by military and political force, turn instead to pacifism and tolerance, but they are not so crushed as to be prevented from practicing righteousness within their own moral ghetto, and demanding with success toleration for their excessive but private zeal.[10]

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7 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
8 *Ibid.*, p. 50.
9 *Ibid.*, p. 51.
10 *Ibid.*, p. 47.

This is when the "miracle" occurred: the failure of enthusiasts to impose their righteousness militarily and politically turns them not only into friends of tolerance and liberty, but the privatization of their zeal channelled into economic activity engenders perpetual economic growth and plenty.

History and Normative Ideals

Clearly, the industrialization-friendly variant of Christianity became a friend of liberty not out of respect for its normative Model but because it had to be so. Had the balance of power been tipped in its favor, a theocratic ideocracy might have won the day. Michael Walzer has argued in his book on "The Revolution of the Saints" that the puritan saints were indeed capable of such radical vigor as the precursors of the Jacobins and the Bolsheviks.

We know, of course, that the Christian enthusiasts were just as "fundamentalist" as their Muslim counterparts: both claim to subscribe to the original, Normative (Ideal) Model and seek to cleanse it of its later distortions. In the case of Islam, according to Gellner, the normative Model makes no distinction between the religious and secular law and hence sacralizes the social world of mundane interaction. For Christianity, implicitly in his book on Civil Society and explicitly in his Muslim Society, Gellner mentions the God-Caesar distinction:

> Judaism and Christianity are also blueprints of a social order, but rather less so than Islam... The most prolonged effort in the direction of theocracy was perhaps Byzantine Caesaro-Papism...[11]

According to Gellner, although the normative Model of Christianity separates society from religion, apparently this Model can be overridden as in the case of not only the Byzantines, but also the enthusiastic Puritans who were intent on establishing the Commonwealth of Virtue "politically and militarily". What stopped the zealous Puritans was not the normative Model but the balance of power.

If one religion can override its normative Model, cannot another do the same; as the normative Ideal was overridden in Christianity, so could it not be in Islam, given favorable balance of forces? Moreover, is the normative Model in Islam as unambiguous as Gellner assumes? From Gellner's own account of Christianity, it appears that normative Models are a matter of interpretative emphases subject to contextual balance of forces –the Protestant enthusiasts' attempt to override the Society-Church distinction was stopped short by the balance of forces, while Byzantine Caesaro-Papism prevailed for some time. Gellner himself is not totally free of doubt about the interpretation of the normative Ideal of High Islam by Muslims.

> High Islam may not really be, as its adherents like to think, the perpetuation of the pristine practice of the prophet and his Companions ['the Model'], but it is something that has genuinely been a prestigious part and parcel of Muslim civilization for a long time.[12]

But if we are to approach the normative Model with some interpretative doubt and put the weight on Muslim civilization, then Islamic civilization has another "part" of long duration overlooked by Gellner: As Ira Lapidus suggests, there are in fact not just one but two historical "paradigms" in Islam: The "Caliphal" paradigm in Islam is conceived as a "total way of life" and the "imperial paradigm" in it which was not. Neither the Recurrent Cycle *à la* Ibn Khaldun, valid for the arid zone of North Africa, nor the sacralization of life in all its aspects was true for the imperial variant of Islamic society. This is how Ira Lapidus puts it:

> The Middle Eastern Islamic heritage provides not one but two basic constellations of historical society, two golden ages, two paradigms, each of which has generated its own characteristic repertoire of political institutions and political theory. The first is the society integrated in all

11 Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society*, Cambridge, 1981, p. 2.
12 Gellner, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

dimensions, political, social, and moral, under the aegis of Islam. The prototype is the unification of Arabia under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century...The second historical paradigm is the imperial Islamic society built not on Arabian or tribal templates but on the differentiated structures of previous Middle Eastern societies...By the eleventh century, Middle Eastern states and religious communities were highly differentiated...Thus, despite the common statement that Islam is a total way of life defining political as well as social and family matters, most Muslim societies ... were in fact built around separate institutions of state and religion.[13]

In the context of the Reformation, Gellner's emphasis is on the balance of forces between the "superstitious" Catholic Church and the "enthusiastic" Protestantism. Once the confrontation between the two ends up in a draw, according to Gellner, "community" is superseded by "society": "In Europe, the contrast between community and society is one between the past and the present." In the case of traditional Islam, "community" and "society" were ever present and synchronic: "community at the margins, society at the centre". This ceases to be true in the Islam of the modern world:

Come the modern world however–imposed by extraneous forces rather than produced indigenously–and the new balance of power, favoring the urban centre against rural communities, causes central faith to prevail, and we are left with a successful *Umma* at long last. This is the mystery of the secularization- resistant nature of Islam...[14]

Gellner uses the concept of "*umma*" to cover both the lax version of urban High Islam ("not properly practiced") and its enthusiastic variant in terms of what is supposedly the highest value for them both: the textual, normative Ideal. In traditional Islam, the relaxed urban variant cyclically succumbed to its enthusiastic, *asabiyya*-ridden counterpart because the "emasculated" urbanites did not have the coherence and moral stamina to govern themselves without the "virile" tribesmen; come the modern world, the balance of forces favor urban High Islam, and "society" at the expense of "community". But why in the new modern setting when society is favored and community undermined, the fundamentalist, enthusiastic version rather than the relaxed version of High Islam prevails (both of which are industrialization-friendly and local) is not clear. Wouldn't it be more accurate to analyze specifically the kinds of power balances that exist in the contemporary Muslim world between the relaxed and enthusiastic, and the "caliphal" and "imperial" variants of High Islam?

If the modern world indeed favors the industrialization-friendly variant of Islam and the city, then the question should be: what is the balance of forces between the relaxed and enthusiastic version and the saint-mediated, magical Islam still favored by the urban poor? It is within the balance of forces between these variants that we must seek the secularization potential of Islam. What, in other words, are the countervailing forces against the enthusiastic, fundamentalist version of Islam, and what form is Islam taking within the field of forces that vary from one country to another? While the fundamentalists have their "caliphal" golden age, so do the moderates and secularists have their "imperial" paradigm, and the "de-tribalized and de-ruralized" population not only aspire to live up to urban High Islam but continue to favor magic and ecstasy. To lump all these groups as the devotees of the "*umma*" overlooks altogether the contemporary diversity and the balance of power among them.

Why indeed is "*umma*" the ever victorious hero of Gellner's story of Islam? There is, I believe, a subtext to Gellner's analysis. In traditional Islam *à la* Ibn Khaldun, the urbanites are haunted by the normative Ideal which they do not practice but never forget; the rustics do not practice it but aspire to it; when the rustics turn zealous, they forge their identity in its image. What was true in old times is true for modern times: the rich and the poor, the *ulema* and the ignorant, the town dwellers and the villagers, the masses and the elites– –all are haunted by the normative Ideal of *umma* all the time

13 Ira Lapidus, "The Golden Age: The Political Concepts of Islam" , *The Annals of the American Academy*, 524, (November 1992), pp. 14-15.

14 Gellner (1994), p. 14.

but practice it some of the time. In Gellner's account of Islam, the normative Ideal always beats history to the punch-line.

> The hold of Islam over the populations of the lands in which it is the main religion has in no way diminished in the course of the last hundred years. In some ways, it has been markedly strengthened. Moreover, the hold is not restricted to certain layers of society; one cannot say that it is only among the lower classes and the rustics or the women that the faith has retained its vigor. Its hold is as strong among the ruling and urban classes and cultural elites as it is among the less favored segments of the population. It is as marked among traditionalist regimes as it is among those committed to social radicalism.[15]

What of historical Christianity and its normative Ideal? There were, to be sure, attempts to violate the Norm but none were really successful. Even the most prolonged effort of them all, Byzantine Caesaro-Papism, served as a model not for later Christianity but for Islam:

> Christianity, which initially flourished among the politically disinherited, did not then presume to be Caesar. A kind of potential for political modesty has stayed with it ever since... Theocratic aspirations only appear intermittently; canon law significantly means religious ordinances as distinct from secular ones, unlike the Muslim *kanun*. The most prolonged effort in the direction of theocracy was perhaps the Byzantine Caesaro-Papism, which, significantly was one of the models available to Islam.[16]

What about the enthusiasts of the Reformation? They too got back in touch with the Norm which they had never renounced –to be sure, a bit of Weberian "routinization" and a lucky balance helped. In the case of the Muslims, "routinization and compromise were not open" to them because "they were politically too successful".[17]

In Gellner's account, history is ultimately the handmaiden of the Original Norm not only in the case of Islam but of Christianity as well: History serves all without discrimination on the basis of faith; each to his own Norm.

The Diversity of Islam

Au contraire to Gellner, History did not serve the Norm well in the case of the Ottomans, for the Ottomans not only compromised the Norm but also struck a compromise between High and Low Islam. This double compromise lasted for a very, very long time, almost six hundred years: While the relaxed variant of High Islam prevailed at the center, folk Islam was practiced at the periphery, and much of the time they interpenetrated each other and existed in "amiable symbiosis" rather than in perpetual tension. The "rude" tribes were subdued (or stopped) at the periphery; and, at the center, a relaxed Islam governed in alliance with the "superstitious". The ever recurrent Ibn Khaldunian cycle was broken.

Gellner is puzzled by the Ottoman Empire: The word "*kanun*" which Gellner spells in its Turkish version meant in the Ottoman context not sacred and secular law fused into one, but secular law only. But more significantly, as the successor to the Byzantine Empire, the model which inspired the Ottomans was not the "caliphal" version of Caesaro-Papism but the "imperial" paradigm which, as Ira Lapidus suggests, was based upon the separation of state and religion. In fact, it was the imperial paradigm that was the rule in pre-modern Islam and not the caliphal one, if we judge it by the scope and longevity of the hold it exercised over the Muslim world from the eighth century onwards. In the imperial paradigm,

> embedded in the Ottoman Empire, ... the realm of Islamic authenticity lies within the soul of the individual and in the relations of individuals with each other within small communities. This is the Islam that sees holiness and religion as incompatible with state power.[18]

15 *Ibid.*, p. 15.
16 Gellner (1981), p. 2.
17 Gellner (1994), p. 49.
18 Lapidus, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

This is a considerably different image of Islam from the one Gellner draws. According to Lapidus, most Muslim societies did and do not conform to the monolithic "*umma*" model. On the contrary,

> they were and are built around separate state and religious institutions. This differentiation first took place in the eighth and ninth centuries when the Caliphate differentiated into a secular political regime and parallel Muslim communal and religious associations, separated by organization, elites and values... Such associations included schools of law, *Sufi tariqat* (brotherhoods), *Sufi* lineages, *Sufi* shrine communities, *Shi'a* sects...Thus, in the pre-modern era there were two alternative concepts of Islamic society. One was the 'Caliphate' which integrated the state and the community, the realms of politics and religion, into an inseparable whole. The second was the "Sultanate" or secular states which ruled over the quasi-independent religious associations that were the true bearers of Muslim religious life.[19]

This is a very different image from that provided by Gellner. Here, there is no state and society forged in the image of a monolithic "*umma*" of atomized individuals governed, in practice, by "cynical clientelism" that fills in the vacuum left by the Law-governed "*umma*". "What strikes the observer" in this non-caliphal image of Muslim society, is not "the curious combination of religious moralism and cynical clientelism"[20] but a secular state co-existing with a society made up of "quasi-independent" religious associations and communities.

Within the "sultanic/imperial" tradition, then, Islam is not unfriendly to the separation of state and religion. Neither is it unfriendly to pluralism; on the contrary, the Ottoman *millet* system was pluralism *par excellence*. To put it in Gellner's terms, the problem of "imperial" Islam vis-a-vis civil society does not lie in its fusion of faith, power and society but in the kind of countervailing pluralism that underwrites society, the kind of "stifling communalism" in which identities are not freely chosen, social ties are not flexible and instrumental but constrained and hampered by religious-moral bonds. This is the problem-area of the imperial variant of High Islam, not the ideocratic fusion of state, religion and society.

We have then two models, not one, within Islamic civilization; both, however, are problematic from the viewpoint of civil society, though in different ways. In the "caliphal" model, the circle between faith, power and society is kept intact, whereas in the "imperial" model, the link between faith and power is broken, but that between faith and society is kept.

In the contemporary Muslim world, some movements and regimes subscribe to the "caliphal" model, (such as the radical fundamentalist movements, Iran and Saudi Arabia) others to the "imperial" model (with some modification, such as Morocco, Jordan, and Pakistan) and yet others reject both and break the circle between faith, power and society (such as Turkey). In the case of Turkey, for instance, there are competing conceptions of state and society: There is a very large and strong constituency for secular state and civil society; and, while the religious Welfare Party appears to espouse the "imperial" model of secular state and a plural but religious-moral society, there is also a wide array of religous networks and groups which concentrate their energies predominantly on private economic activity. The balance of power among these various constituencies and movements is what requires analysis if we are to understand the potential for the secularization of state and society not only in Turkey but elsewhere in Islamic countries.[21]

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19 Ira Lapidus, "Islam and Modernity", in S.N. Eisenstadt, ed., *Patterns of Modernity*, New York, 1987, pp. 90, 93.

20 Gellner (1994), p. 27.

21 See İlkay Sunar and Binnaz Toprak, "Islam and Politics: The Case of Turkey", *Government and Opposition*, 18/3, (Autumn 1983).

Is Islam Secularizable?

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Among the memorable experiences I have had in recent years was listening to the Chairman of the Anthropology Department at Cambridge University, the eminent theoretician and student of North African Islam, Ernest Gellner, declare Islam inherently unsecularizable. This came in a lecture delivered at Princeton University's Near Eastern Studies Department in the Spring of 1990. The message came through loud and clear: among the world's great historical religions, Islam stands alone - for one reason or another - in being impervious to secularization. At the time, I applauded Gellner's raw assertion for making the implicit explicit once and for all without either beating around the bush or resorting to polite euphemisms. I thought, then, that Gellner did everyone a favour by bringing out into the open (harshly, crudely and bluntly), this widely held and deeply entrenched view both in the West and among Muslims fundamentalist circles everywhere.

Now I would like to submit this assumption to some critical examination from both a historico-theoretical angle as well as from a politico-practical one. But, first, let me point out that though the immediate context in which this issue is being addressed is by and large a "Western" context, it is simply not true that the problem of the secularizability of Islam is either primarily a "Western" question or even a "new" question. The fact of the matter is that this issue, and many others like it, has been on the agenda of modern Arab and Muslim thought and history since about Bonaparte's occupation of Egypt in 1798. It is also the kind of question that Arabs, for example, have been uninterruptedly interrogating themselves about, trying to come to terms with and attempting to settle since at least the last quarter of the 19th century; i.e., since what we Arabs often refer to in our recent past as the Arab Renaissance, the Arab Awakening, the Islamic Reformation, or what the late expert on the period, Albert Hourani, aptly called the "Liberal Age" of Arab thought.

In my attempt to formulate a more realistic answer to the question: Is Islam secularizable? I shall start by raising another question: Was the simple, egalitarian and unadorned Islam of Mecca and Medina (Yatherb) at the time of the Prophet and the first four Rightly-Guided Caliphs (chosen by the then emerging Muslim community as his successors) compatible with the hereditary dynastic kingships of such complex empires, stratified societies and hierarchical polities as Byzantium and Sassanid Persia at the time of the Arab-Muslim conquest of those mighty realms? The accurate answer is twofold: (a) dogmatically No; the two were completely incompatible; (b) historically Yes; the two became very compatible and in an incredibly short period of time. The historical Yes issues, then, in the imperial hereditary Caliphate that lasted through the thick and thin of history until its formal abolition by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk soon after the First World War. The dogmatic No of that same charismatic founding moment issued in Islam's famous historical opposition movements with all the multifarious forms that they eventually assumed. Probably nothing in Islam's early history represents the dogmatic No more pristinely and paradigmatically than the Kharijite armed opposition to the institutionalization of early Muslim rule in the form of a hereditary dynastic caliphate of the imperial sort.

I am using "dogmatic", here, not in its current pejorative sense, but in its classi-

cal meaning of what the community of believers takes to be the correct system of beliefs, i.e., orthodoxy. The early Muslim dogmatists, literalists, purists, scripturalists were absolutely right at the time of the first Arab conquests to insist that nothing in the Muslim orthodoxy of the day could make the Islam of Medina, Mecca and the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs compatible with hereditary monarchy of the imperial kind. But the historicists won the day and prevailed, as we all know. Furthermore, I can confidently assert that, broadly speaking, whenever the dogmatic No in Islamic history - correct as it may have been scripturally and literally in its own time - came in outright conflict with the historical Yes - incorrect and unorthodox as it may have seemed at its own moment - the historical Yes tended to win out and prevail over the dogmatic No. This victory used often to reach the point of completely obliterating and supplanting the purist No of the moment.

To bring this matter nearer to Western readers, I would like to give a European example of what I mean by the historical Yes and dogmatic No. I would regard, for instance, the movement of Monsignor Marcel Lefebvre and his followers in Europe and the United States as an excellent example of the Church's persisting purist dogmatic No to modern times' reigning paradigm of a dynamic, spreading and evolving secular humanism, religious pluralism, mutual tolerance, freedom of conscience, a scientifically based culture and so on. At the same time I would regard the Second Vatican Council, convened by Pope John XXIII, resulting in the Conciliar Church as an equally excellent example of the final triumph of the historical Yes in the life of the Roman Church over that classical dogmatic No.

By the same token, I would argue that the accurate answer to our primary question: Is Islam secularizable? is also twofold: (a) dogmatically, No, it is not secularizable; (b) historically, Yes, it is secularizable. In fact I would contend that without a good grasp of the ups and downs of this on-going Yes to the secularization process of contemporary socio-historical Islam, no explanation of the ferociousness of the current fundamentalist reaction or of the accompanying aggressive resurgence and assertiveness of the dogmatic No all over again, can be regarded as either adequate or satisfactory.

Islam, as a coherent static ideal of eternal and permanently valid principles, is, of course, compatible with nothing other than itself. As such, it is the business of Islam to reject, resist and combat secularism and secularization to the very end - like any other major religion viewed under the aspect of eternity. But Islam as a living dynamic evolving faith, responding to widely differing environments and rapidly shifting historical circumstances, incontrovertibly proved itself highly compatible with all the major types of polities and varied forms of social and economic organization that human history produced and threw up in the lives of peoples and societies: from kingship to republic, from slavery to freedom, from tribe to empire, from ancient city state to modern nation-state. Similarly, Islam as a world-historical religion stretching over fifteen centuries has unquestionably succeeded in implanting itself in a whole variety of societies, a whole multiplicity of cultures, a whole diversity of life-forms, ranging from the tribal-nomadic to the centralized bureaucratic, to the feudal agrarian, to the mercantile-financial, to the capitalist-industrial.

In the light of these palpable historical facts, adaptations and precedents, to declare Islam inherently unsecularizable is over-hasty, biased and premature, to say the least. For, obviously, Islam has had to be very plastic, adaptable, malleable and infinitely reinterpretable to survive and flourish under such contradictory circumstances as referred to above. Thus, to insist a *priori*, *à la* Gellner and Co., that Islam is forever incapable of somehow coming to terms with and adapting to the reigning humanist-secularist paradigm of our times is epistemologically to rush in where angels fear to tread.

In fact I can see some confirmation of this general conclusion coming from the

most unlikely quarter of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Even there, one can detect a kind of left-handed compliment paid to the power of the contemporary historical Yes as against the standard dogmatic No of the purists. Consider, for instance, that the Iranian Ayatollahs, in their moment of victory, did not proceed to restore the Islamic Caliphate - and there was a Shi'i Caliphate in Muslim history - nor did they erect an Imamate or vice-Imamate, but proceeded to establish a republic for the first time in Iran's long history. A republic with popular elections, a constituent assembly, a parliament (where real debates take place), a president, a council of ministers, political factions, a constitution (which is a clone of the 1958 French Constitution), a kind of supreme court and so on, all of which has absolutely nothing to do with Islam as history, orthodoxy and dogma, but everything to do with modern Europe as practices, institutions, political accommodations and governmental arrangements. What makes this phenomenon doubly important is the fact that the Iranian clerics and guardians of Shi'i orthodoxy, dogmatic purity etc., have always been ferocious opponents of Republicanism and republics, denouncing them as absolutely un-Islamic. They successfully frustrated all previous attempts at declaring Iran a republic by earlier reforming rulers in the name of the dogmatic No of orthodox Islam and the rejection of European models, imported institutions, alien political arrangements and so on.

Note also that in spite of the Islamic idiom, the politico-ideological discourses, debates and polemics of the Iranian clerics and guardians of correct belief are substantively dictated by the historical Yes of the present socio-economic-political conjuncture rather than the exigencies of the dogmatic No of orthodoxy. This is why we find the public discourses of Iran's ruling Mullahs dealing not so much with theology, dogma, the Caliphate and/or Imamate, but with economic planning, social reform, re-distribution of wealth, the right to private property as against the right to distributive justice, imperialism, economic dependency, development, the role of the popular masses (as against that of technocratic elites), without forgetting such issues as identity, modernization, authenticity etc. Consider the following words of admonition addressed by a Third World leader to his country's religious schools:

> If you pay no attention to the politics of the imperialists and consider religion to be simply the few topics you are always studying and never go beyond them, then the imperialists will leave you alone. Pray as much as you like: it is your oil they are after - why should they worry about your prayers? They are after our minerals, and want to turn our country into a market for their goods. That is the reason why the puppet governments they have installed prevent us from industrializing, and instead establish only assembly plants and industry that is dependent on the outside world.

These could have been easily the words of such secular leaders of the sixties as President Nasser of Egypt, President Sukarno of Indonesia and/or the very early Fidel Castro of Cuba, but they are in fact the words of Ayatollah Khomeiny himself. Obviously the historical and republican Yes has scored some kind of a victory in Iran against the long standing and officially declared dogmatic No.

Since the question of the secularizability of Islam is really neither a pure matter of the spirit nor the mere clashes of ideas nor of conflicting theological speculations and interpretations, but is an affair of real history, power politics and clashes of material forces, the dialectical opposition and interpenetration of the historical Yes and the dogmatic No tend to work themselves out in human affairs and societies quite violently with all the attendant destructions, dislocations, breakdowns, protracted struggles, creative energies and innovative outcomes. This is attested to historically by the ever recurring inter-Islamic armed conflicts, civil wars, insurrections etc., and at present by the current violence of and against armed insurrectionary fundamentalist Islam, practically everywhere.

To be noted in this connection as well is the fact that in such key countries as Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Algeria, Turkey etc., there is hardly anything in society, econo-

my, polity, culture and law that is run anymore according to Islamic precepts, administered along the lines of Shari'a law or functions in conformity with theological doctrine and/or teachings. Outside the realm of personal status, individual belief and private piety and/or impiety the role of Islam has unquestionably receded to the periphery of public life. In other words, inspect, in any one of those states, the factory, the bank, the market place, the officer corps, the political party, the state apparatuses, the school, the university, the laboratory, the court-house, the arts, the media etc., and you will quickly realize that there is very little religion left in them.

Even in a state like Saudi Arabia where the ruling tribal elite wraps itself so conspicuously in the mantles of strict Muslim orthodoxy, moral purity, bedouin austerity and social uprightness, the contradiction between outward official pretence, on the one hand and the real substance of life on the other, has become so wide, sharp and explosive that those still taking the religious pretences seriously staged the armed insurrection which occupied the Meccan Holy shrine in 1979, shaking the kingdom to its foundations in the process. Their declared goal was no more than rectifying that schizophrenic condition, i.e. putting an end to that ludicrous discrepancy between official ideology and reality by bringing the substance of Saudi life again in strict conformity with religious orthodoxy as officially announced and propounded.

In the above mentioned countries, the modern secular-nationalist calendar, with its new holidays, symbols, monuments, historical sites, battles, heroes, ceremonies and memorial days, has come to fill the public square, relegating in the process the old religious calendar and its landmarks to the margins of public life. This is why the truly radical Muslim fundamentalists complain not so much about the unsecularizability of Islam, but rather about "Islam's eclipse and isolation from life", about "the absence of Islam from all realms of human activity, because it has been reduced to mere prayer, the fast, the pilgrimage and alms giving", about how "Islam faces today the worst ordeal in its existence as a result of materialism, individualism and nationalism", about how "school and university curricula, though not openly critical of religion, effectively subvert the Islamic world-picture and its attendant practices", about how "the history of Islam and the Arabs is written, taught and explained without reference to divine intervention causal or otherwise", about how "modern and nominally Muslim nation-states, though they never declare a separation of State and Mosque, nonetheless subvert Islam as a way of life, as an all-encompassing spiritual and moral order and as a normative integrative force, by practising a more sinister *de facto* form of functional separation of state and religion". Obviously these radical fundamentalists have a superior appreciation, in their own way, of the nature of the modern forces and processes gnawing at the traditional fabric of Muslim societies, cultures and polities, than the social scientists, experts and mainstream Mullahs who keep repeating the formula: "Islam is unsecularizable".

Consequently, these radical insurrectionary Islamists keenly resent the fact that contemporary Islam has gone a long way in the direction of privatization, personalization and even individualization to the point of allowing its basic tenets to turn into optional beliefs, rituals and acts of worship. To reverse this seemingly irreversible trend they literally (and not figuratively) go to war in order to achieve what they call the re-Islamization of currently nominally Muslim societies, cultures and polities.

They resent no less keenly: (a) the extent to which traditional gender hierarchies continue to be destabilized, shaken and altered in contemporary Muslim societies; (b) the slow erosion of the traditional power of males over females accompanying such major social shifts as urbanization, the switch to the nuclear family, the wider education, training and gainful employment of women; (c) the steady growth of competing obligations, opportunities and openings attracting women from strictly traditional roles; (d) the tendency towards greater egalitarian gender relations in marriage and life in general; (e) the reproduction of society, through the socialization of children,

according to norms that they regard as totally un-Islamic. Hence, their anger over the whole feminist issue, their nervous discourses over the Muslim family and its fate, their preoccupation with Muslim socialization of children and their militant demands for such measures as: The reimposition on women, the young and the family in general of the norms of traditional respect, obedience, gender segregation and undivided loyalty to the male head of the household.

It should not escape attention, in this connection, that Muslim countries in general and Arab societies in particular have witnessed, since the end of the last century, an uninterrupted commotion of sharp debates, discussions, polemics, rebuttals, counter-rebuttals and struggles over the gender issue and its ramifications for the family, the role of women in society at large, the socialization of children and the kind of norms according to which society is to reproduce itself. For example, Naguib Mahfouz's trilogy of novels about Cairene life in the first part of this century dates the collapse of the male dominated and dictatorially run traditional Muslim household in Cairo at exactly the moment of Egypt's great revolution against British colonial rule in 1919. The society of Muslim Brothers - the mother of all Islamic fundamentalisms in the Arab World - was founded a few years later as a reaction to the secularizing forces and processes unleashed by that revolution.

I would like to emphasise my general point by the following citation from one of Naguib Mahfouz's articles describing the murky and confused condition of a typical Cairene Muslim struggling willy-nilly with the paradoxes, anomalies and antinomies generated daily by a long-term historical secularization process, glimpsed by most only intermittently and through a glass darkly:

> He leads a contemporary [i.e., "modern"] life. He obeys civil and penal laws of Western origin and is involved in a complex tangle of social and economic transactions and is never certain to what extent these agree with or contradict his Islamic creed. Life carries him along in its current and he forgets his misgivings for a time until one Friday he hears the imam or reads the religious page in one of the papers, and the old misgivings come back with a certain fear. He realizes that in this new society he has been afflicted with a split personality: half of him believes, prays, fasts and makes the pilgrimage. The other half renders his values void in banks and courts and in the streets, even in the cinemas and theaters, perhaps even at home among his family before the television set.

This account feels so genuine and true to the actually lived experience of Muslims everywhere that no *a priori* unsecularizability formula should ever be allowed to obscure it.

As far as the Arab World is concerned, one source of confusion concerning this question of unsecularizability lies, as it seems to me, in the fact that Arab societies never witnessed a high dramatic Kemalist instant where the state is declared from the top secular and officially separate from religion as happened with the emergence of modern Turkey from the ashes of the First World War. This process attained its climactic moment in Mustafa Kemal's famous abolition of the Caliphate in 1924.

Now, to sensitize Western readers to the enormity of Mustafa Kemal's act and the great dismay and shock it spread throughout the Muslim World at the time, all that is needed is a moment's reflection over what would have happened had the triumphant Italian nationalists in 1871, proceeded to abolish the Papacy - after annexing the papal domains to the Italian kingdom - instead of recognizing the Pope's sovereignty over the Vatican City and his spiritual leadership of all Roman Catholics everywhere. We know, of course, that in 1922, Atatürk did toy with the idea of an "Italian" solution to the problem of the Caliphate, but he ended up rejecting all such compromises to cut at the root all future legitimist claims and restorationist movements.

In contrast to the Turkish-Kemalist instance, the secularization process in key Arab societies has been slow, informal, hesitant, adaptive, absorbent, pragmatic, gradualistic, full of halfway houses, partial compromises, transient marriages of con-

venience and plenty of temporary retreats and unending evasions, but no striking moment of high drama. That sort of climactic point could have come to pass - somewhat on the Kemalist model - at the hands of President Nasser of Egypt soon after the nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956 (a heroic and immensely popular act all over the Arab World). But, Nasser never took that step and the real high drama arrived with the reaction to all that in the form of Islamic fundamentalism, revivalism, armed insurrectionary Islam and so on.

Let me note in passing that while Turkey, the core of the old empire, had the sufficient resources, will and fighting power to beat back the invading allies of those days, the much weaker Arab periphery fell easy prey to colonial rule, dismemberment and fragmentation.

The subscribers to the unsecularizability thesis, both East and West, should have received a rude shock from the way in which the Soviet Union collapsed. I mean, here, those who for many years now have been expecting the break up of the "Evil Empire" at the hands of its Muslim people and components. For example, such experts on Soviet Islam as Helene Carrere d'Encausse, Alexander Benningsen and Amir Tahiri have held for a long time that the mortal danger to the Communist Union lay in the unchanging bedrock of the Islamic identity which, they predicted, would one day bring about its demise through some sort of a Muslim revolution, explosion or eruption against the secular and secularizing center. For them, "a Soviet Russian remains a Russian, a Soviet Muslim simply a Muslim". In other words, according to this static identitarian logic a Soviet and/or socialist and/or secular Russian is a historical possibility, while a Soviet and/or socialist and/or secular Muslim is something of a contradiction in terms. For, *Homo-Islamicus* will always revert to type under all circumstances and regardless of the nature and depth of the historical changes he may suffer or undergo.

We all know by now that neither *Homo Islamicus* nor his supposed eternal dogmatic No to secularism had anything to do with the demise of the USSR. The main components of the Union that opposed the center and brought it down were all Christian and in the European part of the empire. And while the minuscule Baltic Republics played the leading role in the break up of the whole system (way out of proportion to their size and strength), the Muslim republics inclined to the last minute in the direction of saving the Communist union. Even after its collapse they did their best to attach themselves to its remnants, in spite of the neighboring models of revolutionary Islam in Iran and of armed insurrectionary Islam in Afghanistan.

The Cultural Underpinning of Civil Society in Islamic Civilization: Islam and Democracy - Bridges Between the Civilizations

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Thinking About Islam and Democracy in a Global Context

Among people with a democratic orientation there exists a consensus on the ideas of civil society and democracy. In recent debates the Kantian concept of "democratic peace" has been forwarded in support of the argument that global democratization is needed as the basis of the world peace aspired to.[1] The basic requirements for democratization and for establishing democratic peace is the promotion of civil society on global grounds.[2] In the course of several international inter-civilizational dialogues between the West and Islam held in Jakarta, Karachi, and Amman many of my Muslim co-religionists joined me in arguing that democracy could build bridges between civilizations. I have been involved in unfolding the argument that the clash of civilizations has not been invented, but rather abused.[3] The history of mankind is a history of different civilizations around which a great variety of local cultures revolves. It is a history both of trenches dividing and of bridges connecting civilizations. In our age of globalization the need for bridges connecting civilizations can be equated with the need for world peace.[4] Peace between Islam and the West in the Mediterranean is a pivotal case in point. There are both avenues for reaching this end and obstacles in its way. It is the aim of this paper to inquire into both of them.

In principle, there exists no dispute over the insight that "civil society is both necessary and important". However, the definition of civil society is disputed among people stemming from different cultures. Civil society "can provide a ballast against the power of the state and permit the existence of channels of public expression in order that society's wishes can be articulated".[5] It is a Western concept not fully shared by peoples of different cultures and civilizations. In fact, the major and cru-

1 Michael E. Browns et al., eds., *Debating the Democratic Peace*, Cambridge/MA, 1996, preface ix-xxxiii and also pp. 157ff. Democratic peace is also the subject of a major research project on "Democracy and Democratization in Asia" at the Université Catholique de Louvain. Prof. Michèle Schmiegelow is the director of this project. The research hypothesis is the Kantian approach that democracies do not wage war against one another. The findings are forthcoming in a book to be published by St. Martin's Press, New York, 1997.

2 Adam Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society*, New York, 1992.

3 See the interviews with Bassam Tibi, The Clash of Civilizations was not invented, but it was used, and abused for other reasons, by Tehmina Ahmed, in *Newsline* (Karachi), November 1995, pp. 9-10. See also the report on Tibi's lectures in Jakarta by Patrick Walters: "West, Islam Clash on Human Rights, Democracy", *The Australian*, April 1, 1995. Further: Ali Satan, "Huntington'ın 'Medeniyetler Çatışması'na Bassam Tibi'den Alternatif: Uluslararası Ahlak", *Aksiyon*, 22-28 April 1995, pp. 16-17.

4 Bassam Tibi, *Krieg der Zivilisationen: Politik und Religion zwischen Vernunft und Fundamentalismus*, Hamburg, 1995.

5 Heather Deegan, *Third Worlds: The Politics of the Middle East and Africa*, London and New York, 1996, see pp. 38ff on civil society.

cial difficulty is this very Western origin of the concept. From this follows the criticism that civil society is nothing but an effort to transplant a Western democratic concept into non-Western civilizations. In our age of the politicization of religions to the extent of creating religious anti-Western fundamentalisms,[6] democracy and civil society are considered to be "solutions imported from the West" and thus condemned. This is the qualification formulated as an invective by the leading Muslim fundamentalist Yusuf al-Qaradawi.[7]

In talking about civil society and democracy while still remaining honest and acknowledging the Western origin of these concepts, we cannot escape the observation that there is no global common way of thinking and no universal history in and through which people can unite. However, globalization has contributed to transforming world history into global history.[8] The question to be asked is: Does this global history lead to establishing the needed cultural underpinning for democracy and civil society in societies which regard these Western concepts as alien? I agree with David Held that the new networks of communication and information technology stimulate new societal forms but they equally rekindle and intensify old and parochial ones. "Globalization in the domains of communication and information is far from creating a sense of common purpose ... Hence the political and cultural obstacles ... remain formidable. But while few could seriously doubt the nature of these obstacles, their meaning should not be overstated, either."[9] The call for a de-Westernization of the world is an important articulation of these cultural obstacles. My basic argument in this paper is that only a cross-cultural, not a universalistic approach could contribute to overcoming these obstacles. The unfolding of the needed cultural underpinning of civil society in Islamic civilization is the substance of an effort toward democratization.

The point of departure of this presentation is our world's reality of the simultaneity of structural globalization and cultural fragmentation. This simultaneity is the hallmark of our age, in particular of the present crucial historical period at the turn to the new millennium. By the formula employed I address the fact that the globe is shrinking in terms of interaction and mutual awareness through networking on structural grounds, without, however, the creation of a unity of outlook concerning systems of government, concepts of peace and options for the future of humanity. There exist global structures, but no global order for a civil society shared by all civilizations. The corollary of this statement is that different civilizations need to establish bridges between one another in the pursuit of world peace. My basic contention is that democracy and civil society are the needed bridges.

Some exponents of Political Islam argue that "democracy is an import from the West to the world of Islam" and thus dismiss it as one of the so-called "*al-hulul al-mustawradah*/imported solutions" (see note 7). In my view, an open-minded interpretation of Islam and of our holy scripture smoothes the way to embracing democracy by our Islamic civilization. In the following presentation I want to elaborate on this approach, and support it both with arguments and evidence.

To state that democracy has Greek origins sounds like the reminiscence of traditional wisdom. To say that Islam and democracy are at odds and to support this statement by referring to the non-Islamic sources of democratic thought sounds like an anti-Islamic prejudice. Not surprisingly, this statement comes from some pivotal

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6 Martin Marty and Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Observed*, Chicago, 1991; and Bassam Tibi, *Der religiöse Fundamentalismus*, Mannheim, 1996.

7 Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *al-Hulul al-mustawradah* (The Imported Solutions), new printing, Beirut, 1980.

8 See the chapter by Wolf Schäfer in: Bruce Mazlish and Ralph Boultjens, eds., *Conceptualizing Global History*, Boulder/Col., 1993, pp. 47-69.

9 David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance*, Stanford, 1995, pp. 281-82.

exponents of Political Islam.[10] Students of Islamic heritage and history are, however, familiar with the extremely positive attitudes of Muslim philosophers vis-à-vis the Greek legacy in the classical age of Islam. Aristotle was named by these philosophers the "*Mu'allim al-Awwal*/The First Master", whereas the most significant Muslim philosopher, al-Farabi, was ranked as *al-Mu'allim al-Thani*, only second to Aristotle.[11] In giving the top ranking in Islamic intellectual history to a non-Muslim, Muslim thinkers have proven how open-minded and how flexible Islam originally was.[12]

In view of this remarkable Islamic historical background it sounds strange to read the following statement by one of the most preeminent exponents in Political Islam, the late Abu al-A'la al-Maududi. In his book "Islam and Modern Civilization" Maududi expresses his conviction as follows:

> I tell you, my fellow Muslims, frankly: Democracy is in contradiction with your belief ... Islam, in which you believe, ... is utterly different from this dreadful system ... There can be no reconciliation between Islam and democracy, not even in minor issues, because they contradict one another in all terms. Where this system (of democracy) exists we consider Islam to be absent. When Islam comes to power there is no place for this system.[13]

As a liberal Muslim I place my thoughts in the philosophical tradition of classical Islamic rationalism. Within this framework, I am inclined to ask: Is this alleged incompatibility of Islam and democratic civil society correct? I then wonder, why are Islam and democracy described as being at odds to such an extent? Given the intellectual openmindedness of Islam as an assumption on which my point of departure is based, the quoted sharp rebuff of democracy in the name of Islam seems to me very questionable.

It is true, in terms of *Iman*/belief there exists only one Islam shared by all Muslims. In Islamic history there were, however, many different approaches to understanding Islam and thus varying schools of thought. What school of thought in contemporary Islam is reflected in the quoted statement by Maududi? Clearly Political Islam. There is, however, an alternative, a true synthesis between Islam and the concept of democratic civil society. My contention is that the concept of civil society can be presented on Islamic grounds.

At the very outset of this inquiry it is essential to make clear the distinction between the interpretation of Islam as a religious belief and Political Islam (see note 10). To be sure, Islam is both a basis for a variety of local cultures and for one all-encompassing civilization around which these cultures rally in terms of world-view. Now, the contention adverse to democracy, namely that Islam is a specific system of government opposed to democratic rule, is a quite recent one. For instance, the fundamentalist term *Nizam Islami*/Islamic system occurs neither in the Qur'an nor in the *Hadith*/tradition of the prophet. It follows that this term provided by Political Islam is not an authentic Islamic concept. It is most important to draw a clear distinction between these two totally different understandings of Islam in further advancing the argument that Islam and democracy are not at odds, as suggested by Maududi.

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10 For an enlightened Islamic criticism see M. Said al-Ashmawi, *al-Islam al-siyasi* (Political Islam), Cairo, 1987. For recent studies on this subject, see Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam*, London, 1991; and Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, Cambridge/MA, 1994.

11 On al-Farabi, see Chapter 4 in Bassam Tibi, *Der wahre Imam: Der Islam von Mohammed bis zur Gegenwart*, München, 1996, pp. 133-50.

12 See the most recent record of this Islamic heritage: *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy: Essay in Honor of Mushin Mahdi*, ed. by Charles E. Butterworth, Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs, Cambridge/MA, 1992.

13 Abu al-A'la al-Maududi, *al-Islam wa al-madaniyya al-haditha* (Islam and Modern Civilization), reprint Cairo, no date, pp. 41-42. On these views of Maududi see also Muhammad Dharif, *al-Islam al-siyasi fi al-watan al-'Arabi* (Political Islam in the Arab World), Casablanca, 1992, pp. 98-99; and Youssef Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, Boston 1990, pp. 93ff.

The Grounds of the Inquiry

The assumption of compatibility or incompatibility is in each case related to the point of view from which Islam is regarded. The argument that classical Islam was able to embrace Greek philosophy with very few problems smoothes the way for a favorable debate on Islam and democracy. At first glance, we may ask whether or not the question can be asked at all in such a general manner.

To begin with: In the world of Islam there exists a great variety of local cultures, each united by ethical standards related to similar norms and values, as well as by a corresponding world-view. The Islamic unity in terms of a common *Weltanschauung* and diversity in terms of local cultures can be considered as Islamic civilization. It is true that there are dividing lines between the world's civilizations (see note 4). The reason for the clash between the West and the world of Islam lies in the fact that both claim universality for their world-view and the related concept of order. Given, however, that people who belong to divergent civilizations share the very essence of belonging to one humanity, there must be a common core of ethical values that can unite humanity for the sake of peace in our world. In my view, the concepts of democracy and civil society are the core issues in this international morality.[14]

Our present post-Cold War world is characterized by the rise of ethnic nationalisms and religious fundamentalisms in all regions of the world and its major religions (see note 6). Unfortunately the politicization of all religions emphasizes the dividing lines within humanity (see note 4). The vision of a world in dignity and peace embraces the concept of a global order based on civil society. In my introductory remarks I alluded to democratic peace, i.e. that democracies do not wage war against one another. Basically, democracies resolve their conflicts peacefully through negotiations (see notes 1 and 9). In the light of this argument, world peace among divergent civilizations requires this envisaged ethical convergence on the grounds of accepting civil society as the basis of a global order. The underpinning needs to be cross-cultural, not universalistic. To question universalism and to honor cultural pluralism is not the same as endorsing cultural relativism. There are limits of pluralism due to the fact that neo-absolutisms and relativism[15] tend to clash and so endanger world peace. Inversely, a cross-cultural, i.e. universal consensus on democracy and civil society provides the grounds for establishing world peace. European relativism and fundamentalist neo-absolutisms must inevitably clash, whereas an enlightened interpretation of Islam and European modernity could come to terms.[16] Civil society is a pivotal concept of this very cultural modernity (see note 2).

Despite the given assertions, postmodern politics result in division. By emphasizing heterogeneity and incommensurability cultural relativism undermines the needed bridges between competing world civilizations. The notion of a united humanity goes beyond relativism in stressing that a shared international morality essentially requires the universality of a shared ethical core. It is a precondition for world peace between civilizations that a global order of democratic civil societies is ethically agreed upon and institutionally upheld by all the participating parties (see note 9). Viewed in this manner, the clash of civilizations seems to be, as the Belgian expert on democracy in Asia, Michèle Schmiegelow, rightly argues, "a

14 See the following contributions to the Arab debate on this subject: Center for Arab Unity Studies, ed., *al-Demoqratiyya wa huquq al-insan*, Beirut, 1983; idem, ed., *Azmat al-demoqratiyya fi al-watan al-Arabi*, Beirut, 1984 (see my contribution in the latter volume on pp. 73-87). See my later research on this subject: Bassam Tibi, "Democracy and Democratization in Islam - The Quest for Islamic Enlightenment", *Universitas*, 36, (1994), 4, pp. 244-254. French version, "Democratie et Democratisation en Islam", *Revue Internationale de Politique Comparée*, vol. 2, (1995), issue 2. See also Bassam Tibi, "Islamic Law/Shari'a, Human Rights, Universal Morality and International Relations", *Human Rights Quarterly*, 16, 2 (May 1994), pp. 277-299.

15 See the proceedings of the Erasmus Ascension Symposium, *The Limits of Pluralism: Neo-Absolutisms and Relativism*, Praemium Erasmianum Foundation, Amsterdam, 1994.

16 An example of such an interpretation is Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity*, Chicago, 1982.

clash between fundamentalists of all denominations" (on her project, see note 1). In clearly and distinctly distinguishing between Islam as a religious belief and fundamentalism as a political ideology, we may then ask: Where is the place of Islam in the envisaged synthesis with democracy and civil society? I maintain that an open-minded interpretation of Islam could lead to the full-hearted embrace of democracy. Thus, I distinguish between "Open Islam" and its enemies, the fundamentalists.

Between *Asalah*/Authenticity and Learning From Other Civilizations: How to Adopt "Civil Society"?

The concept of civil society is based on the premise that social and political institutions in a society are autonomous; they are linked to the state, but not controlled by it nor subjected to it. Thus, the institutional division between civil society and the state authority is essential in determining whether or not a society is a civil society. It is unfortunate that the requirements of a civil society have always been missing throughout the World of Islam. There never existed a division of powers nor institutions lying beyond the reach of the rulers. The Islamic concept of politics revolves around the qualification of the ruler as an *Imam*.[17] The late Muslim Oxford scholar Hamid Enayat argues, "the absence of independent political thought in Islamic history" has led to politics rarely being studied in isolation from religious disciplines. As he continues, the result has been that traditional Islamic scholars failed to deal with "problems such as the nature of the state, the varieties of government, the qualification of rulers, and limitations of their power. The rights of the ruled were discussed as a part of the comprehensive treatises of jurisprudence and theology ... It was only under the trauma of European ... encroachments ... that Muslim élites started to write separate works on specifically political topics".[18] In my research (see note 17) I found that the focus of traditional Islamic treatises was on the eligibility of the ruler to be an *Imam 'Adil*/Just Ruler in contrast to *Imam Ja'ir*/Despotic Ruler. In other words: the reasoning on institutions of state and society that guarantee just order, such as civil society, is missing. These findings lead to the conclusion that an Islamic theory of civil society is required for the establishment of an authentic cultural underpinning. Democracy and democratization are not only needed but also possible in the World of Islam. In fact, some distinguished efforts have been taken in this direction, namely by the renowned Egyptian social scientist Saad Eddin Ibrahim, who has contributed to making the Arabic term *al-mujtama' al-madani* a politically and culturally established equivalent for the Western term "civil society".[19]

I believe the concept of civil society can be embedded in Islamic thought on the basis of an "Open Islam". Underlying the contention that Islam could accommodate the concept of civil society is the fact that Islam has - apart from its own rich achievements - a historical record of interaction with and learning from other civilizations.[20] The hub of Islamic civilization is located in West Asia, i.e. the region that Europeans place ethnocentrically in their own geopolitics as the Near and Middle East. Islam is also a basic religion in South and Southeast Asia. The secular state of India has hitherto successfully demonstrated that Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus, as well as others, can share the secular citizenship of the same state while living peacefully within its territory. India, however, provides an illustration of how fundamentalism -in both its

17 See Tibi (1996) (referred to in note 11 above).

18 Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, Austin/Texas, 1982, p. 3.

19 See, among many other publications, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, *al-Mujtama' al-Madani wa al-tahawul al-demoqrati fi al-watan al-'Arabi* (Civil Society and the Democratic Transformation in the Arab World), Ibn Khaldun Center Cairo, 1993 (annual report). See also the bulletin of the Ibn Khaldun Center: *al-Mujtama' al-Madani/Civil Society* (bilingual), published in Cairo.

20 The authoritative history of Islamic civilization is Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, 3 vols., Chicago, 1974.

Hindu and Islamic varieties- is today a threat to that peace, with anti-Islamic oriented Hindu-fundamentalism as the source of this threat. On the other hand, the insistence of some Muslim leaders on the implementation of the *Shari'a* does anything but promote harmony with the Hindus.[21] India is a model for the peaceful coexistence of peoples belonging to diverse civilizations under democracy as the common umbrella, but India is also a model for the "coming anarchy" and the "new Cold War" between politicized religions[22] in our crisis-ridden world. Indonesia is another case of an Asian country where an enlightened and tolerant Islam currently seems to embrace democracy, while providing an institutional guarantee of inter-ethnic and religious peace between the existing five divergent religious communities. Given that Indonesia, with a population of 193 million, constitutes not only the largest Islamic nation in Asia but in the entire world, the Indonesian model could be particularly significant for other Muslims.[23] In this context the question can be asked whether the favorable conditions for democratization in Indonesia can serve as a model that generates demonstrative effects throughout Islamic civilization, i.e. also for West Asia as the center of Islamic civilization. It remains to be hoped that the Indonesian model, despite all its limitations, can affect the experience with democracy in other parts of the Islamic civilization. In this paper, however, my focus will be on the Arab world as the cultural center of the world of Islam.

The search for an accepted frame of reference compatible with liberal Islamic views constitutes my point of departure. In view of the fact that democracy is a recent addition to the political concepts of Islam we need to inquire into the Islamic awareness of this novelty.[24] Muslims have encountered this utterly new concept in the context of globalization and through the exposure of their own civilization to cultural modernity.[25]

Early Arab Muslim liberals were at pains to embrace democracy and to reconcile it with Islam. The first Muslim Imam, leading Muslim students in Europe, Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi, expressed his deep admiration of French democratic culture. He was to witness the July revolution in Paris in 1830 and was impressed to see the representatives of the toppled regime being granted basic human rights after their arrest. For Tahtawi this was evidence -as he says- of "how civilized the French are and how closely their state is bound to justice".[26] Early Muslim modernists and reformists were critical of Europe on account of the colonial incursion into the Islamic homelands. They nevertheless continued their efforts at a reconciliation of Islam with cultural modernity. In the Islamic liberalism of Muhammad Abduh and others in the early twentieth century, democracy was at the top of the agenda of Muslim thinkers. The reasoning of Abbas Mahmud al-Aqqad[27] led the way. In a recent work, the Turkish sociologist Fatma Müge Göçek has shown that the Western ideas adopted in the Ottoman period also included the concept of democracy, and thus indirectly civil society.[28]

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21 See Bassam Tibi, "Islam, Hinduism and the Limited Secularity in India", in W.A.R. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld, eds., *Muslims in the Margin*, Kampen/Netherlands, 1996, pp. 130-44.

22 Robert Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy", in *The Atlantic Monthly*, 273, 2 (February 1994), pp. 44-76. See also Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*, Berkeley, 1993.

23 Bassam Tibi, "Vom Werden eines neuen muslimischen Zentrums in Südostasien: Indonesien als Modell für die islamische Zivilisation", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 27, 1995, pp. 10-11.

24 See note 14; and John Esposito and John Voll, *Islam and Democracy*, New York, 1996.

25 See Abdulmajid Sharfi, *al-Islam wa al-hadatha*, Tunis, 1991. I use the notion of cultural modernity in line with Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Cambridge/MA, 1987.

26 Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi, *Takhlis al-ibriz ila talkhis Paris (1834)*, new printing Cairo, no date, see the German translation of Tahtawi's Paris diary, ed. by Karl Stowasser, *Ein Muslim entdeckt Europa*, München, 1989, p. 223.

27 'Abbas Mahmud al-' Aqqad, *al-Demoqratiyya fi al-Islam* (Democracy in Islam), Cairo, 1952.

28 Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of the Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change*, New York, 1996, pp. 118-22.

At the present day, enlightened Muslims are able to draw on their own history to find a historical record of their process of learning from other civilizations. Islamic rationalism of the medieval period was in fact a synthesis of the Greek legacy and Islamic civilization (see notes 11 and 12). One has to bear in mind that this Islamic rationalism was one of the major sources of inspiration for the European Renaissance and thus one of the main pillars of cultural modernity. It can further be argued that this very modernity is the major source of democracy. Again, the Renaissance is among its initial sources and this very same legacy grew from the interaction between Islam and Europe. As the Berkeley scholar Leslie Lipson puts it:

> Aristotle crept back into Europe by the side door. His return was due to the Arabs, who had become acquainted with Greek thinkers ... The main source of Europe's inspiration shifted...[29]

An earlier encounter predates the above-mentioned cultural interaction. In the course of the Hellenization of Islam medieval Muslim philosophers adopted rational Greek philosophy and Islamized it in the form of a synthesis.[30]

It is unfortunate that the Greek legacy transmitted to Europe by Muslim philosophers vanished in the world of Islam itself. Some historians point to this fact as an explanation of the ensuing decline in Islamic civilization.

In modern times early Muslim liberals were at pains to resume the vanished Islamic enlightenment in coming to terms with democracy and adopting its norms and values in an Islamic context. As the late Oxford Muslim scholar Hamid Enayat puts it, their failure was caused not so much "by conceptual incoherence as by absence of specific social and economic formations". In continuing this line of reasoning, Enayat argues that the major internal obstacles are: "educational backwardness, widespread illiteracy, and the prevalence of servile habits of thinking and blind submission to authority." There are, however, he continues, external obstacles as well. These are related to "the reluctance of the United States and some West European powers to adjust themselves to the realities of the post-colonial era".[31] The late Hamid Enayat emphasizes this while acknowledging that the West, despite all its lip service, has not been favorable to the process of democratization in the world of Islam. Enayat died before being able to observe the West's behavior in the post-Gulf War developments as further evidence for his argument.

There are many Islamic countries with a record of democratization in the early postcolonial period. The rise of one-party authoritarian regimes marked the end of democratization. Recently there were some remarkable signs of electoral democratization in Algeria, Jordan, Egypt, and Morocco.[32]

Before I move to a more detailed discussion of the available openings for the establishment of a cultural underpinning for civil society in synthesizing Islam and democracy in a tradition of enlightenment, I should like to quote some views by representatives of Political Islam. As I pointed out in my introductory remarks, this stream in Islamic civilization argues against democracy. There, I have cited the late Pakistani Abu al-A'la al-Maududi as arguing that Islam and democracy were at odds. Another authority is the late Egyptian Sayyid Qutb. He supports the assertion of such a contradiction and views the conflict on a global scale:

> After the end of democracy in a state of bankruptcy the West has nothing to give to humanity.[33]

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29 Leslie Lipson, *The Ethical Crises of Civilization*, London, 1993, p. 63.

30 See Chapter 4 in Tibi (1996) (referred to in note 11).

31 Enayat (1982) (referred to in note 18), p. 138f.

32 See the surveys in Ellis Goldberg et al., eds., *Rules and Rights in the Middle East: Democracy, Law and Society*, Seattle and London, 1993.

33 Sayyid Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-tariq* (Signs on the Road), 13th legal printing, Cairo, 1989, p. 5.

Following the legacy left by Maududi and Qutb, Yusuf al-Qaradawi is one of the most influential writers of Political Islam in our time. He invented the already quoted formula "*al-Hall al-Islami*/The Islamic Solution" versus "*al-Hulul al-Mustawradah*/The Imported Solutions". al-Qaradawi places democracy at the top of the "imported solutions" which he dismisses. al-Qaradawi tells his readers: "Democracy is a Greek term which means the government of the people" and then continues that "democratic liberalism entered the life of Muslims through the impact of colonialism. It has been the most dangerous result of the colonial legacy."[34] As the reader notices, al-Qaradawi's dismissal of the Greek legacy deliberately withholds the positive record of Hellenism in the heritage of classical Islam. My consent to a synthesis of Islam and democracy as the cultural underpinning for a civil society is based on this very record of cultural borrowing and exchange.

The rejection of democracy by representatives of Political Islam is based on the idea of popular sovereignty. Are these really authentic Islamic political views? Is it true that Islam and democracy are "in contradiction in all respects", as Maududi contends? And last but not least: Why cannot contemporary Muslims vie with their ancestors at the height of classical Islam in learning from others? Islam and Islamic history teach us that there is no contradiction between authenticity and learning from others in the search of cultural patterns in our age of globalization. Our Prophet prescribed: "*Utlubu al-'ilm wa lau fi al-Sin*/Seek for knowledge even in China". The Prophet well knew that China did not belong to the world of Islam.

Toward a Synthesis of Islam and Democracy

On an ethical level there are many theoretical affinities between Islam and democracy. On this level I deem it possible to find features common to Islamic civilization and the other civilizations in the pursuit of the requisite international morality and democratic peace. I share the view of the late Oxford Muslim scholar Hamid Enayat that it is "neither ... inordinately difficult nor illegitimate to derive a list of democratic rights and liberties" from Islamic sources "given a fair degree of exegetical talent".[35] Thus the contention earlier cited, i.e. that Islam and democracy are at odds, does not hold. To be sure, I have liberal and open-minded Islam, not the ideology of Islamism in mind. Thus, my procedure is radically different from the one pursued by Esposito and Voll.[36] In the name of Muslim-Christian understanding these two American scholars of Islam end up legitimizing Islamic fundamentalism.

Islamic fundamentalists confuse civil society with the Islamic state. In fact, the concept of an "Islamic state" does not exist in the Islamic sources. Besides the reference to the holy scripture there are also historical facts that run counter to the ideology of an "Islamic state", i.e. to the pattern presented by Political Islam as an alternative to the democratic state. Students of Islam who are familiar with Islamic *Shari'a* law know that there are four Islamic traditions related to the Hanafi, Shafi'i, Hanbali, and Maliki legal schools. In their respective traditions of law-making, these *Madhahib* never entrusted the state with the implementation of *Shari'a*. As Hamid Enayat puts it, in Islamic history the *Shari'a* "was never implemented as an integral system."[37]

The goal of "Rethinking Islam"[38] is an adaptation of religious doctrine to changed historical realities. Rethinking Islam involves, as I argue in one of my books, a cultural accommodation to social change, not simply a conformism in a pragmatic man-

34 al-Qaradawi (1980) (refer to note 7), p. 50f.

35 Enayat (1982), p. 131.

36 Esposito and Voll (1996) (referred to in note 24), p. 126.

37 Enayat (1982), p. 131.

38 Mohammed Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*, Boulder/Col., 1994.

ner.[39] With regard to democracy, the repeatedly quoted Islamic scholar Hamid Enayat makes the point:

> What is blatantly missing ... is an adaptation of either the ethical and legal precepts of Islam or the attitudes and institutions of traditional society to democracy. This is obviously a much more complex and challenging task than the mere reformulation of democratic principles in Islamic idioms. It is because of this neglect that the hopes of evolving a coherent theory of democracy appropriate to an Islamic context have remained largely unfulfilled.[40]

In reiterating my conviction that it is not only possible to avoid a conflict between Islam and the concept of a democratic civil society, but also to develop a synthesis between both of them, I should like to conclude this paper by stating that the need of Muslims for a "coherent theory of democracy appropriate to an Islamic context"[41] is not restricted to the interests of Islamic civilization. In our contemporary world, fast shrinking to a global village, there is an overall need for an ethical core of political values shared by humanity.as a whole. The universal acceptance of civil society on cross-cultural grounds is the basis for democratic peace and a global order of democracy (see notes 1 and 9). Democracy and civil society are part and parcel of modernity and are among the basic bridges between civilizations under the conditions of the simultaneity of structural globalization and cultural fragmentation. I believe that an open-minded comprehension of Islam would enable us to contribute to this goal in the pursuit of democratic world peace. In contrast, the political ideology of Islamic fundamentalism does not provide a real opening for embracing cultural modernity by Muslims.[42]

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39 Bassam Tibi, *Islam and the Cultural Accommodation of Social Change*, Boulder/Col., 1991 (2nd printing).

40 Enayat (1982), (referred to in note 18), p. 135.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 135.

42 See Bassam Tibi, "The Worldview of Sunni Arab Fundamentalists", in Martin Marty and Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms and Society*, Chicago, 1993, pp. 73-102; and also Bassam Tibi, "Fundamentalism", in Seymour M. Lipset, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Democracy*, 4 vols., here vol. 2, Washington D.C., 1995, pp. 507-10.

From Taliban to Erbakan: The Case of Islam, Civil Society and Democracy

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I

Religion is a system of beliefs, rituals, and practices which deal with the "sacred," the "metaphysical," the "eternal," the "otherworldly," and the "absolute." Even when a religion deals with the "this worldly," it is for the ultimate service of the "otherworldly." Religions, of course, vary in many ways and in many aspects, but they nearly all have the above features in common. Being "sacred" and "absolute" is what made it difficult in the past for a religion to tolerate or coexist with another in the same community or polity. One's sacred and absolute truth set a real or symbolic boundary with the other's sacred and absolute truth. If taken too seriously and passionately, such boundaries could become flaming and bloody. History is full of tragic tales of religious wars and sectarian strife, especially in Europe - the last examples of which can still be seen in Ireland and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

By the same token, being sacred and absolute makes it equally difficult for people who take religion too seriously and passionately to tolerate another worldly system of ideas or beliefs which claims similar qualities to their own - i.e. other man-made dogmatic ideologies such as Marxism. Again, modern history is replete with tragic tales of conflict among religious and non-religious, but equally dogmatic ideologies. It is the exclusive nature of such belief systems which implies the negation of the different Other.

Democracy, on the other hand, starts off from the very exact opposite pole, i.e. inclusion of all human beings of the community as equals regardless of their religion, race or creed. Whatever definition of democracy one opts for, it ultimately revolves around the peaceful management of "differences." Accepting the different Other - i.e. religious-wise, class-wise, interest-wise, gender-wise, ethnic-wise - is what political and legal equality is all about. Equality before the law is a necessary condition for democracy. Democracy may be looked at as a system of managing differences among legal-political equals, to attain their optimum well-being. Such differences are managed in accordance with a set of rules agreed upon by those different equals. Though not as sacred as religious commandments, the rules of the democratic game are to be respected by all players. Unlike religious commandments, the rules of the democratic game (constitutions and laws) can be changed and/or amended. Thus all the fundamentals of democracy are both "worldly" (i.e. formulated by humans for humans on earth) and "relativistic" (time, culturally and politically bound).

The inclusive worldly and relativistic nature of democracy places it in potential conflict with any dogma which claims monopoly of an absolute Truth, including religious dogma. This actual or potential conflict is what led to the separation between the "state" and the "church" in the early democracies of the West. Later democracies

have followed suit. Such a separation is neither a total divorce nor a hostile coexistence. Rather it has been a mutual respect for the autonomy of each other's sphere in regulating human affairs. Depending on a given society's pre-democratic history, the relationship between religion and politics is classifiable into modalities - ranging from working harmoniously together to being totally oblivious of each other. In either case, the religious dogma is toned down and the passions accompanying them are cooled off. One way of doing so is through the re-interpretation, selection or reformulation of sacred texts. The famous saying attributed to Jesus Christ, "What is to Caesar must go to Caesar, and what is to God must remain to God," is a case in point. The "what" was never defined by Jesus; and has remained open-ended ever since! It is the epitome of such a selective reinterpretation which backs up the principle of separation of state and religion.

II

As usual, the problematic of such separation is more complex and dramatic during periods of socio-political transition. In this respect non-Western societies are going through transitions similar to or more severe than those their Western counterparts went through a few centuries earlier. During such a transition one encounters spokesmen of a certain religion giving their own idealized, simplistic but often attractive interpretation of sacred texts to suit the needs, deprivations and aspirations of the marginalized and powerless - e.g. the "Pie-in-the-sky or restoring the Paradise Lost" idioms. We shall demonstrate that all religions, especially Islam, lend themselves to diverse interpretations when it comes to politics and governance. Prevailing socio- economic conditions make one of these interpretations more acceptable than the others. As an illustration, let us start with a page of Western history.

On February 25, 1534, in the German town of Munster, Anabaptist zealots staged an armed uprising and installed a radical dictatorship. All who refused to undergo rebaptism into the new faith were driven from the city without food or belongings during a snowstorm. The new regime impounded all food, money, valuables and cancelled all debts. Mobs burned the financial records of all local merchants. The houses of the fleeing well-to-do were assigned to the poor. Former beggars capered in the streets, decked in plundered finery. The religious positions of the new regime were equally radical. Under the new moral order it imposed, all books other than the Bible were burned. All "sins," including swearing, backbiting, complaining, and disobedience, were to be punished by instant execution. Soon the regime instituted polygamy. Unmarried women were ordered to marry the first man who asked them - and forty-nine women were executed and their bodies hacked into quarters for failing to comply. Before long, however, the outside world reacted. Munster was soon besieged by an army of mercenaries recruited by its bishop, who had escaped . Surrounded and cut off, the city was thrown into growing confusion.

Then, out of the rebel ranks, there arose a new and absolute leader - John Bockelson, who assumed the name of John of Leyden and claimed to have been appointed by God to be king of the last days. A "this-worldly" rebellion now became firmly "other-worldly." The rebels did not need to win victory over their temporal rulers, for all was now in the hands of God in these days before the Last Judgment, announced by John of Leyden to be coming before Easter 1535. Anyone in Munster who opposed or expressed doubt on this prophecy was executed. On June 24, 1535, the bishop's troops made a surprise assault in the night and took the city. John of Leyden was arrested. Over the next few months, he was led in chains from town to town, and in January 1536 taken back to Munster, where he was tor-

tured to death with hot red irons in front of a large crowd. His body was put in an iron cage and suspended from the church tower. The cage still hangs there today.[1]

At the time, there was nothing very unusual about the rebellion in Munster, or its taking the form of a religious movement. Similar events were commonplace in Europe, especially in the growing commercial towns. The few decades preceding and following the Munster episode were replete with intense "worldly" discontent, shrouded in religious discourse and conflict. A quick glance at the annals of the first half of the sixteenth century would substantiate this proposition. Eighteen years before the Munster uprising Sir Thomas More had written his *Utopia* (1516). A year later (1517), in protest against the sale of "indulgences," Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the door of Palast Church in Wittenberg, beginning the famous Reformation. Actually, by the time of the Munster rebellion, Martin Luther had completed the first translation of the Bible into German, and two years later he completed his *Table Talks* (1536). Two years after the execution of John of Leyden, Calvin was expelled from Geneva and settled in Strasbourg (1538). In 1542, Pope Paul III established the Inquisition in Rome, and a year later the first Protestants were burned at the stake in Spain (1543). In 1544, Pope Paul III called a general council at Trent. The Council met a year later (1545), to discuss Reformation and Counter-Reformation.

This was a period of great transformations ushered in by dramatic geographic explorations, scientific discoveries, and sprouting capitalism. By the time of the Munster uprising, the Americas had been discovered (1492). Some 25 universities had been founded all over Europe. The printing press had already turned out some 10 million copies of published books in various European languages. Before the mid-sixteenth century, Religious Reformation and Counter-Reformation would sweep over Germany, France, Switzerland, England, Scotland, Poland, Spain and Sweden.

An examination of sixteenth century Europe in retrospect is very helpful in understanding what is happening in the Arab Muslim world in the late twentieth century. The so-called Islamic revival is as much an expression of "worldly" concern as it is a religious quest for "other-worldly" salvation.

The seizure of the Grand Mosque of Mecca at the end of 1979 by a group of Muslim zealots led by a young man, Juhiman al-Outiabi, resembles in many ways the Munster rebellion. The leader and his followers were all in their twenties and early thirties. They were of Bedouin tribal origin, newcomers to the rapid urbanizing centers of Saudi Arabia. In their youthful life time they had already witnessed the profound, but confusing socio-economic transformation of their country, resulting from the oil boom. In the ten years preceding their rebellion, Saudi Arabia had doubled its total population, tripled its urban population, and increased its financial wealth tenfold. There were as many expatriates as native Saudis in the country. The expatriates poured into the country in unprecedented numbers, especially after 1973. They came from many lands as distant as Korea, Australia, Scandinavia, and America. While the Saudis may have become accustomed to Arabs and Muslims coming in for the pilgrimage, the oil-boom's waves of expatriates had nothing or very little in common with the native Saudis. Different in language, religion and life-style, the expatriates were running much of the economic life of Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the sudden wealth from skyrocketing oil prices was not being equitably distributed, nor was political power equitably shared. In those years estrangement or alienation of the Saudis in their own country was growing as rapidly as the oil wealth. Like youth everywhere, young Saudis, especially those with some education, felt the brunt of such estrangement more than others. With restricted participation in socio-economic life because of their limited skills and lack of training for the modern institutions then

1 Abridged from a full account in, Stark, Rodney and Williams Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985.

being built; and with no opportunity of political participation under the autocratic Saudi regime, long allied with the religious monopoly of the Wahabbi establishment, young Juhiman al-Outiabi and his fellow zealots must have felt the same way as John of Leyden had done four and a half centuries earlier. The end results were much the same. The Grand Mosque of Mecca was soon besieged by Saudi government troops. The required pronouncements of condemnation were quickly issued by Sheikh Ben-Baz, the head of the Wahabbi religious establishment. However, unable to dissuade the rebels to surrender and with the Saudi troops unable to storm the Grand Mosque, the Saudi regime called on French mercenaries to do the job. Several of the zealot Brothers were killed in the process. The others were arrested, quickly tried and beheaded. Ultimately the uprising was crushed and the whole incident ended in three weeks.

Although somewhat different in detail, similar episodes took place in Egypt in 1974 and 1977, in Tunisia just a few months prior to the Grand Mosque seizure (1979), and in Tehran at nearly the same time.

The latest of such episodes is still unfolding in Afghanistan at the time of writing (Nov. 1996). Young zealots under the name of Taliban, led by Mulla Mohammed Omar, swept across most of Afghanistan earlier in the year; and finally captured the capital Kabul in September 1996. Literally for students of Islamic studies, Taliban have risen from the ashes of the devastation caused by the ten-year protracted war waged by the Afghani Mujahideen against Soviet occupation and its client Communist government (1980-1990) and the five years of bitter civil war between the various factions of the victorious Mujahideen themselves, in their struggle for power.

Initially, most war-weary Afghanis welcomed the Taliban, who looked young, self-denying and idealistic. Their swift early victories over some Mujahideen "war-lords" was a welcome sign that God (Allah) must be blessing these new "Cinderella-like" heroes. Many Afghanis thought that at long last their country was soon to be saved and civil peace would be restored, but as soon as the Taliban seized the Capital, declared themselves the "legitimate" government and obtained recognition from their big neighbour Pakistan, they began to show a different face. To many Afghanis, especially women, it was an ugly and horrifying face. In a manner not too dissimilar from John of Leyden's Annapabtists in 1534, the Taliban's Mulla Omar ordered all women to stay at home, forbade them to work or go to school outside their homes, and if they ventured into any public space ordered them to be completely covered from "head to toe" . The Taliban ordered all males above 15 years of age to grow full beards within one month and to wear "Islamic attire." All of these and other commandments were issued in the name of "Islam;" and violators were to be punished on the spot. To show that they meant "business," upon capturing the Capital, Taliban disregarded the sanctity of the UN compound, forced their way in, arrested a former president of Afghanistan (Najeebullah) who had taken refuge there, hanged him in the main public square and left his body hanging for two days.

The zealots in all the above and similar episodes in history have more points of resemblance than of difference, despite their religious affiliations (e.g. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, etc.). The zealots in all of them were not the poorest of the poor, nor were they misfits or the scum of the earth. They were all young and among the relatively better educated in their societies. They were all new-comers to the big city who had come from tribal and rural origins. Like their counterparts in Munster, their tocsin was against "king and pope". In the Arab-Muslim world, that means repressive political regimes and the allied religious establishment. The counter weapon of the discontented zealots is invariably a combination of the political and the religious.

III

More than Christianity and other religions, Islam has the character of a mobilizing political weapon. In its precepts and dicta, Islam is as much a "worldly" as an "other-worldly" religion. In the latter, it promises a glorious life on earth to the believers who adhere to its teachings in letter and spirit. Hence the battle cry of today's activists, "Islam is the Solution." The idealized history which Muslims learn in school and hear about in the mosque has a simple uni-dimensional message: Islam in the days of the Prophet Mohammed and the Guided Caliphs (610-661) enabled Muslims to be virtuous, just, prosperous, and strong. The true believers conquered the world and built the greatest civilization humanity had ever known.

Young Muslims are told in schools that the normative dimensions of Islamic teachings are second to none. Right from the start, Islam educated its adherents to accept differences among human beings. The Holy Qur'an addressed the believer unequivocally.

> O Mankind! We (God) created you from a single pair of a male and a female; and made you into peoples and tribes, that ye may be acquainted with each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous among you... (Hujurat or the Inner Apartments: 13)
>
> If thy Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind One Nation: but they will still differ. (Hud or the Prophet Hud: 118).
>
> Among His (God's) Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages (tongues) and your colors... (Rum, or the Roman Empire: 22)

The above verses spoke about multi-culturalism more eloquently and unequivocally than any twentieth century UN or European document of a similar nature. In more than hundred places in the Holy Qur'an, we encounter clear and detailed verses teaching and preaching the norms, values and virtues that are now considered essential for civil society.

On freedom of religious belief, the Holy Qur'an is no less unequivocal. The following verses suffice.

> Ye may believe in it (the Qur'an) or not ... (Bani Israel: 107)
>
> Say, 'The Truth is From your Lord': Let him who will, Believe, and let him Who will reject (it). (Kahf: 29)
>
> Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out Clear from Error. (Baqara or the Heifer: 256)
>
> If it had been thy Lord's Will, They would all have believed, All who are on Earth! Wilt thou then compel mankind, Against their will to believe! (Yunus, or Jonah: 99)
>
> Therefore do thou give Admonition, for thou art One to admonish. Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs. But if any turn away And reject God, God will punish him With a mighty Punishment. For to Us will be Their return; Then it will be for Us To call them to account. (Gashiya, or the Overwhelming Event: 21-26).

This last verse lays down the Islamic principle of religious co-existence and tolerance. God freed the Prophet and all Muslims from the trap of fruitless debate on who has the monopoly over religious Truth. The duty of the Faithful is to advocate, but not to admonish or coerce. It is only God who can, and will hold people accountable in the thereafter in matters of belief (and deeds). This same belief is repeated over and over again. Addressing the Prophet God Commands,

> If they do wrangle with thee, Say: 'God Knows best What it is ye are doing.' God will judge between you on the Day of Judgment Concerning the matters in which Ye differ. (Hajj or The Pilgrimage: 68-69)

Equally, the Qur'an adjoins the Prophet and the Faithful to be always gentle in addressing, discussing, or arguing with others in general, and Peoples of the Book (Jews and Christians) in particular,

Speak fair to people (Baqara, or the Heifer: 83)

Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them, In ways that are best And most gracious: For thy Lord knoweth best, Who have strayed from His Path, And who receive guidance. (Nahl, or the Bee: 125)

We can give a whole series of examples to illustrate this aspect of Islam's respect of differences and its advocacy of a peaceful and civilized manner of dealing with diversity. But this may in fact be said of nearly all great religions. The question remains: how seriously have Muslims taken their Glorious Commandments? For that we turn to some pages of Muslims socio-political history.

The first Muslim state of Medina set up by the Prophet Mohammed and his four Guided Caliphs (successors) lasted for only forty years (A.D. 622-661). For the following fourteen centuries, the imagination of successive generations of Muslims has been stirred by the purified and glorious tales of those four decades. The history of Muslims since A.D. 661 is full of religo-social movements in quest for the "paradise lost." Not all such movements have succeeded in seizing power; and none has managed to restore the "paradise lost." The political successes, the rise of dynasties, the religious failures and the fall of those dynasties, have always sown the seeds of new religo-social movements.

Ibn Khaldoun (1332/723 - 1406/808), the great Arab social thinker, noted the periodicity of such movements and the pre-requisites of success in seizing political power and establishing dynasties of their own. According to him, it is always a combination of an "*asabiya*" (*esprit de corp*) and a "religious mission". *Asabiya*, a primordial form of solidarity, often embodied in a strong tribe or a tribal coalition, provides the motive power of political-military success. The religious mission provides the spiritual *raison d'être* and legitimacy for success. To put it in other terms, every new movement has to provide an alternative "king and pope" for a decaying "king and pope". The last literal manifestations of the Khaldounian paradigm were to be seen the nineteenth century Saudi-Wahabbi movement in the Arabian Peninsula, the Sanusi movement in North Africa and the Mahadist movement in the Sudan.

In Khaldounian times (the 14th century), the would-be "tribe-religious movement" was often initiated in the hinterland, at a point inaccessible from the seat of political power. That hinterland was known in the times of Ibn Khaldoun as "*bilad al-Siba*" or the unruly country - in contrast to "*bilad al-Maghzin*" or the orderly and tax-paying country. As the central power weakened, the *Siba* country expanded and advanced closer to the capital until the right moment arrived for the *coup de grace* against a decaying ruling elite. A new "tribe-dynasty," legitimated and empowered by a religious vision, takes over the mission of restoring restoring the "Islamic paradise lost". The rest of the cycle unfolds over three to four generations (about 100 years), until another *Siba* hinterland tribe and another religious vision coalesce into a new movement.

IV

This elegant Khaldounian paradigm accounted for much, if not all, of medieval Arab-Muslim history. Since the late 18th century, with the various socio-cultural changes and growing integration into a world system, the paradigm no longer accounts for the march of modern Arab-Muslim history. But some of its internal logic may still be operative. The mobilizing power of an Islamic vision in quest of the "paradise lost" still appeals to the marginals, the relatively deprived, and the powerless.

In this century, the "tribe" alone may no longer be a viable organizational base for a religio-social movement. Although in the recent Yemeni elections (1993) and

civil war (1994) we note an alliance between the Hashid Tribe and the Islamic *Islah* (Reform) Party, a year later, the same alliance would march with modern North Yemeni army units to expel the South Yemeni ruling elite and consolidate their hold on the whole of Yemen. More often, however, it is now an "under-class" which substitutes for the tribe in fuelling religo-social movements in the Arab-Muslim world. Algeria and Egypt are striking cases in point. In both, one-party populist regimes ruled for thirty to forty years before they were forcefully challenged by sprouting Islamic movements.

Initially, the single-party populist regimes had attractive visions of their own. Their visions promised tremendous worldly rewards: consolidation of newly gained independence, rapid development, economic prosperity, social justice, and cultural authenticity. Though not quite a paradise on earth, the populist vision promised something very close to it. There were implicit conditions, however, for delivering on the populist promises: the "masses" were to work hard without demanding liberal political participation. With no previous firm traditions of participatory governance anyhow, this populist trade-off formula seemed acceptable to the vast majority. For the first decade or two, the populist social contract seemed to be working. Remarkable expansion in education, industrialization, health and other service provisions were effected. With these real gains, a new middle class (NMC) and a modern working class (MWC) grew steadily under state tutelage.

However, there were unintended adverse consequences of the populist policies: rapid growth of population, urbanization, and bureaucratization. In the first twenty years of Algeria's populist regime (1962-1982), its population had doubled, its urbanization tripled, and its bureaucracy quadrupled. In Egypt, it took slightly longer - about 27 to 30 years for all the above to occur. By the third decade of populist rule, the regimes in both countries were no longer able to effectively manage either their society or their state. A new socio-economic formation rapidly grew. For lack of a better term, this could be descried as the Marxist "urban lumpen proletariat" (ULP). With high expectations, but little or no employable skills, capital, or civic norms, the swarming millions of rural newcomers to the cities made up the ULP. They crowded the older city quarters or more often created their own new slum areas. Called "*bidonvilles*" in Algeria and "*ashwaiyat*" in Egypt, these densely overpopulated slum areas were to become the late twentieth century equivalent of the Khaldounian "*Siba*". Their human content is proving to be the most flammable materials in Arab-Muslim societies today. In Egypt and Algeria they constitute between 25 and 35% of the total population. Its youth is an easy prey to manipulation by demagogues, organized criminals, *agents provocateurs*, and Islamic activists.

Other compounding factors have made the situation even worse for the populist regimes. The lower rungs of the new middle class have been steadily alienated as a result of dwindling opportunities for employment or upward socio-political mobility. They began a mass desertion - in the 1970s in Egypt, and in the 1980s in Algeria. From their ranks, Islamic activists and other dissidents were to sprout. They were to manipulate the ULP of the new "*Siba*" in staging their challenge vis-a-vis the now aging and decaying populist ruling elite.

To use the Khaldounian analogy, a typical armed confrontation between an Islamic activists-led new "*Siba*" and the Egyptian state (new *maghazin*) took place in December 1992. According to official sources, some 700 shanty areas (*ashwaiyat*) had sprung up in or around Egypt's major urban centers over the previous two decades (1970-1990). At present (1995) their total population is estimated to be between 10 and 12 millions. Western Munira (WM) is one of them. Located on the north-western edge of Imbaba in Greater Cairo, it is less than three kilometers across the Nile from the aristocratic upper class district of Zamalek (the residential area of most *maghazin* elite). With an area of two square kilometers, i.e. less than one-fifth

of the territorial size of Zamalek, WM has nearly one million dwellers, ten times the population of Zamalek. With nearly fifty times the density of Zamalek, at the time of the 1992 confrontation, dwellers of WM had neither schools, hospitals, sewage system, public transportation nor police station within walking distance. For many years, WM represented a "Hobbesian world" run by thugs, criminals, drug dealers and infested with every known vice. With no state presence, WM was also used as a hide-out for many Islamic militants on the run. In the late 1980s, one of them, Sheikh Gaber felt safe enough to operate in the open. He preached and recruited several followers; and in a very short time, he emerged as a "community leader." He began to weed out the vice barons, impose order, veil women, arrange marriages, and collect "taxes." The Egyptian state took no note of him until a Reuters reporter filed a story with the provocative title, "Sheikh Gaber, the President of the Republic of Imbaba." Angered and embarrassed, the Egyptian authorities ordered the Reuters reporter out of the country and staged an armed expedition to arrest Sheikh Gaber. According to official sources, some 12,000 armed security forces laid siege to WM, then stormed the place. The operation lasted for three weeks before Sheikh Gaber and 600 of his followers were killed, wounded, or arrested.

Similar confrontations have been frequent in both Egypt and Algeria since 1991. The casualty toll has escalated in Egypt from 96 in 1991 to 322 in 1992, to 1106 in 1993 - i.e. a more than ten-fold increase in three years. In 1994 and 1995, however, the number of casualties decreased to about 700. In Algeria, the toll has rapidly been escalating: from less than 1,000 in 1992, to about 10,000 in 1993, to about 20,000 in 1994. In April 1995,[2] the Algerian Minister of the Interior (Mr. A. Mezian Sherif), announced that the total number of casualties had exceeded 30,000 and material losses had amounted to over US $2.2 billions in three years (January 1992 to January 1995). According to him, this amount of money, was more than enough to build 400,000 housing units - i.e. for more than 2.4 million people. A war of attrition has been the order of the day in both countries. It is a war between an Islamic-led new "*Siba*" and a semi-authoritarian state timidly trying to democratize.

The profile comparisons between typical challenger militants and the challenged populist rulers are stark. Of equal or superior formal education, an Islamic militant is at least forty years younger. Nearly 90 percent of those militants arrested or killed in armed confrontations with the Algerian state in the last four years (1992-1996) were born after independence (1962) - i.e. after the present populist regime came to power.

Some of Egypt's militants who were recently arrested, tried and sentenced to death were under 18 years old - i.e. they were born after President Mubarak came to power (as vice-president in 1975), and after the beginning of the uninterrupted tenure of at least four of his present cabinet members (i.e. since their appointment in 1977).

Not only did the populist authoritarian regimes fail to renew their ranks by an infusion of new blood and new ideas, but worse, for a long time they repressed other orderly social forces and prevented them from sharing the public space. The middle and upper rungs of the middle class, both men and women, have not been allowed a sufficient margin of freedom to create and participate in autonomous civil society organizations. Had such a civil society been in place during the period of withdrawal of the populist state (the 1970s and 1980s), both Egypt and Algeria could have withered the militant Islamic-led new *Siba* storm. Egypt has stood practically still in its process of timid democratization since the early 1980s. Algeria rushed clumsily into it in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, the situation in both countries could be markedly improved, as we shall shortly see.

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2 Quoted in *Al-Ahram* (Cairo Arabic Daily), April 8, 1995.

V

Surprisingly, what Michael Hudgson calls the "modernizing monarchies" of the Arab-Muslim world have been better able to wither the Islamic-led *Siba* storms. Though different in many ways from their populist neighbours, Arab modernizing monarchies in Morocco and Jordan faced similar socio-economic structural problems during the 1980s - e.g. growing population, urbanization, bureaucratization, huge external debt, and shrinking state resource base. They had their share of urban lumpen proletariat, ULP (new *Siba*) and food rioting in the 1980s, but instead of resorting to repression, the two monarchs have carefully engineered a gradual and orderly democratization. They initiated public debates on governance and constitutional issues in which all political forces participated. A "national pact" or a "new social contract" was implicitly or explicitly formulated. Municipal and parliamentary elections were held, with a marked degree of fairness. The secular opposition in Morocco and the Islamic forces in Jordan won an impressive number of seats. Women were elected for national parliaments for the first time in both countries.

Morocco and Jordan are not, and may not for some time to come, be constitutional monarchies. Nor are there any illusions about their participatory experiments of government soon becoming a Westminster-style democracy. But their socio-political march in the last decade has been far more orderly than that of Algeria and Egypt. There has been no politically motivated violence, killing, or rioting in either country. Islamic militancy hardly exists in Morocco, and is fairly tamed or under complete control in Jordan.

In Kuwait (1992), Lebanon (1992), and Yemen (1993) Islamists participated in parliamentary elections. They came second in Kuwait and Yemen; and had an impressive showing in winning several of the seats assigned to both Shiite and Sunni Muslims in Lebanon.

Even in Egypt, though not officially recognized as a legal party, the Muslim Brothers (MB) ran for parliamentary elections under the banner of other parties, in 1984 (with the *Wafd*) and 1987 (with the Labor Socialist Party). In both elections, the MB won several seats and came out in third place among nine contending parties.

Beyond the Arab world, Islamists have regularly run for elections in Pakistan (120 million), Bangladesh (120 million) and Turkey (60 million) since the 1980s. In Indonesia, Malaysia and the Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union, Islamists have been peacefully engaging in local and municipal politics; and are petitioning for recognition and expansion of pluralistic politics on the national level. It is important to note that in three of the biggest Muslim countries (Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Turkey) women have recently been elected to the top executive office in the land, which dispels any illusion of a built-in anti-democratic or anti-feminist component. As a matter of fact, in Turkey the most religious Islamic Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP) and the most secular True Path Party have recently (July 1996) formed a coalition government. It is also noteworthy that Islamically-based parties in both Pakistan and Bangladesh have appealed to no more than 10 per cent of the electorate. In the uncontestably fair and honest elections in Turkey, the religious RP won only slightly above one-fifth of the popular vote in the December 1995 parliamentary elections. The important thing in all these recent examples is that Islamic parties have accepted the rules of the democratic game and are playing it peacefully and in an orderly manner.

RP's leader Necmettin Erbakan is currently the prime minister of Turkey. His rise to the top executive position in Turkey must be noted as one of the most important developments in the Muslim World, which extends from Indonesia in the east to Morocco in the west. This vast geographic spread with a population of 1.2 billion in more than 60 Muslim countries was recently described as the "Arch of crisis."

Erbakan, however, holds out a promise of escape from such "crises." He has patiently and deliberately advocated the compatibility of Islam and Western-type democracy. Erbakan and his followers, in the Salvation Party of the 1970s and Welfare Party since the 1980s, have impressed the otherwise secularized Turks that there is no inherent contradiction between Islam and secularism, if the latter is taken to mean separation of the state and the "religious establishment" (i.e. Islamic theologians or clergy). Erbakan himself is a modern educated engineer, who believes that Islam contains moral and social commandments which could be adapted and incorporated in the "body-politic" in order to provide better government. He asked fellow Turks to try Islamic RP first as executives in the municipalities. A sizable plurality responded by electing RP's to the mayorships of multi-million Istanbul, Ankara, and other major cities in 1994. A year later, after a decent performance in the municipal governments, more Turks voted for RP than for any other Turkish party. Erbakan contrasts sharply with the Taliban. They represent the extreme end of the Islamic continuum in the 1990s.

There are a number of lessons to be drawn from the contrasting cases of Afghanistan, Algeria and Egypt on one hand, and Turkey, Jordan, and Kuwait on the other, with the rest of the Muslim world somewhere in between. These lessons also serve to elucidate the intricate relations between religion and politics in general and that of Islam in particular.

First, political Islam has grown and spread in the last two decades as an idiom of protest against repression, social injustice, the hardening of the political arteries and the threat to collective identity. Its radicalism is commensurate with the degree to which these ills are felt or perceived by the young educated lower middle class Muslims. Political Islam has not been the only vision to appeal to these young Muslims. They have responded strongly to other secular visions in the course of this century - e.g. Arab nationalism, Turkish nationalism, inter-war liberalism and socialism.

Second, despite their initial radical messages and/or actions, Islamic militants are tamable through accommodative politics of inclusion. Running for office, or once in it, they recognize the complexities of the real world and the need for gradualism and toleration. "Worldly" concerns increasingly encroach upon the "other-worldly" in their consciousness, language, and actions. The Islamists of Iran are a case in point. Starting out as a "pro-natalist party", Iran's Islamic Revolution is now feverishly pursuing an "anti-natalist" population policy. In this respect, Islamic activists are no different from their Chinese Communist counterparts. Recognizing that their ideological rhetoric led to a rapid population increase which undermined their other socio-economic policies, they were willing to alter course by one hundred and eighty degrees.

Third, people in Muslim societies, like people everywhere, may give new visions and promised solutions a chance when the old ones fail, but, at the end of the day, they judge the new ones by their concrete results. The Islamists in Jordan lost one-third of the number of seats between the 1989 and 1993 elections. Despite the majority of seats won in the last aborted parliamentary elections, Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) lost one million votes between 1990 and 1991. In both Jordan and Algeria, the initial flare of the "Islamic Alternative" lost some of its radiance once Islamists were tried in office. On the contrary, in Turkey the Islamic Welfare Party has been gaining steadily in national parliamentary elections, doubling its popular vote from less than 10 percent to more than 20 percent between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s. This surge of popularity is due to its impressive performance in running large urban municipalities (e.g. Istanbul and Izmir). The slum areas around the major Turkish cities could have led to similar bloody confrontations as those of Algeria and Egypt.

Fourth, peoples of the Muslim world have increasingly been integrated in the international system. The radical Islamists among them can not ignore this fact. Even their anti-Western rhetoric is an idiom of protest against other worldly grievances. Once fairly or equitably addressed, cooperation becomes not only possible, but also desirable. In this respect, Islamic radicals are no different from their nationalist counterparts of an earlier generation. The problem of the Muslim peoples with the West resembles their problems with their own repressive corrupt regimes. Not only does the legacy of Western colonialism lurk in the Muslims' collective memory but it is easily invoked with every contemporary Western act or policy which smacks of double standards. Recently, the reaction of the West to the massacres of Muslims by non-Muslims in marketplaces in Bosnia, mosques in Palestine or civilian refugee camps in Lebanon (Qana, April 1996) seemed muted at best. The Western pressure on Arab and Muslim countries to agree to an unlimited Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) without asking their arch enemy Israel to do the same is to them a blatant example of double standards. Equally, Algeria's short-lived experiment with pluralistic politics was a test of whether Islam could be reconciled with democracy. But it was as much a test of whether the West could be reconciled with Muslim democracy. The West has long been on the best of terms with Muslim despots - e.g. Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, Shah of Iran, and Pakistan's Zia'ul-Haq. Once these inconsistencies are seriously and credibly addressed, not only militant Islamists, but most of the Arab-Muslim people would have no legitimate misgivings vis-a-vis the West.

Fifth, as a thoughtful Western observer recently noted, Islamic societies now find themselves in the opening rounds of what the West went through in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in redefining both the relationship between God and Man, between individual human beings and between themselves and the state.[3] We believe that Muslim societies will emerge from this process more rational and more democratic. The process, however, could be much shorter and less costly if the West lent an honest hand on the side of democratic forces. The West has recently been interfering militarily in the affairs of Muslim societies - from Libya to Somalia, and from the Gulf to Kurdistan. It has been doing so as much economically - directly or through the IMF - World Bank prescribed structural adjustment policies. The West is yet to do the same politically for democracy. Even if it brings into office some radical Islamists, they would soon lose either their "radicalism" or "Islamism." Muslims everywhere have taken note that the Islamic Afghani Mujahideen are fighting each other for worldly gains (power); as their counterparts had previously done in post Shah Iran. Muslims recognize that the Islamists are not saints. But they may be less devilish than their present old repressive rulers.[4]

I conclude with a plea to continue to engage in a serious disaggregation of the complex processes now unfolding in various regions of the world, with religion and politics at its center.

It is a renewed plea for the rehabilitation of the concepts of cultural diversity and the practice of "cultural relativism" as a requisite for the "bridging" not the "clashing" of civilizations. Let's remember that for every John of Leyden there are more Christian Democrats; and for every Taliban militant there are more Erbakans, i.e. Muslim Democrats. Boundaries will exist as long as human groups continue to exist. But they need not be hostile boundaries. We neither need another "Great Wall of China" nor another "Berlin Wall." Neither stood the test of time. Their remnants in

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3 Wright, Robin. "Islam, Democracy, and the West." *Foreign Affairs*. Summer 1992, pp. 131-145, see p. 133.

4 See the results of a recent multi-country survey in the Muslim World, Pollock, David and Elaine El-Assal, eds., *In the Eye of the Beholder: Muslim and Non-Muslim Views of Islam, Islamic Politics, and Each Other*. Washington D.C., Office of Research and Media Reaction, U.S. Information Agency, August 1995.

China and Germany are now mere tourist attractions. Let us hope that Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations?" will turn out to be not a self-fulfilling prophecy but a mere intellectual tourist attraction.

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Beyond Civil Society: Democratic Experiences and Their Relevance to the "Middle East"

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In current discourse, civil society is mainly a normative concept. As such it has a number of attractive features: a plurality of autonomous groups and associations; public institutions of culture and communication; privacy for individual choices and pursuits; a system of general rights demarcating plurality, privacy, and publicity from the state, perhaps also from the economy.[1]

The Limitations of Goodness

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

This ideological character is indicated by the important role that the Polish opposition in 1976-1989 has played for the resurgence of the concept. While this was correctly portrayed as a conflict between the rulers of the state and forces rooted in society, the invocation of civil society as a descriptive, analytical or prognostic concept hid the social dynamic of the 1976-89 conflict and had nothing adequate to say about the issues and tendencies in the autumn of 1989 and after: the extraordinary amalgam of straightforward workers struggles for the maintenance of heavy food subsidies, a firmly entrenched and militant Catholic Church, domestic socialist dissidence, and gradually imported liberalism, held together by nationalist anti-communism, a persistent economic crisis, which had generated the conflict and was constantly reproduced by the latter, and almost universal international support, even glorification.

In at least one respect, this impressive social force constituted the opposite of a civil society in a normative sense: there was little discussion of how to tackle major public issues, such as the economic crisis. In the autumn of 1989, the answer was given by a small team of economists, who, hidden from all, had prepared a blueprint, running counter to all the socio-economic demands of the opposition, as late as in June 1989. The economic apparatuses of the state was now in their hands. That was the so-called shock therapy.

The merits or demerits of the latter are not at issue here. Only that the Polish

1 See further J. Cohen and A. Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, Cambridge Mass., 1992, ch. 8; here the Swedish translation, Göteborg, 1995, has been used; E. Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty. Civil Society and Its Rivals*, London, 1994.

experience, one interpretation of which gave the normative discourse on civil society an enormous push, illustrates well some of the pitfalls of civil society discourse: its neglect or even hiding of economics, its abstract idealization of social and political conflict lines, its lack of interest in and its implicit or explicit denial of the importance of historical institutions.

In political science, the discussion of civil society has been given an extra push by a beautiful study of Italian politics, Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work* (Princeton University Press 1993). Putnam's central variable is "civic engagement", "civic community" or "civic tradition", rather than civil society, but the two largely overlap. The former refers to horizontal interpersonal networks in society, "like neighbourhood associations, choral societies, cooperatives, sports clubs, mass-based parties and the like" (p.173). Such networks, together with the norm of reciprocity, generate trust in society.

Putnam's object of study was Italian regional government, and he was out to explain the vast differences in performance of the regional polities set up in 1970. (Performance covers a vast range of indicators, innovativeness and comprehensiveness of legislation, effectiveness of spending, responsiveness to citizens' demands etc.) His explanation is that the enormous differences between northern and southern Italy derive from different civic traditions, from their strength in the north and their weakness in the south, traditions he traces back to early twelfth century.

Putnam's is a very interesting piece of work, which well deserves the attention it has got. However, just because of its excellence, we can also see the limitations of civil society approaches for an understanding of the problems of democracy.

In the Italian case, civic or civil society traditions are of little help in getting at the issue of dictatorship versus democracy. After all, Italian Fascism rose, developed and grew strong in the civic Po valley in the North.

Nor are democratic governments deeply embedded in civic networks always the best performers. In several comparative public policy studies, France, notorious for the weakness of its civil society,[2] comes out as having the most effective government, being most likely to end up on target. A recent study of the budget process in the (then) twelve members of the EU in 1992 re-confirms this.

The French were outstanding in keeping their public budget, then followed, at a distance, by UK, Germany, Netherlands, and Denmark. A last year's extra stiffening of the Swedish budget process leaves Sweden in 1996 on par with the UK, but still with the French target out of reach.[3]

Northwestern Europe is the part of the world with the highest density of voluntary associations. In 1990-91 a good 80 per cent of the adult population belonged to at least one in Scandinavia and in the Netherlands, about two thirds in West Germany, and a good half in Britain. In Latin Europe only a third report such membership. The Dutch-Scandinavian figure is clearly higher than the North American, where de Tocqueville first noticed the importance of associations. City-republics maybe apart, the Northwestern European pattern is old, with a free, early literate Protestant peasantry taking part in parish and judicial affairs.[4]

This did not lead to any very early democratic or even "civil" development, though. Sweden got freedom of religion only in 1860, and electoral participation was both very restricted and low among those qualified. The Swedish electoral turnout in 1875 was almost exactly the same as that in Japan in 1890. The first elections with

2 See further G. Therborn, *European Modernity and Beyond. The Trajectory of European Societies 1945-2000*, London, 1995, pp. 306ff and 331n.

3 The study and its Swedish follow-up are reported in *Svenska Dagbladet*, 28.8.1996, p. 13.

4 G. Therborn, "The Right to Vote and the Four World Routes to/through Modernity", in R. Torstendahl ed., *State Theory and State History*, London, 1992; idem. (1995), pp. 306ff.

virtually universal male suffrage took place in 1911 only, and a democratic parliamentary government followed only upon the revolution in Berlin in 1918.[5]

Communist East Germany had a very developed civil society or set of civic networks in Putnam's sense, well in tune with the rest of Germanic Europe. Angling organized 528,000 people in 1988, out of a total population of 16.7 million, the Urania society for the diffusion of scientific knowledge comprised 417,000 members, the Red Cross 701,000, the association of gardeners and of breeders of small animals rallied 1.488 million, and Popular Solidarity (an organization of social work and of charity) enrolled 2.1 million members and had 200,000 unpaid helpers.[6] This impressive civility does not alter the fact that the East German Communist state was dictatorial and repressive, in fact more so than many other states of Eastern European Communism.

Other things being equal, civil society is a good thing. But few things are equal in this world. The civil society discourse - with its focus on networks and communication, on associations and public spheres - is similar to culturalism - the analysis of societies and polities primarily in terms of religious or other value systems -, in the fact that both bracket out power relations and contingencies. Both the latter, however, are crucial, I would argue, to the rise and fall of democratic and of non-democratic regimes.[7] In so far as the norm of civil society corresponds to reality it is good ground for a democratic polity. But democracy is doomed neither to instability nor to failure in the absence of much of a civil society in the classical European and in the current European sense.

The observation by Mahmood Mamdani on the African discussion is well worth paying attention to: "The current African discourse on civil society resembles an earlier on socialism. It is more programmatic than analytical, more ideological than historical".[8] And, from the side of the programmatical, Cohen and Arato are at pains to emphasize that the concept, as it is currently used, and the current discourse on civil society belong to a "post-Marxist intellectual world and political culture".[9] Whatever the value of that world, it is not synonymous with the problematic of democracy, which is my concern here.

By way of summary, there are three major analytical flaws in the usual conceptualizations of civil society. First, there is an assumption or a postulate of a predefined, pre-constituted equality among the members. In dealings with the empirical world, this means a tendency to ignore, nay even to veil or to hide social inequalities, of class, race/ethnicity/citizenship, gender etc.

Secondly, as a normative concept, it is a-historical, little concerned with historical paths, institutions, trends, and (dis)continuities. On empirical terrain, therefore, the conceptualization has lent itself very easily to unreflected and unwarranted extrapolations in time and space.

Finally, civil society theorizing is uninterested in any specific intra-political dynamics, assuming that the state versus society is the only significant cleavage and conflict line. This entails turning a blind eye to intra-state and to inter-state conflicts, as well as to societal cleavages. From the history of democracy we know, however, that such specific political conflicts and considerations have often been crucial.

While not disputing that a civil society is a good society, those of us who are con-

5 G. Therborn, "The Rule of Capital and the Rise of Democracy", *New Left Review*, 103, 1977; Therborn (1992).

6 Therborn (1995), p. 325.

7 This argument runs exactly contrary to Gellner's, to whom, "Because it highlights those institutional preconditions and the necessary historical contexts, 'Civil Society' is probably a better, more illuminating slogan than 'democracy' " (Gellner [1994], p. 189). In spite of his references to Islam, and its non-secularized *umma*, Gellner's circumscribed by the lookout from Prague Castle.

8 M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, Princeton, 1996, p. 13.

9 Cohen and Arato (1992), p. 78.

cerning with understanding, explaining, and changing the actually existing world had better not stay inside the golden cage of current intellectual fashion. The issues of democratization had better be approached from other angles. The rest of this paper will touch upon one alternative.

Modernity, Democracy, and Civil Society

Modernity, I have found, had better be defined culturally, rather than in terms of concrete institutions, as an *epoch turned to the future*, conceived as likely to be different from and possibly better than the present and the past.[10] The contrast between the past and the future directs modernity's "semantics of time",[11] or constitutes its "binary code". The present is "valid only by the potentialities of the future, as the matrix of the future".[12] The coming of modernity, then, is tantamount to the discovery of the future, of an open this-worldly future, that is. This modern perspective differs both from the past-oriented Golden Age-with subsequent-decline one and from cyclical conceptions of history, like that of Ibn Khaldoun, for instance.

The second half of the eigteenth century appears as the period of the definite victory of Modernity in Western Europe, with important vanguard forays in Francis Bacon's view of learning in early 17th century and in the French late 17th century aesthetic "*querelle des anciens et des modernes*". The rapid growth of commerce, the rise of industry, the scientific breakthroughs and the French Revolution constitute no doubt the setting for this change. For all their creativity, the Renaissance and the Reformation, on the other hand, had their eyes on a golden past.

Modernity has been entered into in very different ways. As a starting-point we shall use a global distinction of four major routes to and through modernity found in a study of the development of modern political rights.[13] The four routes, are actually existing historical trajectories. But they may also be treated as Weberian ideal types, wherewith concrete historical experiences might include aspects of two or more ideal routes.

The distinction starts from the location of the forces for and against modernity, for progress or ancient customs, for reason or for the wisdom of forefathers and of ancient texts, once the issue came up.

Civil Society and European Modernity.

In the case of *Europe* both modernity and anti-modernity were internal, endogenous. The cultural endogeneity of European modernity should be distinguished from the external expansion and overseas plunder and primitive accumulation which accompanied the rise of modernity in Europe and which affected the internal balance of European forces.

The endogeneity of modernity in Europe explains the particular European pattern of internal revolutions, of *civil war*, for and against (forms of) modernity. Because of the culturally and politically interlinked European state system, these civil wars could also take the form of interstate ideological wars, such as the wars in the wake of the French Revolution, and the Fascist-Antifascist war of 1939-45 prepared for in the 1930s.

Part of the European way consisted also of elaborate doctrinal isms, ranging from Legitimism and Absolutism to Socialism and Communism, via Nationalism, Ultramontanism and Liberalism. These internal cleavages of Europe either derived from or were overlayered with conflicts of *class*. The debate still goes on about the

10 See further, Therborn (1992) and (1995).

11 Cf. N. Luthmann, *Soziologie des Risikos*, Berlin, 1991, p. 46.

12 R. Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, Cambridge Mass., 1968, p. 73.

13 G. Therborn, "The Right to Vote and the Four Routes to/through Modernity", pp. 62-92 in R. Torstendahl, ed., *State Theory and State History*, London, 1992.

class or alternative origins and meanings of the great European revolutions,[14] hardly about the involvement and the consequence of class conflict. Class is a concept of internal division, and its importance to European modernity followed in part from the intra-European cleavages for and against modernity, in part from the relative weakness of kinship. Later, class was sustained by the unique significance which industrial capitalism and its polarized division of labour acquired along the European route through modernity.

Civil society is a pre-modern concept, going back to Aristotle and his theory of *Politics*, denoting a society of citizens. It should be stressed that there is no straight continuity between ancient and modern democracy in Europe, but the notion of civil society highlights interesting connections between then and now nevertheless.

One is the self-centered, inward-looking character of it, which came to fit very well with the internal struggles for and against modernity, and for and against a state of citizens or a state of subjects. A civil society has no foreign relations, it is fully preoccupied by the relations of the citizens and the polity. Outside is only the non-world, the non-civil-ized void of barbarians.

Secondly, from its very beginning, civil society has been an ideological concept, in the sense of presenting one part of reality in an uncritically positive light while hiding other relevant parts. The civil society of Aristotle was the free and equal society of male slave owners. The reason for this socially veiling character of the concept is that a civil society always exhibits a pre-defined, pre-constituted equality among its members. Non-equals are non-members. In Aristotle, members of the *politikè koinonía* were the citizens of the polis. Hegel separated civil society from the state, defining the equality of the former in legal rather than political terms. But the self-centered, pre-constituted equality assumption remains. What matters in Hegel's civil society is "man/Mensch/because he is man, and not because he is Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian etc".[15]

Hegel did see a possibility for a civil society to become a class society, a conclusion Marx was to draw. Marx then went looking for the "anatomy of civil society", which he saw as political economy. Durkheim conceived of it as an object of sociology.

Democracy, Civil Society and the non-European Roads to/through Modernity.

Other parts of the world lacked anything similar to ancient Greek democracy and its civic society. Nor could they, in modern times, ignore the existence of Others and the existence of social inequality in the insouciant manner of the European city-state, republican, and liberal traditions.

A second route to modernity, and to democracy, is that of the *New Worlds*, creations of overseas migrations on the eve of European modernity, represented primarily but not exclusively, by the Americas, South as well as North. Here, the opponents of modernity were, above all, on the other side of the ocean - in Britain in the case of the US, in the Iberian peninsula in the case of Latin America, although the domestic modernists also drew heavily on European advances.

The enduring issues of political modernity were, first of all, the question of who belongs to the people, to civil society, i.e., the issue of "race", of the blacks and of the Indians. Central, too, was the effective application or not of the modern discourse of rights, which had been easily adopted upon independence, because the anti-modern forces had been literally thrown into the sea. The most bitter and protracted struggles for democracy in the Americas were not about the principle of democracy -as it

14 The latest major thrust in this high-level polemic is Robert Brenner's *Merchants and Revolution*, Cambridge, 1993. Brenner, a very distinguished American Marixst historian, is on the side of class.

15 G.F.W. Hegel, *Rechtsphilosophie* §290, here quoted from M. Riedel, "Gesellschaft, bürgerliche", in O. Brunner et al. (Hrsg.) *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Stuttgart, 1975, Bd. 2, p. 781.

had been in Europe-, but to what extent it should *de facto* be applied. For instance the civil rights struggles in the South of USA, the cataclysmic Mexican Revolution, which broke out under the slogan "Effective Suffrage and No Re-election", or the milestone in Argentine constitutional history, the Sáenz Peña Act of 1912, which eliminated systematic electoral fraud.

A third route to and through modernity is that of the *Colonial Zone*, stretching from Northwestern Africa to Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific. To the Colonial Zone, modernity arrived from the outside, literally out of the barrel of guns, while resistance to modernity was domestic, and crushed. Later on, colonial modernity involved the acculturation of part of the colonized, their learning the appropriate ideas of the colonizers -popular sovereignty, national self-determination, socio-economic development- and their turning them against the colons and the metropolitan masters. From this follows in the zone, among other things, a deep cultural trauma -with a potential for extraordinary creative new combinations to the extent that the trauma can be mastered- social fragmentation, and the primacy of the national issue.

The colonial experience gave state-society relations its special twist. The relation to the Other was central, the relationship of Masters and Natives. The state represented the former, but not only. The colonial state also represented Modernity, the modernity which the waves of anti-colonial opposition -after that of the original resistance which was crushed by the conquerors- were striving to acquire. The recent, arbitrary boundaries of the colony came to determine the extent of the new nation, struggling for self-determination and sovereignty.

In relation to the colonial state, colonial society was a "strong society", only patchily and intermittently affected by the former. For its everyday life it kept its own laws and customs, though often rigidified by colonial intervention or "indirect rule". These laws and customs never defined one civil society, because the populations brought together under the same colonial master had never constituted a single juridico-political community.[16]

Between the anti-colonial nationalists and colonial society there was always a profound ambiguity. On one hand, the latter was, of course, what the former had to mobilize against the colonial power. On the other, colonial society was dominated by the pre-modernity which the nationalists wanted to get out of. Colonial nationalists -in contrast to European or settler nationalism- could never become unqualifiedly representative of their people and its society. Here was a heavy mortgage on post-colonial democracy.

Finally, there was a group countries, characterized by *Externally Induced Modernization*, challenged and threatened by the new imperial powers of Europe and America, where a part of the ruling elite selectively imported features of the threatening polities in order to stave off colonial subjugation. Elections and popular representations were part of this import.

In other words, democratic rights, usually de-limited, came not from popular struggle, as in the other parts of the world, but from above, by rulers threatened, not from below but from the outside, as a means to maintain their power in inter-state relations. In 1906 an official Chinese commission, chaired by Prince Chun, concluded: "The wealth and strength of other countries are due to the practice of constitutional government, in which public questions are determined by consultation with the people. The ruler and his people are one body animated by one spirit".[17]

Japan is the most successful example of this group of countries, which also

16 Cf. J. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, Princeton, 1988; and Mamdani (1996).

17 See further, Therborn (1992), p. 91.

includes, among others, Iran and the Ottoman Empire/Turkey, and also, to varying extent qualified by colonial intrusions, Morocco, Egypt, and other successors to the House of Osman.

The key actor here is the ruler or, better, a modernizing part of the ruling body, trying to adapt both the state and the society to external challenge and threat. Cleavage patterns tend to run both between modern and anti-modern parts of the elite and between the former and anti-modernists among the people, with the latter sometimes winning, as in Afghanistan and Iran. In this complex pattern of conflicts and alliances, the state-civil society distinction is little relevant and the meaning of popular rights is ambiguous, not seldom rejected by (large parts of) the people as anti-traditional.

Meanderings of Democracy

All the above routes have led to democracies, and to the fall and the resurrection of democracies as well. So have, we should perhaps add, all major religions. Some patterns of social relations and some value systems may be more favourable for democracy than others, but governments emerging from open competitive elections by the whole adult population have come about and settled in many different concrete ways. Therefore, looking at the problems of democracy in a region such as the Middle East, I think we had better not concentrate the analysis on civil society - and its weakness - or on Islam - and its strength. Some attention should also be paid to political power relations.

We might try to summarize the history of democratic experiences so far by listing three crucial factors for making democracy work. These, and in particular not the first two, are not to be seen as pre-conditions, because one of the lessons of democratic history is that the latter usually settles gradually, through non-linear processes of trial and error.

1. It is important, especially in the early stages of democratization, in the initiation of democracy, that room is allowed for an *inter-elite balance of power and mutual accommodation*. Most generally, this refers to modernist and traditionalist elites, but religious, regional, ethnic or class inter-elite relations are also highly pertinent.

2. Even if democracy *de facto* is rarely translatable as the rule of the people, free popular participation is included in the definition, and this in turn requires a certain amount of *popular strength* in terms of sociopolitical capability. Literacy and freedom from abject misery weigh heavily here. Democracy also needs a *balance between popular demands and popular strength* of mobilization. If the demands are too high relatively to the strength behind them, they will provoke successful anticipatory repression. If the demands are too low, the ruling elites will ignore the people and stick to their oligarchy as much as possible.

3. Once democracy has struck deep roots, it is likely to survive most *international environments*, albeit with the addition of increased internal surveillance in times of external conflict, as we saw everywhere in the West during the Cold War, even in neutral countries like Sweden and Switzerland. But before that advanced age in the botany of democracy, the latter is very sensitive to international pressures and models of influence, either for or against. The survival, so far, of democracy or at least semi-democracy in most countries of post-Communist Eastern Europe is clearly due mainly to external pressure and external incentives. Both the EU and the Council of Europe have made it clear that only democracies can be members of "Europe".

An Amateur's Glance at the Middle East

Finally, for the sake of discussion, I shall briefly hint at what I, as an outsider and as an amateur, think of the bearings these experiences have upon the issue of democracy in the so-called Middle East.

The first thing I have noticed, then, is the youth of all the modern polities in the region, with the exceptions of Turkey and Iran. Modern anti-colonialism -claiming national social transformation, autonomy, and, later, independence- was relatively late, from the 1920s mainly, i.e., a generation later than the Indian Congress, even at least a decade later than the ANC in South Africa. Agrarian modernization, in terms of productivity as well as in terms of socio-economic relations began late, in the Nile valley not before the 1950s. National independence is relatively recent, 125-150 years after that of Latin America.

In other words, democracy has not had very long time to find its way yet. Given its age and given the previous lack of a tradition of representative politics, the modest outcomes of democratization efforts in the Middle East do not look exceptional.

What is exceptional is, of course, the oil wealth of the region. Given the historical conditions of control under which this rentier economy rose, the latter has been, and still is, an enormous boost to traditionalist and/or antipopular authority. Saudi Arabia represents a unique historical case of development without modernity.

With regard to inter-elite relations, democracy in the region has clearly suffered from the previous Latin American phenomenon of the "middle-class military coup". That is, a society of high socio-economic closure, where the military offers the major route to social mobility, and where the weakness of the middle classes and of the people makes a military coup the seemingly only successful way of toppling the old landowning upper class.

Coups d'état of this kind tend to leave long-lasting, but not fatal, barriers to democracy. Military regimes always tend towards repression, and their social character in cases of this kind gives them a widespread and enduring legitimacy among modernist, anti-oligarchic intellectuals, the middle strata of public employees, and vast popular clienteles. Seen from this angle, the recent rise of Islamic civilian movements and organizations, of professions, business, and of charity and social services appear as important contributions to democratization as well as to civil society.

Where traditional élites have been able to survive and to modernize themselves, and then have to accommodate to new ones, democracy is less remote. Lebanon,[18] Jordan, Morocco and even Kuwait offer examples of this. The mixture of colonialism and of externally induced domestic modernizers, so characteristic of the region - between the poles of fully colonized Algeria and never colonized Turkey - probably contributed to the lateness of modern politics mentioned above. But in the current period of post-colonial crisis, this mixed heritage of roads to modernity seems to favour democracy.

The complex character of Palestine society has led, after the Arab states débacle of 1967, to something rare in anti-colonial history, a pluralistic, multi-party national liberation organization, using effective, if perhaps not fully democratic, elections.

The Palestinians today apart, the "people" in the Middle East -as counterposed to élites and comfortably off middle classes- have tended to be relatively weak. High rates of illiteracy, relatively few members of a free and sturdy yeomanry and a small industrial proletariat are indications of this. Recent popular demands by armed terror clearly do not correspond to any equivalent social strength, and have mainly served to initiate a vicious spiral of terrorism and repression.

Finally, the external situation of Middle Eastern societies has been strongly

18 Lebanon is, of course, the best example of a segmentary society, which Gellner ([1994], p. 8) rightly took pains to distinguish from a civil society in the classical European sense, the democratic potential of which he wrongly ignored.

unfavourable to democratization. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has destabilized the whole Mashreq, again and again putting arms and foreign policy in the foreground. To the strong US interests in the region, i.e. in the Israeli state and in Arab oil, democracy and human rights are off focus.[19] Peace in Palestine would change the international situation fundamentally, in a direction strongly favourable to the democratization of the region.

The existential insecurity of states, as expressed by mainstream politicians, combined with armed ethnic conflicts, weigh heavily upon democracy and human rights, as is illustrated by the Kurdish issue in Turkey - the "Sèvres trauma" - and in Iraq and the ethno-religious conflict of southern Sudan. The discrepancy between an ideal single "Arab nation" and a *de facto* plurality of Arab states seems also to have favoured a political elision of the internal character of the latter.

The Middle East is hardly without a civil society tradition. Eighteenth century Aleppo had no urban autonomy or even a special urban jurisdiction, true, but its circa 100,000 inhabitants fielded at least 157 guilds, a number of charities, and many organized, religiously and economically rather non-segregated neighbourhoods, as well as three tight, internally autonomous *millets*, of which the Christian one was divided into four competing churches.[20]

But that democracy is having a hard time in the region is understandable nevertheless, and also without having to take recourse to the strength of non-secularized religion.

19 The US investment in Afghan anti-modernity in the 1980s has also come to contribute to anti-democracy in the Middle East, through the diffusion of "Afghan" terrorism.

20 A. Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity. Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century*, New York, 1989, pp. 35, 40, 77, 159.

Prospects for Civil Society in the Middle East: An Analysis of Cultural Impediments

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This paper focuses on a cultural explanation of the problems of civil society in the Middle East. In this paper, a cultural explanation is considered a main causal variable for weak societal and structural institutions that form the backbone of a civil society. Of the several possible explanations for the lack of civil society conditions, the culturalist explanation appears to be of the greatest validity. There are a number of reasons for this theoretical claim.[1] First, the Middle East as a sub-region, despite profound integration with the world economy, has, for the overwhelming sectors of the population, remained culture-resistant to the external milieu. Indigenous Middle Eastern culture can perhaps be said to be the most distinct cultural structure in the world when compared to basic Western norms. A solid majority of the populations in Turkey, Pakistan, Iran and the Arab World remain outside Western cultural norms. It should, of course, be made absolutely clear that I do not intend to make normative judgements. The Middle East is simply different from other regions of the world. Although people in the Middle East have met with few difficulties in accepting and following international economic procedures, culturally as well as politically the sub-region seems to have a distinct identity which has recently become more marked, especially in the last two decades. Thus, globalization has a rather different significance in this region. By accepting this division for security purposes, Western policy has actually helped the formation of a distinct cultural identity.

Secondly, civil society is a Western concept. The concept of civil society developed and matured within a certain historical and socio-economic setting. Western global economic dominance and its global security concerns launched a parallel process of introducing Western social, political and cultural norms onto the world.[2] Clearly, in Asia and Latin America, acceptance is more clearly in evidence.

This congruency may relate to economic logic, Christian traditions and historical political association. Similarly, the prevalence of the rentier state in much of the Middle East may denote a structural inhibition towards the acceptance of political change. Turkey's experience is an extremely important one. While Turkey's economy depends on an exports-led strategy and its political system is highly diversified, its cultural structure leans toward traditional and Islamic norms. So, at least in the case of Turkey, cultural resistance, as a result of a rentier state rationale in the OPEC

1 Augustus Richard Norton, *Civil Society in the Middle East*, vol. 1, New York, 1995, pp. 7-13.

2 In this regard see Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 83-117, 201-225.

Middle East, is of no real validity.[3] Civil society requires a culture of its own, which I will explain later. The emergence of civil society in the West may be the result of certain socio-economic dynamics which produced particular perceptions of man, society and the state. Civil society is closely connected with the way the issue of security is resolved in a given society. In the Middle East, perceptions of man, life, society and the state are, for whatever reasons, quite different. In spite of the growth of consumerism and limited industrial productive capacity, such growth, in contrast to the East Asian region, has had marginal societal and cultural impact. Local traditions, even in an age of telecommunications, transcend exposure to the external environment. Mental processes in the Middle East, when confronted with external cultural diversity, are highly selective and the selection process presupposes strong indigenous criteria. Therefore, it is not clear whether one can expect civil society principles from Middle Eastern social settings.

Third, there are no urgent reasons for the Middle East to change its cultural attitude. Particularly in the last two decades, politics in the Middle East has been forced to adopt a more traditional as well as a more Islamic stance. The Middle Eastern world view generally tends to diverge from its global counterpart. The argument here is that the recent return to traditionalism has made the possible emergence of civil society principles even less likely. Although one could argue that Middle Eastern culture has three main components, local, Islamic and Western, the first two elements are much more important than the Western element. The Western elements are more relevant in the economic behavior of the Middle Eastern citizen than in his or her social, cultural or political behavior. Perhaps, there is a simple explanation for this divisive learning experience. Economic forces and consumerism in particular do not necessarily disturb the social behavioral setting. More especially in the political realm, the cultural underpinnings of the polity are constantly reinforced by the logic of regime security. In a situation where national security is absent and principles of regime security determine the political culture of the society, little expectation may emerge as to the viability of cultural change.[4] It is also necessary to understand the historical evolution of patrimonial as well as monarchical systems in the Middle East. It appears that religion was actually used to serve as a justificatory means for rulers to maintain their legitimacy. Though small, exposed and educated sectors of Middle Eastern societies may attempt to reform their social systems, the ruling elites and the masses hold wholly divergent priorities and belief structures. Therefore, there exists little impetus for change throughout the entire region. I wish to make no normative statements. I simply believe that the dominant culture of the contemporary Middle East is structurally distinct from civil society culture.

Underlying the civil society situation is the concept of rationality, the acceptance of which ultimately leads to a social structure in which relativity and regularity are understood to determine state-society relations. If a state allows unrestricted activity, free association and divergent political views it means that it feels secure as regards both its status and its policies. Moreover, such an outlook by the state may demonstrate that state legitimacy is not seriously at stake and that it has been able to win popular support. No one-man rule polities can allow free social interaction. Political rationality translated into institutionalized state legitimacy, the rotation of power and the subordination of regime security to national security are clear indications of a political maturity that can lead to healthier state-society relations. One

3 See Ayşe Güneş-Ayata, "Roots and Trends of Clientelism in Turkey", *Democracy, Clientelism and Civil Society*, ed. by Luis Roniger and Ayşe Güneş-Ayata, London, 1994, pp. 49-65; Peri Pamir, "Turkey in Its Regional Environment in the Post-bipolar Era: Opportunities and Constraints", in *Building Peace in the Middle East*, ed. by Elise Boulding, London, 1994, pp. 133-147.

4 Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Civil Society and Prospects for Democratization in the Arab World", in *Civil Society in the Middle East*, op. cit., pp. 44-48.

argument that can be advanced with regard to the causality of political irrationality in the Middle East is a "social and cultural belief structure" that sees no relevance in questioning state behavior, that has not internalized the matter of accountability and that views the state not so much as a legal equal as an institution superior to society. There is a certain rationality in the civil society argument. At the root of its structure lies the concept of individualism. Western individualism can be contrasted to the peer group and social conformity prevalent in the Middle East. Both on the part of the state and the citizenry, the rationality of mutual approach, the legal apparatus of rights and the meaning of individuality demand careful examination. Of course, modern economics has led to the restructuring of society and the polity, but quite apart from these structural prerequisites, there is also the argument concerning the elements of the state and individual commitment to civil society. Civil society deals with rights, liberty, self and group identity. It is founded on reason and a new meaning of social structure. In the civil society situation, the influence of passions or emotions on rationality is weak and rationality remains dominant. Moreover, loyalty is directed mainly towards concepts of efficiency, freedom, interaction and accountability. In the Middle Eastern culture, individual loyalty is to the peer group, tribe, class, the state apparatus or to another individual. Rationality deals with reason. Thus, commitment to rationality by all parties in a learning process lies at the basis of the civil society argument. Western experience in this regard is rather long, arduous and founded upon the earlier conceptualizations of positivism and recent modes of urbanization, modernization and a knowledge-based economic framework.

It is true that civil society is the result of open dialogue between the state, and social autonomous organizations. It is also true that civil society develops when regime security leads to national security and the existence and expansion of autonomous associations offer no threat to state legitimacy and authority. But such an outcome is the result of a more complex conceptual and mental development that predates the free emergence of more or less autonomous associations. This conceptualization may be accepted as "rationality" -rationality of culture, rationality of actual and potential political elite groups and rationality related to social organization and economic structuring.[5] The existence of certain forces in a social structure may be essential for the emergence of rational thinking, association and mentality. While, in the European experience, economic logic and the pressures to augment predictability and certainty cultivated rational behavior and rational social structuring,[6] the Middle East experienced no such opportunities and historical forces. Humanism and individualism were powerful cultural forces that created the European organized outlook on life whereby the necessary functional and instrumental means were developed. The impetus of the private sector and an accountable state proved highly influential in maintaining the momentum for rationalization of life. Diverse European societies were thus directed into the new mentality and methods of social organization. In such a framework, all benefited: the individual enjoyed more freedom and could count on his or her abilities for social mobility; the firm could count on the organized mind and disciplined behavior of the citizens in the interests of productivity and efficiency and on the state regulated legal procedures necessary for the maintenance of diversity, mobility and individuality.[7]

The Middle East, comprising the Arab world, Iran and Turkey, could not produce, in its historical evolutions, the differentiated class structure which would allow the

5 See Roland Robertson, *Globalization*, London, 1992, pp. 115-129; Robert Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, London, 1968, pp. 604-616.

6 See Daniel Hausman, ed., *The Philosophy of Economics*, London, 1984.

7 Cohen and Arato (1994), pp. 421-492.

forces of capital accumulation as well as state efficiency to flourish.[8] Continued crises of legitimacy, highly divided societies, fragmented state apparatuses, foreign exploitation of resources and local politics and gradual internationalization, have blocked the emergence of rationality. Despite the congruency of Islamic literature with scientific growth, advocates of religious thought have failed to present applications on the basis of which rationality as a universalist movement could be domesticated and indigenously developed. Rationality as a process of determining efficient methods of reaching evolutionary ends requires a philosophical consensus among influential political and ideological groups in a given society. The Middle East, obsessed as it is by security issues and dominated by security-conscious regimes, has been unable to build up processes of consensus-building. Power has not been invested in the efficiency-conscious classes. Rationality is a step higher than security. Rationality, in this framework, has not had a chance to mature. The Arab-Israeli conflict in the second half of the 20th century has served to postpone civil society momentum, at least in the Arab world, since the lack of a solution has given interests of security dominance over social and economic development. Therefore, unlike the East Asian social and political setting, which quickly produced consensus and implemented incremental and systematic programs of economic and administrative rationality, the Middle Eastern history, specially in the modernizing eras of the second half of the 20th century, displays slowness, resistance, fragmentation and a weak recognition of fundamental global issues and conceptual tendencies.

In explaining the causes of the slowness of rational social, economic and political formations, this paper proposes three areas of examination. In a triangular approach to the issue, three aspects are to be explained: a) the Middle Eastern mind set; b) its concept of the state and c) its mode of social interaction. These three areas are discussed here as constituting a malfunctioning network. Problems associated with these issues are psychological as well as sociological impediments to the rules recognized as regulating state-society relations. Our assumption throughout the paper is that political rationality and economic efficiency are fundamental requisites of state maturity, which in turn leads to the emergence of an autonomous social organization. In explaining the aforementioned problem areas, the following definition of civil society is adopted:

> Civil society [is referred to] as a sphere of social interaction between the economy and the state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communications. Modern civil society is created through forms of self-constitution and self-mobilization. It is institutionalized and generalized through laws, and especially subjective rights, that stabilize social differentiation. While the self-creative and institutionalized dimensions can exist separately, in the long term both autonomous action and institutionalization are necessary for the formation of civil society.[9]

As outlined in the above definition, the focus on laws, institutionalization, autonomous action and social movements are evidence of the significance of conscious interactions among individuals on the one hand, and individuals and the state on the other. Certain presuppositions of individuality and social and political structure are thus in order. Below, I will argue that rationality of mind, rationality of state behavior (as well as a statesmen's concept of citizenship) and rationality of social interaction are required for the maturation of civil society. These seem to be the structural problems in the Middle East.

The Middle Eastern Mind Set

The mind set in this region appears to be a function of two elements: Despotism

8 See Ahmad Moussali, "Modern Islamic Fundamentalist Discourses on Civil Society, Pluralism and Democracy", in *Civil Society in the Middle East*, op. cit., pp. 79-120.

9 Cohen and Arato (1994), p. ix.

and unidimensional religious teaching. What constitutes the Middle Eastern mind set? Because of continuous state failures over centuries, people in this region as a whole tend to consider life as a game of chance.[10] One has no other alternative, it is believed, but to suffer the inevitable and basically negative vicissitudes of life. Life is illusionary, not real. The social setting is one of a hostile international conspiracy for the purpose of infiltrating and corrupting people's lives. There is virtually no one you can rely upon. There are no rules by which one can predict. The life of the Middle Easterner is characterized by a certain aloofness. As few of the religious establishment are familiar with science and scientific modes of thought, their social activities and sermons are concerned almost entirely with the other world and the lack of reliability of worldly affairs. Such a unidimensional view of religion creates an established culture of its own. One may point to the differences between puritanism, catholicism and protestantism in their respective and rather diverse interpretations of worldly affairs. Lack of care, attention and commitment result from the constant reminders of the insignificance of this world. State corruption, combined with the incessant inculcation of this concept of insignificance, produces an apathetic type of character. There is no need here to highlight the powerful impact of environmental forces on character and personality formation. While Islam can provide a source of inspiration for scientific and civilizational purposes, the unidimensional and non-worldly teachings and culture in the Muslim world have served as impediments to the formation of determined state-building. Therefore, the argument here is that ideals associated with the civil society situation may not lie within the comprehension of a Middle Eastern mind set that has been formed as a result of a special historical training perpetuated by the cultural establishment.

The Middle Eastern Concept of the State

A second phenomenon that hinders efforts to move toward civil society conditions is concerned with the conformist attitude of the citizens toward the state to be found throughout the Middle East. The mystic outlook that exists in large parts of the Middle East can be regarded as the source of such conformist behavior, whereas any challenge to authority is considered the pursuit of materialistic ends. Associations are formed to change the status of an issue-area or upgrade the legal rights of a group or demand the implementation of a law. All of these require a serious attitude towards life and the relativity of state power and authority. Moreover, weak or even non-existent entrepreneurial classes, while highly influential in changing state behavior in the West, have not been an economic force for change in the Middle East. Commercial groups in general have no need for a modern state apparatus or for cohesive, organized and disciplined societies; an increasing level of consumer demand may suffice for the creation of continued satisfactory income levels. Middle Eastern commercial groups have dominated its economic life before and to some degree after the exploration of oil. Commercial classes usually conform to state authority and can adapt to any formation. In the years following oil exploration, the rise of the rentier state has even furthered conformity to state policies and structures due to the state's income distributional authority. A weak or non-existent private sector provides the state with powerful mechanisms and opportunities for employment and thus further links economic survival to conformity. Another dimension that intensifies conformity to state behavior is the issue of security. In conditions where the responsibility for national security is not institutionalized, the security of the regime and/or the security of the supreme individual in power takes precedence over national security. All security is reduced to the rule of a single person, a single family or a small group of individuals. The nature of state nourishes fear and insecurity. Courage and talent are treated by the state as

10 See Edward Mortimer, *Faith and Power*, New York, 1982, pp. 56-121.

threats to security. Both economic decline and growth can reinforce these psychological circumstances. As a result, both the nature of the state and the unchanging public image of it perpetuate state domination in the public sphere and its potential autonomous discourse.[11] While some cosmetic change is in evidence in some of the Middle Eastern countries, the overriding trend is state domination.

Middle Eastern Mode of Social Interaction

A third element that inhibits the growth and institutionalization of civil society principles is the manner in which people view association and team work in this region. Individuals in this region quickly impose upon each other some form of institutional constraint, whether it be tribal, national, ideological, social or political. Individuals have difficulty in dealing with each other in a free manner independent of limitations. Middle Easterners are hesitant in establishing ties with each other for the purposes of effective interaction. Due to despotic traditions, the belief structures of individuals tend to fluctuate and are heavily dependent upon the surrounding atmosphere. It is extremely difficult to trust others, specially when shared identity and common goals are involved. Middle Eastern images of society are highly emotional and ideological. Class structures based on diverse settings of belief, interests and styles are deeply distrusted in the Middle East. How could a society form associations and organizations around a set of beliefs and goals when trust and reliability are such scarce commodities? Due to the lack of political stability, the Middle East tends to be overly politicized at the social level. Almost every issue has a political dimension. In a civil society situation, authority is a derivative of the role, function, capability and personal attributes of the individual. In the Middle East, authority is a function of power. Mobility in this region is not a product of hard work and effort but rather the result of political contacts. Independent individuals and organizations are viewed with suspicion. A coherent society with stable and competing belief structures are necessary conditions for a civil society. Fluidity of beliefs and loyalties inhibit stable formations.[12] Under such circumstances, social interaction is at best artificial. Really solid interaction rarely transcends the family or the tribe. The delay in the formation of nation-states in the Middle East may be one structural reason for the prevalence of sub-loyalties. Orderly processing of conceptual dialogue in a society is a prerequisite for any kind of association. In the Middle East, diverse and contradictory layers of thinking create serious difficulties for the emergence of autonomous, meaningful and goal-oriented associations.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper is to explain the malfunctioning processes in the creation of civil society in the Middle East. Throughout this paper, the Middle East has been treated as a single unit. Although there may exist marginal groups, consisting mainly of members of the educated and professional classes unaffected by the tendencies I have described, the overwhelming majority of Middle Eastern societies live, think and interact on the basis of traditions quite distinct from the principles of civil society. Perhaps the majority are more concerned with the improvement of their economic conditions than with concepts such as political participation, accountable states, rotation of power, autonomous social associations, etc. This is certainly a choice. The point I have attempted to prove is that civil society requires the maturation of particular cultural prerequisites, the absence of which inhibits the production of civil society conditions. The economic reorganization in Europe which began in

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 31-39.

12 The chapter on Syria written by Raymond Hinnebusch in *Civil Society in the Middle East* (op. cit.) can be considered as representative of the explanations throughout the Middle East, pp. 214-242.

the eighteenth century reduced state authority throughout the continent. Furthermore, a major commitment on the part of the social as well as the economic interest groups expedited the process of legality and accountability, thus creating the conditions for a civil approach in state-society relations. The creation of these circumstances has been delayed in the Middle East by both indigenous and exogenous factors. I believe that the civil society situation requires, even more than a belief structure and economic reorganization, an enduring and constantly enriched commitment. Within the context of their domestic political and social organization, Middle Eastern societies have been unable to produce forces strong enough to change their state-society relations. In conclusion, it may be claimed that the removal of cultural impediments in the Middle East necessitates a powerful indigenous political and/or economic motive force.

National Identity and State Legitimacy: Contradictions of Turkey's Democratic Experience

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During the past decade, Turkey has discovered that the official representation of the society as a unified, homogeneous entity is not true. The rising political magnitude of various Islamic movements and the Kurdish problem have been the major factors that triggered this discovery. Animated by the feeling that the integrity of the nation and the state is now under serious threat, Turkey's political élites responded in attempts at domesticating Islam by integrating it to the *raison d'état* and smashing Kurdish "terrorism". In so doing, they also failed to come to terms with the rising awareness of a Kurdish identity chacterized by a feeling of being excluded and oppressed by the larger society.

This paper attempts to situate the cultural-political problems Turkey has come to face, especially after the military coup of 1980, in a context delineated by the terms of recent debates over identity/difference and state legitimacy. In contrast to many recent observers who have depicted a somewhat optimistic picture of relative democratization in Turkey, I wish to present a critical examination of some underlying elements of an ongoing crisis of collective identity and state legitimacy. The paper, thus, consists of three sections. The first section will present a cluster of concepts to elucidate the perspective adopted here. The main issues are the complex relations between collective identity and state legitimacy, the problems associated with the attempts at constructing a national identity under the auspices of a state apparatus to produce a basis for legitimacy and accompanying issues stemming from the potential oppressiveness of difference-blind nation-states. The second part of the paper deals with the particularities of the Turkish experience of transition to a nation-state under Kemalism and tries to show that Kemalism has been paradoxical in terms of its construction of Turkishness as the new legitimizing basis of the new state. In the third section, I wish to show that the original paradox inherent in Kemalism has contributed to, if not determined, the emergent crisis of legitimacy which became increasingly salient during the 1980s.

Situating the Problem of National Identity and Political Legitimacy

On the Significance of the Concept of National Identity for Critical Political Analysis

If one of the most salient features of the so-called new world order is the dramatic outbreak of ethno-religious nationalism,[1] the other is multiculturalism.[2] Put dif-

1 See, for example, Claus Offe, "Ethnic Politics in European Transitions," *Zentrum für Europäische Rechtspolitik-Diskussionpapier*, I/93, Bremen, 1993, pp. 1-41.

2 See, for example, Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship, a Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford, 1995.

ferently, in some societies a process of nation-state building is underway while in others, notably in the older, relatively well established nation-states, struggles for the political recognition of cultural differences challenge the long cherished ideal of a unitary nationhood. In its efforts to promote a reconciliation between nationalism and democratization, for instance, Georgia belongs to the former[3] whereas France, which has been confronted with the fact that the principle of the "*nation une et indivisible*" is challenged by the public visibility of a Maghrebi-Muslim community, provides an example of the latter.[4]

This somehow contradictory coexistence of "nation-state building for democracy" on the one hand, and struggles to open up a public space for the expression of cultural differences within the established national publics, now criticized as being "difference-blind", on the other, has stimulated vivid debates among political theorists. In contrast to those working within the framework of the "transitology/consolidology" paradigm,[5] quite a considerable number of prominent political theorists with diverse philosophical preferences and political persuasions are endeavoring to situate the issues within the terms of cultural-political interactions.[6] For the latter, the distressed unity of nation and state, reflected in the old and new forms and practices of nationalism, should be questioned from a moral perspective, for this unity is usually designed to serve as a political legimation formula.[7]

In this context, one question that comes to mind concerns the idea of social and political development: Are cultural-political problems emergent in the established nation-states and advanced industrial societies qualitatively different from those arising in less developed countries? Put differently, can we argue that recent emphases on the political significance of cultural identity and difference are so characteristic of post-materialist orientations in post-industrial societies that they should not be confused with cultural-political expressions stemming from predominantly socio-economic dissatisfactions with an underdeveloped situation?[8] Another related question, echoing the once favorable modernization theory, would address whether we should treat oppressive political practices in the less developed societies as transient stages on the way to a democratic nation-state?

A yes to the questions stated above would not only represent a conventional attachment to "teleological developmentalism" (perhaps to a revived form of modernization theory), but reflect also an uncritical, if not apologetic, attitude towards different forms of oppression in different political settings. As Ghassan Salamé argues,

> We must ... think about democratization without previously settling the question of national identity. A good Jacobin would say it is impossible to skip such a crucial stage: first must come

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3 See Ghia Nodia, "Nationalism and Democracy", *Journal of Democracy*, 3, 4 (October 1992). For a political theoretical discussion of the relations between liberalism and nationalism see, Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1993.

4 For a debate over the case of France see my "Political Toleration or Politics of Recognition, the Headscarves Affair Revisited", *Political Theory*, 24, 2 (May 1996), pp. 325-330.

5 I owe the term to Philippe C . Schmitter, "Transitology and Consolidology: Proto-Sciences of Democratization", unpublished paper presented at the Comparative Politics Seminar, Princeton University (November 1994).

6 See Amy Gutmann, ed., *Multiculturalism, Examining the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton, 1993.

7 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, 1983.

8 Ronald Inglehart seems to suggest an affirmative answer:

> "The values of Western publics have been shifting from an overwhelming emphasis on *material well-being and physical security* toward greater emphasis on the *quality of life*... people tend to be more concerned with immediate needs or threats than with things that seem remote or threatening. Thus a desire for beauty may be more or less universal, but hungry people are more likely to seek food than aesthetic satisfaction." (*Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Societies*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1990, p. 5 -emphases added).

the nation, then its democratization. However, decades after the establishment of present day states, we are obliged to recognize that democratization cannot be indefinitely conditioned by a prior outpouring of nationalitarian and/or nationalist fervor, a fervor adding itself to the real existence of states claiming to be national, of machinery engaged in the construction (in Foucault's sense and not that of nation building), if not the voluntary formation of a nation which would embody the state and be the expression of its autonomous politicization to the people. Such is the dilemma which invites all observers to define democratization even more clearly by its instrumental virtues.[9]

I agree with the above remarks that reject the developmentalist/stagist approach to political change, albeit with a major precaution on the invitation to make use of instrumentalized definitions of democracy. Since instrumentalized definitions of democratization (and democracy) also overtly neglect the moral dimensions of political change, Salamé's invitation implies that problems of democratic politics should be handled without much serious attention to cultural-political interactions.[10] Rejecting the priority of national identity, however, does not necessarily mean that we should also be inattentive to the critical analyses of emergent challenges on the bases of cultural identity and difference to the nation-state.

Viewed from another perspective, national identity gains a crucial significance. National identity, either as "invented tradition", or as "imagined community", is used by the political actors dominating the state apparatuses to justify oppressive political practices in both the old and emergent nation-states. There are certainly differences in the degree of political oppression ranging from "misrecognition or unrecognition"[11] of cultural difference to outright violence, but this does not alter the fact that national identity is an important pillar of legitimation for state-centered oppression. As William Connolly has astutely shown, we are still experiencing the conditions in which the state is treated as the "ultimate agency of collective action" and as the "medium" connecting "personal identity to collective identity", and

> When circumstances are favorable, the relation is one of patriotism chastened by scepticism of state authority; when they are unfavorable, the relation degenerates into either dissatisfaction with the state or a nationalism in which the tribulations of the time are attributed to an evil "other" who must be neutralized.[12]

For this reason, the relationship between national identity and state legitimacy deserves critical examination by observers if social science is to "develop critical standards of self-reflection with which to compare various explanatory strategies and patterns; ... elucidate the goals and purposes of new social theories and judge how well they fulfill them ...."[13]

Identity and Legitimacy: Standards for Critical Analysis

Now, I think, is the time to focus on the critical standards that would be used to examine the links between national identity and state legitimacy. It seems appropriate to begin with the relationship of personal to collective identity. As Charles Taylor has shown, formation of personal identity under conditions of modernity is a complex dialogical process idealized by the concepts of "human dignity" and "authenticity". Taylor's analysis demonstrates (1) that under conditions of modernity char-

9 Ghassan Salamé, "Introduction", in *Democracy Without Democrats, the Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*, ed. by Ghassan Salamé, London, 1994, p. 11.

10 If my reading of Salamé is correct, then it should also be noted that his approach is congruent with the mainstream transitology/consolidology literature as exemplified by Adam Przeworski and Guisseppe di Palma.

11 Both terms are used by Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", in *Multiculturalism*, ed. by Amy Gutmann, pp. 25 ff. and his "Between Democracy and Despotism, the Dangers of Soft Despotism", *Current*, January, 1994, p. 37.

12 William Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, Itacha, NY and London, 1991, p. 199-201.

13 James Bohman, *New Philosophy of Social Science, Problems of Indeterminacy*, Cambridge Mass., 1993, p. viii.

acterized by the replacement of the idea of honor by the idea of human dignity, the ideal is that every individual has an inherent and equal right to due respect; (2) that this equality does not mean that individuals are either identically abstract atoms[14] or simply elements of a homogeneous collectivity; (3) that individual identity is a process of dynamic formation taking place "through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others".[15]

An important conclusion to be drawn from Taylor's analysis for my own purposes in this paper is that personal identity requires the realization of equal freedom for all without erasing differences in cultural membership. The problem with the actually existing forms and practices of liberal-democratic politics and, to be sure, with the transitional or consolidational polities so far as they have a frame of reference which idealizes liberal-democratic systems as the fundamental goal of their development, is that they put the emphasis on the former without giving due attention to the latter.

If we accept that the moral ideals of human dignity and authenticity can only be realized dialogically, then we should proceed to ask how? and under what conditions? It is quite evident that the realization of the moral ideals mentioned require conditions of an "undistorted public dialogue" as the only basis of political legitimation.[16] These conditions are laconically stated by Cohen and Arato as

> (1) mutual and reciprocal recognition, without constraint, of each by all as autonomous, rational subjects; (2) Anyone capable of speech and action ... must be able to participate in the discussion on equal terms; and (3) nothing can and should be taboo for rational discourse, not the preserves of power, wealth, tradition, or authority.[17]

Rather than engaging in a prescriptive endeavor to develop a teleological blueprint that would realize these conditions, it is more convenient to center on the specific factors that distort such a public dialogue and thus pave the way for legitimation crises and oppression.

Among the economic, cultural, and political factors that distort such a dialogical construction of legitimacy, I wish to draw attention to a major political one. This is best illustrated by the contrast between the ideal of "politics as participation" and "politics as *raison d'état*". If the realization of moral ideals of human dignity and authenticity requires full participatory politics under the conditions of undistorted public dialogue, then, an important, perhaps the most important factor that impedes the realization of this ideal, is the form and content of political modernity characterized by the dominance of a mode of political activity determined by arm of protecting the state's existence and unity.[18] To the extent to which this mode of "politics as *raison d'état*" has come to depend on the precarious equation of the national identity and the state, it also serves as a basis of nonrecognition (or misrecognition) of cultural difference, political recognition of cultural diversity being regarded as a threat to the existence and unity of the state.

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14 I surmise that Taylor's views on the politics of recognition is consistent with his earlier critique of "atomistic individualism". Cf. Charles Taylor, "Atomism", in *Communitarianism and Individualism*, ed. by Shlomo Avineri and Avner de-Shalit, Oxford, 1992, pp. 29-50.

15 Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", p. 34.

16 Cf. Seyla Benhabib, "Liberal Dialoque Versus a Critical Theory of Discursive Legitimation", in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, ed. by Nancy L. Rosenblum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989), pp. 143-156.

17 Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, Cambridge Mass., 1992, pp. 347-348.

18 For an incisive historical narrative of this idea see Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State, The Acquisiton and Transformation of the Language of Politics 1250-1600*, Cambridge, 1992, especially pp. 1-11

National Identity and State Legitimacy: Paradoxes of the Kemalist Project

In view of the above considerations, I would now like to turn to the case of Turkey which is, I gather, very instructive in the way in which the public visibility of cultural difference results in a crisis situation for the intrinsically shaky nation-state legitimation formula, hence giving way to oppressive practices under a disguised authoritarianism.[19] Within the confines of this section, I will try to sketch out some elements of Kemalist ideology which have proved to be the sources of a series of paradoxes. In doing this, I will first indicate the historical continuities presented in the Kemalist perception of the state-society relations and then proceed to focus on the paradoxes of the Kemalist project.

Kemalist Perceptions of State-Society Relations: Historical Continuities

Many observers of Turkish society and politics have pointed out that Turkey has a strong state tradition deeply entrenched in its particular historical experience. The cultural-ideological justification of this tradition has been developed from within an Islamicized version of a Platonic worldview in which the strength of the state has been assumed to be identical with the political rectitude of rulers-as-guardians. In this deeply rooted understanding of the state, it has been thought that the "true order of religion", that is, the true order of morality, is inseparably connected to the "true order of the world".[20] This was the classical historical legitimation formula for the Ottoman state, which was been remarkably successful in uniting *auctoritas* and *potestas* in the single house of the Sultan.[21]

Makdisi's argument is also supported by Şerif Mardin, who has shown that the Ottoman state certainly had a legitimation formula "derived from the symbolic force of the dynasty" and resting on a "tacit contract" which included "socio-economic arrangements in Ottoman society of which provided a protective shield over Ottoman subjects and which had to be respected".[22]

Other ingredients of this classical Ottoman legitimation formula could be found in the concept of *adalet* (justice) and the etymological origins of *devlet*. The meaning of *adalet* was determined in a way reflecting the Islamicized-Platonic connections as "giving each man his due", and in this sense it was a central pillar of Ottoman legitimation. The etymological origins of *devlet* (usually translated as "the state" in modern terminology) were found in the Arabic *dawla*, first used when speaking of the alteration of good days and bad days[23] and later used to refer to the rotation of dynasties determined by fortune. Thus, the unity of religion (*auctoritas*) and state (*potestas*) legitimized by the protective shield of the Ottoman tacit contract resting on the principle of *adalet* provided by a dynasty symbolizing the good order of fortune, reveals the Islamic-monocratic construction of the classical Ottoman state.

The dissolution of the Ottoman state which gained momentum during the second half of the nineteenth century constituted a process in which this legitimation formula was destroyed.

The culmination of this destruction was usually interpreted as the rise of the Turkish nationalism which found its full expression in Kemalist republicanism. To

19 I owe the term to Richard Falk's perceptive analysis: "Disguised Authoritarianism".

20 Elie Kedourie, *Politics in the Middle East*, Oxford, 1992, pp. 1-21

21 For a presentation and discussion of this Ottoman achievement see George Makdisi, "Authority in the Islamic Community", in *La notion d'autorité au Moyen Age, Islam, Byzance, Occident*, ed. by G. Makdisi, et. al., Paris, 1978, pp. 117-126.

22 Şerif Mardin, "Freedom in an Ottoman Perspective", in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980's*, ed. by Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin, Berlin, 1988, p. 29.

23 Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, Chicago and London, 1988, pp. 35-37.

be sure, as an ideology in the modern sense, Kemalism was a project aimed at the re-establishment of a state with a new legitimation formula, i.e. that of the unity of nation and state. For many students of Turkish politics, this new ideology and its practices are understood as a total break with the classical notions. Critically reviewed, however, it seems plausible to argue otherwise: True, Kemalism attempted to replace religion with the concept of the nation defined in secularist terms. However, the idea of unity remained. The classical notion of the unity of religion and state became the unity of nation and state.[24]

The continuities between the classical legitimation formula and the Kemalist one do not stop here. The transcendental reference of the Islamic-nomocratic formula was replaced by yet another transcendentalized notion of "positivist scientism" which was regarded not only as to serving the new and fundamental organizational principal of political order, but also as proving the "Turkishness" of the new society. In brief, the "scientific (or laicist) nationalism" of Kemalism remained within a mind set similar to that of the classical Ottoman formula.

The emphasis on the unity of the state was also retained, but this time it was assigned an additional role. This role was characteristic of the tendency of modern state to regulate society through mechanisms penetrating into the private and socio-cultural spheres.[25] In contrast to the formation of a state-civil society distinction, a precondition for checking and balancing the despotic potentials of state power, Kemalist republicanism assigned to the state a dominant role not only in the economy, but also in the field of identity formation, best summarized by the idea that the state will regulate the ideas (*fikrî nâzımlık yapmak*) of the people to secure the formation of a new national consciousness obedient to and in the service of the new state.[26]

Accordingly, early republican definitions of the "new nation" and the "new citizen" did not embrace a notion of individual rights and liberties against the state, but rather regarded rights as dependent on the state-centered definitions of the social, economic and political obligations of citizens. Lying behind this was the perception of Turkish society as a unified, solidaristic totality devoid of class divisions and conflicts, sanctified as an eternal entity to be represented and protected by the state.

If Kemalism was a modern ideology, a form of nationalist blueprint with the aim of integrating the unified, homogeneous cultural entity of the nation and the state by putting the former under the protection of the latter, it was also a mind set reflecting continuities with the elements of the classical Ottoman legitimation formula. Kemalist rejection of social and political prerogatives affixed to status and its emphasis on the role of the state in observing and moderating would-be class cleavages recall the protective shield of the Ottoman tacit contract.

Paradoxes

Continuities between Kemalist perceptions and the historical legitimation formula should not be taken to mean that Kemalism was a mere imitation of the old under new (modern) circumstances. On the contrary, Kemalism incorporated some ideals which could be traced back to the Enlightenment. The most important of these was certainly the idea of progress. In the Kemalist framework, the idea of progress took

24 The late Ernest Gellner was certainly right in his avowedly "modest" but very perceptive anlysis of Kemalism: "the spirit in which Kemalism was formulated and upheld was, at any rate in the first generation, a kind of perpetuation of High Islam. *The spirit was projected into a new doctrine. The content was new but the form and spirit were not.*" ("Kemalism", in Ernest Gellner, *Encounters With Nationalism*, Oxford, 1994, p. 86, (emphases added).

25 For an examination of these "incentives" of modern state in relation to the "social question" under nineteenth century liberalism and after see Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State, A Sociological Indroduction*, London, 1978, pp. 86-149.

26 Levent Köker, *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi*, 3. ed., İstanbul, 1995, pp. 186-187, 206-209.

the form of a nationalist developmentalism aimed at raising the "Turkish nation above the level of modern civilization".[27]

The first and probably the most apparent paradox of the Kemalist project emerges at this point. The Kemalist idea of national development seemed to represent a project of total modernization of Turkish society without having any intention of coming to terms with tradition.

This perception of Kemalism as a project of uncompromising modernization, quite a widespread conviction embedded in many mainstream interpretations as well, failed to observe the conservative element in Kemalism. The Kemalist idea of national development, not unlike many of its counterparts in late-comer societies, had certain limits, the most striking being the preservation of the unique characteristics of the Turkish nation.

This apparent paradox between developmentalism and conservatism serves as a stepping stone from which I can now proceed to discuss another, rather hidden paradox. This second, hidden paradox regards the content of the unique characteristics of the Turkish nation. In a famous definition of the Turkish nation, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk enumerates certain elements that make up the unity of the nation. These were (1) the unity of the political entity; (2) unity of language; (3) unity in race and origins; (4) sharing a common past and (5) a shared morality.[28]

Besides the emphasis on racial unity, what is more intriguing is Atatürk's annotation on the meaning of "shared morality". In a passage where he explains the meaning and significance of morality, it is clearly stated that this was totally different from what some understand in religious terms. In this passage he states that,

> Some say that religious unity is an important element in the formation of a nation. But we have quite a different vision of the Turkish nation. Turks were a great nation long before they accepted Islam. ... [Islam] has loosened the national bonds of the Turkish nation; numbed their national feelings and national enthusiasms. This was very natural. For the aim of religion founded by Muhammad was a politics of *umma*, transcending all nationalities.[29]

This exclusive attitude towards the religious element in the new definition of Turkish national identity was and still is treated by many interpreters of Kemalism as a corollary to the project of uncompromising modernization, the main pillar of which is "laicism".

A closer look at Kemalist ideology and practice, however, reveals that such a clear rejection of the religious ingredient of the national culture becomes blurred. First of all, in regard to the composition of the population, the Kemalist stance in the early, formative years of the Turkish Republic was overtly determined by religion. What I have in mind is the policies towards minorities carried out during and after the Lausanne Treaty. Not only was the exchange of populations after the War of Independence based on religion (i.e. Muslims were exchanged with non-Muslims), but also the enactment and implementation of taxation policy during the Second World War (after a law on Taxation of Wealth [*Varlık Vergisi*] was passed in parliament in 1940) included religious discrimination against non-Muslim citizens of the new state.

In addition to these examples of Kemalist policies, Atatürk himself did not reject religion *qua* religion but rather targeted what he deemed as the superstitious elements introduced into Islam, which, in its pure form, was "the most reasonable and the most natural religion, and, for this reason, has been regarded as the last religion".[30] He then added that "everyone needs a place to learn his religion and faith. That place is

27 *Ibid.*, p. 153-154.

28 A. Afetinan, *Medeni Bilgiler ve Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün El Yazıları*, Ankara, 1969, p. 22.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

30 Cited in Köker (1995), p. 168.

the school [*mektep*]" as opposed to *medrese*, where he believes that Islam is distorted by corrupt *ulema* referred to pejoratively by the Kemalists as "the band of hadjis and hodjcas" (*hacı hoca takımı*) who have grown accustomed to the habits of a system of personal power and who exploit religion for their personal interests.[31]

Thus, it is not at all clear that Kemalist nationalism was anti-religious. It was rather trying to articulate religion with the new *raison d'état* and this is, I believe, illustrated by the institutionalized state control over religious institutions and practices.

For some observers, this central paradox of Kemalist laicism is natural , that is, it is an outcome of the nature of Islam which is a comprehensive religion with the purpose of ordering the sacred and the profane together. My purpose here is not to get involved in a debate over this essentialist and ahistorical interpretation of Islam as opposed to an equally essentialist understanding of Christianity. Instead, I wish to stress the fact that this central paradox of Kemalist laicism could be understood as another instance of the ambiguity of Turkish nationalism in general.

In his study on *Ülkü*, a major magazine of the single party period which was representative of the ideological changes inside the party, Şerif Mardin finds the coexistence of what he then labeled as "modernist" and "traditional" forms of Turkish nationalism.[32] The former laid stronger emphasis on the scientific-technical progress of the Turkish nation together with a process of creating a Turkish consciousness in order to exploit the gains of progress in the interests of the nation, while the latter laid stronger emphasis on the role of religion and customs somewhat dismissed by the modernists.

Mardin's analysis reflects an ambiguity in Turkish nationalism[33] whose reactionary modernist qualifications were ignored by its students. In his study on German intellectuals in Weimar and the Third Reich, Jeffrey Herf presents his concept of "reactionary modernism" as a paradox reflected in the German intellectuals of the time. This paradox between the acceptance of the idea of technological modernization and the rejection of the Enlightenment values of liberty and rationality is best summarized by the German usage of technology and culture. In contrast to German conservatives "who had spoken of technology *or* culture, the reactionary modernists taught the German right to speak of technology *and* culture... [Reactionary modernism] incorporated modern technology into the cultural system of modern German nationalism, without diminishing the latter's romantic and antirational aspects".[34]

The coexistence of modernist and traditional nationalisms in Turkey has strong parallels with Herf's paradox of reactionary modernism and I think this became increasingly apparent during the 1980s when Turkey discovered the existence of groups or cultural entities, i.e. the public appearance of various Islamic movements and an ethno-nationalist Kurdish resurgence, which are different from the officially defined Turkish identity and thus fall outside the recognized public realm. The practical political results of the paradoxes in Kemalist nationalist construction resulted in the re-writing of cultural politics after the military coup of 12 September 1980.

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31 From another speech cited in *ibid.*, p. 164-65.

32 Şerif Mardin, "Siyasi Fikir Tarihi Çalışmalarında Muhteva Analizi", in Ş. Mardin, *Siyasal ve Sosyal Bilimler, Makaleler 2*, Istanbul, 1990 (first published in 1969), p. 9-22.

33 A recent study on Young Turk nationalism which has anticipated Kemalism shows this ambiguity in the form of an oscillation between the French (civic-modern) and German (cultural) models of nationhood: Masami Arai, *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era*, Leiden, 1992.

34 Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism, Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 2 and passim.

Cultural Politics Under the New Conservatism: Post-Kemalism or the Rising Tide of Reactionary-Modernist Despotism?

Turkey's transition from military rule in the 1980s, third since the inception of the Republic in 1923, included (1) the reinforcement of market oriented economic reforms which had been already underway since the economic measures of 24 January 1980, (2) a new constitution with remarkably authoritarian regulations that restrict political participation and (3) a re-writing of the cultural politics.

In the course of this transition, especially after the first general elections held in November 1983, the topics of public debate in Turkey were largely confined to issues like minimizing the role played in the economy by the state. Not unsurprisingly, the market-oriented reforms then carried out by the Motherland Party under the leadership of the late Turgut Özal, were justified in a discursive frame in which there were signs of an apparent break with the unified understanding of the nation and the state.

The rejection of the notion of a father-state not only protecting his children by providing them material benefits, but also instructing them in the principles of and ways to true morality and conduct has been a major element in this discourse. This salient feature of the new Turkish conservatism was an important element in Özal's political discourse, which also included the notion of breaking Kemalist taboos within a self-proclaimed reformism. Özal frequently declared that the people should no longer view the state as an ultimate value in itself but rather as a technical apparatus which has to be brought under the control of the individuals-as-entrepreneurs. This discursive shift from the father-state to the idea of a minimal state also included emphasis on the de-bureaucratization and decentralization of Turkey's administrative structure.

Taken together, the minimalization of the state in order to enhance society's overall capacity of economic development has found repercussions in the Turkish general public, which was then engaged in debates ranging around the concept of civil society. Despite the fact that some liberal-leftist interpretations of this shift seized upon this as an opportunity to open up a more participatory public space in Turkey, it has become quite clear that new Turkish conservatives were not very different from their Western counterparts in their identification of civil society with the market.

This identification of civil society and the market, however, has not been accompanied by political and legal reforms that would further the democratization process. On the contrary, the discursive shift erased virtually every element of the notion of justice remaining from the old tacit contract. The Kemalist founders of the Republic had a chance to revive the elements of the classical Ottoman legitimation formula to produce a synthesis of old values and modern ideals of liberty and equality. Their emphasis on a classless society, however, remained an empty bundle of ideals as they were unable to forge such a synthesis, first because they did not take the moral elements of the old order[35] seriously and second, they had to establish a notion of an absolute break with the past to legitimize their revolution from above.

The neo-conservative emphasis on the market as a strong element of their ideology was, to be sure, incapable of creating a new moral basis for the so-called reformism. When the disadvantaged sections of the newly urbanized population saw that the implementation of the market oriented economic reforms were in fact

35 The late Ernest Gellner is again right when he was remarking his experience of meeting the director of one of the "People's Houses", those centres of Kemalist "indoctrination" in the countryside: "However cogent and lucid the Enlightenment which he brought to the villagers, it struck no real echo in their hearts, and had little permanent impact." (Gellner, "Kemalism", p. 86).

a justification for political corruption, they felt increasingly alienated vis-a-vis the state.

This is a situation which fits into what Connolly describes as "disaffection with the state" under unfavorable conditions. To overcome this disaffection, Turkey's neo-conservatives had no alternative to promoting nationalist fervor among the masses. A new cultural politics has been well underway since the 1980 military takeover, the fundamental characteristic of which was the endeavour to combine technical modernization with more political emphases on the religious dimensions of traditional nationalism. New conservatives fostered this policy even further in the hope of solving the problems arising from the situation of disaffection and undermining severely the already precarious republican-Kemalist legitimacy and, in doing so, they certainly found positive responses, especially in those sections of the population who were both depressed and disturbed by the ongoing war with the Kurds, represented by the state as a resolute struggle against terrorism.

The overall outcome of the policy shift and ideological changes outlined above have reached a point at which the combination of the technical preoccupation of the new conservative modernists and a new understanding of cultural homogeneity along the lines drawn by the intellectuals of Turkish-Islamic synthesis now seem to determine the new *raison d'état*. The failure of the new conservatives to forge a new and more participatory public space which would resolve or, at least moderate the effects of the disaffection with the state, and to generate a new sense of legitimacy based on notions of justice and equality, has created a favorable medium for rising nationalist legitimation formulas. To the extent to which the *raison d'éta*t can colonize and articulate Islamic values and practices, Turkish political Islam, now represented by the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*) comes closer to the reactionary modernist version of Turkish nationalism. This is a situation which demonstrates that the religious/modern paradox in Kemalism is now likely to be overcome by a potentially despotic Turkish reactionary modernism. Treatment of the Kurdish problem as mere terrorism and the resulting exclusion not only of Kurdish identity but also of other differences from the already restricted public space in Turkey, on the other hand, show not only inability of the state to colonize certain spheres of life, but also its desire to oppress whatever it cannot control.

Whether Turkey is going to fall into the hands of a soft or hard reactionary modernist despotism or be able to establish a flourishing public sphere which will not only function as a watchdog limiting power, but also be able to form a space for genuine political debate,[36] still remains uncertain. It is certain that the outcome depends on the democratic social imagery of the disadvantaged groups and their ability to eradicate the deeply ingrained understanding of politics as *raison d'état*.

36 Taylor, "Between Democracy and Despotism", p. 36-37.

Civil Society and its Enemies

Reflections on a Debate in the Light of Recent Developments within the Islamic Student Movement in Turkey

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What are the prospects for the development of civil society in those parts of the world, where such organizations have so far been missing? This question has come to the fore, as new regions and countries have entered the era of mass politics, and ventured more open forms of political rule. When former colonies in Africa, the Middle East, South, and Southeast Asia gained independence this question became a burning issue. The recent rise in this debate has been caused by the disintegration of the Soviet Empire. Ernest Gellner is one of many prominent scholars who for many years and in different contexts have addressed this question. He also did so in one of his last works, *Conditions of Liberty. Civil Society and Its Rivals* (1994). In this book, written just one year before the author's sudden and untimely death, Gellner's main focus was on Eastern Europe after Communism, but it comprised his concern for similar problems in the Islamic world as well.

Opening a book by Gellner is like being invited to watch a play containing the most dramatic personalities. As the curtain opens the spectator is exposed to a rapidly changing stage, where characters from the whole world and several thousands of years of human history walk in and out. The scene is swiftly transformed from a tribal setting, to an ancient city-state, an agrarian empire, a modern nation-state or a Marxist ideocracy. This breadth of interest is well-known from Gellner's earlier works and I have been a very enthusiastic admirer of books like *Muslim Society* (1981), *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), *Post-Modernism, Reason and Religion* (1992). Gellner's ability to knit the most different social systems together around a unifying theme or problematic has added to the sense of universalism. Modern society is not distinctly separated from other social formations. Cultural patterns and social arrangements differ, but this by no means leads to methodological relativism. Certain basic structures and shared problems make comparative approaches necessary and very fruitful.

The scope of comparison has inevitably led to schematization in Gellner's works. In those of his earlier studies which I know best, *Muslim Society* and *Nations and Nationalism*, I have found his simplifications very helpful. In face of a very complex reality, schematic conceptualizations serve to sort out the basic determining features from the less important details. These are all examples of good theoretical work. In the book referred to here, however, it would appear that schematization has gone too far. The actors have lost their previous animation and appear too much as stereotypes.

Gellner's main contention in *Conditions of Liberty* is that the most significant difference between Communism and Western liberalism is the existence of civil society - the intermediary institutions like trade unions, political parties, religious organizations, pressure groups and clubs, which fill the gap between the family or the individual and the state. One basic condition for the development of civil society is

the separation between the economy and political power structures. Even if the existence of an independent market economy is not a sufficient, it surely is a necessary condition for the development of civil society. Under Communism this was not the case. There the economy was never allowed any autonomous status, but was fused with and subordinated to political power.

Once this power has been broken, the future prospects for the development of civil society, which in its turn is looked upon as a precondition for the development of a viable democracy, depends on the character of the intermediary organizations. Not all intermediary organizations can satisfactorily be called civil society. In agrarian empires, where political power was centralized, the subject people could escape state power by clinging to their own communitarian organizations. Tribal organization, for example, was often strong enough to keep central power at arms length. It did so, however, by requiring absolute obedience from its own members. "Traditional man can sometimes escape the tyranny of kings, but only at the cost of falling under the tyranny of cousins, and of ritual."[1] Civil society, however, is built on a double balance act: on the one hand individuals are protected from communitarian forms of suppression by the central state. In this way individual liberties are secured. On the other hand, central state power is checked thanks to the existence of intermediary groups, which are formed by independent individuals, who in that capacity constitute civil society.

A precondition for the development of civil society, thus defined, is Modular Man. This concept describes an individual who has been endowed with a level of education which makes it possible for him to walk in and out of different institutions and organizations. He has achieved the equipment needed to serve as a building stone in very different social constellations. Modular man entered the scene of history during the era of nationalism, when the boundaries of local cultural communities were broken up and larger political units based on national communities (nation-states) came into being. In that process "everybody became a Mamluk," i.e. everybody became partaker of high culture, which in traditional society had been granted only to the learned elite.

Gellner is not pessimistic about the future possibilities of building a civil society on East European soil. Alluding to Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies* - a book mainly endorsed by himself - he challenges the liberal philosopher's concept of historicism by claiming a "partial historicism" for the case of civil society. Even if civil society is not an inevitable outcome of "the scientific-industrial mode of life," the alternatives do not seem to be wholly compatible with it.[2] Modern scientific-industrial society cannot develop together with extreme forms of authoritarianism. The collapse of the Marxist ideocracy serves as a demonstration of this. Still, the residues of authoritarianism and communitarianism are not all together eliminated, according to Gellner, and modern man has to make up his mind concerning which path to take.[3] Civil society cannot develop together with communitarian forms of social organization. Citizens will have to choose either one or the other. The question is, however, how valid this part of the pursued argument really is, based as it is on an either-or logic?

As a matter of fact, Gellner's essay becomes problematic when Islam is taken into the picture. The reason for this is that Gellner all too easily deports Islam to the opposite side, the side of counter-examples. Secularization is seen as a necessary condition for the development of civil society. Individuals, who are not able to act independently from the community of believers, cannot become the building-stones of

1 Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty. Civil Society and its Rivals*, London, 1994, p. 7.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 213.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 214.

the kind of intermediary organizations on which civil society is built. With respect to secularization Islam is singular:

> Islam is unique among the major world civilizations or religions. Some four centuries ago at the end of the Middle Ages, the Old World contained four literate higher civilizations, each with its own religion or cluster of religions. As a result of the dramatic history of the subsequent period, three of these are unmistakably, though not uniformly or completely, secularized. The widely held sociological thesis affirming that in industrial or industrializing societies religion loses much of its erstwhile hold over men and society is, by and large, correct... But there is one marked exception: the world of Islam. The hold of Islam over the populations of the lands in which it is the main religion has in no way diminished in the course of the last hundred years. In some ways it has been markedly strengthened.[4]

Is this description trustworthy? Sweeping generalizations are difficult to evaluate as long as the issues involved are not specified. Without being able to do justice to this intricate question, I will nevertheless try to problematize Gellner's contention with reference to the Turkish case.

The fact is namely that observations concerning the role of Islam in modern Turkey speak a very different language. During the last century or more both state and society have been thoroughly secularized. Starting from 1923 Turkey has had a truly secular polity. Its constitution and laws are now cut off from Islamic jurisprudence. This has not meant that Islamism has been kept out of politics. Ever since the transition to a multi-party system in 1950 Islam has been integrated into mainstream politics, first by close cooperation with the big government parties, the Democratic Party (1950's) and the Justice Party (1960's), and since the end of the 1960's by means of an independent Islamic party. The National Salvation Party of the 1970's was a coalition partner in three different governments, and the Welfare Party of the 1980's and 1990's has been closely integrated in local as well as national politics thanks to its repeated election victories. It is important to keep in mind that Islam has become part of Turkish politics without affecting the secular character of its polity.

A common objection to this kind of analysis is that political Islam in Turkey is not yet strong enough to change the laws and the polity according to its own aspirations. If it were, it would impose a political system based on fundamentalist principles, not very different from what happened in Iran in 1979.

How credible is that prediction? The argument is frightening, but not at all that convincing. First of all, it is based on the assumption that a great majority of so-called Islamists are devoted to a system based on Islamic law, *şeriat*. In addition to that, it assumes that those who believe in the blessings of *şeriat* are also willing to support it even at the price of a political dictatorship. One cannot deny that there are radical fundamentalists in Turkey as well as in other Muslim countries, but it seems that such extreme Islamists do not have a very strong following.

A couple of years ago I interviewed around twenty female students who covered their heads. Many of them had sacrificed a lot for their belief in a correct Islamic practice. Some had been expelled from the university and had not been able to complete their education, others had somehow managed to get a university degree, but later on realized that an academic career was impossible as long as they insisted on wearing a *başörtüsü* (head-scarf). These young women were all very strong and pious believers. They were also prepared to fight for their rights, and in that sense could be described as militant, but they were in no way enthusiastic for a system based on Islamic law, especially if this was to be enforced without the consent of the majority of the people. They seemed to act on the basis of inner conviction, not as a result of external pressure, and in that sense they behaved as true individualists.

These young women were generally different from their mothers. They were

4 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

well-educated, independent-minded, and conscious about their future aims. In this way they could be seen as representatives of a society different from that of the elder generation. It is not only the state that has been secularized in Turkey, but also society. People want to be able to act independently of the community. For a young woman, this means being a.o. able to make a professional career, choose a husband of her own choice, challenge her husband and other superiors on a number of issues. One should not be deceived by the fact that many women struggle in the name of Islam. The Islamic "community" they speak for often seems to be ideational, rather than the expression of a concrete social and communitarian reality.

Social and political organizations built by people defending an Islamic ideology are no less important contributions to the building of civil society than those having a social-democratic, liberal, conservative, or nationalist inclination. Islamist organizations are not by definition communitarian, a concept meaning that once you submit yourself to an organization thus defined you lose your autonomy. Islamic organizations may display communitarian features, but do not have to be totally permeated by communitarianism.

Head-covering may again serve as an example. The practice of covering is a symbol of strong visibility. It easily serves the purpose of separating people into distinct categories: those covering versus those not covering, meaning the more pious versus the less pious. Once covering, you cannot easily change your mind, because that would expose you to scornful glances from covering women. Thus, once you start to wear a head scarf your freedom is curbed. Just as the door to close friendship with other covering believers is opened, it is closed to those groups, who do not cover.

But this is exactly what many covering women are complaining about. The communitarian pressure from their own, as well as the opposite groups is something they feel uneasy about. Many women want to wear a head scarf, but they do not want to be treated differently from others. They want to be like everybody else, meaning that they want to take part in social life as autonomous individuals.

One teacher, who had been covering for more than ten years, was very unhappy about the fact that the scarf marked her out from other non-covering women. During a visit to another country, where Muslim women were covering more freely while at the same time intermixing with people of other confessions, she experienced relief at not being marked out, but instead at having been given the chance to be anonymous or invisible. It is true that the head cover may serve communitarian interests, but it does not necessarily have to do so. The fact is that a tug-of-war between communitarianism and individualism is going on within the Islamic movement itself. That is also one important reason why it is wrong to condemn their organizations as being without relevance for the construction of a civil society.

In order to illustrate the kind of conflicts and tensions that arise when communitarian and liberal attitudes confront each other, let us consider the story of one of the students interviewed in the above mentioned study.

Zeynep

When the rules concerning clothing in the universities were tightened up at the beginning of 1987, Zeynep (a pseudonym) was in her second year in the Faculty of Theology. Coming back from the winter holiday the covering students were told to uncover, otherwise they would either have to stay out of school or accept punishment. Ever since 1982, when similar events had taken place, the Faculty of Theology had been treated as a special case and the students had been able to cover freely.

Yet, by reducing the number of female students, the Council of Higher Education had taken religious education under special control. Zeynep points out that in 1984, the year before she entered the Faculty, fifty female students had been admitted.

When she enrolled, the year after, only fifteen had been accepted. Therefore, the entrance figures had been exceptionally high for girls that year.

Zeynep started to cover towards the end of her first year. She comes from a traditionally religious family, and always covered at home, but she would remove her head scarf when she went out. After becoming a student of theology she made it a practice to take a scarf along for classes where readings was made from the Koran, or for the ritual prayers (*namaz*), but on her way to and from school she stuck to her old habit and went bare-headed. Yet, since she was used to cover at home, it was no dramatic event for Zeynep to start covering regularly also in the public,

- We used to have our Koran class at the end of the day. So, sometimes I kept the scarf on the way back home, especially during the winter. After a while I got used to it and began to cover regularly.

Being hooted out

During those cold winter days in February 1987, when the students were met by new prohibitions, they gathered in front of the entrance to the university. With few exceptions the boys also refrained from entering classes, thereby fully identifying themselves with their women fellow-students.

Yet, nobody really wanted to believe that this ban would last very long. Almost all the girls in this Faculty were covering, and after a couple of years of indulgence towards the theologians, the opinion among the students was that some kind of exception would be effectuated also this time.

However, one day after the other passed without any prospect of concessions. Each day the students gathered in front of the entrance. Some waited more persistently, while others, after having checked the situation, left and went home.

After about a week Zeynep started to feel really uneasy about the situation. At home, her parents told her that this ban was outside her own control, something for which Allah would not hold her responsible. They meant that it would be better for her to follow suit now, study and get her degree, and then, later on, as a responsible grown-up, work for a change of these rules. Zeynep also had an uncle with high professional standing who told her to say to herself: "Allah, I am not responsible for these things. I have to do this (uncover) in order to pursue my studies."

- I remember very well. It was a Tuesday. By then everybody had been pondering and discussing this problem for more than a week. A friend of mine, who also comes from a family of old-fashioned traditions, was getting really worried. As a matter of fact, her father didn't leave her alone, but took her along to campus and waited there until he saw that she really went in. Actually this was against her own will. To tell the truth, I was pretty much in the same situation. I was reluctant to obey the new rules, but my parents wanted me to follow suit. There are really so many things you miss by staying away from the lectures, even for one day.

- It was a Tuesday, about nine or ten in the morning. We (Zeynep, together with the friend just mentioned) took our head-scarves off and ran from the entrance door to the mescid.[5] *You feel like being naked. It was really a difficult thing to do. Yet, when I think about it now, I feel like laughing at the whole thing.*

- Adjacent to that small mosque-room there is a place, where we do our abdest (ablutions) and we are used to uncover in there. Now we were waiting to go to class, both my friend and I. Still, we were hesitating: "Shall we really go, or not?" Finally, we decided, saying to each other: "Since we have already uncov-

5 A small mosque room, which was situated in the basement of the building.

ered to begin with, we might as well go." I went to my class, which was a language course in Arabic, taught by a teacher from Saudi Arabia. There were about five or six girls from one of the higher classes. From my own class there was only one student. Now, that girl and I are studying for our Master's together, like sisters of fate. During that first lecture I counted up to twelve boys, who took no part in the protest.

- So, we were a small group of girls that didn't want to stay away from the lectures. We felt this as a responsibility. During these critical days we stuck firmly together.

Having attended the lectures for about a week, it was time for the first midterm examinations. Yet, at that time, the atmosphere among the students had turned more hostile. Many of those who previously had showed up at the lectures, now refused to take the examinations.

- There were not more than one or two who ventured to enter the examinations. I went there together with one of my friends. Then the second day, when we were on our way out, a couple of other people that had also decided to uncover were a little bit ahead of us. A big crowd of students had gathered in front of the entrance door. When these two students came out on the stairway we heard the noise of people applauding and whistling and didn't really understand what was going on. When it was our turn to get out of the doors we realized that all these students were protesting against us. I blushed. My face turned flaming red. I got so upset, that I walked straight out, and without stopping I went all the way from the university up to Ulus.[6]

- It was good that we were two friends together that day. If I had been alone, it would have been even more difficult... Or had I known we were going to be hooted out like that I would have preferred to wait all day long until the evening to get out... Anyway, the two of us walked all the way up to Ulus, which took about one hour. We were furious. As if we had uncovered of our own free will! Those other people, did they not understand that you are not alone, that you have your family and responsibilities towards them! That friend of mine was in a different situation from me, because her family had been against her studying. She had been struggling with them ever since high-school in order to be able to study. And now her family was pressing her very hard. They would call her on the phone, exhorting her to uncover and attend the lectures. The strange thing was that under normal circumstances they wouldn't care very much about her. She really had a hard time. Anyway, by walking straight ahead like that you get it out of your system. From there (Ulus) I went back home. My friend went to her dorm. Everything was really much more difficult for her, since she was staying in a dorm for covering girls.[7]

- All this happened on a Monday. Back home I told my family about it. The next day I had an examination in English. I went to school, but very reluctantly. Anyway, in the morning there weren't many students around. So there was only a small group of us that went in and had the examination. But then the problem arose, how to find a way out, because, by the time the examination was over, a big crowd of students had gathered in front of the university building. So, if we were to get out the normal gate, we would get into trouble again.

- Now, we knew about a door at the rear part of the building. We also knew that

6 A part of the city situated about 7-8 kilometers from the Faculty of Theology.

7 Zeynep is indicating that her friend would be under pressure from her friends in the dormitory not to uncover. This was especially difficult since her family was insisting so much on the opposite.

some of our friends had succeeded in getting out that way. There were hooting students around there as well, but only in small groups. So, we asked the guardians to help us out by opening this door for us.[8] *Unwillingly, they agreed to do that, and we got out. We ran across a couple of protesting students, escaped and got away.*

- When I came for the examinations the third day, my friend did not show up. I guess she was more sensitive than I. When I looked around I saw that the police had come and sent the students away. I turned to a couple of people at the bus-stop and asked whether they knew anything about the examinations. "Will there be any examinations today," I asked. "What do you mean, examinations," they answered. As a matter of fact I had not been able to prepare myself for that examination anyway. You lose you desire to work under such conditions. From then on there were no examinations. After some time the ban was lifted from our university.

Resentments

As part of their resistance against the ban some students organized a hunger strike. Zeynep obviously was at the periphery of this conflict. Even though one of her own class-mates took part in the strike, she does not seem to be very well informed about what happened.

- Yes, as far as I know, a hunger strike was organized at that time. But I don't remember that very well, because my family didn't want me to get involved in that kind of action.

Concerning the reason why she did not get in touch with any of the activists, Zeynep admits:

- Perhaps it was due to the fact that I had uncovered and taken part in the regular course program that I couldn't induce myself to look those friends straight in the face. I really don't know.

As a matter of fact these events left a scar in Zeynep's memory. Her previous delight at studying abated, and the relationship with her fellow-students turned sour. Below a seemingly unruffled surface, there is no mistaking bitter feelings of disappointment and resentment.

- Many of the students got different kinds of punishments. Some of those who had entered without uncovering got warnings, some were sent away from school for a week, or for a month. It differed. We, who had agreed to uncover, escaped punishment. As a result of this we didn't exactly encounter hostility from the other students. We went on to study together, to eat at the same tables, and to work together. They knew that we had not uncovered voluntarily. We didn't share the same ideas, but we didn't encounter any direct hostility.

To tell the truth, the uncovering students were being gibed at from time to time. "Oh, how becoming", the other students would say, insinuating that bare-headedness well suited the weak character of these girls. It was even rumoured that the ones who had uncovered would be ignored by the boys, so that they would lose the chance to get married. Trying to recall these queer memories Zeynep concludes:

- It may be that I have forgotten a lot of things. Or that I actually don't want to remember what happened... If I were to go through the same events again, I still would act the same. But I profoundly hope I'll never have to.

8 Such extra doors are usually locked for security reasons.

New perspectives on head-covering and Islamic identity

The effect of these unpleasant experiences was that Zeynep became more interested in the character of the person wearing a head-scarf than the fact that she was wearing one.

- In the beginning I used to feel spontaneously much closer to people wearing a head-scarf than to others, but not any more. In this way I really learned something important from these painful events. Now, I try to evaluate people I meet according to their way of being, not their outfit... I don't care that much about what people look like. That is really their own private affair.

According to Zeynep, there are things in Islam that are much more important than covering. Even if covering is imposed by the Koran, the relevant clauses constitute nothing but a recommendation directed to Muslim women. Because, she asks rhetorically, what is the value of covering if a woman does not do her ritual prayers ? Or, if she is not virtuous in other respects.

- I used to have a teacher in sociology who wore the head scarf, but who was always indulging in slander and gossip. When I discovered that, it became a kind of shock for me. After having seen through things like that, I have stopped evaluating women according to their head-cover.

Still, the head-cover has not lost its significance as a unifying symbol. Zeynep speaks her mind, admitting that she has not stopped feeling more sincere towards covered women but that the head-cover as such does not constitute a measuring rod any more. Sentiments of sympathy and reflective evaluation of a person's character are obviously separated from each other.

A new generation

The fact that Zeynep followed her parents' advice during the conflict over the head-cover does not mean that she is completely in their leading-strings. It seems that religion constitutes the sphere of existence where she can most easily chisel out her own independent identity. Compared to the issue of marriage, where she more or less has accepted that her parents will take the initiative in arranging a good match, she seems to be the person in charge when it comes to religious matters.

Zeynep's mother never went to school. She was raised in a village, where she had been taught how to read the Koran. She had also acquired some skill in sewing. Later on, Zeynep's uncle (her mother's brother), who had studied at the university, had seen to it that his sister got at least a passable knowledge of reading.

Asked whether she is a more conscious Islamic believer than her mother, Zeynep answers with an emphatic: "Of course!" and hastens to add that it is not unusual that the differences in learning and outlook between the students and their families cause friction between the generations.

Asked about these differences Zeynep answers:

- They (the older generation) believe in all kinds of superstitions. For example, you are supposed neither to read from, nor even to touch the Koran without first having taken your abdest (ablution). According to my interpretation this is wrong. Such rules do not serve any other purpose than to set up obstacles between the individual believer and the Holy Book.

- Another commonplace is that women cannot read the Koran during their menstruation periods. But, just think about it! How would it be possible for us as students of the Faculty of Theology not to be able to read from the Koran during certain days of the month. Well, most teachers say the same thing, but when I read

the Koran at home (under such circumstances) my mother doesn't like it. She has to put up with it, but she doesn't approve of it.

- There is a türbe[9] *close to the place where my parents used to live when they were small, which my mother respects a lot. Once I visited that türbe, in spite of the fact that I had my special days. You see, when you become more knowledgeable, you start to see things from a different perspective. You experience a kind of alienation. Alienation even from your own family. When my mother discovered what I had done, she became very angry at me. However, there are no rules in Islam forbidding you to enter a türbe without having performed the ritual cleaning. But these superstitions are so strongly ingrained that older people almost get into panic.*

In spite of their traditionalism, Zeynep is able to discuss these controversial issues openly with her parents. Yet, sometimes her mother seems to lose her temper, complaining: "I wished we had never let you study at the university!" But however defiant, expressions like this do not seem to be that serious after all. The truth is that Zeynep's mother is very proud of her daughter, who has not only become a professional teacher but who is carrying on with higher studies at the university as well.

A peaceful mind

Zeynep's Islamic Puritanism has not been combined with any strong existential brooding. Neither has she experienced any deep identity crisis during her adolescence. Zeynep is of the opinion that it is thanks to her good family relations that she was spared great difficulties during the years when she was growing up. Talking about her years at the university:

- I've been lucky in having been able to live with my family. Staying in the dormitory is much more difficult... When students come here on their own (without their families) they get a taste of what it is like to be independent. They get used to doing things on their own initiative. So when they go back to their families they very easily get into trouble.

Zeynep's character is based firmly on moderation. She covers, but not according to any extreme fashion. In more concrete terms that means she is does not wear a *pardesü*, but a skirt of moderate length and a jacket. Her scarf covers the hair all right, but is not wide enough to hang down over the shoulders.

She is working, and enjoys practising her profession, but does not insist on wearing the scarf during work. She does not want others, and herself, to get into unnecessary trouble.

To a large extent she obeys her parents, but is also able to preserve her own independence. Especially within her own field of study she is able to claim an identity of her own.

Her inclination towards stability and moderation does not exclude a quiet, but firm desire for progress and a sincere belief in tolerance towards divers interests and opinions. Being a woman does not seem to have reduced her decisiveness concerning a professional career. As a matter of fact it appears as if the opposite was true. The very fact that she is a woman seems to have incited her to take professional ambition much more seriously than many male students.

Zeynep also shows great insight into the fact that all social reality is based on diversity. These observations are based on her own experience. As an example, she points to the fact that a lot of different opinions and ideas are represented among the

9 A place where a holy saint is buried.

people at her own faculty. This is true in terms of differing interpretations on religious, as well as social and political issues. She does not find this diversity disturbing or distasteful, but rather accepts it as a matter of course. The same thing is also true in relation to her ideas about other covering women. So many different interpretations, attitudes and opinions dwell beneath the head-scarf, that each woman has to be judged according to her own particular personal characteristics. Zeynep sees these insights into the multitude of human relations as important steps on the way to a deeper understanding of the world around herself.

What about the other world? As mentioned before, Zeynep does not seem to have a cogitative or melancholic turn of mind. This does not mean that she is superficial and careless. Just the opposite. She seems to be extremely responsible and responsive in relation to her social environment. Profound meditation and religious brooding, however, do not seem to be in her line.

> *- I'm a believer, but for some time, when I was in lycée, I was pondering whether there really is a God (Allah) or not. But then I thought that if he exists, it is good that I carry out my religious practices. If he does not exist, I won't lose anything by being faithful, so never mind.*

This answer reflects genuine confidence as well as a good dose of pragmatism, an attitude characteristic of many non-militant believers. This disposition is not symptomatic of passivity and indifference. On the contrary, peace of mind does not exclude the existence of an eager and independent mind. In Zeynep's case it was a question of trying to balance the demands put forward by her traditionalist parents and the charges brought against her by the more militant fellow students in the conflict over the head-scarf. In between these pressure groups, Zeynep tried to chisel out what she experienced as most true to herself as an independent individual.

Conclusious

The existence of civil society is not a question of yes-or-no or either-or. Looked upon from the point of view of value judgements, it may be inconsistent to plead simultaneously for values underlying communitarian and liberal forms of organizations. From a sociological point of view, however, it is fully possible to have both, or to have societies in which the building of a civil society has come some of the way, even though not fully to the end. In spite of the fact that he often declared Kantian and Weberian sympathies, it seems to me that in *The Conditions of Liberty* Gellner did not keep the normative fully apart from the descriptive or analytical.

Niyazi Berkes underlines in his work *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (1964) the distinction between the process of secularization and the doctrine of secularism. Secularization is a sociological process, which takes place as a result of factors beyond the control of individuals, while the doctrine of secularism involves individual ideas, attitudes, beliefs and interests.[10] Secularization refers to a social reality. Secularism, on the other hand, expresses an ideology.

Secularization as a sociological process and secularism as an ideology are often interrelated, but the relationship is by no means simple. The process of secularization has its friends and foes, and which inclination will dominate is never given beforehand. In spite of this common-place it seems that Gellner in *Conditions of Liberty* mistook ideology for social reality. Fundamentalism as an anti-secularist ideology is used as evidence for lack of secularization as a sociological process. This leads to the fatal conclusion that Islam is in some sense immune against secularization, when, in fact, the process of secularization has gone very far in many Muslim countries.

10 Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, Montreal, 1964, p. 3-4.

Strong fundamentalist movements are often a reaction to the process of secularization, instead of being an expression of its absence.

Civil society is not a question of either-or. In most cases it would be very difficult to answer in a clear yes or no, whether a country has a well functioning civil society. Even in a country like Sweden, many people would find difficulty in answering that question with a clear affirmative. Civil society as a concept should be treated as an ideal type, in the direction of which a specific country is moving more or less fast, or put negatively, from which it is becoming more or less alienated. This developmental approach is especially appropriate for countries which are in the midst of very fast social, political and economic change.

Turkey is often described as an exception among the countries in the Middle East. The contention is that what has been accomplished in terms of civil society in this country has been achieved in spite of its Islamic heritage and thanks to the radical secularist reforms of Kemal Atatürk. The contrast is often brought out, as in this quotation from Gellner's book:

> The scripturalism, pervasive rule-orientation and puritanism, the regulation though not secularisation of economic life, the monotheism, restrained ritualism and religious though not political individualism, have somehow produced a world religion which, at any rate so far, is secularization-resistant, and tends increasingly to dominate the polities within which it has a majority. There is of course the curious case of Turkey, where the masses seem to take part in this trend, but have a plural Civil Society imposed on them by a military-political élite committed to a secular stance as part of the Kemalist heritage, of which it is the conscientious and sometimes ferocious guardian.[11]

This evaluation of modern Turkish history, which comes close to the official Kemalist version, has been challenged more and more often in recent years. It is certainly not only orthodox and fundamentalist forms of religion that impede the development of civil society. Secularist ideologies have also served authoritarian regimes. The Soviet Union, including East Europe, is one example, and Kemalism constitutes another one, even if its control system never became as totalitarian as Soviet communism.

To be sure, a number of important secularizing reforms have been introduced in the name of Kemalism, but it is also true that the development of such organizations, which would contribute to the development of a dynamic civil society, has been impeded in the name of the same ideology. Especially, when these organizations have had an Islamic bent, the authoritarianism of Turkish secularism has become even more restraining and categorical.

Just as Kemalism has impeded as well as contributed to the growth of civil society, Islamism has also been the carrier of opposite tendencies. Every organization, or every aspect of organizations formed in the name of Islam, is not unfavourable to the development of a democratic society. As a matter of fact, some positive contributions are presently in the making within the press and other media (a large variety of publishing houses, newspapers, magazines, and TV-channels), in education (private schools of high quality in and outside of Turkey), among women of different social standing (study circles, door-knocking campaigns, maternal and other forms of social support) and in party politics (effective grass-roots organizations). Those who close their eyes to the dynamic and pluralistic aspects of the Islamic movement, and focus only on its negative, communitarian aspects, contribute indirectly to the formation of impediments to a viable civil society. In that way they are no less enemies of civil society than those Islamists they intend to struggle against.

Islamism does not easily fit into the right-left spectrum of political ideologies. Islam as ideology has widely served as an expression of nationalism, which is an

11 Gellner (1994), p. 199-200.

over-ideology, and as such contains leftist as well as rightist, liberal as well as conservative political inclinations. Therefore the key to the understanding of the ideological controversies concerning democracy and civil society is to be found not only in the struggle taking place between Islamists and secularists, but also, and perhaps even more so, among the Islamists themselves.

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Civil Society and Democratic Consolidation in Turkey

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It is not my intention here to enter into a lengthy discussion on the definition of civil society. For working purposes, however, I will give the following definition taken by Larry Diamond: Civil society "is the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or a set of shared values". Thus, civil society, being "an intermediate entity, standing between the private sphere and the state ... excludes individual and family life, inward-looking group activity (e.g., for recreation, entertainment, or spirituality), the profit-making enterprise of individual business firms, and political efforts to take control of the state".[1] Likewise, the voluntary nature of civil society organizations excludes the primordial groups. Finally, efforts of such organizations must be oriented towards maintaining a pluralistic society. "To the extent that an organization -such as a religious fundamentalist, ethnic chauvinist, revolutionary, or millenarian movement- seeks to monopolize a functional or political space in society, claiming that it represents the only legitimate path, it contradicts the pluralist and market-oriented nature of civil society."[2]

One of the fundamental distinctions upon which the present paper depends is between civil society and political society, a distinction not stressed by all theorists of civil society. "Civil society *relates to the state* in some way but does not aim to win formal power or office in the state."[3] This distinction is clearly related to the classic distinction in structural-functionalist political science between political parties and interest groups or between interest-articulation and interest-aggregation functions. I believe that this distinction has analytical and empirical value since civil society and political society institutions have distinct aims, styles, organizational patterns, and mentalities. Just as civil society stands between the individual and the state, political society stands between civil society and the state, providing a bridge between the two. This distinction does not, of course, preclude strong (sometimes even organic) relations between a civil society institution and a political society institution, namely political parties.

One of the main arguments of this paper is that the consolidation of democracy requires a balanced relationship between civil society and political society. Linz and Stepan, arguing along the same lines, have written the following:

> At best, civil society can destroy a non-democratic regime. However, a full democratic transition, and especially democratic consolidation, must involve political society ... (I)t is important to stress not only the *distinctiveness* of civil society and political society, but also their *complementarity* ... (W)ithin the democratic community, champions of either civil or political society all too often adopt a discourse and a set of practices that are implicitly inimical to the normal development of the other ... Quite often democratic leaders of political society argue that

1 Larry Diamond, "Rethinking Civil Society: Toward Democratic Consolidation", *Journal of Democracy*, 5 (July 1994), p. 5.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 6-7.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

civil society, having played its historical role, should be demobilized so as to allow for the development of normal democratic politics. Such an argument is bad democratic theory and bad democratic politics. A robust civil society, with the capacity to generate political alternatives and to monitor government and state can help transitions get started, help resist reversals, push transitions to their completion, help consolidate, and help deepen democracy. At all stages of the democratic process, therefore, a lively and independent civil society is invaluable. The danger that democratic groups primarily located in civil society might occasionally present for the development of political society is that normative preferences and styles of organization, perfectly appropriate to civil society, might be taken to be desirable or, indeed, the only legitimate style of organization for political society.[4]

Thus many civil society leaders often speak pejoratively of "institutional routinization, intermediaries, and compromise within politics". Each of these, however, is an indispensable practice of political society. "In short, political society, informed, pressured, and periodically renewed by civil society, must somehow achieve a workable agreement on the myriad ways in which democratic power will be crafted and exercised."[5] Thus, the impact of civil society upon political society would be one of informing, monitoring, checking, and pressuring the latter, but not one of replacing it.

Given these generalizations, the situation in Turkey can be described as a combination of steady (but not so dramatic as compared to Eastern Europe) growth of civil society and the rapid decay of political society. The number of voluntary associations in all fields increased steadily in the last fifty years, and a truly spectacular growth took place in the field of mass communications with the abolition in 1993 of the constitutional prohibition on private radio and television networks. The result is a mushrooming of local and national private radio and television stations all over the country with a strong impact on the growth of civil society. In addition to the officially organized sector of civil society, there also appeared in recent years a large number of officially unorganized groups, platforms, networks, citizens' initiatives, etc. Another relevant factor in the future growth of civil society is the abolition in 1995 of the constitutional provisions banning organic or cooperative relations between political parties and such civil society institutions as trade unions, voluntary associations, foundations, public professional organizations, and cooperative societies. Although the relevant laws have not yet been modified in accordance with the constitutional amendment, this change can be expected to provide further stimuli for the growth of civil society.

The growth of civil society is coupled, however, with a decline of political society. What distinguishes Turkey from many new democracies is the relatively high level of institutionalization of its political parties. Indeed, Frederick Frey, commenting on Turkish politics in the 1950s, argued that "Turkish politics are party politics... Within the power structure of Turkish society, the political party is the main unofficial link between the government and the larger, extra-governmental groups of people... It is perhaps in this respect above all -the existence of extensive, powerful, highly organized, grass roots parties- that Turkey differs institutionally from the other Middle Eastern nations with whom we frequently compare her."[6]

The Turkish party system displayed the characteristics of a typical two-party system between 1946 and 1960, when the two main contenders were the Republican People's Party (RPP) and the Democratic Party (DP). In the 1961 elections that followed the military intervention of 1960, no party obtained a parliamentary majority

4 Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation, Baltimore*, 1996, p. 9-10.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

6 Frederick W. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite*, Cambridge, Mass., 1965, p. 301-303. On the importance of party system institutionalization for democratic consolidation, see also Larry Diamond, "Democracy in Latin America: Degrees, Illusions, and Directions for Consolidation", in Tom Farer, ed., *Beyond Sovereignty: Collectively Defending Democracy in the Americas*, Baltimore, 1995, p. 78-81.

due to the fragmentation of the former DP votes (the DP was banned by the military regime) among three parties. In the 1965 and 1969 elections, however, the Justice Party (JP), having established itself as the main heir to the DP, was able to gain comfortable parliamentary majorities even though the number of parties represented in parliament kept rising. The 1973 elections that followed the 1971 military intervention again produced a fragmented parliament, as did the 1977 elections. In both parliaments no party had a majority but the two major parties (the RPP and the JP) were clearly stronger than others. Their combined percentage of votes was 63.1 in 1973 and 78.8 in 1977. Due to the D'Hondt version of proportional representation which favours larger parties, these corresponded to a total percentage of seats of 74.2 in 1973 and 89.3 in 1977 (Table 1).

The main characteristics (or the "maladies") of the Turkish party system in the 1970s have been described as volatility, fragmentation, and ideological polarization.[7] Volatility meant sudden and significant changes in party votes from one election to the next. Fragmentation was observed in the increasing number of parties represented in parliament. The fragmentation of seats in the National Assembly as measured by Douglas Rae's index of fractionalization[8] was 0.70 in 1961, 0.63 in 1965, 0.59 in 1969, 0.70 in 1973, and 0.60 in 1977. While such fragmentation was not too high and the format of the party system was closer to limited or moderate multipartism, the growth of the two highly ideological parties (the National Salvation Party representing political Islam and the ultra-nationalist Nationalist Action Party) in the 1970s increased ideological polarization and gave the system some of the properties of extreme or polarized multipartism.[9] Short-lived and ideologically incompatible coalition governments were unable to produce policies and to control increasing political violence and terror. Finally, the system broke down with the military intervention of 12 September 1980.

The military regime that took over power attempted to overhaul the party system by manipulating the electoral laws. A new electoral law was passed in 1983 introducing a ten percent national threshold and very high constituency thresholds (ranging between 14.2 percent and 50 percent depending on the size of the constituency) with the hope that this would eliminate the more ideological minor parties and transform the party system into a more manageable two-or three-party system. The 1983 elections where competition was limited to three parties licensed by the ruling military authorities indeed produced the expected result. The Motherland Party (MP) of Turgut Özal won an absolute majority of seats with 45.2 percent of the vote. The MP retained, even increased, its parliamentary majority in the 1987 elections with a diminished percentage of votes (36.3). By that time, however, the signs of refragmentation were already in the air. This became clear in the local elections of 1989 and 1994, and the parliamentary elections of 1991 and 1995 (Table 2).

At present, the Turkish party system is more fragmented than ever. The largest party in the December 1995 elections (the Welfare Party, WP, which is the heir to the National Salvation Party of the 1970s) received only 21.4 percent of the vote. The fragmentation of the Assembly seats as measured by the index of fractionalization is as follows: 0.61 in 1983, 0.51 in 1987, 0.71 in 1991, and 0.77 in 1995. Due to the electoral system with high national and constituency thresholds, the fragmentation of party votes has been much higher than the fragmentation of seats (Table 3). Furthermore, the relatively greater weight of the two major parties in the

7 Üstün Ergüder and Richard I. Hofferbert, "The 1983 General Elections in Turkey: Continuity or Change in Voting Patterns?" in Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin, eds., *State, Democracy, and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, Berlin and New York, 1988, p. 81-102. Ergun Özbudun, "The Turkish Party System: Institutionalization, Polarization, and Fragmentation", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 17 (April 1981), p. 228-40.

8 Douglas W. Rae, *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws*, New Haven, 1967, p. 56.

9 For this distinction, see Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, Cambridge, 1976, p. 131-45.

1960s and the 1970s (the center-right JP and the center-left RPP), which had given some degree of stability to the party system, has also disappeared over the years. Both major tendencies are now divided into two parties each: the center-right tendency is represented by the Motherland (MP) and the True Path (TPP) parties, and the center-left by the Democratic Left (DLP) and the Republican People's (RPP) parties, with little hope of reunification in the near future.

Table 2 also demonstrates a high degree of volatility in the Turkish party system, which suggests an almost continuous process of realignment. Although such high volatility scores are to be expected given the frequency of military interventions which wreaked havoc in the party system (the 1960 intervention banned the DP, and the 1980 intervention closed down all political parties), thirteen years after the most recent retransition to democracy volatility is still high and rising. This presents a sharp contrast with Southern European (i.e., Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Greek) party systems where, "following a critical election, volatility declined and voting behaviour became more stable and predictable".[10] High Turkish volatility scores stem partly from the destructive effects of military interventions as mentioned above, and partly from the fact that Turkish political parties are not strongly rooted in civil society, as will be spelled out below. To the extent that the stabilization of electoral behaviour is an element of democratic consolidation, the current trend in Turkey seems to be detracting from it.

Another worrisome change in the party system is the increasing weakening of the moderate center-right and center-left tendencies. The 1995 elections marked the lowest points ever for the two tendencies which so far have dominated Turkish politics: the combined vote of the two center-right parties was 38.9 percent while that of the two center-left parties was 25.4 percent. This represented a sharp decrease over the years and a corresponding rise in the votes of noncentrist parties. In addition to 21.4 percent of the vote, the Islamic WP, the ultranationalist NAP got 8.18 percent and the Kurdish nationalist People's Democracy Party 4.17 percent of the total vote. Although the latter two parties could not send any representatives to parliament because of the 10 percent national threshold, the combined vote of the three extremist parties reached 33.8, or more than one-third, of the entire electorate. The increasing salience of religious and ethnic issues represents an overall increase in ideological polarization, especially since such issues are more difficult to resolve and less amenable to rational bargainings than socio-economic ones. Thus, all three maladies of the Turkish party system in the 1970's (volatility, fragmentation, and polarization) have reappeared, if anything in worse form. The pivotal position of the WP makes coalition alternatives limited in number and difficult to accomplish. At present, the only possible minimum-winning coalitions are the right-left (MP, TPP or one of the leftist parties), the WP-right (either with the TPP or the MP), and the WP-left (together with both leftist parties) coalitions. The last one is most unlikely because of the strong secularist views of the leftist parties. At any rate, the rise of the WP has, no doubt, increased polarization along the religious dimension, since the party's views on the role of Islam in state and society sharply differentiate it from all other parties.

A fourth malaise in the party system is the organizational weakening of parties and of party identification ties. This seems to be a part of the more general problem of "disillusionment" (*el desenchanto*) typical of many new democracies.[11] The seemingly intractable nature of problems, increasing economic difficulties, very high inflation, a huge foreign and domestic public debt, growing inequalities in wealth, a

10 Leonardo Morlino, "Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe", in Richard Gunther, P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, and Hans-Jürgen Puhle, eds., *The Politics of Democratic Consolidation: Southern Europe in Comparative Perspective*, Baltimore and London, 1995, p. 321.

11 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman and London, 1991, p. 255-58.

sharp deterioration of social policies and pervasive political corruption have created a deep sense of pessimism and disappointment among voters many of whom vote for parties not with any degree of enthusiasm but choose "the least evil" among them.[12] Parties have increasingly neglected the old-style organizational work and concentrated their efforts on media appeals and image- building with the help of professional public relations experts. The slowing down of economic growth means that there is a limit to the spoils parties can distribute to their followers; in the absence of strong ideological motivations, this is another factor that saps the organizational strength of parties. The only party that has managed to avoid this organizational decline is the WP. It is the only party that appreciates the importance of classical door-to-door canvassing with the help of hundreds of thousands of highly motivated, devoted and disciplined party workers. Besides, such activities are not limited to campaign periods but continue all year round. Interestingly, the WP's workers include many women activists, but the party has not so far nominated a single woman even for the most modest elected office.

In this rather bleak picture the only notable positive change compared to the 1970s is the seemingly stronger elite and mass commitment to democracy. Although all major political parties remained committed to democratic regime even during the profound crisis of the late 1970s, some significant groups on the left and on the right challenged its legitimacy. The radical left was not represented in parliament but it found many supporters among students, teachers and in sections of the industrial working class. The radical right, on the other hand, was represented in parliament, even in government, by the NAP, whose commitment to liberal democracy was at best dubious. There were indications that this party was involved in right-wing political violence. Finally, in the eyes of many ordinary citizens, including some civilian politicians, it was quite legitimate for the armed forces to intervene in such a crisis situation to end the violence and chaos. In other words, democracy was not seen by all as "the only game in town".

Today the situation seems to have changed considerably. The collapse of the Communist regime in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union truly marginalized the extreme left groups. The NAP underwent a silent transformation whereby it became a more moderate, pro-system nationalist party. Expectations and calls for a military intervention subsided significantly. Despite the sense of disillusionment among many voters, this did not turn into an ideological challenge to the democratic system itself. "Increased valorization" of democracy as an end in itself[13] is operative in Turkey as in many other new democracies. As O'Donnell observes in regard to the new South American democracies, "the current prestige of democratic discourses, and conversely, the weakness of openly authoritarian political discourses" is a major factor working to the advantage of democratic actors. He is also right in his words of warning, however, that this factor "is subject to withering by the passage of time... (T)he influence of democratic discourses depends... in part on their capacity to be translated into concrete meanings for the majority of the population".[14]

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12 A survey demonstrated that the level of trust in political institutions in Turkey was not lower than in such consolidated democracies as England, France, Italy, Japan, and the Netherlands. Thus 58.1 percent of the respondents stated that they had much or some confidence in parliament. See Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültür ve Demokrasi", in *Türkiye'de Demokratik Siyasal Kültür*, Ankara, 1995, p. 58-61. However, data for this survey were collected in 1990-91. After another five years of very poor governmental performance, I doubt that the same question today would elicit a similar degree of positive response.

13 Diamond, *op.cit.*, 77; 15; Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, "Political Crafting of Democratic Consolidation or Destruction: European and South American Comparisons", in Robert A. Pastor, ed., *Democracy in the Americas: Stopping the Pendulum,* New York and London, 1989, p. 47.

14 Guillermo O'Donnel, "Transitions, Continuities, and Paradoxes," in Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnel, and J. Samuel Valanzaela, eds., *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective*, Notre Dame, 1992, p. 21; See also Scott Mainwaring, "Transitions to Democracy and Democratic Consolidation: Theoretical and Comparative Issues," *idem*, p. 311.

Table 1: Percentage of Votes (and Seats) in Turkish Parliamentary Elections (1950-1977)

Party	1950	1954	1957	1961	1965	1969	1973	1977
DP/JP	53.3	56.6	47.7	34.8	52.9	46.5	29.8	36.9
	(83.8)	(93.0)	(69.5)	(35.1)	(53.3)	(56.9)	(33.1)	(42.0)
RPP	39.8	34.8	40.8	36.7	28.7	27.4	33.3	41.4
	(14.2)	(5.7)	(29.2)	(38.4)	(29.8)	(31.8)	(41.1)	(47.3)
NP	3.0	4.7	7.2	14.0	6.3	3.2	1.0	_
	(0.2)	(0.9)	(0.7)	(12.0)	(6.9)	(1.3)	(0.0)	_
FP	_	_	3.8	_	_	_	_	_
	_	_	(0.7)	_	_	_	_	_
NTP	_	_	_	13.7	3.7	2.2	_	_
	_	_	_	(14.4)	(4.2)	(1.3)	_	_
TLP	_	_	_	_	3.0	2.7	_	0.1
	_	_	_	_	(3.3)	(0.4)	_	(0.0)
NAP	_	_	_	_	2.2	3.0	3.4	6.4
	_	_	_	_	(2.4)	(0.2)	(0.7)	(3.6)
UP	_	_	_	_	_	2.8	1.1	0.4
	_	_	_	_	_	(1.8)	(0.2)	_
RPP	_	_	_	_	_	6.6	5.3	1.9
	_	_	_	_	_	(3.3)	(2.9)	(0.7)
Dem. P	_	_	_	_	_	_	11.9	1.9
	_	_	_	_	_	_	(10.0)	(0.2)
NSP	_	_	_	_	_	_	11.8	8.6
	_	_	_	_	_	_	(10.7)	(5.3)

Source: Official results of elections, State Institute of Statistics.
Note: The first row of figures for each party represents percentages of the popular vote, and the second row (in parentheses) present the percentages of seats won.
Abbreviations: DP, Democrat Party; JP, Justice Party; RPP, Republican People's Party; NP, Nation Party; FP, Freedom Party; NTP, New Turkey Party; TLP, Turkish Labor Party; NAP, Nationalist Action Party; UP, Unity Party; RRP, Republican Reliance Party; Dem.P., Democratic Party; NSP, National Salvation Party.

Table 2: Percentage of votes in Turkish Parliamentary and Local Elections (1983-1995)

Parties	1983 (parliamentary)	1984 (local)	1987 (parliamentary)	1989 (local)	1991 (parliamentary)	1994 (local)	1995 (parliamentary)
MP	45.2 (52.9)	41.5	36.3 (64.9)	21.8	24.0 (25.6)	21.0	19.7 (24.0)
PP	30.5 (29.3)	8.8	_	_	_	_	_
NDP	23.3 (17.8)	7.1	_	_	_	_	_
SDPP	_	23.4	24.7 (22.0)	28.7	20.8 (19.6)	13.6	_
TPP	_	13.3	19.1 (13.1)	25.1	27.0 (39.6)	21.4	19.2 (24.5)
WP	_	4.4	7.2 (0)	9.8	16.9 (13.8)a	19.1	21.4 (28.7)
DLP	_	_	8.5 (0)	9.0	10.8 (1.6)	8.8	14.6 (13.8)
NAP	_	_	2.9 (0)	4.1	_	8.0	8.2 (0)
RPP	_	_	_	_	_	4.6	10.7 (8.9)
*F. of A.S	0.61	_	0.51	_	0.71	_	0.77

*Fractionalization of Assembly Seats

Source: Official results of elections. State Institute of Statistics

Note: The figures in parentheses represent the percentages of parliamentary seats won by each party.

a In alliance with the NAP and the Reformist Democracy Party.

Abbreviations: MP, Motherland Party; PP, Populist Party; NDP, Nationalist Democracy Party; SDPP, Social Democratic Populist Party; TPP, True Path Party; WP, Welfare Party; DLP, Democratic Left Party; NAP, Nationalist Action Party; RPP, Republican People's Party.

Table 3 Volatility and Fragmentation in the Party System

Elections	Volatility[1]	Fragmentation of votes[2]	Fragmentation of seats[2]	Disproportionality index[3]	Effective number of parties[4]
1961	_	0.71	0.70	1.0	3.3
1965	24.5	0.63	0.63	0.75	2.6
1969	11.4	0.70	0.59	7.4	2.3
1973	28.4	0.77	0.70	5.6	3.3
1977	18.3	0.68	0.60	5.5	2.5
1983	_	0.66	0.61	4.5	2.5
1987	_	0.75	0.51	15.7	2.0
1991	16.6	0.79	0.71	7.1	3.5
1995	23.0	0.83	0.77	5.8	4.3

1.Total volatility is the sum of the absolute value of all changes in the percentages of votes cast for each party since the previous election divided by two. The 1961 elections are omitted since the DP was dissolved by the ruling military council (NUC) and two entirely new parties (JP and NTP) competed for its votes. Likewise, the 1983 elections are omitted since the military government (NSC) closed down all the existing parties and thus the three parties that competed in this election were new parties. Finally, the 1987 elections are omitted on the grounds that two of the three parties authorized by the NSC (PP and NDP) were relatively artificial parties that soon disappeared after the return to competitive politics. Had these three elections been included, the average volatility score would certainly have been much higher. In calculating the volatility scores, only those parties that have gained representation in parliament in at least one of the two consecutive elections are taken into account. For the 1991 elections, which the WP contested in an alliance with the NAP and small RDP (Reformist Democracy Party) their percentage of votes in the 1989 local elections was taken as a close approximation.

2. Based on Douglas W. Rae's index of fractionalization: *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws* (New Haven, 1967), 56.

3. Based on Arend Lijphart's index of disproportionality, which is "the average vote-seat deviation of the two largest parties in each election": *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries* (New Haven, 1984), 163.

4. Based on Markku Laakso and Rein Taagepera's formula which is as follows:

$$P_e = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i^2}$$: Effective Number of Parties: A Measure with Application to West Europe, *Comparative Political Studies* 12 (April 1979), 3-27.

The European Union as a Democracy-promoter

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The subject of this essay is European Union support for democratization processes in Turkey and Poland.

To further democracy in other states has become an important preoccupation of many actors in the international arena. In fact, today most of the states of the Western world are self-proclaimed democracy-promoters.

Though the ambition to promote the spread of democracy has been part of foreign policy of many states since the end of World War II and before that, a quantitative and qualitative change has occurred in later years, especially since the end of the Cold War. Ambitions have been made more explicit, activities have intensified. Someone has described democracy promotion as a growth industry.

In this essay, I will disregard traditional methods of democracy promotion, such as technical assistance, diplomacy, conditionality and trade policy. Instead, I intend to study what is usually called *political aid*, i. e. aid with explicit political purposes, specifically to encourage the growth of democracy in a recipient country.

Larry Diamond distinguishes three subgroups of political aid: "political institution building", "election observing and assistance" and "aiding civil society".[1] In the case of Poland and Turkey, we may disregard "election observing and assistance" since such aid has not been offered to either country.

Political institution building

Coherent and effective political institutions (in which Diamond includes political parties) are, for several reasons, thought to be related to democratic stability.

Firstly, institutions structure political behaviour into stable and predictable patterns. Institutional frameworks restrain actors from using violence. It stimulates actors to apply a long-term perspective, encourages negotiations between political opponents, builds confidence between them, and forces them to adapt to one another.

Secondly, such political institutions may strengthen democracy by making the state politically more effective. The state may become more capable of enforcing law and order, and of creating meaningful representation. It is thought to become better equipped to guarantee the competition for power, freedom of choice, and the possibility of the public to reward or sanction policies as responsibilities are clearly distinguishable.

Thirdly, political institutions increase the capacity of a state to create socially and economically effective policies since a state with coherent political institutions has more effective and stable political structures for representing interests and is more likely to produce working congressional majorities or coalitions that can adopt and sustain policies.

Finally, Diamond thinks, strong political institutions decrease the risk of military

1 Larry Diamond, "Promoting Democracy in the 199s: Actors, Instruments, and Issues", Paper presented at the Nobel Symposium in Uppsala, August 27-30, 1994.

meddling in civilian affairs. Where civil institutions are weak and fragmented, military influence tends to increase.

Aiding civil society

According to Diamond, the most established form of political assistance is aid to civil society. This form of aid overlaps traditional aid programs. By supporting individual citizens and groups of citizens, an external actor may contribute indirectly to political reforms and to the building of a democratic culture.

Contemporary discussion of democracy and democratization to a large extent centers on concepts like "civil society" and "social capital". Robert Putnam's research on the connection between the strength of democracy and an active civil society has caused much debate among those interested in the preconditions for democracy, both in Western Europe and in a more general perspective. Concerning Central and Eastern Europe, interest has focused on how to rebuild civil society after the long period of Communist oppression. Naturally, this debate has also influenced research on the preconditions for democracy outside of Europe and North America. Most donor countries now perceive it as the main object of their policies to build and strengthen civil society in recipient countries.

This has raised a number of questions on whether, and in that case how, one may promote the growth of civil society from the outside. One risk of external support, especially if it becomes too extensive, is that donors may counteract the very essence of a civil society, namely its growth from below, based on spontaneous initiatives of individual citizens. If organisations and clubs are initiated simply with the intent of collecting aid, then donors have probably done more harm than good. To avoid a destructive influence, it is important to reflect on how support to civil society may best be organized.

Hadenius and Uggla point out the importance of combining support for civil society with support for political institution building. According to them, administrative reforms, like the creation of a legal-universalist bureaucracy, tend to promote the evolution of a strong civil society.[2]

Channelling aid

Political aid may, therefore, be intended to support political institutions or civil society. Another question is how to channel aid. One alternative is that the donor state channels aid to the government of the recipient country. Traditionally, a large part of aid has been transferred that way from government to government. Such aid has usually been administered by the relevant ministry. Another way is to support local NGOs.[3] Yet another alternative is for the donor to fund NGOs in its home country, which in turn transmit the aid or run a project in the recipient country. These alternatives have various advantages and disadvantages. For example, bypassing a country's government by channelling aid directly to democratic forces on the grass-root level may be very sensitive. Geoffrey Pridham maintains that NGOs are better equipped than governments and state organisations to further democracy on the grass-root level since they "can provide assistance in a less blatant way and thereby risk less resentment over interference by foreign powers".[4]

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2 Axel Hadenius and Fredrik Uggla, *Making Civil Society Work. Promoting Democratic Development: What Can States and Donors Do?*, Report commissioned by the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA, 1995), p. 36.

3 By local NGOs I mean NGOs in the recipient country.

4 Geoffrey Pridham, *Encouraging Democracy. The International Context of Regime Transition in Southern Europe*, London, 1991, p. 239.

Below, I shall give a brief account of two case studies. The purpose is to provide concrete examples of how a donor, in this case the EU, chose to support democratization processes in two specific countries, in Turkey and in Poland. A comparison shows that EU behavior differs greatly in these two cases. The paper ends with some reflections on how the difference may be explained.

EU support for civil society in Poland and in Turkey

To begin with, we may establish that EU political support for Poland is much more extensive than that for Turkey. Apart from the quantitative differences, there are other interesting ones. In both Poland and Turkey, EU aid projects are intended to strengthen civil society. However, EU support for civil society in Turkey is very different from the support given to Poland. EU projects in Poland and Turkey in 1994 are listed below.

Civil society projects in Poland, 1994

Information provided focuses on target groups, aim of the project, organisations receiving aid and funds received.

* 500 teachers, school administrators, students, leaders of NGOs and local government officials.

Aim: to provide training and disseminate information on democracy at a grassroots level.

Foundation for Education for Democracy, Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation.

ECU 69.722 (for Poland only)

* Reformers in mental health care; individual psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, lawyers, etc.

Aim: to explore the area of "Psychiatry and Law" with reformers in mental health care, so as to encourage them to bring mental health care in line with international standards.

Geneva Initiative on Psychiatry, Netherlands.

ECU 124.595 (to be shared between 16 countries).

* Conscripts, present and future, and NGOs working for the benefit of conscripts.

Aim: to push for the recognition and respect of human rights of conscripts.

European Council of Conscript Organisations, Netherlands.

ECU 102.410 (to be shared between 6 countries)

* 600-900 women leaders who are employees or elected members of different cooperative structures.

Aim: to promote equal opportunities in Polish cooperative structures through the establishment of a Women's Cooperative Network and Gender Forum.

Verband der Konsumgenossenschaften, Germany; Foundation for Polish Credit Unions; National Supervision Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies; Supreme Cooperative Council.

ECU 127.988 (for Poland only)

* Trade union officials

Aim: to provide skills relevant to trade unions operating within a democratic framework, to reinforce democratic principles by emphasising personal responsibility and responsible action, to assist in the preparation of training materials reflecting the above by training the trainers in a cascade from the national to the local level.

Bilston Community College, UK; National Committee of Solidarity.

ECU 94.398 (for Poland only)

* Environmental movements

Aim: Strengthening movements for the protection of the environment

A Seed Europe, Netherlands; Youth Organisation of League for Nature Protection.

ECU 188.379 (to be shared between 4 countries)

* Trade union organisations, church agencies and interested NGOs.

Aim: to increase the awareness of the need to protect rights of migrants, refugees and minorities, link existing networks in Europe and increase knowledge of issues concerned with the target groups.

Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe, Belgium.

ECU 41.130 (to be shared between 13 countries)

* Young broadcasters.

Aim: the project aims at giving young media practitioners in Central and Eastern Europe a broader understanding of broadcasting as practiced in Western democracies.

International Media Centre, University of Salford, UK; Polish Television.

ECU 88.253 (to be shared between 3 countries)

* Non-governmental structures such as the FSLD and other organisations connected to them.

Aim: to develop efficient local government administrations in the Ukraine through a transfer of skills developed in Poland, with the assistance of an EU partner.

Foundation in support of Local Democracy, Poland.

ECU 195.000 (to be shared between 2 countries)

* About 60 organisations and initiatives, the participants of which will have an age limit of 20-35, who should preferably be high school graduates.

Aim: Reinforce the social and civic structures in 6 selected borderland areas/centers of the regions where, due to difficult social and economic circumstances, local communities are not suitable.

Integrated Foundation for Social and Economic Initiative, Poland.

ECU 69.220 (for Poland only)

* Present and potential leaders of rural society in local self-governments, groups or labour unions related to agriculture, members of agricultural, social and labour organisations.

Aim: To assist individuals from the target group to participate in decision-making relating to the rural environment.

Agricultural Forum for Central and Eastern Europe, Poland.

ECU 53.200 (for Poland only)

* Teachers, headmasters, future teachers/instructors.

Aim: to introduce an appropriate programme of civic education to primary and secondary schools in Poland.

Center for Citizenship Education, Poland.

ECU 200.000 (for Poland only)

Regional branches of the Polish Ecological Club and its grass-roots groups.

Aim: to strengthen the Polish Ecological Club by increasing its effectiveness and improving the relationship between the different groups within it.

Polish Ecological Club, Poland.

ECU 100.058 (for Poland only)

Civil society projects in Turkey, 1994

Information provided focuses on title of the project, organisations receiving aid and funds received.

* Treatment and rehabilitation centres for torture survivors.
Human rights Foundation of Turkey.
ECU 100.000 (for Turkey only)

* Documentation centre (to widen the information reported in "Daily Human Rights Reports", to create new sources of information, etc).
Human Rights Foundation of Turkey
ECU 25.000 (for Turkey only)

* The Human Rights Week (to stimulate public interest in human rights debates).
Human Rights Foundation of Turkey.
ECU 29.000 (for Turkey only).

* Literature on the opinion of the Human Rights Commission and the Commission's court (to provide information on the opinion of the Commission and the Court to jurists and to the public).
Human Rights Association of Turkey.
ECU 43.000 (for Turkey only)

* Training of primary school teachers on human rights.
Human Rights Association of Turkey.
ECU 41.000 (for Turkey only)

* Séminaires d'information et publication (to arrange seminars on e.g. international conventions against torture.)
Human Rights Centre at the University of Ankara.
ECU 50.000 (for Turkey only)

* Pluralism and Urban Rights (to hold workshops and a symposium on e.g. "mechanisms required for building a more tolerant and pluralistic, democratic urban society")
World Academy for Local Government and Democracy.
ECU 50.000 (for Turkey only)

* Participation in international conferences and study visits.
Turkish NGOs working for human rights.
ECU 22.000 (for Turkey only)

* Citizens' identity and civic involvement (to twin two cities of East and West Turkey and later to create a triple relationship with a European city).
Helsinki Citizens Assembly - National Branch Turkey.
ECU 50.000 (for Turkey only)

* Rights of Women.
Foundation for Women's solidarity.
ECU 20.000 (for Turkey only)

* Development of Human Rights and Civil Society (staging an exhibition on the development of Human rights and civil society in Turkey).
Economic and Social History Foundation of Turkey.
ECU 40.000 (for Turkey only)

* Medical training and human rights questions.
Turkish Medical Association.
ECU 30.000 (for Turkey only).

EU support for political institution building

Before I comment on this list I shall make a few remarks on EU aid for political institution building. The projects listed here belong to a category called "aiding

civil society". In the case of Poland, the EU also runs projects aimed at the public sector.

One example of the latter is SIGMA, a project for which the EU shares responsibility with the OECD. The purpose of SIGMA is to make the public sector more efficient. Through creating contacts between civil servants in Poland and Western Europe, SIGMA is intended to "bring Central and Eastern Europeans[5] into the professional communities of the West". The Polish government has received aid for a project intended to formulate strategies for the implementation of civil service reforms.

Next, the Phare Partnership and Institution Building Programme is intended to strengthen the socio-economic framework in Central and Eastern Europe. The programme primarily targets private organisations, but public organisations are also included.

EIPA, the European Institute of Public Administration, runs programs funded by Phare. The objective is to build a public administration that is well adapted to democracy and the market economy. In Poland the EIPA has helped create a national centre for the training of civil servants, parliamentarians, and other public officials.

General Directorate XVI, responsible for EU regional policies, finances two pilot projects, OVERTURE and ECOS, in the field of local and regional cooperation. One of the purposes of these projects is to assist in the transition to democracy. OVERTURE and ECOS work with local and regional authorities.

In Turkey, however, the EU has no projects which may be included in the category of political institution building. No aid is given to parliament, for reforms of the public sector, nor for public organisations in any sense. The only aid for democratization that the EU gives to Turkey are the programs listed above, which, in Diamonds terminology, belong to the category "aiding civil society".

Differences between EU aid for Poland and for Turkey

From the presentation above, the following may be inferred:

* The EU's political aid for Poland is intended both for political institution building, and to help build an active civil society. To Turkey only the latter type of aid is extended. In this context, it may be relevant to recall that research has shown that there is a connection between support for political institutions and support for civil society. Larry Diamond, e.g., warns of the risk of overestimating the importance of a civil society, stating that "the single most important and urgent factor in the consolidation of democracy is not civil society but political institutionalization". Too strong support for citizens may lead to ungovernability *if* political institutions are too weak.

Hadenius and Uggla also emphasize the connection between administrative reforms and the development of civil society. According to them, the construction of political institutions can serve as channels for dialogue and influence. As mentioned earlier, they claim that the creation of a legal-universalist bureaucracy, decentralization, etc, are reforms which tend to promote the evolution of a strong civil society. They maintain, furthermore, that a strong civil society and democratic practices of governance are interconnected: "As the state starts behaving more appropriately, civil society becomes stronger, and as its strength increases, so does its ability to demand official accountability and good governance."[6]

* Another difference between Poland and Turkey has to do with how aid is transferred from donor to recipient. As mentioned above, there are three main alternatives. Donors may give aid to the government of the recipient country. Or they may give aid to local NGOs. Or they may turn to domestic NGOs, which may then forward the

5 SIGMA is aimed not only at Poland but to all Eastern and Central European states.

6 Hadenius and Uggla, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

aid to NGOs in the recipient country. However, EU aid to Poland is channelled in a fourth way: support is only given to cooperation projects between EU NGOs and Polish NGOs. In other words, two NGOs from the EU and Poland must apply jointly if aid is to be granted. This so-called requirement for partnership is a recurring theme of all aid to Poland. The idea is that Polish civil society will integrate with its correspondence in Western Europe. Aid is designed in such a way that contacts, cooperation, and networking is furthered between citizens of Poland and of the EU. In a formulation which is as foggy as it is telling, the EU speaks of creating "a European dimension". No corresponding ambition may be detected in the case of Turkey. There is no talk of building a European dimension, nor of bringing the Turks into the professional communities of the West. EU aid to Turkey is channelled directly from the Commission to Turkish NGOs, without cooperation of any other organisations within the EU. With the exception of the one project intended to link two Turkish and one EU city, there are no attempts to initiate cooperation between groups of organisations in the EU and in Turkey.

The EU tries to create linkages, not only between Polish and Western European NGOs, but also between Polish and Eastern European NGOs, and in some cases also between various Polish NGOs. The idea of encouraging cooperation between organisations, therefore, is not only based on the intent to tie Poland to Western Europe, but also to create NGO links in general. The importance of this is underlined by Hadenius and Uggla: "the development of linkages - both vertical and horizontal - between different organisations is often of great importance for the democratic functions of civil society."[7]

* Another difference between EU support for civil society in Poland and civil society in Turkey has to do with *which* NGOs receive support. As stands out clearly in the list of aid projects above, EU support for Turkey is almost exclusively focused on human rights organisations. Two projects, one concerning pluralism and urban rights and a town twinning project, are the only exceptions. Judging by this, the EU's objective in Turkey seems to be to further human rights, more than to strengthen civil society. Poland, too, receives aid for human rights projects, but these make up only a small part of the total. Apart from this, support is extended to a wide range of organisations and professions: labour unions, tenant unions, journalists, consumers' rights groups, teachers, lawyers' associations, societies for the protection of the environment, conscripts, etc.

Conclusion

In summary, we may conclude that aid to Poland is not only more extensive, it is also more varied and multifaceted. It is intended both to strengthen civil society and build political institutions, and it is directed to many different types of NGOs. For Turkey, aid is given only to projects concerning human rights. Furthermore, aid is channelled in different ways in the two cases. The EU commission cooperates directly with Turkish NGOs. For Poland's part most of the aid is built around the principle of partnership. This partnership is intended to create linkages between NGOs in the EU and NGOs in Poland, thus connecting Poland to the EU.

One might ask why EU aid differs so much in these two cases. Perhaps EU security concerns, or trade interests, might explain why so much more support is given to the Polish democratic development than to the Turkish one. We may presume that the EU has a stronger interest in Poland becoming a democracy than in Turkey doing so (though this may be a dubious assumption). However, neither economic nor security concerns may help explain why aid is channelled to *different types of organisa-*

7 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

tions, nor *how* the aid is distributed. In Turkey, too, there are environmental societies, labour unions, lawyer's associations, etc., which the EU might conceivably support. And in Turkey, too, it should be possible to channel aid via partnership projects, through which NGOs in the EU and their Turkish equivalents could establish contacts and create networks across national boundaries.

Another possible explanation for the difference between EU actions in these two cases lies in the different cultural identities of the EU, Poland and Turkey. Formally, Turkey is a part of Europe. It has an association agreement with the EU. The Commission has, in its response to the Turkish application for EU membership of 1987, recognized that Turkey is eligible for membership of the European Union and thus a European country. Still, it is quite obvious that many in the EU feel distant to Turkey and regard Turks as non-Europeans. In the ongoing attempts within the EU to create a European identity, Europe is defined in a way that excludes Turkey from the European cultural community. In a number of official EU documents, Europe is said to be characterized by "the Latin tradition", "Christianity", "the Judeo-Christian tradition", "classical culture", etc.

It is obvious that the EU views Poland differently. Poland, like the rest of Central and Eastern Europe, is regarded as part of the "European family of nations". An often invoked image is that of a Europe which, once artificially divided by the Cold War, again will become the historical and cultural unit which should be a natural fact.

This view of Poland as being "part of the family" entails that the EU explicitly assumes a responsibility for Poland's democratic development, as well as a duty to contribute to it. These ideas of responsibility and duty may of course explain why attempts to further civil society and strengthen political institutions are much more ambitious in the case of Poland than in the corresponding attempts in Turkey. Notably, we may perhaps find an explanation to differences concerning how aid to civil society is organised.

That the EU supports a number of organisations in Poland may be due to the fact that it is easier to distinguish more and more varied needs in those thought to be close to oneself. In Turkey, thought to be more alien than Poland, working against the most blatant democratic failures, i. e. the use of torture and other human rights infractions, lies close at hand for the Commission. Recognizing that Turkey has a civil society as much, or probably more, in need of outside support, comes less easy for the Commission.

The idea to create partnerships between NGOs may also surface more easily when countries that are perceived as culturally more similar are concerned, since it is then probably easier to find common activities and natural partners. Perhaps EU civil servants automatically assume that it is easier to initiate cooperation between, let us say, a German and a Polish ecological association, than between a German and a Turkish one.

Perhaps, also, one may infer that EU-Polish cooperation in fact *is* easier than the EU-Turkish one. But the point here is that the partnership idea has not even been attempted in Turkey. A basic aspect of the partnership idea is the urge to "weave" Poland into the European circle, through countless organisational and human ties. This objective is entirely lacking in relation to Turkey. This may perhaps be explained by the EU's cultural identity and its influence on the EU's relations to Poland and Turkey.

Labour, Civil Society and Democratization in North Africa

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Introduction

The argument in this article questions the heuristic value of the concept of civil society when linked to problems of democratization. Firstly, the current discourse on civil society is critically discussed, and an alternative to approaching problems of democratization from a civil society perspective, a "republican", understanding of politics is proposed. The civil society debate concerning the Middle East is discussed in the light of the preceding theoretical discussion, both the socio-historical formulations proposed by Ernest Gellner and other recent contributions. The concepts and generalizations are thereafter used as an instrument in a discussion of the significance of the introduction of multipartism and labour reform in North Africa.[1] The purpose here is to test the propositions stemming from the theoretical introduction and at the same time formulate some tentative conclusions concerning the conditions of democratization in three North African countries, namely Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia.

Civil Society

Should civil society be brought to the world?

In a recent critical review of Robert Putnam's much celebrated book *Making Democracy Work*,[2] Ellis Goldberg raises a number of points showing that Putnam's stress on the specific character of Italian medieval history is weakly grounded. Economic and social institutions of the medieval Mediterranean were not limited to the Northern shore, and this is also true for the institution of credit as well as other characteristics of the 'civic trustful community' which, according to Putnam, is essential as the historical social basis for stable and efficient democracy. "Certainly", writes Goldberg, "the most common grouping in much of the Southern Mediterranean after about 1100 A.D. would have been the Sufi prayer group whose major ritual involves the collective chanting of verses of the Qur'an in a non-hierarchical and social setting: in short, a choral group", which is, in fact, one of the examples of civil society Putnam gives from Italy.[3] The example shows how far into 'the social', beyond political institutions, modern political science is prepared to go in search for the conditions of democracy. It also gives a hint about an ongoing debate among intellectuals and scholars claiming or contesting the specificity of Middle Eastern society and political system, a topic to which we will return.

1 Inga Brandell, *Liberalization, Labour Reform and Democratization in North Africa*, Research project. HSFR, Stockholm, 1993.

2 Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work, Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton, 1993.

3 It should be noted that the bulk of Goldberg's critique lies not in those historical arguments but is focused rather on methodological problems. See, Ellis Goldberg, "Thinking about how Democracy Works", *Politics and Society*, vol. 24, 1996, no. 1, p. 13.

Classical literature on civil society, to which Putnam refers, draws heavily on the historical experience of democratization of absolutist regimes in a Central and Western European setting, in contrast to and juxtaposition with the Northern American experience. Reference to Hegel is unavoidable in the first discourse, to Tocqueville in both. Twentieth century revival and development of the classics have in turn, and quite naturally, taken place with reference to totalitarianism in Europe (Gramsci, Arendt) or the all-pervasive expansion of the welfare state and the commercialization of the public space in the same parts of the world (Habermas). This is still the case at the end of the century, although theoretical (and practical) formulations of the theory of civil society and democracy are now brought to bear, not only on Eastern European, but also on political systems wholly outside the European and North American sphere. Two strands of this thinking can be distinguished. One was developed by Eastern European scholars or activists searching for a non-violent and unarmed strategy to roll back a totalitarian state in such a way as to avoid show-downs and military repression. The other one arises from a concern with sustainability of democratic transitions and democracy *tout court*, in particular in the poor continents.

Until now, historical research on non-Western societies has not been put to systematic and independent use in raising the basic issues concerning state, society and democracy, which leaves today's research and debate with an unsatisfactory tendency to use as a frame of comparison the Western model, which is sometimes German, sometimes French or British, and sometimes American. Are there choral groups, and, if so, do they bear witness to a civil society promising sustainable democracy, and should they be taken into account? These questions can only be adressed at a non-parochial level if distinctions are made between different aspects of a process of democratization, its relation, to different state-forms and, finally, by taking into account specific historical and local aspects of social organization.

Much of the classical formulations of the civil society democracy nexus turn around the forms taken first by political centralization under absolutist monarchies and their counter-forces constituted by corporations and representation of *ständer,* then by their successive weakening and replacement by modern limits to central power, in the form of parliaments and a modern public space: newspapers, clubs, coffee houses etc. In non-Western and colonized parts of the world the approach will have to take into account, firstly, the replacement of an indigenous or local state with a modern state imposed either directly or indirectly from the outside, and, secondly, its replacement with an independent state. Political parties, newspapers, coffee houses, even chorals, evolved differently under those circumstances, and in relationship to the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial political systems and states. This carries a significance on two accounts. It will first be necessary to define at what point a modern centralized state, with relations, not as earlier, to groups with a recognized amount of internal autonomy, but to individuals is under way, thereby opening the road to totalitarianism as well as democracy in the sense of equal citizenship. The second reason for the importance of the historical analysis of the different experiences in state-building has to do with what is stressed by the latest contributions to the debate; namely, the historicity of civil society. Without going back to the twelfth century A.D., it is only common sense to state that newspapers, political parties, coffee houses and other institutions capable of constituting a public political space and limiting the authoritarian or totalitarian drift of modern centralized and powerful state capacity, do not develop from nothing, but from traditions, images and ideas existing and transformed under new conditions and for new purposes.

This means that we need to go further in the systematic empirical historical analysis of the establishment of modern statehood and the possible limits and levels of democracy set by indigenous forces elsewhere than in Europe and the United States. This has been accomplished for some countries and for some periods, and the

results will have to be included in the general research concerning civil society if the latter is to transcend its status of ideal-type model for non-democratic societies. The contribution from regions having a long history of statehood, not only in practice but also as formulated as a theoretical doctrine, as can be seen in China or the core parts of the Islamic world, will be of utmost importance.[4]

A civil society or a republic?

In a recent book on civil society and political theory, Cohen and Arato regard Hannah Arendt's work as having failed to "demonstrate that her normative ideal of the public sphere is compatible with modernity".[5] Nevertheless, her thinking with its foundation in classical thought, which is at least partly the common heritage of the European and the Islamic world, its concern with the distinction between authoritarianism and totalitarianism, still on classical grounds, offers an alternative approach to the issue of democracy and the public sphere. This is elaborated by Arendt outside the limits drawn by a system of thought which is, as in most of the civil society debate, located within the historical experience of European absolutism, American settler society and, as regards the last century, European and Soviet totalitarianism on the one hand, and Western welfare state on the other. If Hannah Arendt does not succeed in her effort to re-establish conceptually the public sphere within modernity it is not really a problem in this context as long as the question of modernity is still an open one in the North African countries.

Arendt wrote somewhere that a general social science today is essentially a question of erudition, by which she meant that so much theory, analysis and historical information from all times are available so that social science already has its material. She herself was, at the same time passionately occupied by contemporary events. As a result, her work is a huge production, combining commentaries on what happened in the world and very erudite explorations of the thinking of the Ancients, both Greek and Roman.

But both her theoretical contributions and essays on contemporary issues contain two essential distinctions. Arendt's concern is basically with what can be called the establishment of the polis, or the institution of the republic (*res publica*). What are the conditions under which free and equal citizens decide by speech and action about the nature of government and thereby increase both public *and* individual freedom? One basic differentiation in society is here decisive, the one between the household, the *oikos*, and the political society, *politike koinonia:* i.e. on the one hand, the "private sphere" as a condition for the autonomy and development of the individual, and, on the other, the "public sphere", where the common interest and the public good are the only concerns. This model, based on the Ancients,[6] made Arendt see the roots of totalitarianism in the disappearance of the public sphere through its expansion into the private sphere, and the problem of modern liberal society and its depoliticization in the blurring of the distinction by all kinds of intermediate differentiations making the private invade the public and the public invade the private.[7]

The public sphere, as the sphere of the *polis*, is the sphere of *praxis*. Here comes

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4 That task, of course, goes far beyond the scope of this article. Below it will be approached within the limits of a contemporary context and a particular sector.

5 Jean L. Cohen and A. Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, MIT, Cambridge, 1992, p. 201.

6 Some, for example Luhmann, have accused them of taking the part for the whole, i.e. giving undue importance to the political society and overlooking other aspects of society, outside either the private or the public realm and of as much importance for the survival and functioning of society. The same critique could be adressed to Arendt and this debate joins the one on 'civil society' but will not be pursued here. (See Cohen and Arato's discussion of Arendt's contribution *op.cit.*).

7 A further discussion about the conditions she sees for the maintenance of the sharp line between private and public would have to include an idea that the private can be guaranteed only when grounded in private property.

the second differentiation, the one between *praxis*, action, and *poiesis,* fabrication; the former is the term proper of democracy, speech and action, leading perhaps to deeds, without full control and with a character of process, the second being oriented towards a tangible goal, to "getting things done", to seeing results and accordingly more compatible with a "monocracy". This is an extremely important aspect of Arendt's thinking, of her conception of democracy, of the human being and of our reasons for caring about politics.[8]

In this context, when we do not yet know enough about the different, if any, historical foundations of democratic political society outside its birthplace in Ancient Greece and its revival in modern Europe and North America, the approach of Arendt is interesting. The quite clear conclusions to be drawn from it in the language of rights, which she rarely used, are that freedom of speech and of assembly are part and parcel of whatever community tends toward the establishment of a *polis*, of a democratic *polis*. She is, on the other hand, quite ambivalent about the importance of the right of association and in fact it is not logically part of what she considers the aim of the polis.

Now, does this *détour* by the Ancients, through Hanna Arendt's reading, save us from the limitations inherent in the analysis in terms of civil society? Are not her, and their, concepts also basically limited by their horizon of understanding? Probably their understanding went quite far beyond the Greek city states. The divide between the East and the West is, as Patricia Springborg reminds us, a much more recent phenomenon.[9] Further, it can still be maintained that until discovered we know no other definition of democracy than the one arising from that context: "the self-institution of an independent community – consisting of equals – by itself, facilitated by certain institutions, but conscious about the possibility to change them and the law".[10] This is certainly not 'democracy as procedure', but it contains something that is difficult to integrate into that approach, namely the question of autonomy, not only of the individuals but also of the collectivity. For the Ancients that meant squarely: independence and no tyrant. The terms have to be found to devise this in the contemporary situation: they are certainly not the same in nation-states constituted long ago but now facing a growing economic and cultural globalization, and in newly independent countries whose debt burden corresponds to total export revenues or where the fall in crude oil prices can from one year to the next make the national revenue fall by a third.

If civil society, what civil society in the Muslim world?

Among Ernest Gellner's many publications two are more specifically devoted to "civil society".[11] The arguments developed can be recognized from the rest of his *œuvre,* based as they are on his reading of the fourteenth century Maghrebin historian and sociologist Ibn Khaldun. Gellner's use of Ibn Khaldun has most recently been discussed and criticized both in terms of the validity of its application to Islamic society in general and at all times and in terms of the accuracy of the description given by Ibn Khaldun of his own time.[12] Gellner's parallel thinking about the Soviet system, protestant Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and "Muslim society" is however sufficiently thought-provoking not to be overlooked. His main question, and in fact his main contribution or analytical inno-

8 That ontological part of her thinking is outlined in her book *Human Condition,* Chicago Press, Chicago 1958.

9 Patricia Springborg, *Western Republicanism and the Oriental Prince*, Introduction, Cambridge, 1992, p. 1.

10 Cornelius Castoriadis, *La montée de l'insignifiance, les carrefours du labyrinthe*, Paris, 1996, p. 187.

11 Ernest Gellner, "Civil Society in Historical Context", *International Social Science Journal*, no 129, 1991; idem, *Conditions of Liberty, Civil Society and its Rivals*, London, 1994.

12 Sami Zubaida, "Is There a Muslim Society? Ernest Gellner's Sociology of Islam", *Economy and Society*, 24, 2, 1995.

vation, concerns the strong demand within former Soviet dominated territories for the recreation of a crushed civil society.

Gellner agrees with many others that civil society, by guaranteeing pluralism and limitation of state power, is essential to democracy and freedom in the modern sense. Here, only the arguments concerning Islam will be referred to. The course of the reasoning concerning civil society proceeds as follows. Islam has the advantage of offering its followers a high culture which can be mobilized, and, indeed, has already been mobilized, to face modernity. It has, claims Gellner, marked 'protestant' features: "severe and emphatic unitarianism, scripturalism, puritanism, aversion to mediation and the cult of personality, a formal absence of priesthood, the equality of believers before God, the equal access by all men (especially literate men) to the revealed truth".[13] But, contrary to expectations, the correlation between Protestantism and civil society has no Islamic equivalence. The existence of Islamic *enthusiasts*,[14] mobilized for a century now and, according to Gellner, largely victorious, has not led to the development of a civil society. On the contrary it has led to a condition "in which the absence or weakness of civil society is not even very much deplored".[15] This is, according to Gellner, because Hume was right when he noted about their protestant counterparts that *enthusiasts* are enemies of freedom, and only when they abandon the aspiration to impose their faith on the whole society -but still cling to it- will the result be an enforcement of civic spirit and an extension of civil society.[16]

In fact there is a second, not entirely outspoken argument in Gellner's reasoning. The fact that Islam "encourages no soteriological expectations from the economy does seem to help it retain its vigor under modern conditions"[17] – in contrast to Marxism. The logic of Gellner's reasoning means that his argument, as regards Muslim societies' "even not deplored weakness of civil society", would be seriously weakened if it could be shown that a civil society actually exists, or, at least, that there is a demand for it. It should also be weakened if it turns out that, there is or was such a resistance to the aims of the enthusiasts that they at one point had to recognize their partial defeat and abandon their ambition to change society. This will also be the case if it turns out that Islam has been or is involved in efforts to draw the economy into the "total project", thereby hindering its development as a basis for modern civil society (which was the Soviet case in Gellner's thinking, and the reason for the strong demand in that context for a civil society).

Recent debate on civil society in the Middle East

Although recent years have seen many efforts to relate research and analysis of Middle Eastern societies to the international revival of the concept of civil society, it can within the region probably be traced to the eruption of political Islamism, at least in the Maghreb. This is the opinion of Aziz Al-Azmeh,[18] and in fact, in both Tunisia and Algeria, the late 1980s and early 1990s was a period when a hitherto scarcely known social and political force grew outside the control of the existing party system and the state authorities. Social movements had seen the day and been crushed or had faded away,[19] but for the first time since the leftist student movements in the late

13 Gellner (1991), p. 509.

14 This term comes from Hume, we would perhaps name them militants or activists.

15 Gellner, *op. cit.*, p. 509.

16 Gellner's judgment concerning the victory of 'high Islam' without much of resistance or opposition is worth a general debate, but will here only be touched upon in a specific empirical setting.

17 Gellner, *op. cit.*, p. 510.

18 Aziz Al-Azmeh, "Populism Contra Democracy: Recent Democratist Discourse in the Arab World", in G. Salamé, ed., *Democracy Without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*, London, 1994, p.122.

19 Strike waves in both countries in the late 1970s, Berber movement in early 1980s in Algeria, so-called bread riots in Tunisia in 1984, student unrest in Algeria in 1986.

1960s there was a movement which neither faded away nor disappeared, at least in the short run, as a result of repression. The Middle East, Egypt and Syria had experienced this much earlier, but in both cases, after the murder of Sadat in 1981 and the upheaval in Syria in 1982 the repression was harsh.

In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood had been in existence for decades, while in Algeria and Tunisia the traditional representatives of 'high Islam', the reformists had, for different reasons, been either marginalized or coopted into central state agencies. The relatively sudden extension of Islamist movements in the latter countries did in fact quite surprisingly put people and organizations on the agenda which could not be understood within the kind of social organization the one-party regimes had put into place, nor be part of the liberal systems the scholars and intellectuals were demanding for. There was a need among scholars and some politicians for concepts to talk about those by the state uncontrolled parts of society, or to think through what society needed not to be overwhelmed by radical movements which the state was unable to control otherwise than by hard repression.

The results of studies of Middle Eastern 'civil society', both past and present, have concentrated mainly on the differences between countries and regions. Still, convincing arguments were presented concerning the general historical existence of a civil society, contrary to the opinion of classic Western orientalists, who, like Gellner, have formulated the political problem in the Islamic context as the lack of a civil society counter force to a despotic state.[20] On the contrary, in precolonial society there existed what is termed *al-mujtama' al-ahli*, family society, to be contrasted with the modern concept *al-mujtama' al-madani* (ahl=family, madina=city). This 'family society' constituted a public sphere linked to the state but which also had a certain autonomy, and was divided into several parts: the group of religiously and legally learned men, the *'ulama* (the religion "doctors"), the merchants, the religious sufi orders, the professional corporations, and perhaps the peasants and the tribes. Economic functions and social services formed an essential part of this 'family society', although the state controlled certain services. The *'ulama* in turn, through their legitimacy as the interpreters of the law, put limits on the power of the state and could –and did– represent the rest of the 'family society'.[21] Other authors add to the preceding groups *al-ashraf*, notables with religious legitimacy stemming from their descent from the Prophet.[22] Suffice here to point to the use of the concepts, and the following problematization of the equivalence instituted in modern civil society discussion between the family and the private sphere. Here, quite evidently, we have to do with a different concept of the family, in fact one which does not at all coincide with the private one of the family in modern Western understanding. There was, no doubt, a private sphere in those societies, but it was not 'the family'. The regional debate has not pursued this line of reasoning, where, as will be mentioned below, other points of contradiction have dominated.

The historical overview resulting from existing research implies, however, that this social organization was naturally upset by reforms preceding or following colonization. The *'ulama* lost part of their position due to the introduction of a new type of political power and sources of law. The merchants and the corporations were hit by the liberalization measures of that time, by which their monopolies were eroded and foreign competition introduced in the field of trade as well as in the production

20 Bryan Turner, "Orientalism and the Problem of Civil Society", A. Hussain, ed., *Orientalism, Islam and Islamists*, Vermont, 1984, p. 34.

21 Saad-Eddin Ibrahim, "Civil Society and the Prospects for Democratization in the Arab World", in A. R. Norton, ed., *Civil Society in the Middle East*, New York, 1995, p. 30.

22 See, Moussali, Ahmed S. "Modern Islamist Fundamentalist Discourse on Civil Society, Pluralism and Democracy", in A. R. Norton, ed., *Civil Society in the Middle East*, New York 1995.

of goods. Peasants and tribes were disorganized when agriculture became reoriented, as in the case of cotton culture in Egypt or wine production in Algeria. Sufi orders and foundations survived, and were sometimes even invigorated, but their role in the public sphere changed and they were to be marginalized, at least for a time, by the assault on them initiated by modern reformist Islam and, later on, by the independent state. The disorganization of *al-mujtama' al-ahli* implied the formation of what is currently considered part of modern civil society, in its social and political sectors: trade unions, political parties, women's associations etc. developed in conjunction with or in opposition to colonial influence. Parliamentarianism, as in the case of Egypt, created an agonistic arena between, on the one hand, old and new structures in civil society and, on the other, a political power under foreign control.[23] Elsewhere, as in Tunisia, it was demanded: *dustur* -constitution- was the gathering cry against beylical and colonial rule, or remained contentious: What about Algerian representation in the French parliament, what about a regional French-Algerian parliament?

'Modern' civil society was also put under stress by political change. The unification of all the various segments in the attempt to roll back the colonial state also meant that once independence had been achieved modern organizations were tied to the would–be–state, which in its phase of establishing independence and 'nation-building' did not admit autonomous spaces or organizations. A party-state, mass organizations linked to it and no independent organization was the rule, sometimes achieved at a high price of repression. As an effect, however, of the state's incapacity to meet growing demands resulting from population growth and the rapid increase of modern education – the efforts to face the demands leading to a financial crisis – this model crumbled. Before, or after formal liberalization, new or old associations stepped forward, took over tasks formally under state jurisdiction or established new fields of action. Added to this, but generally in a more controlled way, is the revival of a public sphere constituted by political parties, irrespectively on which side of the line between state and society these should be placed.

This overview of how the historical development is generally presented can, at the analytical level, be organized in the following way: the definition and establishment of a civil society -*al mujtama' al-ahli* or *al mujtama' al-madini*- depends on its ability in the past to limit the despotism or authoritarianism of the state. At present, the questions raised concern its potential for conquering the space left by an inefficient state under pressure from abroad to liberalize. Added to this is the question of whether or not the 'old' or 'new' civil society has an internal democratizing capacity capable of imposing new norms on the state and society. The polemics sometimes move from one level to another, when for example the more 'traditional' types of networks and organizations are considered stronger and more autonomous and accordingly more strategic as representatives of society and hence for the limitation of the state,[24] while, to others, only modern organization with their open, equal and heterogeneous membership can pave the way for democratization.

To conclude, it thus seems strategic for the analysis of the establishment of a democratic *polis* to ask with Arendt the following question: is freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and – perhaps – freedom of association practised? Furthermore, of interest here are actions, *praxis*, not making, *poiesis*. This distinction allows a selection to be made from among the different forms taken by social and state organization and reform what is political (potentially democratic) and what is not.[25] It must further be stressed that the issues raised concern not only the internal function-

23 Jacques Berque, *Egypt: Imperialism and Revolution*, London 1972 (in French, Paris 1967).

24 Ilya Harik, "Pluralism in the Arab World", *Journal of Democracy*, 3, 1994.

25 It is a fact that very many associations have been created after new laws introduced in the last decade, and also as a result of the interest of foreign donors for private associations. Evidence from Egypt shows that

ing but also the autonomy of the political community in question, which certainly does not mean control over all resources and issues and the whole agenda, but only political autonomy in a strict sense. Globalization and economic integration could be regarded as conditions, in the same way as geostrategic or environmental conditions. So the question is, whether political decision remains with the community, or whether there is a tyrant?

In order to proceed further a certain number of questions must be put at the level of structural analysis contained in Gellner's statements: Is there in Muslim society, as a result of the victory of the *enthusiasts*, no opening to pluralism? Is, moreover, the state's lack of interest in the economic sector a guarantee for a certain limited autonomy and the absence of any demand for civil society in other fields?

Finally, from the specific debate concerning civil society in the Middle East, the most important points to draw on are the following: the problematization of the conceptual and empirical dividing line between private and public, between *oikos* and *polis*. The second point concerns the necessity of distinguishing for analytical reasons between the problem of limiting and "rolling back" an authoritarian state on the one hand, and the establishment of democracy on the other. The fusion of the two into one hinders the evaluation of effective civil society organizations, and, accordingly, the understanding of certain aspects of Islamism. It also eludes the intrinsic aspect of the establishment of the autonomy of the community in this process which is taking place under international penetration at different levels.

Political Pluralism in a Context of Corporatism

The meaning of multipartism

In the three countries under study (Egypt, Algeria, and Tunisia) a National Assembly has been in existence since independence, and, in the case of Egypt much earlier, i.e. from the first World War. Elections have not, however, been held regularly, with the exception of Tunisia, and at certain periods the Assembly has been suspended in Algeria. In the early 1980s a study of the legislative power in the Maghreb countries stated as its point of departure that a certain apparent revision of this political institution was under way.[26] Its conclusions were, however, that the Assemblies were called upon to express national cohesion in times of crisis but were totally subordinated, as regards their functions of legislation and control, to the government and the parties, which, at this time meant in practice, in the case of Tunisia and Algeria, the single political party, namely the Socialist Néo-Destour party and the National Liberation Front respectively.[27]

It is however clear that there were initiatives at the level of political institution building in the 1970s. This was equally so the case in Egypt, where, in the context of President Sadat's succession to president Nasser, a new constitution was ratified by a referendum in 1971. A new law on political parties introduced multipartism in 1976, initially by splitting the previously single party, the Arab Socialist Union, into three groups. Subsequently, old parties reappeared and new ones were legalized.[28] Later, in the 1980s, new political parties have been licensed in Tunisia, though in a more strictly controlled manner, and now there are seven parties in all. In Algeria, no

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not all of them are active, that their autonomy is limited and that they sometimes correspond to a decentralization of the state apparatus.

26 Zouhir Mdhaffar, *Le Pouvoir législatif au Maghreb*, Publication de la Faculté de Droit et des Sciences Politiques de Tunis, 1987, p.11.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 475

28 In the case of a Nasserist one only by court after refusal from the governmental body charged with the licencing of political parties.

preparations for multipartism were under way when, in October 1988, a major upheaval introduced rapid and seemingly profound institutional changes. In 1989, as the result of a new constitution and a new law on political parties there was, in practice, no real obstacle to the creation of new parties, and the result was impressive: about fifty parties being founded at that time.[29]

Was this part of a parliament's success, as an expression of the will of civil society, in reducing arbitrary action on the part of the state and doing away with authoritarian rule? In the 1990s there was a backlash, with the interruption and invalidation of the first multiparty parliamentary elections in Algeria in 1992, and the results in the parliamentary elections in Tunisia in 1994, and Egypt in 1995 creating an almost entirely single party assembly in both countries. This was partly due to the nature of the electoral laws, the majority list elections in Tunisia and the 8% national threshold in Egypt, but apparently, partly also to rigging, fraud and intimidation. The international legitimacy of all these elections, with the exception of the Algerian ones, hardly noticed outside the borders, lay in the presumed necessity to counter Islamist forces. In any case, it seems that the parliaments were then at the point of, if not actually having a real say in legislation and control, at least becoming a political arena. Quite evidently the issue is postponed, not solved. As a result however, it is difficult to judge from electoral campaigning and electoral results the extent of ongoing general autonomization of society. While waiting for more thorough investigations of parliamentarism and of political parties, the choice is made here to pursue the research process the other way round: i.e. from the knowledge of the former non-liberalized context to the new, on the one hand, and from the particular -the local- which can be investigated, on the other. Generalizations to the entire societies and the national levels will have to wait.

Corporatism and its conditions

The concept of 'corporatism' has been used by Robert Bianchi to define the relation between the Egyptian state and the labour movement.[30] In the Maghrebian context, the term populism[31] is more often used, but it is easy to find descriptions of the relationship implying the same state corporatism when looking upon trade unions or the relation to society as a whole, as for example the following lines concerning Algeria:

> Even if the populist regime speaks in favour of social justice and calls for popular mobilization to ratify its legitimacy, it spreads at the same time oppression and statification of social action. This regime is ready to respond to nationalist and social demands at the condition that they are expressed inside the regime, and neither outside nor against it. It is also ready to organize popular participation, but this must be organized on criterias controlled by the regime and not autonomously by the social groups themselves. This means that the populist regime excludes everything it can not coopt or canalize.[32]

In the field of labour, corporatization can be viewed from two distinct but linked perspectives, one concerning the structure and the role of labour organizations, the other concerning the regulation of labour relations in general and in the public sec-

29 New legislation in 1996 and 1997 has put the political parties under strict control and limited their freedom, but about 50 still participated in the general elections in June 1997.

30 Robert Bianchi, "The Corporatization of the Egyptian Labor Movement", *The Middle East Journal*, 40, 3, 1986; idem., *Unruly Corporatism: Associational Life in Twentieth Century Egypt*, Oxford University Press, 1989.

31 Corporatism and populism should be kept apart as analytical concepts. Here the purpose is to produce a background for the following discussion and for that purpose the concepts can remain crude and not take into account the whole literature on those topics by scholars like Schmitter, the two Colliers and others. See Ruth and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1991; Philip C. Schmitter "Still the Century of Corporatism", *Review of Politics*, 36, 1974.

32 Said Chikhi, "Question ouvrière et rapports sociaux en Algérie", *Review*, XVIII 3, 1995.

tor in particular. To this can be added an aspect of the more state-encompassing corporatism outlined in the quotation, which has, however, taken the form of specific state or public enterprise institutions for different aspects of workers' lives outside the workplace.

The establishment and legal recognition of the trade unions in the three countries took place within a pluralist framework. In Egypt, the statutes of 1942 hindered centralization by refusing legal protection to a national confederation, while in the Maghreb the political pluralism of the French unions, with their several confederations, was adopted. In all three countries, the state and trade union leaders concerned later attempted to centralize representation and reduce it both in law and in practice to one single confederation with organizational monopoly. UGTT (*Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens*), UGTA (*Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens*) and ETUF (Egyptian Trade Union Federation) have had the advantage of being the sole representative of wage workers in each country respectively. This situation was neither created nor maintained without problems, but existed nonetheless. In Egypt this unification, partly forced on the movement, had already begun in the 1940s but was finally accomplished under Nasser and Sadat. In the Maghreb it happened essentially within the unifying mobilization and movement for independence. Here major show-downs took place just after independence when these unified confederations aspired without success to autonomy and political influence. Organizational monopoly and a limited autonomy vis-a-vis the state has also meant, for example, that the Minister of Labour is often a former trade union leader, and the participation of trade union leaders in all kinds of state agencies and commissions.

The organization of labour relations has generally included a high level of job security, at least in the public sector, and relative economic advantages as compared to non-wage labour. Wages have not, however, been freely negotiated. Sometimes they have even been formally determined by administrative decision. Labour conflicts have been settled in the same way and strikes prohibited by law. The functioning of this model demands, in the long run, as Goldberg has shown, that the state has a unified institutional control, that it fulfils its task of economic management through large monopolistic or oligopolistic firms, and establishes a market closure, which of course is conditioned by internal and external economic conditions.[33] The financial assets of the state becomes a determining factor for the durability of the model. What has been termed the rentier state[34] is in fact a state which can afford to develop welfare institutions and accept a low level of efficiency because of an important budgetary income generated abroad, the typical case being control over the selling of hydrocarbons. It is also a state which therefore can 'buy legitimacy' and will presumably not face political demands that cannot be canalized. Although none of the countries here could be compared to the very rich oil producers with small populations, external revenue in the form of rent and budgetary assistance have been of great importance, in particular for Algeria and Egypt.

A final characteristic of this "corporatist" context in economies where large public enterprises play an important role as is the case in Egypt and Algeria, consists of the extensive number of services which have become linked to the specific enterprise. Weaknesses in the general welfare systems due to continuing economic underdevelopment in comparison with the very rich rentier states have meant that public enterprises have entered into all kinds of activities, from transport facilities to health care and the accommodation of employees.

33 Ellis Goldberg, "The Foundations of State-Labor Relations in Contemporary Egypt", *Comparative Politics*, 24, 2, 1992.

34 Giacomo Luciani and H. Beblawi, *The Rentier State*, London, 1987.

To conclude, corporatism in the Egyptian setting has often focused on the cooptation of trade union leaders, and also in the Maghreb there is sometimes a tendency to look upon the model as the result of "buying off" high level unionists. Goldberg has shown that in Egypt under Nasser, 'corporatism' corresponded also to workers economic interests and this is even clearer in the Algerian case.[35] But this economic deal had important institutional consequences, which implies that liberalization in the field of labour relations has effects far beyond the workplace and the labour market itself.

Accordingly, to the investigation of new conditions for democracy within the approach proposed earlier -is there freedom of speech and assembly?- must be added the traditional issues of labour relations: labour contracts, bargaining and labour conflict. This is because only thereby can the distinction between *oikos* and *polis* be drawn and only thereby can the question of the agenda of the *polis* be determined. In other words, what is the scope of the possible new public sphere? Do issues previously dealt with within the state administration now emerge into a more autonomous public sphere?

Deconstruction of Corporatism?

For different reasons and often under external pressure, liberalization of the labour market is, at least formally, under way. It did not, however, have any direct connection in time to the demise of the one-party system. Egypt, which, in principle, returned to multipartism in the middle of the 1970s, was preparing a new labour legislation only two decades later.[36] Tunisia, which abandoned the *de facto* one-party system in the early 1980s kept its labour law intact from 1966 and 1973, introducing, as late as 1994, a major revision, still within the limits of the former texts. Algeria, in fact, is the only country among the three where the demise of the one-party system in 1989 was followed by a total amendment of large sections of the former legislation, including a new labour law promulgated in 1990, which was inspired by liberal and pluralist tradition.[37]

Labour law and elections in Tunisia

Now, it is one thing to change the texts and quite another to change the practices. What is the actual situation? An overview of it, in Tunisia based on primary sources[38] and for the other two countries on secondary sources, will necessarily have to be done initially on the basis of the concepts of the actors. Only thereafter will it be possible to carry out an analysis in the terms proposed earlier in this article. Much concern is expressed in Tunisia about the collective agreements. All Tunisian enterprises are, according to the law, supposed to apply the collective agreements.[39] Their managers all claim that they actually do so. Trade-union representatives,[40] however, say that as few as around half of the enterprises apply the agreements. Indeed, according to them, only public enterprises and administrations obey the law which the agreements are in fact.[41]

35 Goldberg (1992), op. cit.

36 Françoise Clément, "Péripéties et vicissitudes de la liberalisation du marché du travail en Egypte", *Egypte-Monde Arabe*, 20.

37 Law 90-02 on collective labour conflicts, law 90-03 on work protection, law 90-04 on individual labour conflicts, and relevant articles in the Constitution (democratic rights, including the right to strike).

38 A series of interviews was conducted in 1995/1996. Here we have decided not to develop the detailed references as research is still under way.

39 The agreements have to be endorsed by the Ministry and published by the *Journal Officiel*, which gives them a status of law. Code du Travail, Livre Premier, Titre III, Chapter II.

40 No new trade-union or confederation has been formed in Tunisia in spite of the legal freedom of organization. UGTT is still organizing all wage employed in the country.

41 Half of the wage-employees in Tunisia are in the public sector, far fewer of the workers in industry, which means that perhaps only a third of industrial workers are working under the conditions laid down in the agreements.

Now, these contradictory claims could be combined if, in fact, employers and trade-unionists gave priority to different parts of the agreements as essential. According to trade-unionists, infringements sometimes concern the wage level. Instead of the minimum wage (in 1995/96) of 148 DT the workers receive wages of 110 or 120 DT. Or else if the agreed wage is paid, then the yearly increase also agreed upon may not be given. However, most complaints concern the contracts. It seems that workers sign temporary contracts *in blanco* which means that they can be terminated at any moment, which is, of course, strictly illegal. Other points raised concern the lack of respect for the agreements in the field of 'conditions of work' or the obligation on the part of the employer to provide work clothes. The most recurrent complaints, however, concern the refusal of the employers to accept the trade-unions in the work-place and even their tendency to try to get rid of workers who are members of trade-unions.

This is, in fact, confirmed by private industry-owners or managers. They do not want the trade-unions within their enterprises. They openly confess having refused to admit a trade-union representative coming from another factory to see their workers, declaring that, with all their other problems, if they accepted trade-unions, they might as well close down. On the other hand they insist that they are applying the collective agreement and are very eager to obey the law. As confirmed by trade-unionists, internal consultative commissions, an innovation introduced during the revision of the law, exist in 90 percent of the work-places. While private Tunisian entrepreneurs see the law and the agreements as essentially a question of paying agreed wages and taxes (social security, insurances, pension funds), applying the norms for the work supervised by work inspectors (hygiene, light, dust etc.), organizing the selection of workers' representatives and having meetings with the consultative commission, they do not feel obliged to deal with the trade-union, particularly insofar as some of them consider that they go quite beyond the law in solving problems with their workers, sometimes addressing "their" problems and presenting themselves as very sensitive to the needs of the workers and their families. It is not always clear why there is such an emotional reaction to the trade-unions among those private employers. When asked whether it would not be easier to have someone with whom they could deal, they say that they talk to everyone of their workers, that they have a good relationship with each of them and, therefore, have no need for any representative organization. The consultative commission is, in this context, regarded as a place for the dissemination of information and the solution of some practical issues.

The trade-union, on the other hand, interprets the texts on freedom of association and freedom of opinion included in the law as entailing the right of the trade-unions to be present inside the work-places and have a say on all issues, as well as participating in the consultative commission and its selection. In fact, trade-union membership covers, according to internal estimation, only 60 to 70 percent of public employees, in industry or administration, and not more than 30 percent in private industry, possibly less.

A second issue of concern, not only to local actors but also to the legislators, is the problem of labour conflicts, which now come under an extensive obligation to be offered to conciliation and arbitration processes.[42] In one major industrial region in the country however, with about 70 000 wage employees, more than half of them defined as workers, and about 30 000 trade-union members (including administration, services, education etc.) in one year there were around twenty official notifications by the trade-union of planned strikes. A dozen of the conflicts were not solved by the conciliation procedure and strike action was actually taken, though most of

42 *Op.cit.* Livre VII, Chap. XIII, art.376-386.

them lasted only one day or two days. Some of them were successful, some not. Furthermore, there were according to trade-union information, more than twenty illegal strikes, caused by complaints regarding unpaid wages or unfair dismissal. In these cases employers call for the police. According to the same source, nothing happens if people from the trade union arrive in time, if not the police can intervene. However it appears that no workers engaged in an illicit strike have been arrested in the last few years. The trade-unions' claim that they organize unregistered workers (which not surprisingly exist) must, however, be qualified by the fact that their task is defined as defending only the unionized workers and not the others.

In the understanding of trade-union people conflicts in the public sector are often solved. The trade-union can involve the state governor, the work inspection and consequently as the managers care about their carrier they want to solve the problems. The private entrepreneur on the other hand signs an agreement[43] and then, according to trade-unionists, nothing happens. This agrees exactly with the statements of the private entrepreneurs, who consider that problems are better solved individually with each worker and that the trade-unions just bring new, additional problems.

It is difficult to assess more precisely the internal consultative commissions - an innovation in the law of 1994 - and their role. It is however remarkable that these organizations actually exist. The reason might either be that the law is obeyed to the letter, while collective agreements are considered less important, or play a real part in the regulation of labour relations. This is an interesting issue, beyond our concern here however. In this context it would be important to know if those commissions do have a role in socializing labour issues in a way which could bring them outside the work-places. There are no signs at all of this, which should seem evident to those who pretend that workers' representatives are often hand-picked by their employers. Their importance should, however, not be outruled as a possible alternative structure in the future. Such an evolution would probably only be possible in a situation where a relatively free public space exists or is created, permitting, amongst other things, exchanges between different workplaces. For different reasons this is not the case today in Tunisia, while, on the other hand, the trade-unions still have structures and places permitting exchanges between their members.

A final point to raise in this investigation of a possible process of 'decorporatization' in Tunisia concerns the agenda of the now multiparty elections, which presumably would be the most intense moment of public political life. Are issues concerning labour relations and the labour market moving out from the corporate structures and investing a public sphere? National elections and political life in the country have, in the 1990s, become more and more concentrated in the person of the president and his party. The electoral system has some importance here: Tunisia has majority list elections, which means that the party which gains in the district send a whole group of deputies to the Parliament. There is a small proportional rectification at national level, but, as the main party is so much bigger than all the others, it also gains the greatest number of deputies from this proportional representation. The issues raised by the opposition during the national campaigns can be classified as essentially turning around the question of democracy, although generally this is worded differently: for example the question of the functioning of the mass media was raised.

When it comes to local elections, ministers go canvassing to explain the tasks of the commune. Local newspapers do not, as earlier, censor letters from their readers. So issues about the functioning of the administration, the chaotic urbanization, the

43 "p-v", procès-verbal.

condition of the streets, the removal of garbage and so on were brought up by the candidates and the constituency. In contrast social and economic issues were not really raised. The argument advanced by a local politician was that the municipalities have some social aid but no right to decide on economic policy. Municipalities prepare industrial zones and they might possibly exempt a particular industry from the local taxes, but that is all. There has been a renewal of the political personnel within the dominant party and administrative efficiency and consistent division of the tasks between the central and the local levels are presented as essential. The UGTT, however, insisting on its independence, relies on its connections to local state representatives and cannot be expected in the current conjuncture to raise local social and economic issues.

Labour law and elections in Algeria and Egypt

The first collective agreements which were concluded after negotiations in accordance with the new Algerian law were essentially ideological documents without much specification.[44] The very high level of labour conflicts in the country during the first years after the 1988 upheaval has decreased dramatically. Still, however, long lasting conflicts are no exception among, for example, the car factory workers in Rouiba or the construction workers at the new airport in Algiers.[45] There is sometimes fierce conflict concerning the right of UGTA to negotiate on behalf of non-unionized personnel, as in the latest case, or the right of new unions to participate.[46] UGTA is still involved in central political decisions, even formally, although this is contrary to the new legislation.[47] The context in Algeria is however one of rapidly decreasing real wages as a result of high inflation and the devaluation of the currency. At the same time, the low-scale civil war affects people's lives in all kinds of ways, including their work life. 40 000 work places are calculated to have disappeared as the result of the destruction of premises and machinery.

The proposed law in Egypt with its introduction of the right to negotiation at branch and factory level, and the reintroduction of the right to strike, although carefully circumscribed, has not yet been voted by the Egyptian parliament and public controversy is intense. According to information about the negotiations preceding the final proposal the representatives of the trade union confederation were quite favorable to the law despite the commonly spread opinion that the disappearance of job security will constitute a loss for workers. Apparently, the ETUF leaders[48] expected wage increases in the public sector as a result of their acceptance of easier lay-offs. However, the new law has already been postponed in 1994 as a result of a major strike in one of the largest textile factories of the country.[49]

In Algeria, local elections in 1990 and parliamentary elections in 1991 were dominated by contradictions concerning the evaluation of the incumbent administrations and politicians while the ones in 1997 were, quite naturally, focussed on diverging opinions concerning the solution of the violent crisis in the country.

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44 Anissa Lazib-Allouache, "Nouveau droit au travail et émergence des acteurs sociaux Algérie", paper presented to the AKUT-CREAD workshop on Labour and Political Reform -A Comparison of Algeria and Nigeria, Algiers 26-28 September 1992.

45 *La Nation*, 134, 146, 1996.

46 With 20 % of the employees in a workplace a trade-union has the right to participate, and new ones have been formed on this basis.

47 Leila Hamdan, "Les difficultés de mise en œuvre du nouveau droit du travail", *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord*, XXXIII, CNRS, Paris; Amar Benamrouche, "Etat, conflits sociaux et mouvement syndical en Algérie (1962-1995), *Maghreb-Machrek*, n. 148, avril-juin 1995.

48 Here, not only in practice but also legally, ETUF is the only permitted confederation. Pluralism has, however, evolved in Egypt with the increased number and importance of professional associations which do not negotiate wages but represent their members in other contexts. It remains to be seen if the new legislation concerning their functioning will hinder their evolution as a center of political opposition.

49 Clément, *op. cit.*

Many of the strikes taking place in the early 1990s had as their motives protests against managers in the public enterprises as well as against UGTA trade union leaders. All this was made public through the creation of many new newspapers and journals which at that time and, despite later severe restrictions with reference to the state of emergency guaranteed, and still continue to guarantee, a relatively large and lively political discussion. This is also the case in Egypt, although the new law on information promulgated in 1996 was considered a step back. Case studies of the electoral campaigns preceding Egyptian parliamentary elections in December 1995 show that in some cases local issues linked to industry and workplaces were raised, more often, however, concerning environmental problems than labour relations.[50]

Conclusions: Democracy, Society and Further Questions

Does this empirical evidence permit any conclusion in terms of the establishment of a public sphere with freedom of expression and of assembly, with a potential for praxis; action? Do they weaken or confirm Gellner's theses on civil society in a Muslim setting? Do they, finally, go further in offering an insight into the dividing line between the private and the public, the *oikos* (understood as the household or the economy) and the *polis*, and thereby how a civil society under these conditions could be defined?

Gellner's theses: the demand for a civil society

It is quite clear that if those countries should be considered Muslim societies in Gellner's view they have not corresponded to the expectation not to invade the economy with the project of a new society. On the contrary, nationalization of industry and foreign trade and public investment in new industry have characterized the three countries in their "socialist" and nationalist phase. This phase was relatively short in the Tunisian case, ending at the end of the 1960s and transformed into a more capitalist project in the early 1970s. In Algeria it went further than elsewhere, more of the economy was controlled by the state and every employee benefited from a uniform General Statute of the Worker, applicable in every context. In 1974, just a couple of years after Tunisia, Egypt under Sadat abandoned the completely state controlled socialist model with the so-called *infitah* policy, opening the way for the expansion of foreign and domestic private capital. Here however, the very huge public production units in textile and steel, for example, have not as yet been touched. In fact, a strong opposition towards privatization based on the labour confederation as well as on sections of the state have consistently postponed this part of the economic liberalization package.[51] It could, of course, be claimed that nationalist leaders like Nasser, Boumedienne or Ben Salah in Tunisia, are an anomaly in the Muslim society Gellner is thinking about. The fact is, however, that to different degrees the transformation and control of the economy was a part of their political project. So, if there was a lack of demand for civil society, it could hardly be due to a general lack of interest in the economic sector among the ruling political leaders in those Muslim countries.

At another level, however, the difference between the three countries tends however to confirm the other general thesis developed by Gellner, i.e. that if the economic sector has remained relatively untouched the quest for a civil society will be weaker than in the former Communist (Marxist) countries he was comparing them

50 Elisabeth Longuenesse, "Le syndicalisme professionnel en Egypte entre identités socio-professionnelles et corporatisme", *Egypte-Monde Arabe*, 24, 1996.

51 Marsha Pripstein Posusney, "Labor as an Obstacle to Privatization: The Case of Egypt", in I. Harik and D. J. Sullivan, eds., *Privatization and Liberalization in the Middle East*, Indianapolis, 1992; Clément, *op. cit.*

to. This would mean that in the case of Tunisia, with less state control of the economy and without the enormous state owned factories as in Egypt and Algeria, there would be no real disposition for a "demand for civil society", a fact corroborated by the findings so far. The controlled mass media at the national level, the lack of a public sphere at both the national and the local level, together with the tendency of the trade unionists to continue to rely on the state agencies, point in the same direction, although this requires examination over a longer period. It could also be a result of repression and not of less "demand" among people.[52] For our purposes Gellner's general thesis concerning Islam and civil society seems weakly founded, while his idea about the importance of the relative autonomy of the economic sector, which has nothing particular to do with Islam, is worth considering in more detail.[53]

The establishment of a *polis* as a condition for democracy

The situation is contradictory. In Algeria, the new constitution and the labour law (as well as parts of the new legislation in other fields) lay the ground for political life, which in turn is hindered and polarized by a violent conflict between armed groups and the repressive forces of the state. According to many observations, the crisis still implies that individuals, for the first time, have taken a stand without the protection of the group, be it the family or the party.[54] In Egypt, as a matter of fact, political life is quite active in the mass media, in the professional associations and other areas in which associations are created. Party life exists, but arbitrariness prohibits its stabilization as when dozens of candidates were arrested shortly before the 1995 parliamentary and the 1997 local elections. In both countries freedom of the press is sometimes and for some questions limited.

In Tunisia, after an opening in the late 1980s the press is now completely controlled, neither freedom of speech nor freedom of assembly is respected, and the political parties can at any moment find their leaders arrested for different reasons. On the other hand, the issues raised in the quite extensive local campaigning fall essentially within what Arendt names *poeisis,* administrative and practical problems and grievances, but scarcely at all address the common concern of the *polis*, the political community.

In none of these three countries is political opinion free, since Islamist ideology may always be considered as a support for the armed opposition groups and thus as a criminal offence. This in turn is something that may be possible to manipulate in a context where international organizations are continually involved in negotiations with the governments of those countries over economic reforms, new credits and trade associations, while on the other hand the quest for stability in the region and competition between international actors influence their view of the price they are prepared to pay. National political life in Egypt and Algeria, but to a certain extent also in Tunisia, is for a large part dominated by those international negotiations and their possible outcome for the regimes and the populations.

Oikos and *polis*: the different problems of democracy

It is quite instructive to listen to the Tunisian private entrepreneurs talking about their relations to their employees and the state. They stress their respect for the law. They also want to keep state agencies, which they consider the trade unions to be, out of their activities, and they insist upon their capacity to deal with each of their

52 In the middle of the 1980s there was a period of more intense public debate, associative life and freer mass medias, but since then the Islamist "threat" has more and more legitimized open and hidden restrictions.

53 It has, however, to be coupled with the thesis concerning the victory or defeat of the *enthusiasts*, which is worth another discussion beyond our scope here.

54 Pierre Claverie, "Humanité plurielle", *Le Monde*, Paris, 4-5.8. 1996.

employees and take into account their personal needs and family situation. The private economic sector is not a civil society, is it therefore a family society? Yes, in the sense that those entrepreneurs have a capacity to put some limits on the state, since they have an economic and social importance and thereby a certain autonomy. They employ two thirds of the industrial labour force and half of the total wage employees. They are also expected to face international competition and in the long run constitute the financial basis for the state. The payment of taxes in the form of "benevolent" contributions to the President's solidarity fund is an obligation, independently of the economic result of the individual enterprise. This taxation is, however, open to negotiation.

In Algeria there is nothing like this, no small or medium large private industries producing for export and earning currency. Privatisation has hardly begun and, for the moment, is largely restricted to the construction sector and some production for the domestic market. The state budget is essentially financed by rent income and foreign credits.

Egypt lies in between, with its long tradition of private enterprise, but also its huge nationalized industries, its quite modest earnings from selling of hydrocarbons supplemented by the receipt of consistent foreign aid due to its strategic position.

To draw a conclusion at this stage is to point at the different levels at which the problem of democracy has to be posed in each of the particular cases: in Tunisia the state is limited by an *oikos*, what are the conditions for the creation of the public sphere? In Algeria and in Egypt a public sphere exists, at least at the national level, and probably more than in Tunisia at the local level. But it is limited by the continuing blurring of the lines, the state being still very present in the economy, in Algeria also in the more restricted meaning of the *oikos* as 'household', and at the same time redesigning the relationship to the international surroundings.

If fair and pluralist enough to correspond to the multipartism which has been introduced, parliamentary elections would constitute a test of the existence of the autonomy of the citizens due to the lack of encroachment on the part of the state or the public sphere into the *oikos,* but also of the existence of a public sphere where all common issues are brought up. In the meantime, it is still meaningful to pursue the analysis at the level chosen; i.e. on the basis of the study of the deconstruction of corporatism and local political life. It has perspectives of a deeper understanding, not only of the empirical setting but also of the general problematic of democratization and the universal or particular character of the concepts discussed.

Civil Society and Divisive Politicisation

Experiences from Popular Efforts at Democratisation in Indonesia

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Introduction

Only a few years ago one could say that although Suharto the longest serving head of state, next to Castro, had built a political and economic empire on the basis of guns and oil, characterised by nepotism and corruption, Indonesia seemed to be doing quite well. Of course, liberty and democracy were lacking. But stability was there, and high and steady growth as well. True, crony businessmen enriched themselves excessively. But they invested much of their profits. Many other businessmen and new middle class people also did well. The poor were less poor than before. Student and intellectual dissidents survived in the margins. And reformists talked of 'modernising' the system.

Even as the conflicts accentuated, an increasing number of workers began to strike, the international wave of democracy reached the country and a domestic movement emerged, most analysts agreed that the likely scenario was one of fairly orderly elitist transition to a better regulated and less authoritarian rule.[1] It was very difficult to be more precise. Conflicts were hidden, organising prohibited, manoeuvres covert, messages cryptic.

By now, however, the picture is sharper, and things less easy. In April 1996 president Suharto's wife and foremost confidante, Mrs Tien, suddenly past away. A few months later Suharto himself flew to Germany for a medical check up. Stock markets dived and leading business journals wrote extensively about the end of stability and good fortunes in Indonesia. The question, therefore, was if Suharto and all his men would prove capable of effecting a smooth transition or if they would simply show that the old man was still in command. They went for the latter.

On June 20 a government sponsored faction of the smallest of the two recognised parties (besides the government's Golkar), the Indonesian Democratic Party PDI, met in Medan, North Sumatra, to do away with its legally elected leader Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of the legendary Sukarno. This kind of intervention was not a new phenomenon - but the response was. Megawati and her increasingly many supporters around the country refused to give up. In Jakarta they held on to the party headquarters on Jalan Diponogoro and, besides demonstrations, arranged a daily free speech forum at the office compound. Of course, it was far from developing into a Philippine 'people power' revolution, but more and more people came out in support of Megawati, including NGOs, action groups, and quite a few of the workers who went on strike for better conditions.

1 Even though some had hopes of rather extensive changes like in the Philippines; or at least that the many new popular oriented NGOs and sections of the rapidly expanding middle and working classes, if better organised, would be able to radicalise elite-lead transitions.

The situation became increasingly tense. At about 6 o'clock on Saturday morning July 27 policemen and soldiers stood by in the streets nearby the PDI office as several army-like troop transport trucks drew up in front of the building and unloaded thugs who, assisted by the police, charged the office, and chased the PDI members inside; many of them were seriously injured and several possibly dead. More and more concerned people came to the area and as these were forced out devastating riots and new demonstrations followed. Soon enough, however, the military stated they would shoot troublemakers "on the spot" and Suharto invented a scapegoat to prevent the pro-democracy forces from uniting and capitalising on the crackdown. All the trouble, it was stated, had been instigated by the young pro-democracy activists of a new small Peoples Democratic Party (PRD) who were labelled communists. What was more, these "subversive elements" in turn had been "masterminded" by all the other pro-democrats. Thus the witch-hunt was on, no matter if even the US government, for the first time that I am aware of, expressed serious concern over the treatment of so-called communists. Either you are loyal or a crypto-communist. If somebody manages to hide, the authorities pick at the parents or wife/husband and even children instead. And as I am writing this in late-November, 1996 the hunt is still on. Many are being arrested, including the independent trade union leader Muchtar Pakpahan. Others are intimidated, not only 'ordinary' activists but also internationally reputed human rights monitors, cultural workers, and journalists.

The open conflicts and riots in mid-96 and the following crackdown on the democracy movement thus disclosed, if only for a brief period of time, much of what used to be concealed. I was there to follow up a draft version of a long essay on the problems of democratisation (primarily based on interviews in late-1994) before publishing. It was with mixed feelings, indeed, that I could virtually see how much of the draft analysis proved right and could be further developed. A very brief summary of some points that may be of relevance for our general discussion on civil society and democratisation:[2]

Inevitable Transition with Limited Prospects

To begin with, let us consider the dynamics of the dominant forces. Three characteristics stand out as the most important.

1. Transition from the old authoritarian rule is inevitable. There is a growing inability to regulate conflicts both within the elite and in its relation to new social forces.

The regime is lacking solid institutions to handle conflicts among the dominating groups, not to talk of broader social contradictions. By now Suharto may balance it all from the top. By now the military may crack down on protests and strikes that challenge them as well. But the problems will only grow worse when succes-

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2 The original essay is part of a larger effort which started in 1991 to compare over time the importance and problems of democratisation for renewal-oriented popular movements and associated organisations in three very different contexts, within the Philippines, India and Indonesia. For the comprehensive version and references, please see the forthcoming report (probably through the Nordic Asia Institute, 1997) and/or the following book with the cases in comparative and theoretical perpective.

I am most thankful to all friends cum colleagues, political leaders and activists in the Philippines, Kerala and Indonesia who in a spirit of mutual trust and interest in critical ideas, keep spending a great deal of time in informative and exciting discussions with me-including in Indonesia in July and August 1996, when so many other matters were more urgent and important. The research in Indonesia is conducted in co-operation with Dr. Arief Budiman and with the valuable assistance of Bimo. My research is financed by Uppsala University and Sarec, the Department for research cooperation within SIDA, the Swedish International Development Authority.

sion is really around the corner. Then new rules of the game would have to be worked out and new trustworthy institutions to regulate (with a reasonable degree of predictability) the increasingly complicated economy and the various rival groups now conforming to Suharto would simply have to be established. So transition to a less authoritarian regime seems inevitable.

2. Much of the additional factors which elsewhere nourished drastic middle-class democratisation are missing.

In countries like the Philippines, with middle-class based elitist transitions from authoritarian rule, the main problem is now that democratisation lacks solid foundations; especially, I would say, in genuine popular movements and interests. In cases like Indonesia, however, where authoritarian rule still persists, the even more basic problem is that the inability of the regime to regulate conflicts and institutionalise sustained growth is likely to spur transition but not democratisation. Historically, of course, it is true that democratic rule has also evolved from above and through external pressure, as in Japan.[3] But as it is rather the forceful internal dynamics of capitalist growth that dominates the current picture, it is more relevant to relate to the 'conventional' theories about democratisation and to point to the fact that Indonesian capitalism still develops without many of the kind of relatively independent businessmen and middle-classes, and separation between state and civil society, that capitalism in general is 'normally' associated with.[4] The most likely scenario, therefore, is rather a transition to a slightly more open and well regulated society without democratisation, at least initially, through horse trading among post-Suharto elites.

3. However, the 27 of July affair now indicates that even this kind of crafted transition through horse-trading is unlikely to be a smooth and orderly one. To my understanding, the real significance of the affair is rather that it signals the devastating ways in which succession may come about.

The idea of a crafted orderly transition perspective began to fade away already as the government decided to block the attempts by the pro-Megawati people. The latter initiated (in mid-March) an electoral watch movement, to mobilise people in face of the 1997 elections and thus, despite everything, find a way of promoting democratisation by relating to the existing unequal political system. No divisions and no soft-liners within the regime were capable of altering or even modifying the blocking of these attempts, neither the potential friends of Megawati & Co. nor the pro-government reformists.

It is true that Sukarnoist Megawati and her unofficial ally Abdurrachman Wahid, the liberal minded leader of the world's largest Muslim organisation, *Nahdlatul Ulama*, are not only populist oriented but also try to negotiate pacts with disenchanted factions among those in power. Those proved wrong, however, who said that the government and the army would be divided enough to not only accept Megawati as leader of the PDI (in 1993) but also tolerate the participation of outright pro-democrats.

It is also true that less pluralistic but reformist Muslims have realised that the clientelist government *Golkar* party is a shell that is likely to vanish with its super patron Suharto. Therefore they try instead to turn the pro-government Association of Muslim Intellectuals, ICMI, into a more genuine forum in order to modernise clientelism into Malyasian-like state-corporatism. But at no point from mid-June till July 27 am I aware of any sign that those reformists seriously tried, or could have been

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3 Cf. Göran Therborn, "The Right to Vote and the Four World routes to/through Modernity", in Rolf Torstendahl, ed., *State Theory an State History*, London, 1992, and his contribution to this seminar.

4 See e.g. Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave, Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman-London, 1991; G. O'Donnel and P.C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule, Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Domocracies*, Baltimore-London, 1986.

able to accommodate the pro-democrats and to 'handle' them within a more open political framework.

So what happened on July 27 was 'only' that the regime (including its soft sections) displayed its total incapacity to even prepare its own reformation, having instead to crack down on the pro-democracy movement. Of course, increasingly many reformists as well as businessmen now realise that this cannot go on, that clashes cost too much, that there must be more openness, a better regulated economy, and new institutions and organisations that allow for efficient and reliable negotiations among the elite as well as with the people at large. (It is better, for instance, to have a representative union to deal with than to have 10,000 angry workers in the street who constantly have to be repressed by the army.) But what is the use of those insights if the reformists cannot start building the institutions and allowing the organisations until Suharto is gone? What can ICMI do, if its chairman technology minister Habibie always has to be on speaking terms with Suharto? Or what can enlightened military officers do, if the only way to sustain their positions is to be loyal to Suharto? Meanwhile the fundamental social and economic conflicts are getting worse.

Some might add that sensible compromises and gradual democratisation are anyway inevitable because capitalism is flourishing and some kind of civil society emerges. But the right to consume and a few individual liberties are not enough. It is fine if people like to have democracy (recent pools testify to this), do not trust what is in the papers, and criticise the government in coffee-shop discussions. But to make a difference they must also be able to organise on the basis of common interests and ideas. And this they cannot. Indonesia today is way behind the Philippines ten years ago, not to talk of South Africa five years ago. There is no mass organisation from below. The only option is incorporation of people into politics based on populism and what remains of the old pillars, Sukarnoism and Islam. And now July 27 displayed the risks in terms of poorly organised and angry masses that run wild and invite more repression. Moreover, the regime is rather successful in dividing the Muslims. Independent and pluralist Gus Dur is probably next on the list, if necessary.

Hence I am afraid that the July 27 affair points in the direction of, if not an upsurge *à la* Rumania, at least more unrest, more failures, and more crackdowns. Only when Suharto falls or steps down will the many actors who have remained loyal in order to survive try to handle the transition. At the moment, therefore, the army remains the only solid organisation. But the generals can no longer run the country on their own. They must look for support among businessmen and politicians, who are likely to compete with each other in offering different generals' finance and mass support. And since most of the competing actors have not been able to prepare an institutional framework for a negotiated transition, they may not be able to settle their disputes in a smooth way either.

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Eventually some kind of elitist democracy may well evolve from this process as well. But what can be done to alter the depressing *immediate* scenario? If the main points in this analysis are accepted, the only clear-cut path, even for businessmen with a strategic perspective, is the narrow one, that is, to strengthen the position of the pro-democracy forces that do not depend on remaining loyal to the regime till the bitter end. So let us turn then to these forces instead.

Of Popular Efforts at Democratisation

July 27, unfortunately, testifies also to the fact that the more genuine pro-democracy movements cannot make much difference. Their honest attempt to

relate to the recognised political system by mobilising as many as possible in face of the 1997 elections behind Megawati failed because of the lack of space for more openness and gradual change. However, when fighting an authoritarian regime this is a typical dilemma which dissidents simply have to come to terms with. Hence we must also, and primarily, analyse the problems of the democracy movement itself.

Of these problems, however, there are comparatively few studies and little relevant theory to build upon, besides general and often normative works on civil society and social movements. Some even say it is a waste of time studying the democracy movement. They believe instead it is only the powerful elites and their horse trading that will be significant.[5] But the other side of the coin or of the rise of capital, I would argue, is the rise of new social forces, including the peasants (losing land), the rural and urban toiling classes, the industrial workers, and the middle class intellectuals and professionals. And though it is true that upper class government and administration according to rule, as well as the emergence of a civil society (in terms of a sphere for relatively autonomous action and association between state and individual) and sometimes external pressure, preceded most democracies,[6] it is widely accepted that most processes of democratisation have rested with the social forces generated by capitalism, primarily the working class, but also the middle classes and their political movements.[7] So why should not the democratic potential of similar forces and organisations be studied in Indonesia too, despite the fact that times have changed and conditions vary?

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What, then, are the problems and prospects for these forces and movements to make a difference? Given the lack of research of the new forces and movements (and the fact that recent rapid changes often make it irrelevant to deduce from earlier results),[8] how do we even formulate the questions, analyse basic characteristics, and put forward hypotheses?

To begin with, it is important, I believe, to abstain from negating the conventional focus upon state and elites by 'just' studying movements and institutions in civil society.[9] The key question is rather to ask about the linkages between government and civil society, in my case by focusing upon connecting movements and parties in political society, and to look at the interplay between actors and structures/institutions, in my case by studying the ways in which the actors perceive of (and try to change) these conditions.

Secondly, if this is accepted, we need a limited universal concept of democrati-

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5 A position taken by, e.g., Richard Robison, Conversation, Copenhagen, October 26-29, 1995.

6 Cf. Göran Therborn, *op. cit.*

7 Cf. e.g., D. D. Rueschemeyer, E. Huber-Stephens and J.D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, Cambridge, 1992.

8 Including my own studies of the massive old popular organisations. (See at first hand, Olle Törnquist, *Dilemmas of Third World Communism. The Destruction of the PKI in Indonesia*, London, 1984; *Struggle for Democracy - a New Option in Indonesia?*, Uppsala University, 1984; *What's Wrong with Marxism, Vol. I: On Capitalists and State in India and Indonesia*, New Delhi, 1989; *Vol. II: On Peasants and Workers in India and Indonesia*, New Delhi, 1991; and "Communists and Democracy in the Philippines", *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 6-13 and July 20, 1991).

9 To use the concept of civil society outside the framework of the old modernised capitalist parts of world is, of course, open to even more complications than elsewhere. In a sense one may even argue that *a modern* civil society still remains to be created in countries like Indonesia. But even if I tend to subscribe to the view that the modern civil society -both as a concept and in reality- is a product of the rise of Western capitalism, it would be wrong to exclude the possibility that the minimum analytical and empirical (but *not* normative!) meaning that I put into the concept in terms of a sphere for relatively autonomous action and association between state and individual can emerge under other conditions as well, minus, of course, where, for instance, archtypical feudal relations dominate.

sation as well as a conceptualisation of the kind of associated contextual factors that the actors believe are crucial and which we thus need to ask how they relate to.[10-11]

Thirdly, the lack of relevant theories and research in the field calls for comprehensive down-to-earth studies of an exploratory nature. I have opted for comparative contrasting of the movements' views and actions related to democratisation in three very different contexts: Indonesia, the Philippines and the Indian state of Kerala. In each case I can draw on my earlier research on old movements,[12] and then add new research about new (or renewed) movements. Besides comparatively undisputed standard literature, news reports on general developments, scholarly studies and evaluations, and some documents, the new sources are mainly interviews during repeated field visits with, at each time and in each case, about fifty key-informants and leading members of the movements and associated organisations. To document problematic and unintended developments, priority is given to "self-critical" evaluations by leaders who otherwise would be expected to do their best to defend their policies.

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Initially it suffices to apply, in comparative perspective, the above-mentioned concepts only. Actually, the Philippine and Kerala case studies have generated three clusters of factors on how previously successful popular politics tend to obstruct further advances, on how old movements still condition new, and on how the expansion of capitalism both constrains and promotes democratisation. These factors may serve as points of departure for the Indonesian inquiry as well.[13]

However, when also trying to analyse the character, limits and prospects of the

10 My minimum definition of democratisation is promotion of the establishment and further development of democracy as an idea and as a method in terms of sovereignty of the people in accordance with the principle of constitutionally guaranteed political equality among citizens or members who are independent enough to express their own will. (Or in operational and minimum-procedural terms: promote the establishment and further development of government according to rule on the basis of majority decisions among adult citizens or members with one vote each and freedom of expression and organisation.) And the associated contextual factors that the actors believe are essential and which we need to analyse how they relate to are: (a) the *preconditions* that the actors give emphasis to (e.g. the capacity to organise and express opinions), (b) the *forms* of democratisation that they prefer (e.g. work inside or outside the established political system, and stressing of popular participation/direct control or representation), (c) the *extent* to which they try to expand democracy (e.g. the spreading of democratic forms of rule beyond the state to companies and civil associations), and (d) the *content* or the policies which the actors characterise as democratic (e.g. whether democratic ends justify undemocratic means).

11 Hence we are not focusing upon the introduction of democratic government at 'national' levels only but also on democratisation in other spheres and on other levels as well as its further development once established.

12 See at first hand, Olle Törnquist, *Dilemmas of Third World Communism... op. cit; What's Wrong with Marxism. Vol. I: op. cit; Vol. II: op.cit;* and "Communists and Democracy in the Philippines", *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 6-13 and July 20, 1991.

13 A brief summary: 1. Previously successful popular politics tended to obstruct further advances. In Indonesia it is quite obvious that the old massive left movement contributed unintentionally to the emergence of the present authoritarian system. 2. Old movements still condition new. In Indonesia the destruction of the previous Left meant that remaining liberal dissidents and a new generation of radical critics had to start anew. The basic problem in Indonesia is simply that dissidents are isolated from people in general -because of the destruction of the broad popular movements in the mid-60's and the authoritarian rule during the New Order. Usually it is even impossible to form membership based automous organisations. There are very few movements among people themselves to relate to. The same holds true in terms of critical ideologies and historical consciousness. Most of the dissident groups have to work from above and out of the main urban centres where civil cociety is somewhat more developed and certain protection is available from friends and temporary allies with influential positions. This way layers of fragmented dissidents have developed over the years. 3. The expansion of capitalism partly promote democratisation. Generally speaking economic and political liberalisation is a double edged sword. On the one hand, new division of labour often breaks down old class alliances and give rise to multiplicity of interests, and movements. On the other hand, liberalisation has created some space which may allow people to partially improve their standard of living by different local efforts - not having to alwalys grab political power on a general level first, thereafter to rely on state intervention. And this local space, and the need to overcome fragmentation, have spurred democratisation from below. In Indonesia, despite authoritarian rule, there are similar tendencies. For one it has been possible for a lot of development oriented NGOs to relate to new social classes in society, and a new generation of students have related to peasants (hard

new politics of democratisation there is a need for additional analytical tools. We focus on the importance of democratisation when actors read (and influence) structures and institutions in order to link up government and civil society by means of movements and organisations. But how, more exactly, should we analyse their efforts to democratise by linking up government and civil society? The answer, I think, is to concentrate on their strategic positions: (a) where do they find most space to work; (b) how do they include people into politics; (c) how do they politicise interests and ideas?

Political Space, Inclusion, and Politicisation

S p a c e

There is a wide consensus among dissidents on the general prerequisites for democratisation, primarily in terms of 'more space' or freedom of expression and organisation, and the respect for human rights. All this is needed, but lacking. The major differences are related instead to how the groups read the situation (or the 'political opportunity structure' as many analysts of social movements would have called it)[14] and what one should do to create the much needed 'space'. So what are the prerequisites for the prerequisites? How can one pave the way for democratisation? And what forms, scope, and content of democratisation should be promoted?

Two kinds of problems seem to be fundamental. Both relate to where, relatively speaking and according to the actors themselves, there is most room of manoeuvre for the democratic forces.[15] Is it necessary, firstly, to oppose and break up the political system from outside (while simultaneously, of course, trying to benefit from divisions in the regime)? This is what most dissidents would argue. Or is it possible and meaningful to try to change the political system from within? Within the existing institutions and parties, and the representative and administrative apparatuses? Like the leaders who try to promote democracy by associating with the legally recognised PDI. On the one hand, therefore, there are those who claim that it is necessary to work outside the political system; on the other hand those who contend that it is possible to stay within.

Secondly, all agree that the state alone is too dominant, but how should the balance of power between state and society be altered? Traditionally there are two answers to the question: either people believe that it is possible and necessary to promote democratisation directly in civil society under the prevailing conditions (including unequal division of power and resources) - or they feel that one can and has to first create or capture political instruments such as party and state institutions, at best democratise them, and thereafter politically facilitate civil rights and a 'good' civil society.[16] For instance, many political activists argue that space for meaningful action

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hit by evictions) and new industrial workers. In fact I think it is safe to say, therefore, that the new popular movements giving emphasis to democratisation are potentially significant, despite the many layers of fragmented dissidents. They are more than a product of the global wave of democracy and the divisions within the ruling coalition (which are only likely to generate turbulent transition to less authoritarian rule) - they are also conditioned by the expansion of capital and the new classes thus emerging.

For the full reports, see Olle Törnquist, "Democratic 'Empowerment' and Democratisation of Politics. Radical Popular Movements and the May 1992 Philippine Elections", *Third World Quarterly*, 14, 1993, 3, (For revised version including re-study, see Manoranjan Mohanty and Partha Mukherji with Olle Törnquist, eds., *People's Right: Social Movements and the State in the Third World,* forthcoming, New Delhi) and "Democratisation and Attempts to Renew the Radical Political Development Project - the Case of Kerala", *Economic and Political Weekly*, XXXI, July 13, 20 and 27, 1996, Nos. 28, 29, 30 (also available through the Nordic Asia Institute).

14 Cf. e.g. Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement, Social Movements, Collective Action, and Politics*, New York, 1994.

15 The answer to these questions, of course, is not mainly due to principles but vary with the actual conditions and the actors' ways of reading them.

16 On the concept of civil society, see the brief note in n. 9.

in civil society must be created 'from above', since the grassroots, who may only play a role if they are organised, cannot even start organising, and the elite, who must be able to compete with ideas, cannot even run reasonable newspapers. At the other end, several development-oriented NGO-leaders claim that there is, despite everything, sufficient space for relatively autonomous action, wherefore it makes sense to give priority to the strengthening of civil society (by promoting another development, critical consciousness, human rights, and informal organisation). Thus, they say, one may favour democratisation in the society at large 'from below' without first having to topple the state and by refraining from out-rightly challenging the regime and thus from provoking devastating repression. On the one hand, therefore, there are those who claim that civil society must be politically facilitated, and on the other hand those who contend that it may be strengthened directly.

The various actors, of course, must take a stand on both these issues. Hence we should cross-tabulate the two dimensions. This way we may identify four basic positions with regard to political space among the Indonesian pro-democracy forces.

Fig. 1. Basic strategic positions among the Indonesian pro-democracy forces depending on their views on whether there is space enough for meaningful work within the political system and civil society.

		Space for meaningful work within the established political system?	
		No. Must work outside	Yes. Can work inside
Space for meaningful direct work in civil society?	No. Must be politically facilitated	**I** Unrecognised avant-garde policies to alter the system and then promote democratisation	**II** Recognised political intervention to adjust the system and then promote democratisation
	Yes. May be strengthened directly	**III** 'Empower' civil society and, some add, harness popular movements to promote democratisation	**IV** Vitalise movements and NGOs more or less related to (II), to promote democratisation

Inclusion

Space, however, is not enough. We also need to know how pro-democrats try to include people into politics, no matter if outside or inside the official political system.

In general accordance with Nicos Mouzelis one may make a distinction between the integration of people into politics on the basis of relatively autonomous broad popular movements generated by comprehensive economic development (as in many parts of western Europe), and the elitist incorporation of people with less solid organisations of their own into comparatively advanced polities in economically late developing societies (as in the Balkans and many third world countries).[17]

These concepts, of course, call for further elaboration. Until early 1996 those who claimed that it was necessary to work outside the system gave emphasis to the integration of people into politics while those saying it was possible to stay within emphasised incorporation. Let us begin with those trying adjustment by way of incorporation.

Incorporation of people into politics within the system

Following Mouzelis one may talk of two methods of incorporating people into comparatively advanced polities: clientelism and populism. While clientelism, primarily, is associated with bosses on different levels with their own capacity to deliver patronage in return for services and votes, populism, generally, goes with charismatic leaders who are able to express popular feelings and ideas, but not necessarily interests, and whose positions are essential to the stability of the leaders and their ability to support followers.

17 Nicos P. Mouzelis, *Politics in the Semi - Periphery, Early Parliamentarism and Late Industrialisation in the Balkans and Latin America*, London, 1986.

In the present Indonesian context, populism, which was so important during the Old Order, is now returning to the fore with Megawati's Sukarnoism within (until recently) the political system and the comparatively pluralist Muslim NU in civil society. Megawati's undivided PDI was the only legal party with a charismatic and elected leader. The party itself, however, is small and made up of Sukarnoists and Christians, with some support from disenchanted officers and some liberal oriented businessmen and members of the new middle classes. NU is economically more independent in its mainly rural strongholds in Java. The charismatic leader Abdurrachman 'Gus Dur' Wahid has been able to sustain his leadership against intervening government loyalists. In fact, he skilfully steers this huge traditionalist cum pragmatic (some say 'neo-modernist') socio-religious movement in turbulent waters. On the one hand he both avoids confrontation with the regime and running offside in relation to his followers, "whose awareness is only emerging and who have only began to question things and to ask for better accountability etc. Democracy, he stresses, must be built from below, in civil society, "by developing our culture".[18] On the other hand, he both hits hard against those characterised as anti-plural, primordial, opportunistic and not consistently democratic modernist Muslims (see below), and contemplates (at least till recently) a new alliance with Megawati's PDI and certain sections of the army in addition to what may come out of discussions, under his own chairmanship, with other leading intellectuals, including radical activists, in the so called Democratic Forum.[19]

While this renewed populist blend of Sukarnoism and Muslim pluralism, therefore, may travel rather well with some democratisation, the same is not necessarily true of the current attempts at reforming clientelism. After Sukarno, the new authoritarian rulers rejected populism but sustained clientelism; the kind of clientelism that has characterised much of their New Order. Since the late eighties, however, there have been attempts at modernising the old way of incorporating people into politics by substituting more well regulated and de-militarised state-corporatism,[20] plus some co-optation of intellectuals and experts, for the previous more personalised, militarised and arbitrary clientelism. This, of course, is not to democratise Indonesia's polity but to make it more efficient and sustainable, especially in face of the inevitable succession. This calls for more than good connections with big businessmen and leading professionals. Friendly relations with the many Muslims among the *pribumi* businessmen and middle class people must also be added. These had hitherto been set aside as compared to, for instance, foreign and Chinese businessmen, and Christian officers and intellectuals. Consequently, a few years ago, not only Muslim loyalists but also well respected dissidents and NGO activists got an offer most of them could not refuse. By linking up with ICMI and Habibie, even the former rebels would get as much resources, freedom and influence as one could possibly hope for in civil society as well as within the political system to better the position of the Muslims as a corporation, but not the middle-class or working class as a whole, or the poor in general.

What was more, this way they got the chance to work out a formula for succession that would be comparatively progressive but yet sufficiently stable and well functioning that later on, when time had become ripe, it would be the present rulers who could not refuse *this* offer. Said Adi Sasono, leading 'defector', now secretary general of ICMI:

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18 Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid 15/11/94.

19 A meeting-point for dissident intellectuals and activists.

20 State-corporatism should thus be distinguished from the kind of social corporatism that emerged more from below in, for instance, the Scandinavian countries. Cf., moreover, Nicos Mouzelis "Modernity, Late Development and Civil Society", in Lars Rudebeck and Olle Törnquist, eds., *Democratisation in the Third World*... op. cit.

> NGOs are not enough. One must also work within government. It is not monolithic. There are progressive elements ... and possibilities to push 'new emerging forces' ... There must be something once he (Suharto) is gone...We must prepare for the future ... (so that we can) democratise with unity and stability ... (This is only possible if we) counter the monetarists and build an ecologically sustainable and growth oriented economy which really is to the benefit of much more people than now by way of efficient and clean government intervention, as in the NICs, before the oil dries up ... OK. we can't go too far with de-monopolisation...it wouldn't be politically wise ... but we can do our best to demilitarise labour relations, strengthen human rights, improve the position of the poor and the small (Muslim) businessmen ... Like Malaysia? I'm not sure ... But *Golkar* will be instrumental in legalising reform in the representative organs of the state ... I would rather compare it with the Institutional Revolutionary Party in Mexico...And ICMI is a kind of forum and powerful vanguard...both in state and civil society.[21]

After the 27 of July affair, however, there is less optimism: "This is a terrible setback for us as well...there are dynamics within the army which we cannot do much about...and the old man doesn't listen." And when I ask how ICMI, which is not in favour of a transition based on multi-party negotiations and elections, will accommodate other views and forces, such as those who rally behind Megawati and Gus Dur, the only answer is: "well, that's a good question".[22]

Fig. 2. Strategic positions among the 'moderates' who believe adjustment to democracy is possible within the established political system, depending, as earlier, on different views on what space there is for meaningful work within civil society, but now also on ways of incorporating people into politics: populism or (state)corporatism.

		Forms of incorporating people into politics	
		Populist	(State) corporatist
Space for meaningful work in civil society?	No. Legal political intervention to adjust the political system and raise civil society	Negotiate pacts with those losing out under Suharto and mobilise electoral support for more equal chances and religious pluralism	Prepare 'orderly' succession by instituting pro-Muslim state-corporatism and making *Golkar* an organ producing pacts and mobilising votes
	Yes. Vitalise, therefore, adjoining movements and NGOs to adjust the system	Use culture to develop critical awareness within NU and understanding with other groups, like Sukarnoists, Christians and NGO-activists	Use ICMI and related NGOs to counter militarisation and to mobilise the Muslim *pribumi* middle classes in advantageous corporations

Integration of people into politics outside the system

Most of the outright pro-democracy activists, however, are on the left side of our basic matrix (figure 1) arguing that it is, at present, almost impossible to democratise the political system from within. Legal politics is tightly controlled and regulated. Political participation is limited to those who are loyal to the regime. It is indeed true, most of the radical democrats continue, that divisions within the establishment are important and should be taken advantage of, especially as they generate more space for action. Even unfair elections, many say, may turn into rallying points and give rise to change. But all agree that actual change requires popular power, as in the Philippines, so genuine democratisation must still be enforced by mobilising pressure from outside. Exactly how this should be done, however, is a matter of dispute and factions are abundant. To begin with we should recall the fundamental question whether the balance of power between state and civil society must be politically facilitated, or if it can, and should, be done directly from

21 Adi Sasono in interview, 4/11/1994.

22 Adi Sasono in interview, 13/8/1996.

within civil society. On a general level, of course, almost everybody says that both are necessary. But which makes most sense and which should be given priority?

The first point (about the need to create politically more space in civil society) is usually made by 'traditional' activists, including those with a leftist-nationalist, socialist or communist background, but also by the new generation of radical activists who focus on state power at the central and local level. The contemporary version of the second argument (that civil society can be empowered from within), on the other hand, emerged among those who were 'morally' disillusioned with the New Order, as well as among progressive socio-religious movements, and grew strong within the development and human rights oriented NGO-community. Later on much of the internationally fashionable normative discourse on civil society and new social movements was also incorporated, in addition to some of the experiences from the anti-authoritarian struggles in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and parts of Asia.

The actual positions of the actors, however, cannot be characterised without considering how they try to include people into politics. Until early 1996, as already pointed out, those who preferred to work outside the system all opposed the traditional third world pattern of elitist incorporation of people into politics and tried instead to improve their narrow social basis by integration through popular organisations.

In general accordance with Sidney Tarrow, one may distinguish two basic methods of popular integration, one which gives emphasis to autonomous collective action and the other which focuses upon the internalisation of actions and movements in organisations with some leadership. Tarrow argues, and my earlier studies of Kerala and the Philippines confirm his views, that the most important but often neglected element of movement organising is what he calls the 'mobilising structures'. These link the 'centre' (in terms of formally organised leadership identifying aims and means) and 'periphery' (in terms of the actual collective action in the field). The 'mobilising structures' are thus "permitting movement co-ordination and allowing movements to persist over time".[23] Historically, he continues, there are two solutions to the problem, one with roots in anarchist and one in democratic socialist thinking.[24] The anarchist approach emphasises people's natural and spontaneous willingness and ability to resist repression and exploitation through linked networks and federations of autonomous associations with, however, in reality, organic leaders as spearheads. The social democratic concept stresses the need for political ideology, organisation, and intervention through an integrated structure of parties, unions, and self-help organisations.[25] In the Indonesian context these labels often carry different connotations. Hence, I shall talk instead of federative and unitary forms of integration.[26]

Thus we arrive at four fundamental positions as a starting point for further analysis of the radical pro-democracy actors in Indonesia.

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23 Tarrow (1994), p. 135 f.

24 In the 'anarchist' solutions Tarrow also includes, for instance, syndicalism and guild socialism; in the second he adds, for instance, European Christian Democracy. Of course, one could also add reformist communist patterns (like in West Bengal and Kerala) to the second category.

25 *Ibid.*, primarily pp. 138 ff.

26 Much could be added to this. Tarrow discusses intermediate solutions or more or less attractive compromises having developed over time. For analytical purposes, and as a way of further distancing ourselves from Tarrow's European and North American context, I believe it is more fruitful to hold on to the basic ideal types and to begin by cross tabulating with our earlier distinction between different positions on whether the balance of power between state and civil society must be altered 'from above', or if it can, and should, be done 'from below'.

Fig. 3. Strategic positions among the radical democrats until early 1996 who all believed that democratisation is not possible within the established political system depending, as earlier, on different views on what space there is for meaningful work within civil society, but now also on ways of integrating people into politics: federative and unitary.

		Forms of integrating people into politics	
		Federative	Unitary
Space for meaningful work in civil society?	No. Avant-garde politics necessary to break up the regime and liberate civil society	Networking avant-garde catalysts	Political leaders plus general organisers
	Yes. Empower civil society and, some add, harness popular movement politics to change the system	'Independent' NGOs with grassroots activities	Movement organisers cum co-ordinators

Politicisation of interests and issues

Before proceeding to a closer analysis of the character and dilemmas of the four categories of radical democrats,[27] however, we must also develop analytical tools to handle the question of politicisation. A major conclusion from my comparative case studies in the Philippines and Kerala is that while new actions and development work often contribute to the vitalisation of civil society, and even to the generation of a democratic culture or 'social capital', they do not in themselves converge and produce the broader issues, perspectives and organisations that may generate extended and dynamic popular politics of democratisation.[28] Consequently, there are good reasons for looking into this problem in Indonesia as well. The only problem is that there is a lack of theoretically informed tools.

On the basis of a historical and Marxian oriented understanding of civil society and democracy, however, Peter Gibbon has succinctly suggested some exciting propositions that may serve as points of departure.[29] If it is accepted that the contemporary emergence of civil society is related to the expansion of capitalism at the expense of extra-economic coercion, it follows that civil society primarily reflects the new 'bourgeois' social division of labour with its individualised and privatised entities. The thus generated plurality of groupings is not in itself likely to promote general interests and democratic forms of government. Rather there is a risk that even the popular organisations involved become prisoners of the process by 'deepening civil society' and are unable to combine single issues, special interests and fragmented movements by way of politicisation.

27 And then, of course, also adding the less tricky questions about their own democratic practices, including within the movements, as well as the scope and content of democracy in terms of what they try to democratise and what they regard as democratic policies (including to what extent democratic ends justify undemocratic means).

28 In the Philippines 'pure' developmentalism and 'deepening' rather than politicisation of civil society, suppelemented by lobbying and perssure politics on single issues, dominate popular efforts at further democratisation. In Kerela non-party political development actions, when possible in co-operation with a Left Front Government, are in the forefront, while the outright political tasks are referred to not too accommodating established parties and movements. See Olle Törnquist, "Democratic 'Empowerment' and Democratisation of Politics..." *op. cit.* (For a revised version including a re-study, see Manoranjan Mohanty and Partha Mukherji with Olle Törnquist, eds., *People's Right...*, *op. cit.* and "Democratisation and Attempts to Renew the Radical Political Development Project - the Case of Kerela" *op. cit.).*

29 See Peter Gibbon, "Some Reflections on Development, Democratisation, and Civil Society", in Lars Rudebeck and Olle Törnquist, eds., *Democratisation in the Third World... op. cit.* As matter of fact, when Gibbon presented the first draft on his article in 1993 we were both struck by how well his own empirical findings from Africa related to mine based on research in the Philippines in 1992, see Olle Törnquist, "Democratic 'Empowerment' and Democratisation of Politics..., *op. cit.*

This way of conceptualising politicisation, however, is both too narrow (and partly normative) as it is not problematised, and too general, as it tends to include all aspects of politics. We should not rule out politicisation through e.g. development oriented civil society organisations. And just like pluralism, of course, politicisation is no sufficient recipe for democratisation, as recently demonstrated in former Yugoslavia, and earlier when carried out with even the best of intentions within the framework of various socialist projects. Hence, there is a need for qualifications. Moreover, we have to be more precise. We have already discussed how people are involved in politics. So let us now reserve the concept of politicisation for the ways in which interests, ideas, and issues are also included into politics - i.e. put in a societal perspective by people who have come together about what should be held in common and how this should be done in a politically created society (such as a nation state or a municipality). Three aspects are most important: the basis, the forms, and the content.

The *basis for politicisation* may be derived from the ideas and interests that make people come together. Let us distinguish between movements and organisations on the basis of, first, single issues and/or special interests[30] and, second, ideologies and/or collective interests. The *forms of politicisation* are by definition related to societal organs like a state or local government but vary according to whether one 'only' demands that certain policies should be carried out by these organs or also really engages in promoting similar ends through self-management, for instance by way of co-operatives. The *content of politicisation* is difficult to classify but is, of course, for instance, about different ideologies and the way in which various movements articulate issues and interests as well as norms, such as democratic rights and equality, in different contexts. On the one hand, even authoritarian rulers talk of democracy, and even chauvinist religious movements may legitimate their aims and means in terms of the rights and freedom of their members.[31] On the other hand, demands for democratisation may well be expressed by use of 'traditional' values and vocabulary.[32]

The basis and forms of politicisation may be illustrated in a simple table, whereafter we have to supplement with the content.

Fig. 4. Types of politicisation.

		Forms of politicisation	
		Via state/local govt. only	Also via self-management
Basis of politicisation	Single issues or special interests	1. Single pluralism	2. Dual pluralism
	Ideology or collective interests	3 . Single social	4. Dual social

Hereby we may distinguish between four types of politicisation. In box 1, the kind of single pluralism where pressure groups, single issue movements, and special interest organisations try to affect state or local government policies. In box 2, dual pluralism with various groups and organisations putting forward their demands while

30 Hence, a single issue like the building of a nuclear power station may but does not have to be linked to special interests among the people immediately concerned.

31 Cf. the writings of Thomas Blom Hansen, e.g. *Politics and Ideology in Developing Societies. An Exploratory Essay*, Aalbord University, 1991, and "Becoming a Light onto Itself': Nationalist Fantasies in the Age of Globalisation", in *Economic and Political Weekly*, XXXI, 10, March 1966.

32 Cf. e.g. James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven - London, 1986, and *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven - London, 1990, as well as Gail Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution. New Social Movements and the Socialist Tradition in India*, New York - London, 1993.

also self-managing issues and interests. In box 3 the single social type of politicisation with organisations or corporations demanding state or local government policies on the basis of ideologies and/or collective interests. In box 4 dual social politicisation through similar organisations which also, to a considerable extent, manage common interests.

Let us now, keeping in mind the conceptualisation of basic strategic positions among the radical democrats,[33] situate the types of politicisation[34] within the framework of each strategic position, so that we can continue with a brief analysis the actual character, limits, and prospects of their politics of democratisation.

Scattered Movements and Divisive Politicisation

Character of new politics of democratisation

To begin with a very brief characterisation of the movements' politics of democratisation. Their different strategic positions indicated in figure 3 serve as a framework.

(1) According to the net working catalysts it is necessary to break up the regime and liberate civil society 'from above' by way of *avant-garde* politics. There is little room for manoeuvre within the established political system or in civil society. People should be integrated into politics on the basis of federative ideas about their spontaneous ability to resist and carry out collective action which simply has to be ignited and linked up.[35] Much of this thinking has deep roots in the Indonesian liberation struggle. There is also the tradition of generating 'moral pressure' to thus de-legitimise the rulers. At times of low tide in collective action, the position of the net-working catalysts has been that of patronising various NGOs, courageously speaking up in favour of civil and human rights, and defending all kinds of activists on all kinds of issues, while also linking them up with disenchanted sections of the elite. With the new wave of radical collective action in the late-eighties and onwards, however, alternative forms of catalytic work emerged. Increasingly radical and restless students in covert study groups began to look around for signs in actual life of what they had read of exploited masses who could make a difference. They found local but still rather unarticulated protests among the workers and the rural poor against abusive land acquisition. They left most of the 'established' NGOs and dissidents behind. They formed new action groups and unions, staged daring demonstrations, and tried to give voice to subordinated but protesting people. Some constantly hunted for new issues to attract the media and were labelled 'action maniacs'. While the catalysts thus demonstrated that there is some space for radical action and politicisation, they primarily focused on scattered single issues and pressure politics. Rallying points failed to appear. Some try to make up for this by simply "not talking so much about the future but concentrating on getting rid of Suharto, which is the most important task anyway".[36] There is little ideological cohesion or strategic considerations, aside from general ideas about the need to promote freedom, human rights, and democracy. The collective interests brought forward on the labour front proved difficult to sustain and took an ugly turn. In the process, however, certain changes have occurred. Some journalists, for instance, who try to develop their own movement and produce alternative magazines have taken up more fundamental work in civil society. Others give more emphasis to general organisation and to co-ordination. Hence we shall return to them below.

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33 Positions incorporating much of the actor's views on preconditions and forms of democratisation - urging us to now also consider their positions regarding the scope and content of democratisation.

34 Supplemented by the content of politicisation.

35 Examples of top-down catalysts include H.J.C. Princen, Muchtar Pakpahan's SBSI, many of the Yogya-students getting incolved in the Kedong Ombo affair, and the Jakarta centred Pijar-group.

36 Interview with leading Pijar activists, 7/11/1994. (Similar ideas expressed 1996.)

(2) The political leaders and general organisers also maintain that there is a need to break up the regime and liberate civil society by way of avant-garde politics, but their view on how people should be integrated into politics is based less on federalist ideas than on unitary preoccupation with political ideology and intervention through parties and related organisations. There are two historical patterns in the Indonesian context. One model dates back to the middle class intellectuals who tried to build 'modern' parties but ended up with elitist formations (like the former Socialist Party), or elite-led parties based on conventional loyalties (such as PNI and *Masjumi*). The other model is that of the reformist-communists who also made use of some conventional loyalties but still managed to build a comparatively 'modern' party with some 20 million people in affiliated popular organisations. However, what remains at present is leaders from the elitist tradition who initially supported the New Order but then turned critics and were deprived of their organisational base. Their main remaining asset is some integrity and legitimacy in the eyes of many people and among Western governments and agencies. This makes it possible for them to mobilise some resources and, more importantly, to stand out as necessary partners of any slightly more liberal regime, just as of all the less well connected action groups and NGOs.[37] The reformist-communists, on the other hand, are no more, but there are serious attempts to re-build a 'modern' mass-based party. The propelling forces are young former net working catalysts who turned against cautious NGO work in civil society in the late-80's and early-90's and tried instead to politicise single issues by daring demonstrations, but then felt that this was not enough. They now argue that the main problem was the lack of consistent work at the grassroots level, particularly organisation, and a long term perspective. However, they start, not by forming mass organisations like unions from below but by trying top-down cadre-based mobilisation. The immediate target is liberal democratisation to alter the regime; later they also hope to widen the scope to include democratisation of social and economic relations. Here are thus the young radicals who began building political action groups among workers, peasants, students, et. al. in early 1994 and recently formed the People's Democratic Party (PRD) now accused of being communist and of having instigated the 27 of July affair. To sum up, on the one hand there are experienced leaders with some legitimacy, logistics, and ability to form part of new political pacts, but lacking organisation; on the other hand young activist top-down organisers who may be able to initiate some popular pressure but lack legitimacy and resources. Both parties focus on the central state to alter the regime, and thus promote better policies, rather than on self-management to improve the condition of the people. And both make attempts at moving from single issues to more ideological questions, and from special interests to more collective ones. But while the political leaders primarily prepare the ground for pacts and compromises between various actors, until the time is ripe for outright intervention, the top-down organisers try to work out their own concepts and set out to mobilise the people right now.

(3) The 'independent' NGOs with grassroots activities differ from the catalysts, the political leaders and the general organisers in their claim that there is, despite everything, some space for meaningful work in civil society; a civil society which should be strengthened and people integrated into politics in accordance with federative ideas in order to promote 'real' democratisation. The people themselves, it is argued, are quite capable and willing to stand up against oppression. "They know what's happening. They can speak for themselves. They organise for immediate needs. There is no need to tell them, speak for them, or shut them up. We, from the

37 Examples of political leaders include Buyung Nasution and associates, Ali Sadikin et. al. in the Petition 50 group, many of those involved in democratic forum, and Bintang Pramukas, Julius Usman and others in PUDI.

outside, should not intervene like that."[38] Secondly, the grassroots NGOs have a good deal of suspicion, for various reasons, of 'central' leadership and integrated organisations, and prefer instead autonomous associations that may link up and federate. The grassroots NGOs include, firstly, new labour activists trying to ignite the spark from bottom up rather than from top down by favouring outright unionism on the basis of immediate demands,[39] secondly, NGO workers adhering to the classical and most widespread position that one should rather serve or facilitate many small fires that people can handle by themselves. Hence we may distinguish between movement servers, including many supportive action groups and NGOs,[40] and the primarily development-oriented movement facilitators.[41] The latter are less interested in altering the regime than in creating preconditions for 'meaningful democratisation' and extending it to society at large. The new labour activists and the movement servers primarily put forward demands to those directly concerned, like the factory owners, or state representatives, while the movement facilitators give priority to self management. All three, however, are plagued by hierarchies between as well as within the various organisations which is in contrast to their aim of contributing to the democratisation of society at large. All three focus on single issues and special interests, an orientation which seems to generate many of the problems related to politicisation. The lack of democratic relations between and within the organisations not only generates friction and lack of co-ordination. Local issues and interests tend to be subordinated to central considerations and to be defined according to various ideas among the organisations and activists. This gives rise to additional divisions. The facilitators even get involved in complicated local conflicts and may thus generate particularistic trust rather than more general co-operation. There is also a constant risk that a kind of alternative patronage may develop. There are attempts among movement developers to compensate for this through networking. For instance, local NGO forums are established in some regions and cities. On the national and international level certain issues of common concern are handled within INFID,[42] but while some important co-operation has thus been initiated, contacts and discussions alone have little effect on the more fundamental factors just identified behind the tendency towards fragmentation.

(4) The bottom-up movement organisers cum co-ordinators are newcomers. Strategic positions related to unitary ideas (including social democratic ones) on how to integrate people into politics have usually been associated with top-down practices.[43] As demonstrated in our third figure, however, it is logical to allow also for a bottom-up project; a project propelled by actors who, just like the movement developers, say that there is space for meaningful work in civil society, and that priority should be given to its 'empowerment', but then add that there is also a need for political ideology and an integrated structure of various organisations; actors who conclude, therefore, that this organisational structure, just as the politics of democratisation, must be built from within civil society. Are there any such political animals in Indonesia? One example is from the labour front and the rise of *Forsol* in the early-90's, a co-ordination body of various NGOs active among the workers in Greater Jakarta. As usual, the NGOs had different views, methods and spheres of interest. But then there was a big strike, and the repression hit at workers associated with all the NGOs. So these active workers demanded that the NGOs must do something together - and hence *Forsol* was established. Say some of the NGO leaders:

38 Indera Nababan, interview 11/11/1994.

39 Examples of labour oriented movement developers include many of the grassroots activists within SBSI, independent labour groups, and some NGOs involved in labour training and conscientisation.

40 Examples of movement servers include much of the work carried out by Human Rights organisations like YLBHI (though some of the work within this broad association also relate to other strategic positions) ELSAM, and supportive groups like Geni and Whali.

41 One very positive example among the many movement developing NGOs is Bina Desa.

42 International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development.

43 See e.g. Tarrow (1994), op. cit.

In *Forsol* we get to know each other and divide the territory. But we also agree on fighting for some basic goals like the right to form free unions, getting rid of military intervention as well as obstructive government regulations, and the protection of child labour". "Anyway, the basic thing is that it wasn't us that initiated this co-ordination. Rather it was active workers who began to organise the supportive NGOs.[44]

By 1996 this co-operation had spread to additional areas in the country, promoted by, among others, the labour units of the Legal Aid Institutes.[45] Another recent initiative in the same direction is KIPP, the independent election monitoring committee established in March 1996. Leading pro-democracy dissidents and groupings with various orientations were planning to monitor the 1997 parliamentary elections, to begin with. The initiative was widely acclaimed, by moderate democrats among others. There was and still is an obvious potential in co-ordinating scattered movements with the common focus on promoting the officially proclaimed element of democracy, and exposing everything that is unsatisfactory or lacking. However, the extent to which KIPP would take root among the grassroots, and be guided by widespread popular concern rather than elitist aspirations, remained to be seen. Soon enough it was linked up with the support-work for Megawati and now it suffers badly from the crackdown on the democracy movement as a whole. In conclusion, the still weak and few organisers cum co-ordinators thus tend to relate politicisation of single issues and special interests to problems of more common concern. Moreover, some of those who used to focus 'only' on putting pressure on, for instance, factory owners or the state leaders by way of strikes or protests, now also try to mobilise people's capacity to do things on their own. There are also signs indicating that this orientation arises not merely from intellectual considerations but is the result of pressure from below; pressure generated in turn by actual conflicts in society, not in seminar rooms.

Limits of new politics of democratisation

Much of the efforts by the few and weak movement organisers cum co-ordinators is of such a recent origin that a close and critical evaluation will have to wait. But till early 1996 a major result of all the other attempts and actors is that none of *them* had been markedly successful in building their different 'mobilising structures' and in propelling democratisation. In other words, the possibilities of generating social bases for the pro-democracy groupings and of inducing democratisation do not seem to vary directly with the major strategic positions.

In seeking an answer to why it is that so many different groupings with different positions and different views of democratisation all share those problems, it would thus be fruitful to look out for common features. One should not exclude the possibility that the strategic position taken by the new movement organisers cum co-ordinators might be more fruitful, but as far as I can see now the primary common denominator among all the others is their pattern of politicisation, with a basic orientation towards single issues and special interests.

Interestingly enough, similar kinds of politicisation are of major importance even in the more divergent contexts of the Philippines and Kerala. Here, as we know, new actions and development work often contribute to the vitalisation of civil society, and even to the generation of social capital, but do not in themselves converge and produce the broader issues, perspectives and organisations that may generate extended and dynamic popular politics of democratisation. In the present case of Indonesia, most groupings base themselves on single issues or special interests, either by putting pressure on the state and local government in favour of alternative policies or by also promoting similar ends through self-management, like the run-

44 Interviews with NGO labour activists Teten Masduki (Jakarta 11/11/1994 and 19/7/1996), Aris Merdeka Sirait (Jakarta 8/11/1994 and 14/8/1996) and Fauzi Abdullah (Jakarta 17/7/1996 and 16/8/1996).

45 Another example in the more comprehensive essay is some of the work led by Johny Simanjuntak in relation to the Kedung Ombo affair.

ning of co-operatives. Moreover, those primarily doing so (the movement developers) are also the actors with the strongest social base, while those also trying to focus upon ideology are more isolated and tend to work from above (the political leaders and general organisers).

Finally, there has been a tendency since the early-90's, and especially since 1994, to really link up alternative development and human rights work, for instance, with politics. Most frustrating, however, is that while major groupings within the three dominant strategic positions try their best to really relate specific issues and special interests to more general perspectives, they also tend, despite good intentions, to get stuck in either the limited kind of politicisation with some social foundation among the grassroots or the attempts at broader perspective without much social basis, even ending up by causing each other trouble. Hence, let us examine in somewhat more detail the dynamics of this divisive politicisation within the framework of the dominant strategic positions.

Divisive politicisation

The networking catalysts, as we know, focus on single issues and special interests, and try to pave the way for popular pressure politics, primarily directed against the state. In trying to find the rallying point, however, they are constantly looking for a better case. When simultaneously having to attract the attention of the media, they also need new and good 'stories' and may even turn 'action maniacs'. In doing this they easily become part of Jakarta's elitist 'political theatre' and tend to split. In making up for the divisions and the lack of a rallying point, they may try to develop a short-sighted and simple aim, such as getting rid of Suharto and his cronies. And when trying to ignite the sparks among the many frustrated workers, they run the risk of simply generating a popular upsurge which may easily be abused and falter or fade away. It is true that the catalysts have demonstrated through bold and daring initiatives that there exists more space for action than what most other dissidents initially thought. But to bring various issues to the street, and constantly try out what is possible, they have to take more and more daring steps, and neglect painstaking democratic principles and consistent work on the grassroots level, thus running offside, far ahead of most potential followers, and dominating, alienating, and causing trouble for those who work slowly but consistently among the people.

The political leaders try to put pressure on the regime but have lost their organised social base. Hence, while discussing ideological and strategical matters and preparing the ground for pacts and compromises, they at the same time patronise various NGOs and movements that focus on special issues and interests. The leaders' main asset is some integrity and general legitimacy among the people, as well as Western governments and agencies, which makes them indispensable partners of a more liberal regime and capable of mobilising some resources. It is true that this is of vital importance in the general process of democratisation, but when the leaders try to sustain their asset it makes less sense to them to engage in time-consuming awareness building and organisational work than to see to it that others who are already doing so continue to ask for support and become parts of an integrated structure of popular pressure groups. This in turn, therefore, rather upholds than weakens the leader's scepticism regarding the capacity of social movements to make a difference. Moreover, it tends to sustain the hierarchies and lack of democracy among and within the organisations where strong leaders sometimes act as institutions in themselves; it may even improve the leaders' ability to act as alternative patrons of groups that are weak and people who are threatened. (Ironically, various scattered groupings themselves may also encourage the rise of such leaders, as the former feel that there is a need for some kind of 'locomotive'. Moreover, radical activists may do the same when trying to demonstrate that the old leaders 'are not radical and consistent enough'.)

The general organisers, on the other hand, really try to build an integrated structure of mass based political organisations that can put pressure on state and capital and are based on 'scientifically identified' collective interests as well as a common ideology and strategy. In doing this, however, they tend to substitute efficient organisation, cadres, and more radical policies for lack of popular legitimacy, authority, and bottom-up organising. This way they may distance themselves from hesitant critics of the regime, for instance within the middle classes; this way they may come into conflict with both rival political leaders and with the many dissidents who try to stay away from enlightened 'cadreism' and give priority instead to the generation of ideological perspectives and less 'guided' resistance from below; and this way their emphasis on confronting the capitalist system and state in general may neglect the many groups that focus on vital special issues and try to defend and improve the position of weak sections of the population.

The many 'independent' NGOs with grassroots activities, like the catalysts, focus on single issues and special interests and try, of course, to link them up. In doing this, however, the new grassroots labour activists may turn directly to unionism. Hence they run the risk of causing trouble for other grassroots NGOs (and organisers-cum-co-ordinators) who first like to prepare more solid grounds among a much larger number of workers. The absolute majority of the grassroots NGOs on the other hand, either tend to compile incoherent long lists of demands and attempts, or try to promote unity on the basis of different particular issues, interests, and methods. In the latter case, therefore, they frequently come into conflict with each other; conflicts which they often 'solve' by multiplying their organisations rather than developing internal democracy, as they have access to alternative patronage and do not have to rely on common efforts among the people whom they aim at supporting.

Furthermore, those among these grassroots NGOs who primarily 'serve the people' first oppose catalysts that subordinate the people's immediate problems to issues that may cause as much harm as possible for the regime. Thereafter, however, they themselves tend to promote unity on the basis of their own way of stating the problem, for instance in terms of property rights among people being evicted for 'development purposes'. Hence they not only run into conflict with others with a different way of posing the problem but may also exclude all the people concerned who have no property rights. Similarly, the movement developers, who try to avoid this by 'only' facilitating men's and women's own efforts, are harsh critics of the intervention of catalysts; actually they often add political leaders and movement organisers. But then facilitators are also caught in the logic of stating the problem themselves, especially when having to satisfy patrons that provide resources from above. What is more, they face additional problems of generalising the struggle on the basis of the very different local communities and interests that they relate to and sub-patronise. At worst they may even aggravate local divisions.

Outcome

As the movement organisers cum co-ordinators[46] are still very weak, the major conclusion is that the divisive politicisation and the radical pro-democracy groupings involved do not, in themselves, generate an opening. No doubt, they all carry out very important, sincere, and devoted work, but their own dynamics is not enough to make a difference. The likely outcome, therefore, is rather that factors which are external to their own efforts will be decisive, at least initially. This is what happened in June and early July 1996 (when I had just concluded the draft version of the original more extensive essay). The government did away with Megawati as

46 Who feel that some intervention and organising of the movements from below is necessary both to transform special interests into collective ones and to relate single issues to an ideological perspective, but who simultaneously restrict themselves to the co-ordination of such movements and aspirations.

a legally recognised and increasingly popular leader who might have caused some problems in the forthcoming elections. So at this point of time, what was the radical democrats' logical way of acting given their character and dynamics as outlined above?

(1) Many political activists, especially among top down catalysts and political leaders, simply rallied behind Megawati and her associated populist moderate-democrats within PDI and NU, since these were legitimate actors within the system and, most important of all, proved capable of incorporating a lot of people into politics.

(2) Other catalysts and political leaders and (to my surprise) even the young radical general organisers of the PRD[47] did much the same, while simultaneously trying to uphold some independence by striking deals with the Megawati camp on the basis of their own potential to stage actions and mobilise the people. (One co-ordination body for the purpose was *Mari*.) As there was a shortage of time, many of them even substituted their capacity to incorporate people into politics through the alternative patronage of various followers for their ambition to integrate instead people into politics.

Hence we should extend our previous figure 3 of strategic positions among the radical democrats. A new column should be added indicating a kind of radical incorporation of people into politics by way of alternative patronage. This may be done from above, for instance by patronising various central NGOs and providing Megawati and influential allies (e.g. within the military) with some democratic legitimacy, but also from below where the NGOs in turn may offer patronage to their clients among the people.[48]

Fig. 5. Strategic positions among the radical democrats when external factors have triggered off a broad movement for transition from authoritarian rule.

		Forms of integrating people into politics		Alternative incorporation of people into politics via patronage
		Federative	Unitary	
Space for meaningful work in civil society?	No. Avant-garde politics necessary to break up the regime and liberate civil society	Networking avant garde catalysts	Political leaders plus general organizers	Leading radical patrons
	Yes. Empower civil society and, some add, harness popular movement politics to change the system	'Independent' NGOs with grassroots activities	Movement organisers cum co-ordinators	Local NGO-patrons

47 At his point my prediction failed. I expected the principled general organisers (like fellow Lagman in Manila) to date unscrupulous 'traditional politicians' while simultaneously concentrating upon rather sectarian efforts at forming a kind of socialist cadre party in command of an integrated structure of topdown initiated unions and various popular organisations. Even then, of course, centralised and efficient cadres might occasionally make some difference, though this may not necessarily be to the benefit of the broader but less well organised pro-democracy forces. By now, however, I know that PRD leaders at an early point of time, at least in March when KIPP was formed, were less shrewd when supporting Megawati in trying to contribute to the rallying and people in face of the elections and (perhaps) generating a situation similar to the one that caused the Philippine 'people power' revolution which in turn opened up for democracy.

48 Probably the best example of alternative patronage (though not in relation to NGOs) is that of the Left Front and the Communist Party (Marxist) in West Bengal since 1977 of tenants (an later on others as well) whose security and other advantages depend to a large extent on political protection. (Cf. O. Törnquist, *What's Wrong with Marxism, Vol. II* ...op. cit. or "Communism and Democracy: Two Indian Cases and one Debate", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 23:2, 1991.)

(3) Many principled 'Indepentent' NGOs grassroots workers vacillated between, on the one hand, really linking up with the moderate democrats or radical alternative patrons and, on the other hand, 'only' favouring democratisation through their more independent and long-standing efforts at strengthening the position of the weak sections of the people. (A typical example was Kartjono, director of *Bina Desa*.) This time the government soon cracked down on the rapidly growing democracy movement, but, in principle, one can expect that as long as there is a strong momentum for the transition from authoritarian rule, these actors are likely to contribute to the undermining of the authoritarian regime and thus to serve as important supporters of the leading moderate and radical democrats. Because they themselves are fragmented, however, their own influence will be limited, besides some special issues. Thereafter, in the process of (hopefully) having some democratic gains to consolidate and further develop, we will be back into 'normal' divisive politicisation. As in the post-Marcos period in the Philippines, the grassroots NGO workers will be politically marginalised and active mainly, again, as, for instance, single issue action groups and promoters of alternative grassroots development projects.

(4) The movement organisers cum co-ordinators could play some role in mobilising support for pro-democracy forces in general and, for instance, in bringing together various actors in plans to monitor elections and enforce fairer ones. The co-ordinating activists, however, were few, poorly organised and not capable of bridging the gap between top-down activists running offside and grassroots activists who had not yet been able to generate interest-based mass organisations from below. KIPP, for instance, failed to take root and primarily remained an elite activist project. Good intentions were set aside as so much had to be done instantly and, as anyway, most other activists invested instead in incorporation of people into politics.

Prospects

The only optimistic prospect in the light of our analysis of the character and dynamics of the existing movements in the current Indonesian context would be that I have underestimated the potential of the movement organisers cum co-ordinators to promote ideology- and collective interest-directed politicisation from below on the basis of the immediate needs of the classes that are now emerging under the rapid expansion of capitalism. At first hand, that would not be because I have misread the activists' own limited capacity, but because of an additional 'external' factor: that workers and other labouring people themselves, as well as the middle class professionals, are more prepared to try common organisation against state intervention and repression (as did the workers who demanded common organising from NGO-activists) than I have hitherto found reasonable evidence for. This, then, would signal that politically facilitated exploitation under rapidly expanding capitalism by way of business patronage and repressive subordination really paves the way for new and radical struggles for democracy, since conducting this political intervention is necessary to improve both one's immediate conditions and one's right to have a say. Class-related struggles would thus be intertwined with struggles for democratisation. But, of course, the co-ordinators must then also be able to respond by forming the required organs for common organisation. They must be able to skilfully analyse the conditions and work out platforms for common action. They must be able to relate these joint efforts to other pro-democracy actors, including many middle class professionals. And they must be able to make it possible for these formations to form a body that is so coherent and well anchored among the grassroots movements that it may constitute a reliable and forceful actor; an actor, that is, which can negotiate a transition-package that is more attractive for both subordinated people and the liberals among the dominating forces than the solutions'

offered by other more elite-based players, including those banking on (state) corporatism. Of course, it is difficult even to think of this in late 1996 when the crackdown is still on and basic defence is on the agenda; but times will change, so maybe it is not entirely impossible. Maybe, for instance, the initiative in forming an electoral watch body could be reconstructed into a democratic watch movement on the basis not only of daring top-down activists but also those working at the grassroots level. Between hope and reality, this is all I can say.

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