Abstract

Globalization, the democratic movements in Latin America and Eastern Europe of the 1980s and 90s and the recent worldwide decline in human security have contributed to the reemergence of civil society as an important notion in relation to democracy. Using the techniques of analytic inquiry, this critical analysis of the concept of 'civil society' sought to gain a richer and deeper understanding of the term and its relationship with adult learning. Recent political, social and democratic theories, in addition to theories of civil society and the public sphere were explored and key conceptual distinctions and relations were examined. Moreover, the historical roots of civil society were investigated in relation to the state-civil society relationship and differentiation of societal spheres, including the postnational context. The analysis led to a proposed expansion and modification of Habermas's system-lifeworld model and draws connections with Gramscian concepts such as hegemony, common sense and the historical bloc, as employed by these two theorists and others who have expanded on their theories and concepts. The notions of political and economic society were also integrated into the framework and the workplace and homeplace were identified as important sites because of the democratic potential of their location overlapping intimate and non-intimate spaces in the lifeworld, civil society, state and economy. The inquiry concludes adult learning, particularly in social movements, has an important role to play in energizing civil society and cultivating a vibrant public sphere by challenging hegemonic relations and contributing to collective will articulation in the on-going construction of a radical, deliberative, plural and participative democracy.
Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... ii

Table of Contents .......................................................................................................................... iii

List of Figures ............................................................................................................................... vi

Acknowledgements ...................................................................................................................... vii

CHAPTER 1: Framing the Inquiry .................................................................................................. 1
  Introduction ................................................................................................................................... 1
  Theoretical Framework .............................................................................................................. 3
  Purpose of the Study ................................................................................................................... 8
  Scope ......................................................................................................................................... 10

CHAPTER 2: Methodology ........................................................................................................... 12
  Analytic Inquiry ......................................................................................................................... 12
    Forms of analytic inquiry ........................................................................................................ 16
  Exploring ‘Civil Society’ ............................................................................................................. 18
  Researcher-Text Relationship .................................................................................................... 20

CHAPTER 3: Meanings, Conceptual Distinctions and Relations ............................................... 22
  Meanings .................................................................................................................................. 22
    Defining ‘civil’ and ‘society’ ..................................................................................................... 22
    Is there a difference between ‘civil’ and ‘civic’? ................................................................... 23
    The Meaning Conveyed by Putting ‘civil’ and ‘society’ Together ....................................... 24
  Conceptual Distinctions and Relations ............................................................................... 27
    Civil/Uncivil .......................................................................................................................... 27
      Colonization: Civilizing the “uncivil” Other ................................................................. 27
    Violence and Civility ............................................................................................................. 28
    Democracy and Civil Society ............................................................................................... 31
    Freedom and Equality .......................................................................................................... 31
CHAPTER 4: The Historical Roots of Civil Society

The Ancients
Reason, Industrialization and the Birth of the Nation-State
Nineteenth Century Thinkers
Theorists of the Twentieth Century
The Revival of Civil Society
Postnational Conditions
  The Weakening of the Nation-State
  From a National to a Global Conception of Civil Society
Violence and Global Civil Society

CHAPTER 5: Gramsci and Civil Society

Hegemony, Common Sense and Gramsci’s Relocation of Civil Society
Public Opinion and the Formation of an Historical Bloc
Civil Society and the Role of Intellectuals in Social Movements
Expanding Gramscian Thought
  Emphasizing Gramsci’s Critique of Marxism
  Radical Democratic Politics

CHAPTER 6: Habermas and the Lifeworld

The Public Sphere
Communicative Action
  The Lifeworld
Civil Society, the Lifeworld and the Public Sphere
  The Role of Social Movements
Building on the Ideas of Habermas
  Civil Society as a Theory of Discourse Ethics
  Highlighting Processes and Activities in Civil Society
List of Figures

Figure 1. The Historical Differenciation of Societal Sphere ........................................... 113
Figure 2. The Mediating Roles of Civil Society ................................................................. 119
Figure 3. Locating Economic and Political Society ......................................................... 132
Figure 4. Extending the System Lifeworld Model ......................................................... 134
Figure 5. Locating the Homeplace and Workplace ....................................................... 138
Figure 6. Colonization and Decolonization of the Lifeworld ......................................... 139
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CHAPTER 1: FRAMING THE INQUIRY

Introduction

Although numerous people try to remain informed about local and global current events, few are actively engaged in social, political or community work. Despite growing participation in grassroots activities, only a small number of people are directly involved in shaping their communities, countries or the world. The technological revolution and modernity were supposed to free people’s time for pursuits beyond their basic needs. However, while technology and modernity have had many positive impacts on the ability of humans to fight disease and improve food supplies, for example, they have also increased unemployment as machinery and computers replace people in factories and the workplace (Kellner, 2000). This displacement, coupled with a seemingly endless pursuit of profits in the neo-liberal version of globalization, has led to considerable job losses and a polarization of income distribution (Thomas, 2001). Neo-liberal economic policies have also contributed to economic uncertainty, resulting in people having to spend more time surviving, leaving little or no energy for social, political or community pursuits.

Much of the progress towards the recognition of basic human rights, gender equality, the protection of the natural environment and the strengthening of democratic and participatory institutions has been driven by civil society initiatives. In addition, there seems to be a particular lack of faith in the ability and desire of elected representatives to take meaningful steps towards both individual and collective improvement. As a result, social movements have become more relevant as people choose to participate less in political parties and more in civil society. Moreover, civil society organizations have
been increasingly involved in implementing community development projects and delivery of social services.

A strong civil society is an important prerequisite of democracy at all levels, from the global to the local. Institutions of civil society play a critical role in promoting and protecting democracy because of their knowledge of issues and capacity to mobilize communities. Civil society groups and institutions have fostered changes in important areas of human activities such as the preservation of the natural environment, advancement of women's rights, protection of human rights, and many others. By foregrounding people's own needs and by building on their strengths, grassroots movements have made important contributions to advancing democratic participation.

A fundamental characteristic of civil society groups and institutions is they operate for non-instrumental reasons and are guided principally by altruistic purposes. Civil society organizations act as the nexus between individuals and communities and the state and market. Their main objectives are neither to generate profits nor to seek political power but to give voice to citizens by opening space for articulating their interests and defending their rights. They also provide goods and services, drawing mainly from their own resources with limited recourse to state agencies. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are a type of civil society organization specifically engaged in implementing development projects. With the growth in the concept of global citizenship, NGO networks have the potential to be the means of expressing civil society. Social movements that operate at substate, state and global level are also important civil society actors, especially because of their relevance as learning sites. The indigenous knowledge
of persons and groups is valuable in generating knowledge and local approaches to community challenges.

My interest in examining the concept of civil society was sparked by my personal and professional experiences with NGOs and social movements, as well as what I have read in both the popular and academic literature. My life experiences have, to a large extent, fueled my interest in the relationships between civil society, societal change and democracy by illustrating the importance of civil society in bringing about non-violent change towards social justice. My family was among the hundreds of thousands of Chileans who fled after the bloody coup in 1973. Canada welcomed thousands of Chileans and my family was fortunate to be one of them. After 17 years of brutal oppression, Chileans brought an end to the dictatorship through non-violent organized protest that generated changes to political and social structures through collective action.

This aspect of my personal history inevitably had an impact on my reading of the literature and also affected the analytic process. My professional experiences working with NGOs and participation in social movements, coupled with my personal experiences, had the potential to lead me to focus on certain aspects of these concepts and their relationships to other concepts that may not have otherwise seemed as salient.

Theoretical Framework

Although Bertrand Russell conceives of conceptual analysis as a neutral project, “most analytic philosophers today do not follow Russell... in this extreme view, [however] they still claim a neutrality and detachment that traditional philosophers (and neo-Marxists and postmodernists, too) find both impossible and undesirable” (Noddings, 1995, p.44). Rather than claim neutrality, I approached the conceptual analysis from a
critical perspective. It is because of my theoretical concerns, practical observations, life experiences and what I have learned through the literature that I feel critical theory is the lens that best brought into focus the elements for analysis in this study.

Critical theory, understood as a neo-Marxist critique of modernity and positivism, provided the best theoretical framework for the analysis of power relations through the interplay between agents and social structures from a subjective perspective (Morrow & Brown, 1994). Furthermore, the analysis of civil society was based on the works of Habermas, Gramsci and others whose ideas share an affinity with critical and democratic theory. As an integral part of this conceptual inquiry, concepts related to civil society, such as democracy, plurality, freedom, equality and violence were also analyzed.

The ideas of the political and civil society scholars Gramsci and Habermas have deeply influenced contemporary theorists. Gramsci’s modification of the Marxist framework was sparked by his understanding of civil society as part of the cultural domain of the superstructure, not in the material domain of the base structure. His radical separation of civil society from the economy in the base and its subsequent relocation to the superstructure created three societal spheres: the economy, state and civil society. Moreover, his expansion of the concept of hegemony to include not only political relations of domination, but also cultural hegemonic relations was pertinent to deciding how to initiate this inquiry. His notions of common sense and the historical bloc were also relevant in relation to democracy, since the continuous construction of popular and scientific knowledge accepted as valid (common sense) is what maintains hegemonic relations and therefore needs to be challenged. An historical bloc will emerge when sufficient pressure, capable of transforming dominant relations, has been mounted.
Habermas's *system-lifeworld* model and concepts of *communicative action* and the *public sphere* are important constructs that are strongly related to the concept of civil society. The system is comprised of the state and economic subsystems; the realm of material relations, and the lifeworld is the cultural realm of meaning-making in which civil society and the public sphere operate. Habermas defines communicative action as the dialogical interaction among people searching for mutual understanding and consensus, who are responding to the crisis resulting from tension between the individual and society (Chambers, 1995). Communicative action is, then, an important element in strengthening democratic processes.

Communication is also important for sharing knowledge and information between civil society actors, such as social movements and NGOs, and among civil society actors and organizations, since structural and power relations that function within and among civil society and its actors, and between civil society and other societal spheres, influence whether civil society's capacity to induce social change is enhanced or hindered.

For Habermas the public sphere is an important institution of democracy because it is the place where individuals, participating in non-coercive, rational discussions about matters of common concern, can overcome their initial subjective points of view and work towards a rational intersubjective consensus (Warren, 1995). With respect to this study, the concept of the public sphere is important as it delineates the space in which public debate takes place, with the aim of empowering silenced voices. Since civil society organizations often give voice to those who are silenced, members of civil society need to assure they have equal access to the public sphere.
Furthermore, people often cite a sense of powerlessness regarding their ability to participate in social and political processes and/or community activities. As a result, many feel apathetic and disillusioned about social and political structures and processes that exist for effecting any change because through their own experiences and the experiences of those around them, they have not seen significant changes resulting from their efforts. Ellis (1993) argues that in addition to these barriers to participation, people have a habit of non-participation, in part because they feel they have insufficient knowledge and skills to contribute in a meaningful way. Moreover, they lack the confidence to use the knowledge and skills they do have.

The structures of society are manifested through institutions, processes and procedures that affect us both individually and collectively. Many scholars have forwarded the idea civic participation can be enhanced through more democratic processes, such as decision-making, in institutions and broader societal structures (Benn, 2000; Cohen & Arato, 1992; Ellis, 1993; Gouthro, 2000; Habermas, 1989; Johnston, 1999; Keane, 1998; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Welton, 1997a; Young, 1994). In the economic sphere, the workplace is an area in which democratic processes can be implemented. Young (1994) suggests this can occur through the democratization of the relationship between workers and consumers. In the study conducted by Benn (2000), respondents overwhelmingly identified the workplace as the site that had a positive influence on learning citizenship skills. Moreover, Miller (1997) argues it is in the overlap between the family, workplace and neighbourhood that democracy lies.

A concrete example of the capacity of civil society to induce change in democratic processes is the case of Chile, where the population, through their collective
action, brought an end to the dictatorship by means of non-violent organized protest that produced major political and social change. Gramsci’s concept of the ‘historical bloc’ (Forgacs, 1988) is useful for understanding how such significant change can come about. The participation of Chileans in civil society seems to have had a snowball effect. Having been paralyzed by fear of torture and/or death for expressing ideas either individually or collectively, the more people engaged in social, political and economic processes, the less fear people felt, which in turn encouraged more to participate. When enough people had joined forces in forming a counter-hegemonic force, a new ‘historical bloc’ emerged and societal change occurred.

Young (1994) warns civil society activities may not be enough to reduce privilege and inequality. Structural change in the political and economic societal spheres also needs to occur. As illustrated by the Chilean case, civil society activities can be an important catalyst for change (Bebbington & Humphreys, 1997), but not necessarily the sole arena for effecting change. In fact, after the reestablishment of a democratic form of government in Chile, the role of civil society organizations changed as a result of the new type of relationships created between them and national government and international lending agencies. When governments and international institutions “make community groups part of their strategies ... organizations are more likely to facilitate than critique donors’ and governments’ practices” (Paley, 2001, p.4).

In order for political and economic structures to change, the efforts of civil society actors need to be translated into the other two societal spheres so that transformations towards social justice do not remain solely within the lifeworld. The ways in which civil society activities contribute to making the political and economic spheres more
democratic is a dimension of the capacity of civil society to induce change that needs to be explored further. This dimension is especially important as civil society has become more relevant as a space if interaction with the political and economic spheres (Forgacs, 1988).

Another aspect of civil society that needs to be analyzed is people’s participation in social movements. In the past participation in social movements occurred, to a large extent, through what is referred to as ‘old’ social movements, such as trade unions and church organizations. Although many people continue to participate in ‘old’ social movements, increasingly people are participating in ‘new’ social movements. Many scholars have highlighted social movements as important learning sites for active participation in society (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991; Finger, 1989; Foley, 1999; Hall, Richards, Martin, Paavo, & Philip, 2004; Holford, 1995; Johnston, 1999; Welton, 1993, 1997a, 2001; Young, 1994).

**Purpose of the Study**

A comprehensive literature review of books and articles from the areas of political, social and democratic theory, theories of civil society, adult education/learning and social movement learning revealed a great deal of information on civil society, but none that explore the concept of civil society explicitly through analytic inquiry. Most contributions are broad political, social and democratic theories, some of which include theories of civil society and the public sphere (Cohen & Arato, 1992; Gramsci, 1971, 1985; Habermas, 1987, 1989, 1996; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Young, 1994), and in-depth investigations of the state-civil society relationship (Bobbio, 1988; Kaldor, 2003; Keane, 1988, 1998, 2003; Reitzes, 1994). There are also a number of analytical papers that
explore theories, practices and debates around the concept of civil society, often in relation to democracy (Brannan, 2003; Golding, 1992; Gouthro, 2000; Hall, 2000; Miller, 1997).

The relationships between adult learning and democracy are well established in the literature, specifically in relation to social and political action (Foley, 1999; Freire, 1981, 1994; Manicom & Walters, 1997; Mayo, 1994, 1999; McLaren, 1997; Morrow & Torres, 2000; Walters, 2000; Welton, 1995), civil/civic participation (Benn, 2000; Ellis, 1993; Johnston, 1999; Manicom & Walters, 1997; Welton, forthcoming) and civil society (Murphy, 2001; Welton, 1997a, 1997b, 2001, 2002). In addition, there is a growing body of literature on social movements and adult learning (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991; Finger, 1989; Hall et al., 2004; Holford, 1995; Kellner, 2000; Welton, 1993).

The primary purposes, therefore, of this study were to understand the meanings and uses of the concept of civil society by political, social and educational theorists and researchers up to the present time and to explore political and social theories in relation to conceptions of democracy and civil society. Using the techniques of analytic inquiry, I came to a richer understanding of the meanings and ways in which the concept of civil society has been used historically, its relationships with other concepts and the role they play in social contexts. This inquiry also examined the role of adult learning in civil society in general, with a specific focus on social movements. Another aim of this research was to contribute to the operationalization of the concept of civil society for future research that will explore the role of non-formal adult learning in social movements as actors in civil society, in enhancing and/or limiting the capacity of civil society as a whole to produce social, political and economic structural changes.
**Scope**

The naming of the concept of civil society as a space or sphere of social life free of violence and fomentive of peaceful organization is not unique to "Western" cultures. Although named as such, civil society is a "Western" concept, it has existed in other forms in other parts of the world for centuries. The meaning of the term 'civil society' is conveyed in other languages and cultures, but may be named in such a way that the term(s) does not translate to English (nor to other European languages) as 'civil society.' The Latin 'societas civilis,' is clearly the root of the English form, as well as the Italian 'società civile,' the Spanish 'sociedad civil,' the Portuguese 'sociedade civil,' and the French 'société civile.' In many other languages, the idea of civil society appears in a variety of ways.

Although civil society has emerged in diverse parts of world under different names, it was beyond the scope of this inquiry to investigate the ways in which it has appeared historically in non-"Western" parts of the world. Moreover, a gender analysis of political and social theories, as well as theories of civil society and democracy, is certainly an important undertaking; however, a detailed gender analysis of such theories is also beyond the scope of this inquiry.

The reemergence of civil society in recent decades signals a recognition of the relevance of civil society and the public sphere for meaningful political, social, and economic participation in an increasingly fragmented and insecure world. Having introduced and framed the study in this opening chapter, Chapter 2 outlines the ways in which the analytic process was carried out in this inquiry. The techniques of analytic inquiry and the procedure followed for engaging in the investigation of the concept of
'civil society' and its relationship with adult learning are discussed in detail and some considerations regarding the research-text relationship are also explored.

Chapter 3 examines the meanings of civil, society and civil society, as well as important conceptual distinctions and relations. Chapter 4 traces the historical roots of the concept from the classical to contemporary period and considers civil society in light of postnational conditions. Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the ideas of Gramsci, Habermas and those who have built on their theories and concepts. In Chapter 7, the relationship between democracy, civil society and adult learning is investigated. Chapter 8 offers a critical discussion on key concepts and relationships before drawing some conclusions about the nature of a radical, deliberative, plural and participative democratic project in the final chapter.
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

Analytic Inquiry

Analytic philosophy is a form of inquiry that involves the use of various analytic questions, techniques and procedures. The purpose of analytic inquiry is to understand concepts and/or conceptual structures from the perspective of the ways in which we read the world, articulate purpose, frame problems and undertake inquiries (Coombs & Daniels, 1991). This form of inquiry has long been used to analyze language and concepts. Bertrand Russell introduced a version of analytic philosophy that came to be recognized by many as too extreme. He held that reality is analyzable and every sign in language corresponds to something in reality. However, languages rarely have signs that correspond exactly to characteristics of reality.

In early works, the Austrian philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, took a similar position to Russell. He later rejected much of this work and instead argued it is important to focus on the use of language in ordinary discourse. Moreover, he forwarded the idea that concepts need to be understood contextually (Baird, 1993). Today few educational philosophers attempt to match signs to a feature of reality; rather they seek to analyze and clarify concepts using conceptual analysis (Noddings, 1995).

Analytic inquiry plays an important role in educational research. Research, conceptualized as a bridge between theory and practice, is key to the relationship between the two. Conceptual structures inform adult education researchers in framing research questions, analyzing data, and formulating theoretical, practical and policy implications of the research. The resulting research, in turn, informs theorists, practitioners and policy makers in formulating theories, planning and facilitating educational activities and
developing educational policies. A clearer and more fully developed understanding of concepts and their inter-relationships is, therefore, central both to research itself in its role as a link between theory and practice, and to adult education theory, practice and policy formulation. It is because analytic inquiry enriches and deepens our understanding of conceptual structures that it is an essential part of adult education research.

The claim to neutrality is an important characteristic of analytic philosophy. However, along with other critics, I think it is neither desirable nor possible to be neutral in approaching any type of analysis. In education, the concepts employed in theory, research, practice and policy are inherently value-laden. In trying to understand and clarify the meaning and use of a given concept or conceptual structure, normative assumptions will form the basis from which the concept is constructed. The meanings attached to the concept and the boundaries drawn around what is and is not included in the construction reflect these underlying assumptions. Therefore, it is important for researchers to make normative assumptions explicit and discuss their implications.

In this research, a critical conceptual analysis best attended to the power relations and the subjective and structural variables involved in the ways in which the concept of civil society is understood and employed. In order to understand and describe this concept, a critical approach situated the concept historically and culturally and captured the subjective nature of social interaction and the influence of societal structures and power relations that shape the construction of this concept. It identified conditions that represent a dialectical relationship that takes into consideration the subjective perspective of the subject (agent) and the objective material conditions (context) in which the phenomena take place (Morrow & Brown, 1994).
In addition to the two ideas of communicative action and the public sphere mentioned earlier, another important idea contributed by Habermas is his discussion on the reconciliation of hermeneutics and positivism. In this discussion, an important epistemological argument is made by Habermas whereby he develops a case for the epistemological synthesis of positivism and interpretivism. He argues they are not mutually exclusive and, therefore, it is not a contradiction to hold both, since they each contributes to our understanding of knowledge construction (Bernstein, 1985).

For Habermas, the reconciliation of positivism and hermeneutics comes through a critical social science that constitutes its dialectical synthesis. A critical social science incorporates the study of the regularities of the natural world and the interpretation of human interaction, but “always allows for further testing, challenge, and rational reevaluation” (Bernstein, 1985, pp. 10-11). My analysis of the concept of civil society stemmed from this position.

Through analytic inquiry, the diverse ways in which concepts and concept structures are constructed from subjective points of view can be examined for similarities and differences. This is especially relevant to the critical nature of the conceptual inquiry undertaken here. Critical inquiry, as the chosen mode of analysis is, then, consistent with a focus on subjective mediation of reality.

Moreover, through analytic inquiry, useful distinctions can be drawn that may have previously clouded important facets and/or layers of a concept or concept structure. Analytic inquiry can contribute to synthesizing dichotomies that confuse, rather than clarify concepts. From a critical perspective, this is especially relevant because although dichotomies can be useful tools for thinking about concepts, it is the dialectical
relationship between concepts that is more significant than positioning concepts in opposition to each other.

Another way analytic inquiry plays a significant role with respect to educational research is that conceptual structures, as they are formulated at any given point in time, determine which research questions are considered important. The ways in which persons read the world are largely shaped by conceptual structures. Therefore, the issues we focus on and the aspects of the world we choose to problematize (and sometimes pathologize or construct in terms of deficit) are strongly influenced by these conceptual structures.

Finally, analytic inquiry is important for educational research with respect to the operationalization of concepts. If researchers do not have a deep and rich understanding of the meanings and uses of concepts and conceptual structures, they will not be able to construct concepts in a way that is useful to their research. Researchers need to be able to take an abstract concept and define it for the purposes of their research and/or determine how they will use the concept in measurement. If researchers do not have a comprehensive understanding of concepts that are crucial to their investigation, the operationalized concept may not capture what the research seeks to explore. Moreover, in designing research instruments, such as scales to measure psychosocial dispositions, researchers need to investigate the concepts they use in research instruments so that they will be able to create meaningful instruments that measure what they aim to measure. Guzzini (2002), warns about the need to strike a balance between a rigorous theoretical construction of the meaning of a concept and its meaning defined in the context of related concepts (cluster concept), for applied research purposes. “By having climbed up the ‘ladder of abstraction’ to such daring heights, ... concepts no longer function as viable
‘data-containers’ ... [T]hey can either assure communicability or more rigorous variable construction, but not both” (Guzzini, 2002, p.6).

**Forms of analytic inquiry**

Conceptual analysis is the mode used to work towards a sound understanding of the meaning of a concept, its relationship with other concepts and its use in social contexts. Regarding the relationships between concepts and their meaning, Guzzini (2002) states, “Although conceptual analysis geared towards concept formation is hence in the core of making scholarly sense of the world, it, in turn, can only be done through other concepts. Thus looking at concept formation exposes the hermeneutic circle of all our understanding” (p. 2). The meaning of any concept under study can only be fully captured if its links to related concepts is considered. In other words, concepts need to be analyzed according to Guzzini (2001), as cluster concepts. Also important are the different meanings attributed to a concept depending on the socio-historical context in which it is used.

There are different forms of analytic inquiry that can be used to accomplish tasks in education research. Coombs & Daniels (1991) refer to three kinds of inquiry: Concept Interpretation, Conception Development and Conceptual Structure Assessment. Concept Interpretation aims to do more than minimize vagueness; it aims to give a thorough account of the potential meanings attached to a term. The complexity of concepts demands concept interpretation be rich enough to capture the full range of possible meanings and uses. However, since it is unlikely interpretations will be able to cover all
possible meanings and uses, it is important to understand both the contributions and limitations of the inquiry.

Secondly, Conception Development aims to refine concepts by differentiating their components while preserving their core meaning. This form of analytic inquiry can be used to outline descriptive criteria for employing a concept. Coombs & Daniels (1991) discuss what they call ‘technical use analysis’ to describe what is essentially a conceptual analysis of a concept used by a particular group. In this case, the group included social and educational theorists and researchers. This research project sought mainly to understand the meaning and use of civil society as it is understood and utilized by political, social and educational theorists. However, since civil society is used so broadly in everyday contexts and the media, its popularity and wide use, with so many different meanings, may ultimately make the concept lose its communicative value. Thus, the “ambiguity with which this term is beset only serves to intensify the need to examine the meanings and debates attached to it, and to locate it within its historical context” (Brannan, 2003, p.1).

Finally, Conceptual Structure Assessment is undertaken to determine the extent to which a theory or model advanced ways of thinking about research, practice and policy. It can involve comparing the state of affairs prior to the development of the conceptual structure to the post-conceptual structure state of affairs, or comparing various conceptual structures. The process entails evaluating the coherence of a conceptual structure, the degree of explanatory power it offers and the extent to which it contributes to the formulation of critical educational questions. “This type of conceptual analysis is not so much about what exactly is meant by it, but what the concept achieves in communication.
It is not about what concepts mean, but what their use does. ... It tries to explore the relationship between concepts, their meanings and their changing historical contexts” (Guzzini, 2002, p. 13, italics in original).

**Exploring ‘Civil Society’**

The conceptual analysis I engaged in involved all three forms of analytic inquiry. Concept Interpretation led to a deeper and clearer understanding of a range of complex meanings and uses of the concept of civil society, its relation to other concepts and its role in social contexts. Civil society needs to be understood in terms of its ordinary meaning, as well as the meanings political, social and educational theorists in particular attach to the concept. Therefore, although Conception Development did not form a significant part of this analysis, it played a role in this respect. Conceptual Structure Assessment, like Concept Interpretation, is concerned with relationships between concepts. At the abstract level, civil society is a concept that is usually understood in relation to other concepts. For example, Gramsci uses it in relation to the two concepts of the political and economic spheres to differentiate it from these other two societal spheres within a larger conceptual structure. Thus, Conceptual Structure Assessment was used to analyze theories and compare them.

Since the inquiry undertaken here forms part of a larger research project, the primary research question is relevant to determining which relationships between the primary concept – *civil society* – and other concepts ought to be investigated. The research question seeks to explore the role of non-formal adult learning in enhancing and/or limiting the capacity of civil society to induce social, political and economic structural changes. The preliminary interpretation aspect of the conceptual analysis began
by exploring each word — *civil* and *society* — individually because distinctions, such as the difference between civil/uncivil, were important. Moreover, although each word is relevant individually, the two together - ‘civil society’ - signify a concept that is much more complex. It does not convey the same meaning as each individual word, nor does it signify a mere amalgamation of the meaning of the two words.

Having done the preliminary analysis, interpretation then moved onto examining the whole concept of *civil society*. Gramsci (1971, 1985) and Habermas (1987, 1989, 1996) have perhaps made the most significant contributions to current understandings of the meaning of *civil society* and its relationship with democracy. Many political, social and democratic theorists and educators have also made important contributions (Cohen & Arato, 1992; Finger, 1989; Hall, 2000; Kaldor, 2003; Keane, 1988, 1998, 2003; Kellner, 2000; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Mayo, 1994, 1999; Reitzes, 1994; Welton, 1995, 1997a, 2001, 2002; Young, 1994). Radical adult educators see civil society “as providing potential spaces both for learning free from domination and also engaging in social change. It also acts as somewhat of a catch-all phrase for activities such as cultural education, women’s groups and new social movements among others” (Murphy, 2001, p.2). These contributions enriched my understanding by highlighting key distinctions and aspects of the concept to be particularly attentive to in the analysis.

Moreover, through my reflections on the relationships between concepts and conceptual structures used by political, social and educational theorists, I think it was important to explore the relationship among Gramsci’s concepts of *civil society*, the *state* and *economy*, and *hegemony*, *common sense* and the *historical bloc* and Habermas’s concepts of *lifeworld* and *system*. These concepts are strongly related to democracy, a
concept that is also related to Habermas's concepts of *communicative action* and the *public sphere*. The inquiry also traces the historical roots of civil society and its relationship with the state, in addition to exploring the work of theorists that have expanded models and concepts developed by Gramsci and Habermas.

In Chapter 8, a number of figures are presented as visual conceptualizations that represent my understanding of the work of others, in addition to ideas I generated throughout the analytic process. These visual representations are intended to contribute to understanding concepts and their relationships. They present ways of conceptualizing concepts and theories, as well as an expansion of the system-lifeworld model I developed.

**Researcher-Text Relationship**

According to Coombs & Daniels (1991), conceptual analysis “does not attempt to change our concepts, but to understand them” (p. 29). However, the process of coming to a clearer and deeper understanding of concepts and conceptual structures inevitably changes them. Analytic inquiry engages the researcher in a dialectical relationship with concepts and conceptual structures in which concepts in their current construction inform the researcher and the product of the researcher’s engagement with concepts informs the construction of the concept. The process is never-ending and each inquiry contributes to the new iteration of concepts and conceptual structures. Conceptual analysis should not be limited to describing concepts; rather it should contribute to temporary conceptual constructions.

The relevance of conceptual analysis to the construction of metanarratives is significant. From a critical perspective, this mode of analysis should not contribute to the
reification of absolute universalist claims. However, to avoid the paralysis provoked by
the extreme relativism posited by postmodernists, critical conceptual analysis engages in
the permanent construction of what McLaren (1997) calls 'critical metanarratives.'

Analytic inquiry is important for educational research because conceptual
constructions determine which research questions are deemed significant and how those
questions are framed. Moreover, analytic inquiry contributes to the operationalization of
concepts. It aims to understand the meanings and uses of concepts and conceptual
structures through the techniques and procedures of concept interpretation, conception
development and conceptual structure assessment. The analytic process began by
examining the meanings of 'civil,' 'society' and 'civil society,' as well as conceptual
distinctions and relations. Theories of civil society were then analyzed and civil society
was explored as part of broader political, social and democratic theories. Finally, these
theories were compared and connections between and among civil society and a number
of relational concepts were investigated. In Chapter 3, the analytic process is initiated
with a preliminary analysis of meanings, distinctions and relations.
CHAPTER 3: MEANINGS, CONCEPTUAL DISTINCTIONS AND RELATIONS

Meanings

To understand the meanings conveyed by 'civil society' it is important to explore what each term means individually and what they communicate when they are used together. The discussion in this section begins by examining the meanings expressed by 'civil' and 'society' before looking at the whole concept of 'civil society.'

Defining 'civil' and 'society'

The compound word 'civil society' is comprised of two separate, but related terms. The term 'society' is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary (1989) in many senses. With specific reference to humans, the most generic meanings of the sign 'society' convey the idea of living in association with and in the company of fellow humans. What is common to these broad definitions is they are characterized by community, conviviality, connection, and fellowship. The types of associations further distinguish the meanings of the term. It can be used in the sense of "high society," to communicate the notion of an elite group of fashionable people; in the sense of association by a common interest or purpose, such as unions, business associations and religious orders; or in a political sense to express the state of living under the same government.

The political understanding is most relevant to what connects the terms 'civil' and 'society.' The political meaning of society that seems most closely associated with 'civil society' is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "the system or mode of life adopted by a body of individuals for the purpose of harmonious co-existence or for
mutual benefit, defence, etc.” (Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 913). This construction reflects the classical conceptualization of the state and society as a unified whole that privileges collective well-being over individual self-interest. It is important to note that neither early modern civil society theorists, nor those still writing today (as will be explored in later chapters) would agree the terrain of civil society is harmonious.

The many definitions of the term ‘civil’ make reference to the rights of the individual citizen to liberty and equality, as well as to the commonwealth and that which pertains to affairs of the politic or state. The notions of private and public are also indicated, with public meaning ‘of the people’ and private alluding to the individual. Moreover, ‘civil’ means not ecclesiastic, a reflection of the early modern conceptualizations that arose as the Church was separated from the state. In addition, the word ‘civil’ can express a legal meaning, both as distinguished from the criminal and in terms of social order. Finally, it can signify persons who are educated and polished; who are not barbarous. The meanings associated with ‘civil’ and ‘uncivil’ will be further developed in the Conceptual Distinctions and Relations chapter.

*Is there a difference between ‘civil’ and ‘civic’?*

According to Oxford English Dictionary definitions, there is basically no difference between the meanings of ‘civil’ and ‘civic’ at the macro political level, since both relate the idea of citizenship (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). At the micro level, the word ‘civic’ can refer specifically to that which pertains to a city or municipality. At both levels, the communitarian character ‘civic’ shares with ‘civil’ is highlighted.
When the two signs 'civil' and 'society' are combined into the compound word 'civil society,' the meaning expresses more than an amalgamation of the two terms. The meanings of the word 'society' seem to most approximate those attached to civil society as it has evolved. Definitions of 'society' on their own denote a more generic understanding of human social organization than 'civil society' together. The classical conception of civil society and state as one is likely responsible for this generic construction. The public/private distinction associated with this conception locates the state/civil society in the public realm in contrast to the private realm. As discussed above, the term 'society' can be understood in the sense of a group of people with a shared interest or purpose. It is interesting that these groups are currently included as actors in civil society by most theorists.

It is not until the state and civil society are differentiated that civil society takes on more complex meanings. The birth of the nation-state changed the relationship between the individual and the collective. The state was no longer seen as a genuine representation of the will of the people and individuals began to be seen both as private and public agents. In classical conceptualizations, the state and civil society together make up the public domain, and both are distinct from the private. The state/civil society split leaves only the state within the public and relocates civil society to the private realm. Thus the economy, as part of civil society, is also positioned in the private space. As private agents, individuals function in civil society, within which they also function as part of the economy, while as public agents, they operate in the state.
The shift in the way the private/public distinction is understood reflects changes in the nature of the state/civil society relationship that took place as nation-states formed. Rather than seeing the individual and the collective as one, forming a public, it is now seen as civil society representing individual self-interest and the state representing common welfare. The private/public division of the classical period based the contrast on the difference between private intimate and public non-intimate relationships. The reconceptualization that took place with the formation of nation-states changed the meaning of private and public from a differentiation founded on an intimate/non-intimate distinction, to one founded on a distinction reflecting the tension between individual self-interest and collective well-being.

The increased specialization and mechanization of the economy that occurred during the industrial revolution made relations within civil society, which still included the economy, more complex as social classes emerged. Moreover, the relations between civil society, the growing economy and the state also grew more complex. The economy was differentiated from civil society in the late industrial period, both in reality as a result of commercial activity, and in theory as the increased complexity in the interactions between the state, economy and civil society called for a more comprehensive understanding of civil society.

The Gramscian relocation of civil society from the base structure to the superstructure theoretically separates civil society from the economy. Building on the Gramscian differentiation of the economy and civil society that produced a three part societal scheme, Habermas kept the distinction between the three spheres, but arranged them into a model comprised of the system – the state and the economy – and the
lifeworld, a concept roughly similar to civil society, but not conceptually the same. This is not only a matter of discourse, but also of conceptual equivalence, a point that will be explored more fully later. It is the contributions of Gramsci and Habermas that have provided the most fruitful basis for recent developments in theories of civil society that have attempted to explicate the increasingly complex nature of relations between the three societal spheres, as well as within them. The term ‘civil society’ now communicates a more complex understanding of the social world.

The associations based on a common purpose mentioned among the dictionary definitions of ‘society’ pertinent to the actors in civil society have become more relevant as people participate more in civil society organizations rather than political parties. Many of those writing in the past few decades have emphasized these associations in general, and social movements specifically as forms of social integration with the potential for radical approaches to democracy (Bobbio, 1988; Cohen & Arato, 1992; Keane, 1998; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Young, 1994).

Contemporary “Western” conceptions of the relationship between the state and civil society have changed significantly since the classical period. The increased complexity of the social world has demanded more comprehensive understandings of ‘public’ and ‘private’ and the interactions between the state, civil society and the economy. Among civil society actors, social movements in particular have become more relevant to democratic projects and adult learning committed to a radical, deliberative, plural and participative democracy.
Conceptual Distinctions and Relations

In order to provide an overview of concepts related to civil society, their inter­relationships, as well as important differentiations, this section investigates the civil/uncivil distinction and the relationship between democracy and civil society.

Civil/Uncivil

The distinction between that which is ‘civil’ and ‘uncivil’ can be made from the cultural perspective of defining a given culture as ‘civil’ and those not of the same culture as ‘uncivil.’ It can also be made from the perspective of defining ‘civil’ as the absence of violence and ‘uncivil’ as the presence of violence.

Colonization: Civilizing the “uncivil” Other

The same period that saw the development of modern conceptualizations of civil society also saw the ‘civilization’ of the Other (Said, 1978). Although European explorers began their travels towards the end of the fifteenth century, colonization reached its height in the seventeenth century, with diverse European powers claiming colonies all over the world. As the colonizers encountered “savages” they felt it was necessary to ‘civilize’ them. The idea of civil society was defined as a society that is civilized, according to the European notion of what it means to be civilized. Since the “savages” did not espouse the same cultural norms or forms of social organization, they were considered ‘uncivil.’ The way in which ‘civil’ or ‘civilized’ was used by the Europeans is closely related to the definition of ‘civil’ as refinement. A person is therefore ‘civil’ if s/he is polite and polished. Naturally, the “savages” were ‘rude,’ at least according to the
European definition of what it means to be well-mannered, and their lack of refinement made them crude and barbarous. They were thus considered 'uncivil.'

The other meaning of 'civil' relevant to this discussion is its legal meaning, which both contrasts the term with the 'criminal' and in terms of maintaining social order. The latter legal meaning is of concern here, since 'civil' was constructed as the European way of maintaining social order through the form of social organization they had developed. It is exactly because the Other did not have the same forms of social organization that they were constructed as 'uncivil.' Moreover, for the Europeans, their methods for sustaining social order over time were more "developed" than the Other’s social systems. The notion of development held by the Europeans implied advancement towards some historical telos of social organization (Keane, 1998). Since their ‘civilized’ ways of maintaining social order were seen as more advanced in the process of development, the Other’s forms of social organization were constructed as ‘primitive.’ The Europeans, therefore, identified themselves as superior, based on the claim non-violent forms of maintaining social order are more advanced than violent ones.

*Violence and Civility*

The other way in which the distinction between ‘civil’ and ‘uncivil’ can be drawn is by approaching it from the perspective of whether or not violence is present. It is interesting to note that, despite the attention given to violence in the literature on civil society and democracy, the Oxford English Dictionary definitions of ‘uncivil’ do not include the meaning based on the absence or presence of violence. Ironically, a definition of ‘civil’ as humane and gentle is, however, included.
In recent times, the definition of violence has been broadened to include other forms of violence, often based on relations of domination and oppression. For example, defining poverty as a form of economic violence locates the meaning of violence in terms of these relations, expanding its meaning to include more than physical aggression. For the purposes of discussions with respect to the relationship between the state and civil society and the problem of violence and civil society, violence is defined in the physical sense.

The European imperialist projects did not apparently include this approach in the ways in which they construed civil/uncivil. Violence was omnipresent in the colonization process, yet the Europeans claimed to be ‘civilizing’ the peoples of the lands they invaded. Clearly it is incoherent to claim to bring civility to “savages” by violent means. If part of the reason the Europeans designated themselves as ‘civil’ is based on the claim their forms of maintaining social order were non-violent, is it not then a contradiction to employ violence in the process of ‘civilization’? The paradox that arises in the state-civil society relationship with respect to violence is that a populace agrees to give the state the right to discretionary use of violence in return for ensuring they can exercise their rights in a peaceful environment. Peace is ensured through the threat of legitimized state violence. The Europeans, therefore, legitimized their use of violence in the process of civilization because the ultimate result would be a ‘civil’ society able to maintain social order by non-violent means. However, not all the supposed ‘uncivil’ societies they encountered were organized socially through the use of violence. For example, many Indigenous groups of the Americas had highly complex social systems that also legitimized the discretionary use of violence. There was no logical reason for the
Europeans to conclude the Other is ‘uncivil’ based on a definition of ‘civil’ as non-violent.

Modern civil societies are still termed ‘civil’ despite their continuous struggle with violence. The most recent examples emerge from the social movements in Latin America that faced authoritarian states that came to and maintained power through violent means. These despotic states inflicted violence on their own citizens instead of fostering a free and peaceful environment. Despite brutal measures to exercise social control, dictatorships in Latin America did not crush civil society. Instead, civil society began to operate in a clandestine fashion. ‘Civil’ society, then, existed concurrently with ‘uncivil’ society (Keane, 1998), and sadly, even though democracy has reemerged, it still does. Since little has been done to heal as a community of human beings, both aggressors and victims still live their daily lives side by side with the unspoken knowledge of the history between and among them.

The most ‘civilized’ nations of the world continue to use violence in order to ‘civilize’ the Other. The obvious contemporary example is the U.S. invasion of Iraq that is meant to ‘civilize’ the people of Iraq. The U.S. claims legitimacy on the grounds of self-defense and exercises its authority through its military and economic power. The same argument employed by European colonizers persists in the discourse of U.S. foreign policy today; that it is legitimate to use physical aggression as a means of establishing and maintaining peaceful conditions. This argument is not only unsound; it can hardly lead to the peace it purports to seek.
Democracy and Civil Society

Violence is a key notion not only in understanding the meaning of ‘civil,’ but also in relation to power, legitimacy, authority, freedom, equality and democracy. These concepts are all related to civil society, and its relational construct, the state. The economy has played an increasingly important role in these relations in the past couple of decades as global economic systems and regulatory bodies emerge. This only reaffirms the need for more complex understandings of the relationship between civil society and the state and civil society and the economy, as well as the state and the economy. This section aims to provide an overview of the ways in which these concepts are interrelated, since they will be discussed throughout the chapters that follow.

Freedom and Equality

In liberal conceptualizations of democracy, the state gains legitimate authority to place limits on the freedoms of its members by guaranteeing them diverse freedoms through a legal apparatus that applies laws equally to all members. Freedoms can be described in positive or negative terms. Positive freedoms are those rights members of a societal community may exercise freely, and negative freedoms are those that protect members from being subjected to that which is defined as undesirable, by placing limits on the freedoms of all.

Freedoms that are ensured and limited will vary according to the construction of democracy employed. In liberal democracies, positive freedoms include the right to associate and assemble freely with other members of a societal community, the right to free thought and speech and to own property, among others. Negative freedoms include
the right to not be discriminated against on the basis of class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, ableness, religion or age. The constraints liberal states put on freedoms include restrictions on freedom of speech, if it promotes hate towards a particular group and on freedom of assembly, if it includes violence.

**Power, Legitimacy and Authority**

The legal apparatus used to legitimize and enforce laws may take different forms, depending on the conceptualization of democracy employed. In general terms, laws are passed by an elected body, thereby legitimizing them. The legitimate laws are then applied universally to all members of a societal community. The state then gains legitimate authority to apply and enforce these laws through the police and military. The police ensures internal peace, while the military guarantees peace by protecting the nation-state from external threats.

The power gained by the state as a result of “the social invention of the monopoly of physical violence...is a dangerous instrument” (Elias, 1988, p.179) in the hands of despots. The dictatorships of recent decades illustrate how state monopoly of physical violence can be turned against the very societal members it is supposed to protect. Rather than guarding against external threats, the military is used internally. The police continue to operate internally, but their function changes to serve the interests of those who have illegitimately appropriated state power. This illegitimate use of force comes about when a select group of individuals with access to power that was legitimately given to the military and police then use it to terrorize a populace. In both cases the use of force is illegitimate because power was gained by force, not free elections. Moreover, the laws
passed by the self-declared authority are illegitimate as no elected bodies passed them. Therefore, the illegitimacy of the laws renders their enforcement by the military and police illegitimate as well.

*The Changing Construction of the Citizen*

The conceptualization of 'citizen' historically included men, and/or men who own property, and/or "White" men. It is not until the twentieth century that feminists and race theorists challenge the exclusive nature of the way in which the 'citizen' or member of society is conceptualized. Some feminists argue the public/private distinction not only differentiates the state and civil society, it also constructs workers, women and children as private, while men are constructed as public (Pateman, 1988; Reitzes, 1994). This relegates women to the private realm, denying them participation in the public domain and their rights as rightful members of society. It was in the late 1800s that women's movement campaigns came into full force, leading in the early 1900s to the inclusion of women in "Western" liberal societies as citizens. This occurred when they gained the right to vote and hold office in the first decades of the twentieth century. In part women were excluded because they did not have the right to own property, a prerequisite to the right to vote. Nevertheless, they did not achieve the right to vote even after they gained the right to own property, a condition that was later abolished. The women's movement has made great strides by shifting the rights and concerns of women from the private sphere into the public sphere, in order to demand equal status. However, in many societies, the struggle for recognition as persons continues today and there is much work ahead in forwarding greater gender equality in societies in which women have already gained recognition as human beings.
The conception of the 'citizen' as the "White" citizen is largely the result of the process of colonization that defined Europeans as civil and the Other as uncivil. Citizens are defined as "White" persons, immediately excluding the Indigenous populations in the lands they conquered. The civil rights movement in the U.S. during the 1950s and 60s sought to redefine 'citizen' to include African-Americans and struggled for desegregation of schools, transportation and services, the right to attend universities and the right to vote. The last few decades have certainly seen the expansion of the notion of 'citizen.' Constitutions have guaranteed societal members the negative freedom of the right to not be discriminated against based on age, class, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality and ableness for decades. However, in practice, the 'citizen' still faces many forms of discrimination.

The conception of the citizen has also changed as a result of the continued rise of capitalism and globalization. The conceptualization of the citizen as an active member of a community has shifted to one of the citizen as a passive consumer of images, products and services (Reitzes, 1994). The values of consumption and individualism promoted by capitalism have changed the cultural meaning of the 'citizen.' Moreover, as the globalization of human interaction grows, the citizen is conceived less as a member of a nation-state, and more as a member of a global community. The implications of globalization for civil society will be further explored in the section on Postnational Conditions. Finally, the conceptual distinctions and relations discussed in this section provide an overview of the meanings attached to 'civil' and 'uncivil,' in addition to relationships among civil society and democracy, in order to lay the foundation for exploring the historical roots of civil society in the next chapter.
The past twenty years have seen the revival of the term civil society. Globalization, the democratic movements in Eastern Europe and Latin America during the 1980s and 90s and recent decline in human security have all contributed to its reemergence as an important notion in relation to democracy. Today civil society is a widely used term invoked by national and international governing bodies, business communities, NGOs, diverse community groups, as well as social researchers and theorists. We hear and read about it in the media, where it appears in the language of commerce, policy makers and social movements, and in academic circles, where it is contested and vigorously debated. However, in order to begin to understand its current conceptualizations and uses, it is necessary to explore its historical roots.

The Ancients

The term civil society has a long history in “Western” cultures. The modern conceptualization of civil society that took shape in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries originated from terms used by ancient Greek and Roman philosophers. The Greek notion of the \textit{politike koinona} or political society/community, or the Latin, \textit{societas civilis}, were understood as synonymous with the state. The state and civil society were seen as one and the same, since being “a member of a civil society was to be a citizen – a member of the state – and, thus, obligated to act in accordance with its laws and without engaging in acts harmful to other citizens” (Keane, 1988, p.36).

The state was contrasted with the private, such that the state was part of the public realm. It was a competitive space in which members of society could participate in public
affairs and individuals competed for excellence and recognition. This domain was seen as normative; as an expression of collective morality. It was seen as a realm in which an ethical pursuit, that privileged the public good over private interests, could be realized through public deliberation and political action.

**Reason, Industrialization and the Birth of the Nation-State**

The early modern theorists developed their conceptualization of civil society based on the idea of a social contract; a notion that emerged when monarchies were being challenged and social pressure mounted to separate the church from the state. As nation-states formed and commerce increased, the relationship between the individual and the new nation-state was reconceptualized. Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau all posited society in relation to the unregulated state of nature. Society, then, needed to be civilized through the construct of the social contract. However, the three differed with respect to the nature of the social contract, based on their differing views on human nature and the relationship between the state and citizens.

Hobbes saw the social contract as one in which the individual rejects the state of nature’s unlimited freedom by accepting the imposition of “legal limits...on the freedom of each individual, creating greater freedom for all, from each” (Reitzes, 1994, p. 97). For Hobbes, humans are essentially self-interested. Therefore, the role of the state was to maintain social control by means of increased executive power and the enactment of laws, enforced through coercive reprimands that would ensure peace. The powers of the state, however, lay in the hands of a single body that guaranteed the individual’s right to security in exchange for limits on their freedom. Ideally, this body would be a monarchy.
Locke argued the social contract is made not only between the state and the individual, but also between individuals, in order to secure life, liberty and property. Human nature, according to Locke, was not guided exclusively by self-preservation, it was also guided by morality and affective relationships. He saw private property ownership as a condition of civil society, based on the right of individuals to possess the products of their labour. Thus, the role of the state is to protect the property rights of individuals in return for their political consent. Unlike Hobbes, Locke felt a monarchy was not a form of civil government, since power is concentrated in a single branch. It was necessary to separate the legislative from the executive, since for him, power ought to lie in the legislature (Kaldor, 2003). Laws applied to citizens and rulers alike and governments could be ousted if they broke the people’s trust.

The increase in commerce associated with this period and Locke’s introduction of private property ownership as a right contributed to Adam Smith’s argument that placed particular emphasis on marketplace exchanges as the foundation of civil society. Smith argued society would benefit from a market free to function outside of the constraints of the state. This is essentially the birth of the link between democracy and a free market economy; a connection growing more salient by the day.

Rousseau rejected the right to own private property on the grounds it gives rise to corruption and social conflicts generated by disagreement over property relations, not interpersonal relations. Civil society emerged out of the right to private property ownership. The civility of civil society is not to be found in contrast to the uncivil state of war, rather civil society itself is characterized by this uncivil state of nature, requiring the Hobbesian coercive state to impose law and order. Rousseau shared Locke’s view of
human nature being guided by morality. Therefore, it was incomprehensible to Rousseau that morality could arise out the force or physical power inherent in the Hobbesian coercive state.

Both Hobbes and Locke privileged individual rights over the common good. Rousseau, however, felt the state was the ultimate expression of humanity and freedom, such that collective freedom and individual freedom are inseparable. "Neither state nor individual is subordinate to the other; the two become one" (Reitzes, 1994, p.99). This dialectical synthesis can be approximated through the General Will, a notion developed by Rousseau as a normative alternative to the Hobbesian state of nature that is predicated on the social contract, consent and the legitimacy of the state. The General Will is basically an amalgamation of individual wills, expressed as a collective will. The state’s legitimacy is based on the extent to which it exercises the General Will. Moreover, interests not covered by the social contract and that are beyond the scope of the General Will remain within the private domain, a realm in which the state cannot interfere (Reitzes, 1994). Rousseau also argued against representative government, claiming active, direct participation in public affairs can only take place when a populace is free, and a representative form of government strips the people of their freedom.

Kant agreed with Rousseau with respect to the idea of the General Will. For Kant, the public will is what legitimizes the state, since "public law which defines for everyone that which is permitted and prohibited by right, is the act of a public will, from which all right proceeds and which must not therefore itself be able to do an injustice to anyone. And this requires no less than the will of the entire people" (Kant in Habermas, 1989, p.107).
Civil society was defined as the sphere of private autonomy. The public sphere; the ‘world’ in which private individuals come together to constitute a public (Habermas, 1989), is the space within which matters of common concern can be rationally discussed. Therefore, in order for the public sphere to serve its purpose, individuals need to venture out of the private realm and into the public domain. According to Kant, the organizing principle of civil society is found in its telos. Human beings have intrinsic value; they are not instruments to be used as a means to an end; rather they exist “as an end in [themselves] and not merely as a means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will. [They] must in all [their] actions, whether directed at [themselves] or to other rational beings, always be regarded at the same time as an end” (Kant, 1981, p.35).

Written in 1767, Ferguson’s “An Essay on the History of Civil Society” is the earliest indication of the disintegration of the classical conceptualization of civil society. Contrary to a construction of civil society based on the social contract, Ferguson argued civil society is not the outcome of a contract, but the result of an unpredictable process that involves negotiation and is characterized by a diversity of social currents (Kaldor, 2003).

In all these conceptualizations, the major break from the ancients of the classical period is that the state and civil society are no longer seen one and the same. The previously established link, based on the relational construct of societas civilis, was broken (Keane, 1988). The state and civil society now exist as differentiated spheres; with the economy forming part of civil society. Both the state and civil society are seen as public realms of interaction, distinguishing them from the private domain of intimate
relationships. However, "the state and civil society are not posited in contradistinction to each other, but are mutually necessary and constitutive" (Reitzes, 1994, p.100).

Enlightenment thinkers did not agree when it came to the tension between the real and the ideal. Hobbes, Locke and Smith viewed the state and civil society as separate in both reality and the ideal, while Rousseau, Kant and Ferguson recognized the two as separate in reality, but not in the ideal. As previously discussed, for Rousseau the state and civil society ought to be the same, for if they are not, the state is lost.

**Nineteenth Century Thinkers**

Hegel developed a theory of history by attempting to achieve a dialectical synthesis between the subjective and objective, the normative and the empirical, rationality and affect and the individual and society. Like Ferguson, civil society was conceived by Hegel not as a pregiven aspect of 'natural life,' but as the result of a complex historical process: "The creation of civil society is the achievement of the modern world" (Hegel in Keane, p.50).

Civil society is comprised of social classes, the market economy, institutions concerned with civil law and well-being, and the corporation, none of which are immediately dependent on the state. Hegel highlighted the corporation as the fundamental institution of civil society involving forms of associations, such as trade, professional and business associations, as well as faith-based groups and municipal governments. It is like a second family that opens space for genuine participation (Reitzes, 1994) and shelters its members from the unpredictability of life in civil society.

With the Industrial Revolution at its peak, the social stratification generated by the market economy, as a result of the ever increasing specialization and mechanization
of human labour, created many classes in civil society that Hegel identified as an agricultural class, a business class and a class of civil servants, among others. The business class, or bourgeois class, was characterized by selfish individualism and depended on the corporation as a mediator between self-interest and the common good. The tension between the individual and the collective could be resolved, according to Hegel, through the dialectical synthesis of individual freedom and collective well-being. Although the tendency of most people would be to assume it would follow to argue for the dialectical synthesis of the state and civil society, Hegel nevertheless argued the separation of the state from civil society should not be abandoned (Keane, 1988).

Lacking in unifying identities and riddled with conflict, civil society does not escape injustice and inequality. However, Hegel paradoxically argues civil society enables the reconciliation of contradictions, but is not capable of overcoming the inherent conflicts of its competitive pluralism. The role of the state, then, is seen as the guarantor of equality and justice that protects and furthers the common good. The state can therefore legitimately intervene in civil society interactions in order to achieve these ends (Keane, 1988). The more the state intervenes, however, the more it becomes blurred with civil society. The fragmented nature of civil society in turn permeates the state.

For Hegel, it is precisely the competitive and contested nature of civil society that gives rise to the ambivalence of what he termed public opinion, a collective expression of individual freedom. A disorganized public opinion, expressed in the public sphere, is potentially dangerous because it can grow into a bloc capable of powerfully opposing the state (Habermas, 1989). Given Hegel's concern, it is not surprising he argued for
maintaining the separation of state from civil society, despite his emphasis on the
synthesis of dichotomies.

Based on his investigation of the government and society of the United States, the
French sociologist Tocqueville argued there is a danger in elected governments because
they give the illusion of legitimacy, while continuing their despotic practices. The
relationship between the state and civil society is potentially harmed, since the state’s
unbridled power could be exercised under the guise of legitimacy. Post-aristocratic
societies believe they have surpassed the despotism of pre-modern aristocratic times
exactly because the fear of despotism has been removed as a result of the breakdown of
the power of the aristocracy (Keane, 1988).

Civil society, according to Tocqueville, is obligated to navigate the power
struggles of its disputed waters, keeping it in a state of constant restlessness. Like Hegel,
Tocqueville saw civil society as a conflicted realm full of contradiction. The relationship
between civil society and the state involves the reconciliation of these contradictions
through dynamics of consent and consensus that mutually legitimizes the state and civil
society.

Using a form of Hegel’s dialectic, Marx developed a conceptualization of
capitalism as contradictory. Labour and capital are positioned in opposition to each other,
rendering them mutually exclusive (Goodwin, 1987). A dialectical analysis, however,
positions the two in relation to each other. By positioning them as polar opposites,
capitalism creates a false dichotomy that results from the failure to see the constitutive
relationship between the two. Likewise, capitalism is what reifies the separation between
civil society and the state and the relations of dominance that exist between the two and
within civil society. The Marxist scheme is usually conceived as the base structure, comprised of the economy and the superstructure, the realm of culture, where the state is positioned. This locates civil society in the base, with close ties to the economy. Therefore, for Marx, transforming relations of domination begins in the base structure, which then triggers changes in the superstructure.

Marx also argued it is not reasonable to expect social classes to connect the state and civil society because it forces individuals to retreat from the political sphere into the private realm. The political nature of civil society would be eliminated by the political revolution, which would dissolve civil society into individuals and the material and cultural elements that influence them. The political spirit would be liberated from the private realm into the public sphere, thus uniting elements of civil society into a community sphere (Habermas, 1989). The empirical situation reflects the division between the state and civil society, but the ideal situation would collapse the division. Since capitalism produces relations of dominance, the state and civil society are naturalized as a result of the incapability of the state and civil society to contain the contradictions created by the tensions between the universal and the particular. Marx thought “the relationship between the capitalist state and civil society is such that with the demise of capitalism, the state will wither away, taking civil society with it” (Reitzes, 1994, p.101).
Theorists of the Twentieth Century

The ideas that emerged during the last century made important contributions to political and social thinking about the nature of political engagement and conceptions of civil society and the public sphere. The political philosopher Hannah Arendt published most of her works between 1940 and the early 1970s. Writing mainly on 'society' - political, civil and private - she defends the classical republican notion of state and society as one, differentiated from the private realm. The state and society are part of the public domain of the universal, while the private is characterized by the particular.

While emphasizing the intrinsic value of public life, Arendt posits the modern achievement of enriching the private intimate realm is denied by the separation of state and society. However, she accepts their distinction as necessary. Arguing there has been an interpermeation of the public and private realms, she proposes the concept of the social; a concept that is different from both the classical notion of political society (state and civil society as one) and the modern liberal notion of civil society (Cohen & Arato, 1992).

A central component of the 'social' is the public sphere, around which Arendt develops a theory based on the ancient conceptualization of the republic. For Arendt, the public sphere is a common world that validates differences and establishes commonalities. It is a space in which diverse unequal individuals are constructed as equals before the law. Based on a theory of action, she contends the republic affirms a space in which persons can speak and act together, while action on a personal level involves self-disclosure and self-renewal. Moreover, power is connected more with
political discourse than action, since it is through communication structures that people interact in the public sphere.

Gramsci and Habermas are perhaps considered among the most influential civil society theorists of the twentieth century. Both drew on the ideas of Enlightenment philosophers and nineteenth century thinkers as they developed their social theories. Gramsci and Habermas were both influenced by Hegel and Marx, and Kant features prominently in much of Habermas's work.

Breaking away from Marxist theory, Gramsci foregrounded civil society as a key concept in his political thought, basing his understanding of the term largely on the work of Hegel. He separated civil society from the economy in the base structure and relocated civil society to the superstructure. This meant the base structure now included only the economy. By joining the state in the superstructure, civil society became part of the realm of meaning-making, no longer operating within the sphere of material relations, but in the sphere of cultural relations. The starting point for transforming relations of dominance for Gramsci therefore lies in the superstructure, not the base structure as Marx argued. The capitalist economy and the liberal state are reified by civil society institutions and hence the potential to challenge them lies in civil society (Bobbio, 1988). By removing civil society from the base structure, Gramsci separated civil society from the economy, creating three societal spheres: the political and economic spheres and civil society.

Habermas's societal model employs a different discourse. For Habermas, the social world is made up the system and the lifeworld. The system is comprised of the economy and the state, while the lifeworld, the realm of meaning-making in Habermas's thinking, is akin to the superstructure, the home of civil society, according to Gramsci.
Civil society operates in the lifeworld and expresses itself as a critical public in the public sphere, a domain of rational discussion about matters of common concern. The public will discussed by Kant is constructed by and expressed through the public sphere. Habermas developed an elaborate theory to suggest the ways in which humans can discursively interact in the public sphere in his theory of communicative action. Presented in two volumes, Habermas outlines how an intersubjective reality can be constructed through rational dialogue.

The Revival of Civil Society

The democratic movements of Eastern Europe and Latin America that took hold during the 1980s and 90s made extensive use of the idea of civil society as a way of moving towards democracy. In the case of Eastern Europe, the classic example of civil society initiatives producing structural change is the Solidarity movement in Poland that sparked the later collapse of the Soviet Union. The Latin American context was quite different from the European environment in which democratic movements emerged. The Latin American countries had long enjoyed democratic governments when the coups of the 1970s ushered in military dictatorships that would rule for decades. Civil society emerged as the only sphere in which people could participate politically, most often clandestinely.

There is no lack of enthusiasm for engaging in debates about the concept of civil society. These debates have produced some outstanding work in the latter half of the twentieth century that continues to be developed in the new millennium. Some authors have focused on the relationship between the state and civil society (Cohen & Arato, 1992; Gramsci, 1971; Habermas, 1989, 1996; Kaldor, 2003; Keane, 1988, 1998; Reitzes, 46
1994), while others have emphasized radical theories of civil society (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Young, 1994). Recent developments in theories of civil society posit the relationship between the state and civil society cannot be understood outside the context of globalization (Hall, 2000; Kaldor, 2003; Keane, 1998, 2003).

*Postnational Conditions*

As the nation-state loses power in a global context, civil society must now be conceptualized as global civil society in order to have any influence in public affairs (Hall, 2000; Kaldor, 2003; Keane, 1998, 2003; Welton, 1997b, 2001). Scholars committed to a radical, plural and deliberative democratic project that creates spaces, structures and processes oriented towards meaningful participation by societal members have recently turned their attention to the notion of 'global civil society.' As the term appears more frequently in everyday and academic discourses, current trends in conceptualizations of civil society accentuate the need to understand civil society in terms of the emerging postnational context.

*The Weakening of the Nation-State*

As cultural, economic and political globalization infiltrate state structures, shaking the very foundations of the state, the national interest states used to represent is becoming less tangible. In the realm of economic activity, market imperatives seem to govern the state and social programs are increasingly handed over to pseudo-state bodies. Moreover, the diffuse invasion of capital and increased migration of people further destabilize the nation-state. The idea of national identity appears to have lost most of its meaning as groups organize around a diversity of identities that do not necessarily
correspond to a given geographic area, leaving the polity open to new interpretations of
collective identity. In the face of such instability, civil society has re-emerged as a central
notion with respect to social solidarity and political action. This is largely a result of the
revival of civil society in the democratic movements in Eastern Europe and Latin
America as a means for mobilizing the populace to act in solidarity against repressive
states.

From a National to a Global Conception of Civil Society

One of the most prominent political thinkers to examine the relationship between
civil society and the state is John Keane who is currently a Professor of Politics at the
University of Westminster where he founded the Centre for the Study of Democracy in
1989. Keane (1998) argues revitalizing the democratic imagination is both intellectually
and politically necessary. His early work focused on the development of the institutional
differentiation of the state and civil society in late eighteenth century and early nineteenth
century Europe. At the time, debates about civil society and the constriction of state
intervention were fueled by ‘non-entrepreneurial’ social groups whose pursuits were not
congruent with the expansion of state power which often protected corporate practices
and elite privileges (Keane, 1988). Keane (1998) argues democracy is an ongoing project
in which the duty to doubt metanarratives is institutionalized and rich pluralism is
defended. The process of distributing and publicly monitoring power to protect against its
dangerous amassing involves civil society and state as institutionally distinct mediated
realms. Keane does not, however, see markets and civil societies as completely distinct;
rather they are mutually dependent.
For Keane, the weaknesses of Gramsci's ideas lie in his insistence on class hegemony and the 'regulated society' that would emerge when the state was ultimately absorbed by civil society. Economics are not the root of every inequality and not necessarily the most important factor in bringing about a more socially just society. Moreover, the distinction between civil society and state, Keane claims, is essential and still a constructive tool for reflecting on and acting in the organization of democratic institutions of the 'late modern' period. In Keane's opinion, Habermas's system/lifeworld scheme, which he conceives as state-economy/civil society, not only fails to recognize the economic dimension of civil society, it sees it as negative, while civil society is seen positively because it encompasses the realm of freedom (Keane, 1998).

The concept of civil society is not only applicable to contexts in which the most basic civil and political freedoms are absent, but also "applies equally well to such disparate political phenomena as the decline of the welfare state, the rise of neoliberalism and the growth of social movements" (Keane, 1998, p.7). Keane uses civil society as an ideal-typical category. For him, it describes and visualizes an intricate, dynamic assortment of non-governmental institutions that are in constant tension with the state and with each other. Protected by law, these institutions are self-organizing, self-reflexive and tend to be non-violent.

In his discussions on violence, Keane distinguishes civil/uncivil based on the absence or presence of violence, arguing violence is anti-democratic. Since society is not always civil, the extent to which the "political goal of crafting civil societies by reducing and eliminating violence will be effective" (Keane, 1998, pp. 154-5) depends on nurturing multiple strategies at both macro and micro levels. However, "unless cultures of civility
are cultivated at the level of civil society” (Ibid, p.155), these strategies will not have a significant impact. Moreover, rescuing shared memories can remind people of past horrors, an important factor in ensuring they do not occur in the future. Finally, cultivating ‘public spheres of controversy’ is also important to the public monitoring of power and violence and for resistance to the violent exercise of power.

The public sphere, according to Keane (1999), can be understood as having three levels: the micro, meso and macro public spheres operating at substate, nation-state and global levels. At all levels, the public sphere is essential to the constant non-violent articulation of diverse interests and matters of common concern, as well as the monitoring of power and the ethics of those with power. Moreover, the public sphere is a crucial space that creates space for sparking debate and “shaking the world, thereby stopping it from falling asleep” (p.14).

In Keane’s most recent work, he considers civil society in the context of globalization. The emerging notion of global civil society for Keane (2003) is just beginning to take shape both conceptually and in practice. According to Keane, the precursor to the emergence of a global civil society was the Eastern European revival of the term, which led to the democratic movements of the 1980s.

Keane (2003) continues to promote principles of pluralism and equality, as well as the self-organizing and self-reflexive characteristics of civil society. The delineation of civil society and global civil society is marked by state borders, so it is when civil societies traverse state boundaries that they become global. He discusses the ‘cosmocracy’ of present conditions in which an amalgamation of interconnected micro, meso and macro level institutions interact with various processes along multiple
dimensions. However, in consort, these legalized institutions and processes are not capable of monitoring power and violence. Still faithful to his commitment to non-violence, Keane argues a global civil society cannot include terrorist groups precisely because it is characterized by the marginalization of violence. Moreover, he asserts it is a space in which metanarratives ought to be challenged and reformulated in order to ensure the grand discourses of the past do not get in the way of a more genuinely plural democracy.

*Violence and Global Civil Society*

In recent years, Mary Kaldor has emerged as a leading scholar with respect to the idea of global civil society and its close relationship with democracy and violence. She is Co-director of the London School of Economics and Political Science Centre for the Study of Global Governance and Principal Research Fellow and Program Director of the Centre for the Study of Human Rights. Kaldor (2003) agrees with Keane that the very naming of a phenomenon is a sign that it is emerging. As the reconfiguration of global politics transforms the state, sovereignty and democracy are being re-envisioned and the state is now one entity among multiple global actors. Like Keane, she also connects the Eastern European and Latin American movements to the surfacing of the notion of global civil society. Kaldor argues the reconstruction of the concept of civil society cannot be understood independent of the global context. The end of the Cold War and the expansion of global interconnectedness destabilized the territorial delineation that distinguished civil/uncivil societal communities and democratic/non-democratic societies. Furthermore, it problematized the established centralized warmongering state.
The effects have been both constructive and destructive, creating both connections among struggles and new forms of insecurity. This “new form of politics, which we call civil society, is both an outcome and an agent of global interconnectedness” (Kaldor, 2003, p.2).

There are many ways in which global civil society can be conceptualized. Kaldor suggests the term has five meanings that follow the historical development of the concept. The meaning associated with the ancients of a political community can be understood in relation to a global state currently exemplified by international criminal courts, human rights laws and peacekeeping activities. Another conception is global civil society as the result of historical processes in relation to the rise and more recent intensification of capitalism. Thirdly, from the activist point of view, state power needs to be both restrained and redistributed, while autonomy and participation need to be expanded. A global public sphere in which transnational social movements advocate for and draw the world’s attention to diverse struggles is central to a radical democracy. A fourth meaning is the neo-liberal version, which is “a kind of market in politics” (Kaldor, 2003, p.9). Like the activist version, restraining state power is important, but the non-profit and/or non-governmental voluntary sector increasingly substitutes state functions. Finally, the postmodern understanding of the meaning of global civil society rejects the totalizing discourse of other versions, arguing it is a plural, conflictual space that is both civil and uncivil. However, the universal principle of tolerance is nevertheless necessary for the viability of the postmodern account.

Kaldor’s own understanding of global civil society draws on many of these meanings. She believes, like Keane, that the relationship between civil society and
markets is reciprocal. This relationship assures the autonomy of the market, while the relationship between civil society and the state guarantees security. Democracy at the national level cannot be substituted by global civil society; rather global civil society ought to be understood as supplementary to it.

After World War II, the global panorama changed as states began acting as groups. Kaldor argues it was not until after 1989 that global politics became more relevant as relations among states and groups of states moved from a collective bargaining process to more complex relations in which a variety of institutional and individual actors interact in the interest of both the individual and the collective. The collective has also been redefined and now includes not only the collective of the nation-state, but also collectivities organized around identities. Kaldor refers to this process as “the ‘taming’ of the social movements of the pre-1989 period” (Kaldor, 2003, p.79) many of which are known today as non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

A central part of Kaldor’s argument is the need to dissolve the distinction between global and national in order to understand the concept of global civil society. Social movements, NGOs and other civil society actors live in a political realm that is not bound by formal national-level politics and they advocate for local, national and global issues at all these institutional levels. Global civil society describes “the global process through which individuals debate, influence and negotiate an ongoing social contract or set of contracts with the centres of political and economic authority” (Kaldor, 2003, p.79).

Numerous actors are part of the current global landscape. These groups are composed of different social agents and operate based on vertical and/or horizontal forms of organization. They relate to power in different ways and address a wide range of issues.
using diverse forms of action. These actors include the ‘old’ social movements of the pre-
1970 era, the ‘new’ social movements of the 1970s and 80s, the NGOs, think-tanks,
commissions and transnational civic networks of the late 1980s and 1990s, the ‘new’
nationalist and fundamentalist movements of the 1990s and the ‘new’ anti-capitalist
movement that emerged in the late 1990s and 2000s. For Kaldor, what is now needed is a
system of global governance that can provide a framework for organizing society. Civil
society both constructs and is protected by this framework. Most importantly, fear,
violence and coercion need to be eradicated so the conditions for free expression are met
and voices are heard.

The post-Cold War period has created a diversity of military forces, partially in
response to the new global context. Kaldor (2003) identifies three main kinds of warfare
that have developed, all of which overlap and interact. ‘Network warfare’ involves armed
webs of both state and non-state actors (para-military groups, warlords, terrorist cells,
units of regular forces) that wage ‘new wars’ in which violence is aimed at expanding
networks, rather than at the enemy. Unfortunately, since violence is directed at civilians,
more than ninety per cent of casualties are civilian and there has been a sharp increase in
the number of refugees and displaced persons. The second type of warfare Kaldor
identifies is ‘spectacle warfare,’ which entails long distance warfare that depersonalizes
engagement through the use of technologically sophisticated aircraft and missiles and
proxy armies in a further attempt to avoid casualties. This type of warfare is mainly
waged by the U.S. and reflects the ways in which the “inherited structures of the Cold
War period retain their power, in a context where American citizens no longer accept the
conditions of an earlier national bargain, the readiness to die in war” (Kaldor, 2003,
Finally, 'neo-modern warfare' refers to the developmental trajectory the traditional military forces of large states in transition from a centralized economy to an internationally oriented market economy that are not, however, capable of challenging the U.S. This kind of warfare generally involves inter-state engagements and counter-insurgent measures against extremist networks.

Although the global picture looks rather bleak, Kaldor suggests there is hope. Controlling war in the contemporary context by expanding and applying international humanitarian and human rights law is crucial given that 'new wars' directly target civilian populations. In the emerging global context, global civil society has an important role to play in shaping transnational associations, institutions and laws and in constructing itself. Deliberation offers the most hope for the future of humanity and global civil society and although “understood very differently in different contexts, allows us space in which to hold such conversations and to create some new ‘islands of engagement’ [that] perhaps...can lead to change” (Kaldor, 2003, p.160).

Civil society actors interact most often in and through the public sphere via diverse forms of associations and at various levels of social integration. Social movements in particular come together in a political realm that simultaneously functions at the substate, national and global level. Therefore, the postnational context in which the notion of global civil society can be understood points to the transnational level at which civil societies all over the world operate. Sadly, violent trends are evident in many regions of the world as ‘new wars’ are waged in the new millennium. The threat posed to the non-violent dimension of civil society calls for the cultivation and protection of the civility of civil society and of the public sphere.
The state-civil society relationship has been conceptualized in different ways since its initial classical conception in “Western” history. The emergence of nation-states and increase in commerce of the early modern period led to the first major break from a conception of state and civil society as one and the same to a differentiation between the two. Enlightenment thinkers proposed social contract theories in an effort to describe the changing relationship between the individual and the new nation-state and social models capable of reflecting the increased differentiation of the social world were developed by theorists of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Recent trends are oriented towards an understanding of civil society that takes into account the emerging global political and economic context.

In the following chapter, the ideas of Gramsci, one of the most important twentieth century civil society theorists, are examined in relation to his use and development of the concepts of hegemony, common sense, public opinion and the historical bloc. Moreover, the works of scholars who have expanded on his ideas are explored in relation to a theory of radical democratic politics and Gramsci’s revolutionary modifications of Marxist theory.
The Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci was the leader of the Italian Communist
Party and a Communist Deputy in the Italian parliament when he was arrested in 1926.
Sadly, he spent the remainder of his life in prison or hospital. He was arrested, along with
some of his colleagues, despite their parliamentary immunity. The Chamber of Deputies
quickly stripped all deputies belonging to opposition parties of their immunity the
following day, signaling an important step in the Italian fascist project. He was first
sentenced to five years confinement, but was later condemned to twenty years of
imprisonment, a sentence that was subsequently reduced to twelve years.

While awaiting trial in Milan, he developed his idea for the Prison Notebooks.
Gramsci was transferred to prison in Turi di Bari in 1928, where he was eventually
granted special permission to write in his cell. In 1929, he began his work, writing in a
school exercise book. He was later moved to a clinic in 1933, where he continued his
work and then to a sanatorium in 1935. Antonio Gramsci died in 1937, less than a month
after his prison sentence expired.

The notebooks amounted to over thirty exercise books by the time his
imprisonment ended. Tatiana, his Russian wife, sent them to Moscow a year later.
However, it was not until after World War II that the notebooks and his letters appeared
in print. Collections of his letters and selections from his notebooks were edited and
published in Italy towards the end of the 1940s (Nowell-Smith, 1985).
**Hegemony, Common Sense and Gramsci's Relocation of Civil Society**

Although Gramsci used a Marxist framework in his analysis, the notion of civil society he developed draws directly on the work of Hegel. Gramsci was attracted to Hegel’s idea of the corporation, seen as the most important institution of civil society, since it is the space in which genuine participation can take place through diverse associations. It is because it mediates between self-interest and collective well-being that the corporation has the potential to bring about the synthesis of individual freedom and the common good. Gramsci’s focus on the corporation stems from his recognition that modern civil society has generated new forms of plurality and association that exist in the corporation.

According to Hegel, the terrain in which these associations operate is conflictual as a result of the competitive pluralism of civil society. Gramsci agreed civil society is characterized by pluralism and conflict, but he felt it was necessary to explicate the cause of the competition that arises between groups. For Gramsci, competition is generated by the radical individualism and consumerism inherent in capitalist societies. The privileging of individual self-interest over collective well-being and the value placed on consumption is not only produced by capitalist economic relations, but also by the ability of the dominant class to control cultural institutions. Therefore, Gramsci argued that in order to transform relations of domination and oppression, the subaltern classes need to target cultural institutions and form a new cultural hegemony in civil society through the socialist party.

One of the concepts most associated with Gramsci is the concept of hegemony, “which the dominant group exercises throughout society” (Gramsci, 1971, p.12). This
type of hegemony is differentiated from that of “direct domination” or command exercised through the state or “juridical” government through coercion. Hegemonic control involves consent, which is created in the cultural institutions of the superstructure. Under capitalism, the state, controlled by the bourgeois class, exercises direct domination through coercion. The bourgeois class also controls civil society by exercising its hegemony through consent. Since Gramsci postulated social change begins in the superstructure, in order for subaltern classes to gain hegemonic control, they need to focus their efforts in the sphere of cultural relations.

Hegemony can take many forms, including cultural, moral, intellectual, commercial and financial and international. Gramsci most often employs the concept of cultural hegemony, since overcoming dominance involves orienting subaltern activities towards gaining control of cultural institutions. He proposes this challenge can be undertaken by engaging in cultural relations that can change common sense. According to Gramsci, common sense is “basically the most widespread conception of life and man [sic]... the folklore of philosophy and always stands midway between folklore proper (folklore as it is normally understood) and the philosophy, science, and economics of the scientists. Common sense creates the folklore of the future, a relatively rigidified phase of popular knowledge in a given time and place” (Gramsci, 1985, pp.420-421). Common sense is only rigidified momentarily, since it is dynamic in nature, under permanent construction. Moreover, each social class creates its own common sense.

Gramsci saw the potential for social change as lying in the cultural realm. Since institutions of civil society operate in the cultural domain, civil society needs to be relocated from the base structure to the superstructure in order to be able to change
common sense and create a new cultural hegemony. The relocation of civil society in the Marxist model both separated the economy from civil society, creating three societal spheres, and removed civil society from the realm of material relations and repositioned it in the cultural domain. This is a major break from Hegel who saw the market economy as part of civil society and from Marx, who kept civil society in the base structure with the economy. Although Gramsci was trying to reflect reality in differentiating civil society from the economy, he was not representing what he believed to be the ideal.

Public Opinion and the Formation of an Historical Bloc

Gramsci contends the subaltern classes can influence public opinion by transforming common sense through the cultural institutions of civil society. While Hegel was concerned about the "dangerous" potential that exists in a disorganized public opinion arising out of the conflictual nature of civil society because it can gain enough strength to form a bloc capable of opposing the state, Gramsci approached the historical bloc from a completely different perspective. Whereas Hegel saw the potential danger in the formation of a new historical bloc as normatively 'bad,' Gramsci saw it as 'good' because opposing the state is exactly what civil society ought to be engaged in, given the role it can play in the cultural realm.

Gramsci argues the dialectical unity of structures and superstructures form an historical bloc, in which the complex, contradictory and discordant ensemble of the superstructures is the reflection of the ensemble of the social relations of production... If a social group is formed which is one hundred per cent homogenous on the level of ideology, this means that the premisses [sic] exist one hundred per
cent for this revolutionizing: that is that the “rational” is actively and actually real. This reasoning is based on the necessary reciprocity between structure and superstructure, a reciprocity which is nothing other than the real dialectical process (Gramsci, 1971, p.366).

Once a new cultural hegemony has been created in the superstructure, forming an historical bloc, relations of domination in the base structure will also change. Gramsci challenged the historical materialism in Marx’s model by flipping the direction of social change. Marx theorized that by first changing economic relations in the base structure, changes in the superstructure would follow. Therefore, the proletariat needs to transform capitalist economic relations in order to transform the dominant ideology. Capitalism is a phase in the historical development of societies, which culminates in the communist state, representing the dialectical unity of base structure and superstructure. In postulating the starting point of social change lies in the superstructure, Gramsci not only reversed the direction of change, but also suggested the dialectical relationship between the two creates a double feedback loop in which each influences the other, ideally bringing them ever closer in unity. The synthesis of base structure with superstructure dissolves the divisions between economy, state and civil society.

Civil Society and the Role of Intellectuals in Social Movements

Having established a conceptual framework consisting of three parts that foregrounds civil society, Gramsci explored the associations in civil society in some detail. The new associations that emerged with modernity did not focus solely on relations of production and consumption and were thus the best sites for forming a new cultural hegemony. Gramsci felt Hegel’s notion of the corporation, the central institution
of civil society, was no longer adequate and needed to be reconceptualized. The separation of civil society from the economy established by Gramsci created new space within civil society for the corporation to undergo a metamorphosis as new forms of plurality and associations emerged.

These new kinds of associations appear as a reaction to state organization of consent and can develop into social movements, which he added to civil society. According to Gramsci, “the complex of superstructures, of which the intellectuals are, precisely, the ‘functionaries’ ” (Gramsci, 1971, p.12) means the role intellectuals have in civil society activities is highly significant. Gramsci believed that despite the intellectual nature of all humans, not all persons play a part in society as intellectuals, asserting “All men [sic] are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men [sic] have in society the function of intellectuals” (Gramsci, 1971, p.9). What distinguishes the intellectual is not found in the inherent character of intellectual activities, rather in “the ensemble of the system of relations in which these activities (and therefore the intellectual groups who personify them) have their place within the general complex of social relations” (Gramsci, 1971, p.8).

Gramsci seems to use the idea of the intellectual in at least a couple of different ways, depending on the “organic quality” associated with the intellectual. One is in the sense of the intrinsic intellectual nature of all humans, since each human “carries on some form of intellectual activity…and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought” (Gramsci, 1971, p.9). Another is in the sense of being born out of the grassroots of a societal community. This involves several levels, from organic intellectuals in social movements to those of a
nation, as opposed to drawing on the ideas of foreign intellectuals who can exercise moral and intellectual hegemony in such a way that the members of a societal community feel “more closely related to foreign intellectuals than to ‘domestic’ ones, [and] there is no national intellectual and moral bloc, either hierarchical or, still less, egalitarian” (Gramsci, 1985, p.209). For Gramsci, intellectuals have a key role to play in the creation of a new cultural hegemony. It is therefore vital that ‘domestic’ intellectuals participate in changing common sense, since they are the ones who best understand their own culture. An historical bloc cannot form based on the ideas of foreign intellectuals who cannot possibly appreciate the common sense of a nation the way ‘domestic’ intellectuals can.

**Expanding Gramscian Thought**

Since Gramsci’s ideas exist as a fragmented collection of arguments and reflections in social theory and cultural studies, his work is open to many interpretations and uses. Over the last twenty years or so, the ideas put forth by Gramsci have been infused with new energy. Key relationships and concepts that run throughout his reflections have been taken up by scholars and reconceptualized in light of the conditions of the late/post modern period. Gramsci’s discussions on the association between state and civil society with respect to the base-superstructure relationship, the way he used ‘hegemony,’ and his illumination of associations and social movements have all had a significant impact on social theories and radical approaches to democracy.

**Emphasizing Gramsci’s Critique of Marxism**

An important interpretation of Gramsci’s work is that of the Italian philosopher of law and political theory, Norberto Bobbio, who died in January of 2004, at the age of
ninety-four. The fact that he was born and lived most of his life in Turin surely affected his views. Turin is the birthplace of worker movements and trade union activism in Italy; it is the city where Gramsci mobilized support for factory councils and also where in the 1930s, Bobbio joined the newly formed underground liberal socialist movement, becoming an important interpreter and promoter of liberal socialism after World War II (Urbinati, 2004).

The basis of liberal socialism strongly influenced Bobbio's interpretation of Gramsci. Liberal socialism is based on several assumptions: democracy is a never-ending project; liberty and equality constitute its most important principles and are in infinite tension, which is healthy for democracy. Bobbio argues, therefore, that democracy is better understood as an unfinished process that can only be expected to achieve a provisional synthesis between individual freedom and social justice (ibid).

Gramsci's reconceptualization of the base-superstructure relationship reversed the starting point for the process of social transformation in traditional Marxist thought. Bobbio (1988) posits the change in the direction of this process is expressed through various antitheses. He identifies the economic sphere/ethico-political sphere, necessity/freedom and objective/subjective antitheses as most significant in understanding Gramsci's reconceptualization of the base-superstructure relationship. The repositioning of civil society can be understood in the ways in which civil society appears as a part of two dichotomies. It figures in the contrast between base-superstructure, as well as the ideological-institutional distinction within the superstructure.

When Gramsci separated civil society from the economy, he differentiated the economy from civil society within the base. By relocating civil society in the
superstructure, he created a secondary differentiation within the superstructure between civil society and political society. The first distinction within the base between civil society and economy and the subsequent relocation of civil society to the superstructure gave primacy to the superstructure over the base as the starting point for transformation. The second distinction within the superstructure gave primacy to civil society over political society as the agent of change.

According to Bobbio (1988), Gramsci employs the base-superstructure, as well as the ideological-institutional dichotomies in two ways. One is as a historiographic hermeneutic tool “where they are used as canons of historical interpretation-explanation” (ibid, p.89) and the other is in practical political terms “as criteria to distinguish what must be done from what must not be done” (ibid). Historiographically, the base-superstructure dichotomy is used to identify the fundamentals involved in the process of history. The ideological-institutional dichotomy within the superstructure is used to differentiate between stages of ascent and decline in the process of building hegemony in the formation of historical blocs.

In pragmatic terms, Bobbio argues the first dichotomy forms the basis of Gramsci’s critique of the Marxist reduction of the potential for transformation to the economic sphere. This underlies the primacy Gramsci grants to the cultural realm of the superstructure, which ultimately leads to his revolutionary inversion of the direction of transformation. For Bobbio (1988), the second dichotomy gives rise to what is conceivably Gramsci’s most innovative observation “where the stable conquest of power by the subordinate classes is always considered as a function of the transformation which must first be operated in civil society” (ibid, p.90).
Therefore, in historical terms, the repositioning of civil society from the base, next to the economy, to form part of the superstructure provides an understanding of the basic elements of the process of history and the necessary delineations for grasping how social transformation takes place first in the cultural realm of the superstructure. In pragmatic terms, it is the reason Gramsci argues for the initiation of transformation in the superstructure. It also forms the basis for the practical consideration of the ways and extent to which civil society and political society merge at a given point in history.

According to Bobbio (1988), in the ideal, Gramsci argued for the 'regulated society' which would emerge when civil society expands "until all the space occupied by political society has been eliminated" (ibid, p.94). Bobbio discusses Gramsci's use of hegemony as an important concept in achieving the 'regulated society.' In the differentiation of civil society and political society (i.e. the state) in the superstructure, civil society operates under the principle of consent, while political society functions based on coercion. Hegemony figures prominently, therefore, in civil society.

Bobbio claims Gramsci's use of the term is closely associated with the role of intellectuals and Lenin's notion of leadership, which Gramsci developed. Gramsci used the term hegemony in earlier writings to refer, as Lenin did, to political leadership, but later expanded it, using hegemony to refer to cultural leadership as well. For Bobbio, this extension is an underappreciated, yet significant contribution, since hegemonic forces that eventually form an historical bloc emerge from both the political and cultural institutions of civil society (Bobbio, 1988). Moreover, Gramsci considers political parties as part of the institutions of civil society, not part of the coercive political society. It is therefore the task of civil society to build enough hegemonic forces to reabsorb political...
society in the superstructure in order to spark change in the base. The primacy Gramsci
gives to the ideological over the institutional within the superstructure locates the
initiation of change in civil society. The primacy of the superstructure as a whole over the
base indicates the process of transformation then moves from the superstructure to the
base. However, Gramsci does not envision a “society without classes” as Marx did; rather
he envisioned “civil society without a political society” (Bobbio, 1988, p.94).

Bobbio discusses the Marxist roots of Gramsci’s thought, undertaking an in-depth
analysis of his departures from traditional Marxism and demonstrating how Gramsci
expanded the concept of hegemony to include not only political hegemony, but also
cultural hegemony. The concept is spotlighted by Laclau & Mouffe (1985) who interpret
Gramsci’s use of the concept, extend it and then use it to develop their theory of radical
democratic politics. Bobbio shares a liberal socialist approach to democracy and radical
politics with Laclau and Mouffe, since their theory is based both on liberal principles of
democracy and socialist principles of radical politics.

Radical Democratic Politics

Another important contribution to the development and expansion of Gramsci’s
ideas can be found in the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, both of whom are
currently Professors at the University of Essex and Westminster respectively. Each has
written extensively in the political, social and cultural domains, and taught in universities
all over the Americas and Europe. Their most influential work is a piece they co-
authored, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics
(1985), in which they revived the concept of hegemony and made it a central concept in
the development of their theory of radical democratic politics. To construct their theory, they also draw on liberalism and cultural critique. Laclau and Mouffe follow the historical maturation of the concept of hegemony and build on Gramsci’s expansion of its meaning. They emphasize his organic approach to a socialist democracy, while retaining liberal notions of freedom, equality and justice. In addition, the relational concepts ‘articulation’ and ‘antagonism’ form an integral part of their analysis, arising both out of the conception of hegemony they develop and the work of cultural critics, such as Foucault.

In their interpretation and analysis of Gramsci, they begin by emphasizing the relevance of Gramsci’s extension of the concept to include cultural hegemony because it makes hegemony a concept that operates not only in the coercive institutional realm, but also in the consensual ideological realm. This expansion moves hegemony beyond a conceptualization based solely on ties of class to one based on ties of ideology as well. Political leadership can organize hegemonic forces in the institutional domain, but cultural leadership “requires that an ensemble of ‘ideas’ and ‘values’ be shared by a number of sectors” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, pp.66-67) in order to rally hegemonic forces in the ideological domain. The primacy of the ideological contribution to will formation is what unifies hegemonic forces into an historical bloc.

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argue Gramsci’s introduction of ‘collective will’ overcomes ideological reductionism because it expresses the “politico-ideological articulation of dispersed and fragmented historical forces” (Ibid, p. 67). These disjointed wills can be cemented into a collective will that does not seize the power of the state; rather it becomes the state. Gramsci, it would seem, set the stage for the “democratic
practice of hegemony” (Ibid, p.69). However, Gramsci maintained class hegemony is what unifies wills, ultimately reducing their relation to the economy. If society cannot overcome the limits the economy places on its potential to reconfigure itself hegemonically, then the economic space is not hegemonic.

In order to understand the ambiguity present in Gramsci’s thought, Laclau and Mouffe highlight the concept of ‘war of position’ as a hermeneutic tool. Gramsci did not understand this war in military terms. Instead, he saw it as the dissolution of one societal community and the reconstitution of another as a class hegemony in an ongoing process in which the identities of the opponents is never fully cemented. Despite the continuity implied in the process, the new hegemonic formation is again organized around class. According to Laclau and Mouffe (1985), Gramsci simultaneously accepted that, by virtue of their plurality, struggles and the demands they put forth cannot be reduced to class. It is the hegemonic articulation of a struggle that gives it its meaning, but the direction it moves in is not predetermined, resulting in an erratic series of hegemonic formations.

For Laclau and Mouffe, the collective will can be said to have no identity other than their relationship “with the force hegemonizing them” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p.69). Therefore, collective will formation or articulation cannot organize exclusively on the basis of class. These contingent articulations are formed by a plurality of struggles in the context of an antagonistic politico-ideological terrain. It is important for Laclau and Mouffe that the confrontational nature of the concept of ‘war of position’ be maintained (Townshend, 2004) in the constant formation of historical blocs. Moreover, the non-identity of the opponents in the war is an important aspect of collective articulation.
Arguing for the necessity of a new political imaginary as a result of the failure of the working class to form an historical agent as Marx predicted, Laclau and Mouffe posit this imaginary can be constructed through “the rejection of privileged points of rupture and the confluence of struggles into a unified political space, and the acceptance, on the contrary, of the plurality and indeterminacy of the social” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p.152). They agree with Gramsci’s rejection of historical materialism, stating that the situation of subordination cannot form the basis for the struggle against that very same subordination. They also agree with Foucault in that power and resistance always appear together. However, these forms of resistance are diverse and not all are political in nature. Some struggles organize around eradicating relations of subordination themselves, without ever going through political parties or the state. Therefore, it is necessary to view the political as social because the political permeates not only a particular level of the social, but all levels of the social.

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) see their main task as the identification of “the discursive conditions for the emergence of a collective action, directed towards struggling against inequalities and challenging relations of subordination” (Ibid, p.153) and their secondary task as detecting under which circumstances subordination becomes oppressive, thus forming a site of antagonism. First, relations of subordination, oppression and domination need to be differentiated. A *relation of subordination* exists when “an agent is subjected to the decision of another” (Ibid), but it is not antagonistic in itself. Relations of subordination become *relations of oppression* when they “have transformed themselves into sites of antagonisms” (Ibid) as a result of discursive formations that construct them as oppression. *Relations of domination* refer to relations of
subordination conceived as illegitimate from a discursive 'exterior' by an external social agent. Therefore, the thesis posited by Laclau and Mouffe is that the conditions that will render the struggle against different forms of inequality possible only exist at the point at which democratic discourse emerges to articulate the different sorts of resistance to subordination.

Borrowing the notion of a 'democratic revolution' from Tocqueville, Laclau and Mouffe argue the democratic principles of liberty and equality forced themselves into the social world, signaling "the end of a society...ruled by theological-political logic" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p.156) because it offered the discursive conditions necessary for inviting the possibility of proposing the illegitimacy of the various forms of inequality, rendering them equivalent forms of oppression. The expansion of the democratic revolution laid the foundation for new forms of political identity to emerge. Rather than view these 'new social movements' as a mere amalgamation of struggles positioned in opposition to class, for Laclau and Mouffe it is more useful to think of these 'new social movements' in terms of the extension of the democratic revolution to an entire new set of different social relations generated by capitalism because it problematizes new forms of subordination.

The 'commodification' of the social shattered previous social relations and led to commodity relations infiltrating almost every aspect of individual and collective existence. Coupled with the bureaucratization that grew out of the welfare state, the homogenization of social life has produced various inequalities and conflict. The line between the private and public shifted, illuminating the political nature of social relations and creating new public spaces that imposed new kinds of subordination, rather than the
genuine democratization of social relations. Moreover, liberal democratic ideals have
been redefined by this expansion of rights. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argue a ‘rights’
framework is what provides the discourse necessary for demanding rights. Finally, new
cultural forms linked to information and communication technology have emerged out of
these means of mass communication that have the dual effect of promoting consumerism
and individualism, while at the same time challenging inequalities. The crisis that has
ensued is viewed as the result of a ‘crisis of values’ or “the consequence of the
development of an ‘adversary culture’ and of the ‘cultural contradictions of capitalism’ ”
(p.166).

These factors provide the theoretical context in which Laclau and Mouffe propose
the idea of a radical and plural democracy. The multiplicity of antagonisms and the
diverse forms each of these antagonisms take, preclude a particular direction for
overcoming this crisis because of their different modes of subordination and the many
ways in which struggles can be articulated. The democratic revolution has opened space
for diverse political thought. However, these new forms of subordination and resistance
can be articulated into anti-democratic discourse, as is the case with the neo-conservative
and neo-liberal hegemonic articulations used to attack the welfare state, which means
“any politics with hegemonic aspirations can never consider itself as repetition, as taking
place in a space delimiting a pure internality, but must always mobilize itself on a
plurality of planes” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p.170).

The main political objective of the liberal project is individual liberty, negatively
defined as reducing coercion in the context of a capitalist market economy. This
definition excludes political liberty. The right to unlimited accumulation of wealth along
with minimal state intervention presents the liberal democratic project as one that can only exist in this context. Social and redistributive justice is under constant attack by neo-liberals with respect to justified state intervention, since a collective cannot make decisions about individuals, leaving the concept of social justice empty. The Right argues equality implies uniformization, since it does not recognize difference, revealing the totalitarian nature of democracy. Instead, the 'right to difference' is championed because liberty arises out of the inequality generated by difference and ought to be seen as 'good.' Hence, “the new conservatism has succeeded in presenting its programme of dismantling the Welfare State as a defence of individual liberty against the oppressor state” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p.175).

Laclau and Mouffe argue the Left needs to abandon the base/superstructure distinction and renounce the notion of privileged starting points for initiating emancipatory political practice. What the Left needs to do is construct a different system of equivalents to oppose the equivalences drawn between difference, inequality and liberty. Instead of rejecting liberal-democratic ideals, the Left needs to intensify and extend them towards a radical and plural democracy.

Drawing on Gramsci’s concept of ‘war of position,’ Laclau and Mouffe (1985) contend the revolutionary act is a moment in the process of radical transformation that takes place once multiple political spaces exist and power is no longer concentrated in one point. The concentration of power and knowledge can be avoided through these multiple autonomous spheres of struggle “which only exercise their equivalential and overdetermining effects in certain spheres of the social” (p.178). Ending capitalist relations of production is a necessary aim of any socialist struggle and since every project
for a radical democracy entails a socialist dimension, it must also be an aim of such a project. However, it is one of many elements of a project for radical democracy, not the other way around. The socialization of the means of production forms one part of the strategy for a radical and plural democracy, which implies more than worker self-management; it means genuine participation in decisions about what is produced and how it is produced and distributed.

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) posit the recent arguments in favour of a deepening of the division between state and civil society seems to imply all forms of domination can be attributed to the state. However, civil society is riddled with conflict manifested in various relations of oppression and sites of antagonism, and it is simultaneously characterized by democratic struggles. Moreover,

the state is an important means for effecting an advance frequently against civil society...[it] can be the seat of numerous democratic antagonisms, to the extent that a set of functions within it...can enter into relations of antagonism with centres of power, within the state itself, which seek to restrict and deform them (p.180).

The distinction between state and civil society can be constituted as a central division, as exemplified by dictatorships, but one cannot establish a priori whether democratic antagonisms will surface out of one or the other. A radical and plural democracy can emerge by recognizing the multiplicity of social actors, their plural formations arising out of their multiple discursive constitutions and the decentring that occurs within the plurality.
The delineation between public and private that distinguished between the public universal and the plurality of the private has dissolved over the past two hundred years as a result of the diversity of struggles that have characterized this period of the democratic revolution. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argue there has been a radical politicization of the social which has displaced the line that distinguishes between public and private, "not in terms of the encroachment on the private by a unified public space, but in terms of a proliferation of radically new and different political spaces" (p.181). Thus, what sometimes sets social agents apart is what sometimes unites them at times in what is thought of as private space and at others in what is conceived as public space. The anti-capitalist dimension of a radical democratic politics involves societal members demanding equality as producers, further dissolving the line between public state and private economy; the economy is no longer completely private.

This raises important questions about the autonomy/hegemony dichotomy that apparently arises out of the plurality of political spaces and collective identities. The unifying result of the logic of equivalence stands in contrast to an 'absolute system of differences' produced by the logic of autonomy, both of which are totalizing. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) suggest this can be avoided by changing the standing of specific concepts that were conceptualized as foundations into social logics. What is needed for 'democratic equivalence' is "the construction of a new 'common sense' which changes the identity of the different groups, in such a way that demands of each group are articulated equivalentially with those of the others" (p.183). This demands a balance between equality and liberty. Thus autonomy and hegemony are complementary, not mutually exclusive. Furthermore, if the assumption of a closed system is abandoned, the
notion of a plurality of political spaces with the logic of equivalence becomes congruent. The ‘totalizing moment’ brings political space together as one, or as a whole, but not around any given centre. The logic operating in this context is a political logic. Through a multiplicity of social logics, the ongoing challenge involves a balancing act between plurality and a sense of wholeness that prevents the potential “lack of all reference to this unity” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 188).

The democratic logic, according to Laclau and Mouffe, is not sufficient for the hegemonic project because any unity between the subversive moment of the logic of democracy and positive moment of the institution of the social is contingent. What is needed are proposals for a positive form of social organization such that the demands of a subordinated group can be constructed not simply in opposition to a dominant order, but as a new order. Hegemony is then a state of affairs “in which the management of the positivity of the social and the articulation of the diverse democratic demands [have] achieved a maximum of integration” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, 189). It is in this context that Laclau and Mouffe argue for a radical democratic project as an alternative for the Left.

Finally, ideals are still needed for any kind of radical imaginary to form a horizon for political struggles since it is “the presence of this imaginary...as a set of symbolic meanings which totalize as negativity a certain social order [that] is absolutely essential for the constitution of all left-wing thought” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 190). Energizing a project for radical democracy must therefore include pushing the myth of a society that is rational and transparent to the recesses of the social horizon. This precludes any unified
discourse for the Left, but coming together contingently on points of agreement can unite struggles hegemonically.

Gramsci made a number of significant contributions to contemporary theories of civil society and democracy. His reconceptualization of the base-superstructure relationship and his differentiation and relocation of civil society challenged traditional Marxist thought and foregrounded the cultural realm in relation to hegemony, common sense, public opinion and the formation of historical blocs. Emphasizing Gramsci's critique of Marx, Bobbio offers an important interpretation of Gramsci's reflections and Laclau and Mouffe develop a theory of radical democratic politics by extending the concept of hegemony. Both Bobbio and Laclau and Mouffe remain committed to liberal principles of freedom, equality, justice and pluralism and a radical approach to democracy. In addition to the work of Gramsci, the ideas of Habermas have strongly influenced recent conceptions of civil society. His theory of communicative action, in which he outlines a sophisticated social model, and his early and recent work on the public sphere are the subject of the next chapter, along with the work of theorists who have built on his ideas.
CHAPTER 6: HABERMAS AND THE LIFEWORLD

The ideas of Jürgen Habermas are among the most influential to emerge from the Frankfurt School. He is considered a leading philosopher, respected by followers and critics alike. Habermas has written extensively and taken together, his writings form an impressive body of intellectual work. Like all humans, Habermas surely does not “practice what he preaches” in every circumstance. He is known, however, for engaging in lively debates in venues ranging from restaurants to academic conferences, in an attempt to put communicative action into practice. Habermas still writes for German newspapers today, further extending his participation in the public sphere from the academic realm, into the broader sphere of public debate.

The events of War World II marked Habermas profoundly. Having been a member of the Hitler Youth, he was shocked when the Nuremberg war trials began to unfold, revealing the horrors of the concentration camps in documentary films. The history Habermas witnessed in the making established his commitment to preventing such inhumane acts from recurring and led to his concern with investigating reason, justice and freedom.

He initiated his inquiry into such concepts at the University of Bonn, studying the works of Hegel, Marx and Lukács. After earning his PhD in 1954, he went to the University of Frankfurt where he became an assistant to Theodor Adorno, a professor who was affiliated with the university’s Institute for Social Research (Stephens, 1994). Critical theory, the interdisciplinary approach oriented towards applying philosophical ideas to social problems is the triumph of what is now known as the Frankfurt School.
Over the next twenty years, Habermas alternated between the University of Frankfurt and tenures at various German universities and research institutes. He has been at the University of Frankfurt since 1983, where he became Professor Emeritus in 1994. In addition, Habermas is a permanent visiting professor at Northwestern University in the United States.

Habermas has spent his career as an intellectual and political figure developing a theory capable of reflecting the complexities of the social world. *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1987) presents the conceptual model Habermas proposes for understanding and acting in the world in order to make it more socially just. In volume two, he distinguishes between the system and the lifeworld. He kept the three part model Gramsci created by repositioning civil society in the superstructure, but rearranged the three societal spheres. For Marx the state is located in the superstructure and economic relations in civil society remained in the base structure. However, Habermas concurred with Gramsci that civil society is better understood as functioning in the realm of cultural re/production that corresponds to the superstructure. For Habermas the lifeworld is analogous to the cultural realm of the superstructure and the system is comprised of the state and the economy.

*The Public Sphere*

Primarily following the work of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Mill and Tocqueville, Habermas (1989) traces and analyzes the emergence and transformation of the public sphere. The state had been conceptually distinguished from civil society in the eighteenth century and civil society emerged “as the corollary of a depersonalized state authority” (p.19). According to Habermas, Kant’s arguments on moral and historical philosophy
form the basis for the eighteenth century conceptualization of the public sphere, particularly his notion of *publicity* that links the political with the moral. Habermas posits Hegel agrees with Kant with respect to public opinion. In order to better understand the increased complexity of the social world, Hegel differentiated classes within civil society. However, since he held civil society is characterized by conflict and competitive pluralism, Habermas (1989) felt Hegel “took the teeth out of the idea of the public sphere of civil society” (p. 122) because for Hegel, civil society is not the sphere in which autonomous persons can interact critically and discursively in order to move towards an intersubjectively constructed public will.

Marx criticized the public sphere, but also approached it as a way of analyzing bourgeois society. He saw it as a sphere dominated by the bourgeois class and condemned public opinion as false consciousness, since it simply masked bourgeois class interests. At the time, the public sphere Marx saw “contradicted its own principle of universal accessibility – public could no longer claim to be identical with the nation, civil society with all of society” (Habermas, 1989, p. 124).

Like Hegel, Mill and Tocqueville saw the public sphere as a space in which a powerful and potentially dangerous force that needs to be controlled can emerge. As electoral reform replaced publicity in the nineteenth century, public opinion became fragmented. The liberal public sphere, according to Habermas, was thus seen as desirable insofar as it expressed the will of the people. However, it could also turn into a coercive force if the dominant opinion forced collective values on the individual.

Sketching the development of the bourgeois public sphere towards the end of the eighteenth century, Habermas describes how a discursive sphere emerged in which
societal members (upper-class “White” men) of the bourgeois class began to meet in public venues (cafes, salons) to engage in critical discussions about art and literature in emerging literary spaces (periodicals). The literary public sphere laid the foundation for the political public sphere to come into existence. The private realm, made up of civil society and the intimate sphere of the family, operated in contrast to the state in the public domain. Habermas emphasizes the family as the core of civil society. The family occupies an internal space within the private realm distinct from the economic activity of civil society. When private persons come together as a public, they do so in the public sphere. This linked the private and public realms such that matters of common concern could be discussed through rational, critical debate and expressed to the state. This gave rise to the political public sphere “through the vehicle of public opinion [which] put the state in touch with the needs of society” (Habermas, 1989, p.31).

As capitalism grew, the system (state and economy) began to colonize the public sphere. With the commercialization of the press, the task of the media shifted from one of conveying public debates to one of shaping them. Advertising played a key role in this transition, since the media became more interested in profit than rational public debate. The state also began to use the public sphere to influence public opinion, for the purpose of gaining and/or maintaining political power. The citizen turned into a passive consumer of images and information, rather than participating actively in its creation. Habermas sees the transformation of the liberal constitutional state into the social welfare-state as a paradoxical factor in this process. The extent to which it represents the collapse of the public sphere of civil society, it makes room for a staged and manipulative publicity displayed by organizations over
the heads of a mediatized public...[and] the degree to which it preserves the continuity with the liberal constitutional state, the social-welfare state clings to the mandate of a political public sphere according to which the public is to set in motion a *critical* process of public communication through the very organizations that mediatize it (Habermas, 1989, p.232).

The result can be the instrumental control of the public sphere by the system, which gives societal members the illusion that public opinion and will formation occurs in a democratic fashion. It can also be the genuinely democratic construction of public opinion and will through rational dialogue, via communicative action in the lifeworld. The public sphere can potentially deteriorate into a battleground for powerful lobby groups, government media machines and economic interests and it is therefore essential to protect it within the lifeworld.

**Communicative Action**

Habermas (1987) argues the social world is integrated by the *system* and the *lifeworld*. In pre-modern societies, there was a high degree of correspondence among the internal spheres of the lifeworld. In modern societies, the “differentiation of a highly complex market system destroys traditional forms of solidarity without at the same time producing normative orientations capable of securing an organic form of solidarity” (p.116). Modernity may have pulled the system and lifeworld apart, but Habermas proposes the lifeworld concept and the system concept of society are not mutually exclusive. Referring to the French sociologist Durkheim’s observation that the social disintegration created by the division of labour cannot be countered by the democratic formation of critical publics alone, Habermas suggests Durkheim fails to resolve the
paradox generated by the increasing complexity of modern societies because he does not connect stages of system differentiation to forms of social integration. By foregrounding this link, Habermas argues the system and lifeworld can move closer together through communicative action if societies are concurrently conceptualized as systems and lifeworlds. This connection can be achieved by separating the “rationalization of the lifeworld from the growing complexity of societal systems” (Habermas, 1987, p.118).

The system and lifeworld are differentiated by Habermas along the distinction between public and private. The distinction illustrates the tension between the individual and the collective. By applying this conception of the public/private, the system can be differentiated into two subsystems. The public realm of the system refers to the political subsystem (state) and the private realm to the economic subsystem. The public domain of the lifeworld is the public sphere while the private domain delineates the private sphere. Therefore, there are two levels of differentiation in Habermas’s societal model. The system is differentiated from the lifeworld and each is further distinguished in the public and private realms (Cohen & Arato, 1992).

The Lifeworld

Since Habermas sees the lifeworld as the realm of meaning-making, he argues the concepts of the lifeworld and communicative action are to be understood as complementary. He builds on the phenomenological conception of the lifeworld with the intention of addressing “the question of how the lifeworld – as the horizon within which communicative actions are “always already” moving – is in turn limited and changed by

83
the structural transformation of society as a whole” (Habermas, 1987, p.119). Communicative action then is what reproduces the lifeworld.

The lifeworld has three structural components: person/personality, society and culture. Habermas uses personality to refer to the capacities of a subject to speak and act and society to refer to the legitimate web through which the person regulates her or his social group membership in order to establish and maintain solidarity. Habermas uses culture to denote the pool of knowledge persons draw from in communicative interactions. This knowledge equips them with interpretations in the process of coming to an understanding about a particular aspect of the world.

The structural components of the lifeworld are related to reproduction processes of socialization, social integration and cultural reproduction, each of which ensures emerging and existing situations are connected along various dimensions. Socialization ensures they are connected in the dimension of historical time, securing “for succeeding generations the acquisition of generalized competencies for action and sees to it that individual life histories are in harmony with collective forms of life” (Habermas, 1987, p.141). Social integration ensures they are linked in the dimension of social space, since it coordinates “actions by way of legitimately regulated interpersonal relations and stabilizes the identity of groups to an extent sufficient for everyday practice” (Habermas, 1987, p.140). Cultural reproduction ensures they are brought together in the semantic dimension, securing “a continuity of tradition and coherence of knowledge sufficient for daily practice” (Ibid).

When the structural components of the lifeworld are intermeshed with reproduction processes, the result can contribute both to preserving the structural
components of the lifeworld and to action oriented to mutual understanding. A
disturbance in reproduction processes creates crisis in the interaction between these
processes and the structural components of the lifeworld. This crisis is expressed in many
troubled forms.

The structural components of the lifeworld draw on symbolic resources in their
interactions with reproduction processes. In the cultural realm, the symbolic resource is
meaning, while society makes use of solidarity, and the person of her or his ego strength.
When the reproductive processes of the lifeworld become unstable, the distress felt at the
level of culture is manifested as loss of meaning because the symbolic resource
“meaning” becomes scarce. At the societal level, the disturbance of social integration
creates anomie as a result of the scarcity of the resource “social solidarity.” When
socialization is disturbed, the resource “ego strength” becomes scarce and the person
consequently experiences psychopathologies.

Moreover, Habermas postulates the extent to which the individual contributes to
reproduction processes can be evaluated along various dimensions. Measurement in these
dimensions will vary in relation to the levels of structural differentiation in the lifeworld.
With respect to cultural reproduction, the extent to which the individual contributes to
continuity and coherence can be measured by examining the rationality of knowledge that
has been accepted as valid. In social integration, the individual’s contribution to
coordinated actions that stabilize the identities of groups can be evaluated by the extent to
which s/he contributes to the solidarity of members. In socialization, the extent to which
the individual’s level of personal responsibility contributes to her or his own capacities
for action and personal identity can be measured.
Civil Society, the Lifeworld and the Public Sphere

In more recent work, Habermas (1996) discusses the political and legal implications of his theory of communicative action, arguing it can contribute to bridging the tension between norms and facts. Habermas foregrounds the links between civil society and the public sphere as important connections in the process, since both involve agents acting as autonomous individuals and as social actors who interact through social and communicative structures embedded in the lifeworld. Civil society engages a variety of associations in moving issues of concern from the private to the public sphere in the lifeworld in order to make them more salient. For Habermas (1996):

Civil society is composed of those more or less spontaneously emergent associations, organizations, and movements that, attuned to how societal problems resonate in the private life sphere, distill and transmit such reactions in amplified form to the public sphere. The core of civil society comprises a network of associations that institutionalize problem-solving discourse on questions of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres. The ‘discursive designs’ have an egalitarian, open form or organization that mirrors essential features of the kind of communication around which they crystallize and to which they lend continuity and permanence (p.367).

Habermas does not only highlight the associations, organizations and movements that tune into social concerns and convey them in the public sphere, he also places great importance on both the webs of interaction among family, friends and neighbours, with whom people are more closely connected, and the work-related and social networks
among colleagues and acquaintances with whom there is more distance. What is significant is the foregrounding of daily interactions in real life. These human experiences contribute to mutual understanding, which can be expressed in the public sphere.

The contemporary world has several 'publics' differentiated first according to the various spheres they contribute to (political, literary), their group integration (shared religious beliefs, artists), the cause they struggle for (diverse civil rights) and the issues they forward (healthcare, the natural environment). These publics are further differentiated in relation to the density of communication, level of organization and spatial scope involved. *Episodic* publics denote everyday spontaneous encounters on the bus or in a restaurant; *occasional* publics come together at events such as concerts and associational meetings, while *abstract* publics refer to geographically dispersed participants connected by way of the media (Habermas, 1996).

*The Role of Social Movements*

Social movements have played a significant role in translating social concerns from the private to the public sphere for centuries. Over the past few decades, they have become even more relevant as social actors in democratic struggles against dictators, in post-conflict contexts, as well as in liberal democracies. An important characteristic of civil society actors that has contributed towards the advancement of diverse human rights is the very diversity of civil society itself. The pluralistic nature of civil society makes the terrain of civil society contentious. Unlike Hegel, Habermas (1996) sees this as disruptive
rather than dangerous. Social movements are constantly reinventing themselves, having to auto-create and reconstruct their identities and self-legitimize them.

When civil society acts politically, it does so in an offensive and defensive fashion. The offensive ways in which social movements act is by identifying problems and brainstorming solutions, by devising strategies to mobilize support and by formulating sound arguments and amplifying them in the public sphere. Offensive approaches may involve non-violent acts of civil disobedience, which may produce a range of state responses. The degree of violence employed in the state's reaction will vary with the context, but it is an omnipresent danger in the offensive strategies of social movements.

Social movements act in defense of the lifeworld in a variety of ways. They protect existing social and communication structures of association capable of critically influencing the formation and expression of public opinion in the public sphere in an effort to have a significant impact on this process. Moreover, their task is to mobilize subcultures in order to create counter cultures and institutions that can contribute to rearticulating lifeworld concerns in the public sphere as a counter public. Social movements act in many public spheres, at different organizational levels, in diverse places, all of which are connected through webs of communication.

**Building on the Ideas of Habermas**

Many scholars have been inspired by the ideas of Habermas, using his ideas both as a springboard for their own theories and drawing on certain concepts as hermeneutic tools in analyzing the social world. In relation to civil society, some have focused on the spheres that integrate the social world, while others highlight activities and/or processes
within civil society. What they seem to have in common is an emphasis on the centrality of the political in any current understanding of civil society. This foregrounding of the political is something those who have developed their ideas more directly from Habermas share with those who have drawn more on Gramscian conceptions.

**Civil Society as a Theory of Discourse Ethics**

The theorists who have most used Habermas's work in developing a theory of civil society are Andrew Arato and Jean Cohen, both of whom are at Columbia University in the New School for Social Research and the Department of Political Science respectively. In their monumental work, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (1992), they trace the development of the concept of civil society up to and including the implications of postmodern thought.

Arguing the model they develop is capable of accommodating the negative phenomena linked to modern civil society by employing the notions of reification and colonization of the lifeworld, Cohen and Arato make a case for the continuation of the welfare state and the democratic revolution through reflexive practice. The current weakness seen in projects that seek to reconstruct civil society directly from conceptions posited by theorists such as Hegel or Gramsci arises from their vulnerability to critiques like those of Habermas and Foucault. For Cohen and Arato, models of differentiation and modernization are embedded in a cultural background in which the coordination of normative action takes place in a rational manner. Therefore, "what is needed is a conception of civil society that can reflect on the core of new collective identities and
articulate the terms within which projects based on such identities can contribute to the emergence of freer, more democratic societies” (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 421).

Using a Habermasian theoretical framework as a base, Cohen and Arato integrate the concept of civil society into the model by exploring how the unfolding of communicative action on the level of political theory might inform a reconceptualization of civil society founded on the values of freedom and solidarity. The reduction of political culture and associational forms to the production of either bourgeois hegemony or socialist hegemony makes Gramsci’s conception simultaneously too realist and too utopian. Moreover, the three part model Gramsci created by relocating civil society renders the base/superstructure division irrelevant. Therefore this model needs to be reconstructed and according to Cohen and Arato (1992), Habermas “provides the best available conceptual framework” (p.426) for this task.

However, ‘civil society’ and ‘lifeworld’ cannot be translated in any obvious way because the two are operating on different conceptual levels. Despite this non-equivalence, Cohen and Arato contend the Habermasian conception of the lifeworld, understood in terms of two levels will allow them “to pinpoint the exact locus of civil society within the overall framework” (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p.427). At one level the cultural-linguistic background of the lifeworld is reproduced and at another level, the structures of the lifeworld are reproduced. Three reproduction processes – socialization, social integration and cultural reproduction – are at work in both the reproduction of the background of the lifeworld and of its structures. It is at the structural or “institutional level of the lifeworld, that one can root a hermeneutically accessible, because socially integrated, concept of civil society. This concept would include all of the institutions and
associational forms that require communicative interaction for their reproduction and that rely primarily on processes of social integration for coordinating action within their boundaries” (Ibid, p.429).

A rationalized lifeworld needs to replace the idea of normative consensus achieved through conventional means to the notion of a communicatively constructed lifeworld. The post-traditional conception of civil society Cohen and Arato develop on the basis of a communicatively rooted theory of civil society based on discourse ethics connects political and economic steering mechanisms with civil society. The lifeworld is embedded in a cultural-linguistic background, but in relation to civil society, it is the institutional level of the lifeworld that is brought into focus. At this level, civil society refers to lifeworld institutions that are coordinated communicatively, while political and economic steering mechanisms directed by money and power correspond to institutions of each subsystem.

Cohen and Arato (1992) propose extending “the theory of lifeworld and system in the direction of institutions penetrating the subsystems” (p.480). There is a tendency to view the state and economy from a lifeworld perspective only and thus political and economic society are seen as being primarily within the realm of the system. The idea of democratization, considered along with Habermas’s notion of decolonization, means political and economic society also need to be viewed from the point of view of the system. Moreover, the concept of civil society engages vertical connections in addition to the horizontal linkages present in the lifeworld which can be understood as playing a mediating role or as conceptually distinct from, but complementary to civil society. When
seen as ‘institutions of mediation,’ political and economic society can act as a nexus between civil society and political and economic steering mechanisms.

There is an implicit relationship between law and morality in discourse ethics that penetrates both the system and the lifeworld and it is the institutions in political and economic society that can mediate between the lifeworld and the system. Therefore, democratization cannot be limited to institutions of the lifeworld; it needs to take place in the political and economic subsystems as well. This can be articulated through societal publics created in the interactions between civil society and political and economic society. For Cohen and Arato, the state and the economy cannot be conceived only in terms of pursuing instrumental ends. However, even though it is normatively desirable to democratize the economy, for example, this must be mitigated by the need to maintain the integrity of self-regulating steering systems. Publics can nevertheless be constructed even within institutions driven principally by the instrumentality of the system, as evidenced by parliaments and collective bargaining. The mechanics of influence determine the kind of pressure that can be exerted on subsystems while maintaining their integrity as steering systems. Influence, then, is at work in the construction of publics and the pressure they exert on the subsystems.

The role of law is that of reflexive law, which goes beyond a conception of law as institution. Rather than “directly insisting on and enforcing particular goals to be achieved in a regulated areas, reflexive law tries to establish norms of procedure, organization, membership, and competence that can alter decision-making, change the weights of different parties and members, and make overall processes of decision sensitive to side effects and externalities” (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p.482). It is therefore
key for the ‘plurality of democracies’ to be articulated in discursive forms both in institutions allied to the subsystems and to institutions of civil society in order for the democratization of the subsystems to take place.

To sustain new democracies, civil society needs to be institutionalized on as broad a level as possible through fostering a political culture that can “avoid the destructive cycles between authoritarianism and populism” (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p.489).

Moreover, a democratic political culture reproduced by civil society needs to be fomented through both limiting colonization by the system and establishing new ways of exercising social control in the system. In one of Habermas’s (1996) recent publications, Cohen and Arato received his broad approval of their application of discourse ethics to a theory of civil society. The procedural concept of democracy based on deliberative politics Habermas discusses is enriched by Cohen and Arato’s contributions.

**Highlighting Processes and Activities in Civil Society**

Along with Laclau and Mouffe (1985), other authors also argue the Left has faced a crisis since the fragmentation of the Soviet Union and the collapse of other experiments with communism in Eastern Europe. Laclau and Mouffe call their alternative a project for a radical and plural democracy. However, a theory of civil society is also being articulated in an attempt to address the concern of the Left with naming an alternative (Young, 1994), although it is likely Laclau and Mouffe would argue there is a universalizing tone implicit in such theories. Nevertheless, just as they emphasize process in the hegemonic project, so do others in their contributions to examining civil society and its relational concepts with the purpose of advancing democratic projects.
Young (1994) asserts the theory of civil society resonates with radical critiques of Marxism that reject the unity of revolutionary agency, the reduction of all relations of oppression to those of class and the vision of taking the state through a revolutionary party. However, she wonders whether a theory of civil society presents a viable alternative as a theory of social change because it lacks a theory of social power that can lead to structural change. She proposes exploring some questions in order to think about a theory of radical social change first by contrasting the theory of civil society with that of theory of revolution understood in Marxist terms.

The theory of capitalism in classical Marxist thought “tends to reduce the state to a reflection or instrument of the imperatives and relations of the economy. Its theory of socialism, on the other hand, tends to assimilate the economy into the state” (Young, 1994, p.75). It is widely accepted among the Left, Young argues, that class is not the only dimension of inequality resulting from structural causes. Building on the ideas of Gramsci, the state and economy are no longer seen as the spheres with the only or the most essential social functions, since this excludes a range of counter-hegemonic actors and activities that seek to subvert relations of oppression in existing hegemonic relations. These struggles go beyond relations of production and touch a diversity of institutions that form part of daily life.

Broadly based on Cohen and Arato’s theoretical framework, Young (1994) modifies their theory, which conceives of civil society as a social sphere, by constructing civil society in terms of “a kind of activity” (p.76), stressing it is important to understand civil society as process. Civil society is better understood as types of activities, rather
than as an aggregate of institutions or in terms of spheres. These sorts of activities are public, voluntary and associative and are distinguished from private society.

Civil society as activity exists in the lifeworld, guided by communicative reason. When groups come together voluntarily they establish and organize activities and/or they maintain communication networks. Their activities are considered public because they are not exclusive (at least in principle) and because they are civic in nature. The activities of private society, by contrast, “face inward, to self-contemplation, enjoyment, [and] the meeting of personal needs” (Young, 1994, p.79). Moreover, Young argues conceptualizing civil society as oriented to civic ‘good’ defines it as ‘latently political.’ In this respect, she differs from Cohen and Arato who conceive of political society as separate from civil society. By defining civil society in terms of activities, Young highlights the coexistence of civil, political and economic activities in institutions. The aim of radical social action needs to be oriented towards expanding the sphere in which communicative activity takes place, not in the direction of political or economic revolution. In this way, the lifeworld can drive back the colonization of the lifeworld by the system.

Radical associations in civil society play two roles and at times, both roles simultaneously. Through autonomous services and institutions, they stimulate identity formation, solidarity and cultural expression. By means of public demonstration and civil disobedience, among others, they foment ‘critical public action.’ Therefore, in Young’s theory, civil society is conceptualized as both the means through which social change can be enacted and as the goal of social transformation. The aim of said activities is to democratize the state and the economy by “converting bureaucracy or commodification
into communicative interaction” (Young, 1994, p.82). In order to secure civil society, the state must guarantee rights in a robust framework; however, civil society must also retain its critical autonomy. The radical dimension of Young’s project stems from her concern with subverting systemic oppressions from the grassroots, not from the top down. The political activities of civil society can be located along the border between system and lifeworld. Although it is essential for critical publics to expose power, this exposure is often met by hegemonic forces with the defensive reaction of labeling them extremist because they do not abide by the rules designed by ‘the establishment’ and as naïve or idealist for advancing moral appeals.

Expressing concern for the potential of a ‘theory and practice of civil society’ to address social and economic inequality, Young feels its limits also need to be kept in mind. Since reactionary groups and those oriented towards emancipation are not distinguished, a deeper understanding of the aims of groups is necessary to avoid a liberal pluralist collapse into competition between groups for voice and power. Civil society “does little to challenge structural relations of class privilege and the processes that reproduce them, but may in fact reinforce that class inequality” (Young, 1994, p.92). Structures of economic power and privilege cannot be countered with the public voluntary associative activity carried out by civil society. The very nature of civil society to some extent precludes this.

The system-lifeworld model elaborated by Habermas in his theory of communicative action offers a comprehensive model of the social world integrated by the material domain of the state and economic subsystems and the cultural realm of the lifeworld. The relationships between civil society and the public sphere in the lifeworld
are explored by Habermas in both early and recent work and social movements are highlighted because of their offensive and defensive roles in protecting and defending the lifeworld.

Building on Habermas’s model, Cohen and Arato locate of civil society in the institutional level of the lifeworld and introduce the notions of political and economic society as mediating spheres between civil society and state and economic steering mechanisms. Drawing on the work of Cohen and Arato, Young emphasizes the relevance of activities and processes in civil society in her radical approach to a theory of social change. Social learning processes are an integral part of the activities unfolding in civil society and play an important role in articulating matters of common concern and conveying them from intimate spaces to the public sphere. In the next chapter, relationships among adult learning, the lifeworld, civil society, hegemony and common sense are explored, with specific reference to social movement learning.
CHAPTER 7: ADULT LEARNING AND CIVIL SOCIETY

The relationship between learning and nurturing a healthy deliberative and participative democracy has been investigated extensively in the literature (Benn, 2000; Ellis, 1993; Johnston, 1999; McLaren, 1997; Miller, 1997; Murphy, 2001). The relevance of civil society to adult learning for active and meaningful democratic participation has been examined by a multitude of scholars (Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 2000; Miller, 1997; Murphy, 2001; Welton, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 2001), some of whom pay special attention to social movements as actors in civil society because of the important learning sites located within them (Finger, 1989; Foley, 1999; Holford, 1995; Kellner, 2000; Welton, 1993, 2002).

The ideas of various scholars explored in this inquiry in relation to civil society and democratic projects have all advanced diverse ways of thinking about the social world that envision a more genuinely participative and socially just society. In addition to connecting their views on civil society and democracy to learning and education, the contributions of adult educators who also have a political project in mind will be explored. Drawing on the ideas of the social and political philosophers discussed in previous chapters, many adult educators have examined the relationships between civil society and democracy and learning and education in terms of the role of education and learning processes in fomenting critical reflection and political action towards a radical, deliberative, plural and participative democracy.
Hegemony, Common Sense and the Role of the Educator

Gramsci's reflections include his thoughts on education, particularly in relation to hegemony, common sense and the role of intellectuals as educators. While Gramsci discusses the role of formal educational activities, such as schooling and university, he emphasizes the diffuse nature of education and learning, arguing for a broad understanding of these terms. For Gramsci, educational relationships exist in all areas of society in its entirety and between individuals. This highlights the importance of non-formal educational activities taking place in diverse areas of social life, since learning is taking place within and among individuals and social groups, in a variety of venues and under diverse circumstances.

For Gramsci every hegemonic relationship "is necessarily an educational relationship" (Gramsci, 1971, p.350). Scholastic relationships are only one form among many educational relationships that exist in all areas of the social world. Since the construction of power relations takes place in the cultural realm, what is of particular interest here are the ways in which civil society actors operating in this domain challenge hegemonic relations. This connects the learning processes unfolding in social movements as actors in civil society with the critical examination of hegemonic constructions that maintain oppressive structures. This is highly significant because learning processes contribute to the re/construction of common sense and therefore also have the potential to challenge and transform relations of oppression that are constructed as such because of the common sense assumptions underlying them.

Moreover, intellectuals have an important role to play as educators. Gramsci refers to both intellectuals with a background in classical humanities and to 'organic
intellectuals' that emerge from a given social group. He discusses workers or peasants who work with people in their community, continually challenging themselves and those around them, with the aim of eradicating relations of oppression supported by common sense. Social movements connect intellectuals with formal preparation with organic intellectuals who share economic interests. Gramsci advocated the establishment of adult education centres where both kinds of intellectuals could work together (Mayo, 1999).

Paulo Freire, the Brazilian adult educator, also had a political project in mind as he developed his pedagogical approach. He was concerned with challenging hegemonic power relations, arguing

One of the tasks of progressive popular education ... is to seek, by means of a critical understanding of the mechanism of social conflict, to further the process in which the weakness of the oppressed turns into a strength capable of converting the oppressor's strength into weakness (Freire, 1994, p. 125).

According to Freire, critical consciousness is a fundamental element for generating a notion of collective agency among oppressed people that will eventually allow them to counter the top down power of the dominant sectors of society (Freire, 1973). For Freire, the dialectical relationship between the individual and society is central. He argued it is vital to contextualize individuals in social, political, cultural and historical contexts and claims the examination of the interaction of power structures and relations at the societal or collective level is fundamental. Freire cannot imagine an analysis of the world, or action upon the world in order to change it that is not rooted in history asserting,
"Reflection and action become imperative when one does not erroneously attempt to dichotomize the content of humanity from its historical forms" (Freire, 1981, p. 52).

Freire has been compared with many thinkers, including the Argentine revolutionary Che Guevara (McLaren, 2000), the Indian pacifist Mahatma Gandhi (Mann, 1995) and the Canadian social activist and adult educator Moses Coady (Armstrong, 1977). Perhaps one of the most comprehensive comparisons between Freire and Gramsci has been undertaken by Peter Mayo. In various works, Mayo (1994, 1999) asserts their ideas are best understood as complementary. He outlines both the ways in which their thought converges and diverges, focusing mainly on how their similarities may inform a radical theory of adult education. Mayo argues social relations are important because power is manifested through these relations and can therefore be challenged by changing the underlying social relations that generate power structures.

In addition to the obvious connection in challenging hegemonic relations in order to transform relations of oppression present in both Gramsci and Freire, Mayo highlights their respective personal histories and views on praxis as essential elements in understanding the development of both their ideas. The contexts in which each of these thinkers worked were undergoing economic and social transformation. Gramsci was actively engaged with workers' movements and Freire in his work with peasants and the urban poor. Furthermore, both spent a significant period of time in exceptional circumstances that removed them from the context they were analyzing. In Gramsci's case, it came as a consequence of his imprisonment. For Freire, it came as a result of living in exile.
The emphasis placed by both on praxis is also central to their ideas. Praxis involves dialectical relationships between theory and practice, as well as reflection and action. For Freire, liberation is brought about through the dialectical relationship of praxis, which is “...reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (Freire, 1981, p.36). He held action is human only when it is not divorced from reflection and that reflection is essential to action. Moreover, praxis involves dialogue and conscientization, making it “impermissible, in democratic practice...for the teachers, subreptitiously or otherwise, to impose on their pupils their own “reading of the world,” in whose framework, therefore, they will now situate the teaching content” (Freire, 1994, p. 111).

Like Gramsci, Freire saw the teacher-learner relationship as a reciprocal one. He sees the relationship between the educator and the learner as dialectical; they learn from each other and generate knowledge together. In Freire’s view, the teacher and learner are equals in the learning process. Freire recognizes the inherent power of the educator, but also that it has been constructed through oppressive societal structures. Therefore, it is important to be aware of this power relation and to do everything possible not to be authoritarian as an educator and to construct new, more balanced structures. Gramsci also recognized the dialectical nature of the relationship between ‘teacher’ and ‘pupil’ stating that this relationship is “active and reciprocal so that every teacher is always a pupil and every pupil a teacher” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 350). Moreover, the role of the teacher is to be a ‘friendly guide’ who creates the conditions for spontaneous, autonomous learning on the part of the ‘pupil’ because “To discover a truth oneself, without external suggestions or assistance, is to create – even if the truth is an old one” (Ibid, p. 33).
Freire realized the significance of indigenous knowledge in creating local ways of dealing with what local people identify as challenges in their communities. This ties in with Gramsci’s notion of the ‘organic intellectual’ who relies on indigenous knowledge. Freire stresses the value of indigenous knowledge and the importance of legitimating that knowledge as an important part of another dialectical relationship between theory and practice. It is the indigenous knowledge of grassroots groups in civil society that is crucial to challenging undemocratic power relations.

Freire saw the relevance of experience as part of the generative process involved in education. Experience, as he saw it, does not only serve as a resource for learning, but also as the basis for the educational process. Learners share their experiences and generate knowledge from their reading of reality. Based on this knowledge, they learn from each other by individually and collectively reflecting on their world and creating ways of transforming their reality through social and political action. For Freire, “one of the radical differences between education as a dominating and dehumanizing task and education as a humanistic and liberating task is that the former is a pure act of transference of knowledge, whereas the latter is an act of knowledge” (Freire, 1985, p. 114).

Critical and liberating dialogue is the vehicle through which those who are oppressed become conscious of their reality and realize they have agency. This process is what Freire calls conscientization (Freire, 1981). “Dialogue is meaningful precisely because the dialogical subjects, the agents in the dialogue, not only retain their identity, but actively defend it, and thus grow together.... Dialogue ... implies a sincere, fundamental respect on the part of the subjects engaged in it, a respect that is violated, or
prevented from materializing, by authoritarianism” (Freire, 1994, p. 117). It is the process of conscientization that produces generative themes, which are coded through a process of reading and naming the world. These codes are then decoded by unravelling the psychological structures that shape the way in which we think about social, political, cultural constructs. Freire argued this occurs via the processes of dialogue and conscientization. The role of the educator is to create conditions for people to critically examine their world and decide if and how they will act to change it. Freire contends humans ought to be viewed “as beings in the process of becoming – as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality... The unfinished character of men (sic) and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity.” (Freire, 1981, p. 72). The detachment experienced by Gramsci in prison and Freire in exile created the opportunity for them to objectify the social world in order to see it more critically (Mayo, 1999). The process of decoding and coding could take place because of their detachment, illustrating to both that transforming common sense begins with objectification and then moves on to reconstructing new codes.

**Learning, the Lifeworld and Civil Society**

The relationships between democracy, civil society and social learning processes form the basis for much of adult education theory in relation to civic/civil participation. Drawing mainly on Habermas, but also on the work of Cohen and Arato, Welton (1993, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 2001, 2002) has analyzed their ideas in relation to adult learning. Arguing the core values of adult education point directly to civil society, Welton (1997) contends it is the task of adult educators to rebuild and defend civil society because it unifies the project of adult education for genuine participation in a deliberative
democracy. Framed by the lifeworld, social learning processes are fundamental to
democratic participation (Welton, 1995). Adult educators interested in fostering a healthy
democracy need to focus on these movements as learning sites in which social
revolutionary learning takes place (Welton, 1993) because they contribute to defending
the lifeworld and rallying subaltern groups in the formation of a counter-hegemony.

Like Freire, Welton stresses reflection and dialogue in these learning processes.
According to Welton (2002), the role of listening has been neglected by philosophy and
adult education theory. Outlining a ‘pedagogy of civil society,’ Welton posits an open,
non-coercive environment in which self-reflective, respectful communication can take
place is especially relevant to adult learning in the communicative realm of civil society.
Political listening is central in creating and cementing solidarity and a key element in the
articulation of the ‘best argument’ formulated by civil society actors as they continually
reformulate an intersubjective reality. Using a Habermasian understanding of civil
society, Welton (2001) argues public spaces are particularly important for a learning
society that fosters a participative and deliberative democracy. The public sphere as a
whole and the constantly emerging publics in which matters of common concern are
discussed are fundamental to comprehending how the lifeworld can influence the
economy and state subsystems.

In his latest analysis of civil society and social learning processes, Welton
(forthcoming), adds a psychological dimension to the ways in which the just learning
society is understood. The struggle against injustice needs to nurture the human capacity
for recognition in its three forms of love, rights and self-esteem. Moreover, the parental
care that fosters self-confidence and the institutions of civil society and the system
require a pedagogical structure that cultivates the self-confidence of persons throughout the lifespan. In the lifeworld, the homeplace is highlighted as an important learning site, while work and governance are emphasized as areas in which adults can continue to be actively engaged in their social world. With respect to parental care, the homeplace is most important in early years, but civil society institutions in the communicative realm of the lifeworld are also vital for enduring meaningful participation throughout the lifespan. It is through the ‘lifeworld curriculum’ that the well-being promoting values of the lifeworld can be nurtured in order to restrain the power and money driven system.

The homeplace is foregrounded as an important consideration in Gouthro’s (2000) gender analysis of civil society in relation to the impact of globalization on adult education. Gouthro agrees with Cohen (1995) and Fraser’s (1995) concerns about the masculine construction of civil society that does not take into account how gender differences are experienced in everyday life. The abstract level of Habermas’s work seems so distant from the concerns of daily life that it does not enable nurturing capacities to develop. Moreover, the system/lifeworld dichotomy reflected in the public/private division devalues women’s work as well as their contributions to the societal community. The homeplace, therefore, plays a vital role not only as individual residences, but also in relation to extended family, community and culture. Gender needs to be analyzed in learning experiences by illuminating labour, relationships and identity formation in the homeplace.
Social Movement Learning

The social commitment tradition of adult education has long emphasized the responsibility of educators and activists to create new ways of thinking about social movements and adult learning. Finger (1989) argues new social movements are especially relevant as contexts in which processes of cultural transformation can address the social crisis brought on by modernity. The powerful learning that takes place in social movements can challenge hegemonic constructions and power relations and lead to personal and collective transformation. Education is a central part of social movements, but each movement may conceptualize and approach learning from different perspectives. Welton (1993) credits Finger for contextualizing new social movements in the debates around the crisis arising out of modernity. However, Welton argues personal fulfillment cannot be separated from collective action and therefore new social movements need to be understood as collective social actors oriented towards “creating new political institutions and learning processes” (p. 153). Drawing on the work of Eyerman and Jamison (1991), Holford (1995) added to the debate asserting their concept of ‘cognitive praxis’ can be applied to adult education. ‘Cognitive praxis’ refers to the knowledge production processes through which social movements construct their identity. Holford posits the indigenous knowledge generated by social movements makes them vital sites of knowledge production. By taking a leading role as movement intellectuals, adult educators need to focus on both the processes that generate knowledge and the structures of communication within organizations because they can supply important information about the educational processes taking place in a movement.
Social movement learning can refer to a range of phenomena (Hall et al., 2004). The informal learning experiences of people who participate in social movements can include new understandings of old and new issues related to the efforts of a specific movement and/or to that of other movements. Moreover, informal learning can involve organizational skills required by social movements in order to achieve their goals. Intentional learning that takes place through organized educational activities often occurs in the "form of internal 'educational' for members" (p.541) or as public information and education activities, while formal and informal learning can take place in the wider public as a result of social movement activities. Foley (1999) also stresses the value of informal learning processes in social action as powerful learning experiences and highlights the collective aspect of critical learning rather than the role of the adult educator as a movement intellectual.

Adult Learning and Civil Society in the Postnational Context

Many scholars now argue adult learning needs to be understood in relation to cultural, political and economic globalization processes. Critical adult educators concerned with fostering a participative and deliberative democracy agree that as the nation-state loses power in the global context, adult education needs to look for ways to address both the challenges and opportunities presented by globalization processes. Information and communication technology has presented an opportunity for creating networks that can build global solidarity around local and global struggles. The excesses of transnational corporations driven by the competitive, money promoting values of the global market calls for an alternative discourse that counters the neo-liberal model (Morrow & Torres, 2000; Walters, 2000).
The term ‘globalization’ appears in various discursive forms. It is used as a euphemism for imperialism and modernization, it figures into both modern and postmodern constructions of global projects, and some theorists even suggest it needs to be seen as a new concept that replaces modernity and postmodernity. A critical theory of globalization that integrates economic, political and cultural dimensions and stresses their inter-relations and interdependencies is required in order to renounce oppression and challenge domination and exploitation (Kellner, 2000).

A complex global civil society is emerging that can be understood both in terms of the aggregate of micro, meso and macro levels of civil society structures and in terms of the expansion of global forms of civil society (Hall, 2000). This emerging global civil society is not conceived as a unifying concept, but as a space full of divisions, pointing out global networks are not always democratic. Hall asserts employing the concept encourages seeing it as an existing political space in which adult education can create and foster individual development and collective learning. In many respects, adult education is “already engaged in strengthening the learning dimensions of global civil society” (Hall, 2000, p.28). Global civil society is a space in which critical public debate about global capitalism can take place and new ways of thinking about a more socially just world can be explored and developed.

Global social movements as actors in civil society are particularly important in local, national and global radical democratic struggles. The indigenous knowledge created by grassroots groups, including peasants, Indigenous peoples, women, labour movements, ethnic minorities and environmental groups, among others, needs to be valued and nurtured (Hall, 2000; Kellner, 2000; Walters, 2000). Moreover, this grassroots
knowledge can provide valuable information in building agendas (Finger, 1989; Welton, 1997a). It is within these groups that Gramsci’s political organic intellectual can emerge and develop and Freiran principles of critical pedagogy can be employed (Kellner, 2000; Manicom & Walters, 1997). Freire recognized the value of indigenous knowledge and the importance of legitimating it as an essential part of the learning process. By sharing their experiences, learners generate knowledge from their reading of their reality. Through individual and collective critical reflection on their world, learners create local ways of transforming their reality through social and political action.

Feminist popular educators have foregrounded the gendered global political and economic context, calling for the knowledge women already have to be valued and developed. Manicom and Walters (1997) argue for the democratization of the relationship between the state and civil society in order to counter the feminization of poverty and the increased influence of ethnic, nationalist and fundamentalist groups who construe gender from a conservative perspective. The main challenge educators face is developing, “with women learners, a gendered analysis of global restructuring” (p. 73). Reflexive practices that draw on knowledge created in generative learning processes can connect local experiences with a global perspective of issues of concern to women.

The relationships between adult learning and civil society are important for fostering meaningful participation in a healthy democracy. Social learning processes that take place in the cultural realm of the lifeworld create discursive spaces in which common sense assumptions can be challenged. In addition to the homeplace and the domains of work and governance, it is vital for adult learning to focus on social movements as central learning sites and for fostering the development of organic
intellectuals. Learning processes oriented towards transforming hegemonic relations need to value and legitimize the indigenous knowledge generated by social movements and its contribution to collective will formation at the substate and national levels, as well as in the global context.

A critical discussion of the ideas explored in preceding chapters forms the basis for the next chapter. First, key relationships are examined and a proposed expansion of the system-lifeworld model is then outlined. Finally, concepts, structures, process and sites with the potential for advancing a radical, deliberative, plural and participative democracy are analyzed and learning sites relevant to civil society and democracy are highlighted.
CHAPTER 8: LOOKING BACK, IMAGINING THE FUTURE

Conceptualizations of 'civil society' have become more complex as humans are faced with navigating an increasingly fragmented social world. With the increased complexity of the social world, scholars have attempted to understand and map the differentiated and complex cultural, social, political, and economic interactions between and among individuals and groups. Important conceptual relationships have changed over time, shaping existing understandings of civil society, its relationships with the state and the economy, and with the public sphere. Debates continue around conceptual issues such as the basis for the distinction between public and private, the tensions between individual interest and the collective well-being, and more recently, between the particular and universal. Concerns with the excesses of capitalism and the growing violence of current times continue to fuel discussions about the notion of collective will and legitimacy of the state. Moreover, new ways of thinking about the relationship of individuals and groups are emerging in the context of global interactions.

In this chapter, various figures are presented as visual conceptualizations of models, concepts and relationships. I developed these figures as the analytic process unfolded. They represent my understanding of the work of others, as well as ideas I generated as a result of conceptual and analytic reflection. The visual representations that appear in these figures offer a way of mapping concepts and understanding them in relation to each other. They are not intended to signify closed systems or absolute categories or imply a concept is more or less significant than other concepts. Moreover,
the space occupied by a concept within a model does not necessarily represent the amount of space a given concept will "fill" in every context or historical period.

**Mapping the Historical Conceptual Differentiation of the Social World**

The concept of civil society has undergone many transformations since it first emerged in "Western" history thousands of years ago. Figure 1 is a graphic representation of the historical differentiation of societal spheres.

*Figure 1. The Historical Differentiation of Societal Spheres. The size of the arrow represents the emphasis given to the base or superstructure by each theorist.*
The ancients saw the state and civil society as integrated concepts, both of which were expressions of a collective. The state and civil society formed a public non-intimate realm, contrasted with a private intimate realm. The classical privileging of collective well-being over self-interest changed with the birth of the nation-state and the industrial revolution. As a result of the changing relationship between the individual and the collective, the state was no longer perceived as representing the collective will, creating the differentiation between state and civil society. The state remained in the public realm defined by the pursuit of the collective interest, and civil society (with the economy) occupied the private realm characterized by the pursuit of self-interest. The private/public distinction shifted from a differentiation based on intimate/non-intimate to one based on individual interest/collective well-being.

Early modern conceptualizations positioned civil society in relation to the state of nature and the resulting need to maintain social order through the social contract. For Hobbes and Locke, the state and civil society are separate in both reality and the ideal. However, Rousseau saw the two as separate in reality, but not in the ideal, since the state gains its legitimacy through exercising the 'general will,' a claim shared by Kant who discussed the notion of 'public will.' Rousseau’s insistence on consent, the legitimacy of the state and his disapproval of representative government still resonate in current debates about the relevance of the cultural institutions of civil society and the legitimate discretionary use of violence. Tocqueville shared Rousseau’s skepticism about any representative form of government, echoing Rousseau’s concerns about its potential to mask despotism under the illusion of legitimacy. Recent public calls in various parts of the world for proportional representation are evidence of a growing concern that
governance structures are not genuinely representing the diverse concerns of societal members.

Hegel expanded on the state-civil society differentiation by developing a model in which civil society, which includes the economy, is in the base; the realm of material relations, while the state is in the superstructure; the realm of cultural relations. He argued this distinction should be maintained and that societal transformation begins in the cultural domain of the superstructure. Separate from the economy, the corporation, the central institution of civil society, was seen as the realm capable of mediating between self-interest and collective well-being. While not all current constructions of civil society necessarily view it as mediating between selfish pursuits and the common good, the similarity of the corporation and more recent conceptualizations of civil society as separate from the economy is apparent. For Hegel, however, the corporation is an institution within civil society, separate from the economy, but not civil society per se.

For Marx, capitalism maintains the division between civil society and the state and the dominant relations between the two, as well as within civil society. In keeping with Hegel, the base is where civil society lives and includes the economy, while the state remains in the superstructure. Relations of domination can be transformed by changing economic relations in the base, which sparks change in the superstructure, basically reversing the primacy given to the superstructure by Hegel. The ideal will come about with the demise of capitalism, which will dissolve the state and take civil society with it.

Concerns about the excesses of capitalism still run through the reflections of civil society and radical democratic theorists. The distribution of wealth has become increasingly polarized at both national and global levels, creating serious economic
inequalities. Moreover, the consumer culture, fueled by the capitalist values of unlimited exploitation of the natural environment and accumulation of profits ignores the life-promoting values of self-fulfillment and solidarity. Calls for more democratic forms of economic organization and processes are evident in the work of many contemporary scholars.

For Gramsci, it is not the corporation that is separate from the economy within civil society, but civil society itself that is separate from the economy. His revolutionary repositioning of civil society in the superstructure had many important conceptual effects. By locating civil society in the sphere of cultural relations, it gave primacy to the superstructure as the beginning point for social transformation – a return to the Hegelian understanding of the base-superstructure relationship. This relocation removes civil society from the domain of materially-based relations and places it in the cultural space of meaning-making. Secondly, the removal of civil society from the base not only differentiated civil society from the economy, it also maintained the distinction between civil society and the state. However, rather than being differentiated by their respective locations in the base and superstructure, civil society joined the state in the cultural domain, creating two realms within the superstructure, thus producing an ideological-institutional relationship between the two.

Paradoxically, while it is precisely the repositioning of civil society in the superstructure, maintaining the division between base and superstructure, that creates the hegemonic moment for social change, Gramsci simultaneously argues the two would ideally move towards a synthesis over time. It would seem this would preclude any opportunity for future hegemonic moments. However, given the stress Gramsci placed on
the continuous construction involved in the dialectic, he seems to claim there will always be hegemonic moments that mark the end of one transformation and the beginning of a new one. The new process of transformation inherits some of the cultural understandings of the previous formative process that led to the historical bloc, creating the hegemonic moment in question, and so the cycle continues. While this captures the unfinished character of democratic projects, an important question to pose is to what extent gaining hegemonic control of cultural institutions contributes to a democratic project since this approach can potentially produce a series of struggles for hegemonic control in which one hegemonic group continuously replaces another. In extreme situations of despotism, engaging this process is a necessary step towards societal transformation. The unfinished nature of democratic projects is healthy; however, they also need to aim for a more just and equal distribution of power in order to ensure the stability needed for continuous meaningful participation by societal members.

Habermas kept Gramsci's location of civil society in the cultural realm of the superstructure, but moved the state out of the superstructure. Although he does not use the base/superstructure model, he maintains the differentiation between the material and cultural realms of the base and superstructure respectively. Habermas's relocation of the state alongside the economy could be thought of as a differentiation in the base. However, in his model the material domain is named the 'system,' integrated by the subsystems of state and economy, and the cultural domain is termed the 'lifeworld.' Thus for Habermas, civil society operates in the lifeworld. Since Habermas agrees with Gramsci's critique of historical materialism in Marxist thought, the starting point for social transformation rests in the cultural realm of the lifeworld.
Since Gramsci’s radical differentiation, conceptual understandings of civil society have retained the distinction between the three societal spheres of state, economy and civil society and kept civil society in the cultural realm. Despite changes in discourse in the development of new models and calls for focusing on specific concepts related to civil society, the concept has enjoyed renewed interest in relation to democratic projects and in the emerging global context. Some scholars have foregrounded concepts such as hegemony, while others have highlighted forms of association like social movements and important sites, such as the homeplace and workplace.

The Mediating Role of Civil Society

Gramsci saw the role of civil society as a mediator between state and economy, while Habermas saw civil society as mediating between the public and private realms of the lifeworld (see Figure 2). As part of the superstructure, Gramsci conceived of civil society as interacting with the state within the superstructure and with the economy in the base. In this conception, civil society is the component of the realm of culture that bridges the material domain with the cultural realm. For Gramsci, the task of civil society is to gain hegemonic control of the cultural institutions of civil society in order to absorb the state in the superstructure in an effort to spark transformation in the base. In the historical period during which Gramsci wrote, civil society actors, which for Gramsci included political parties, were struggling against the relations of domination created by capitalism and fascism. They were mediating between the selfish pursuits of the market and the coercive impositions of despotism.
Figure 2. The Mediating Roles of Civil Society

While this may have reflected the role of civil society in the historical period during which Gramsci wrote, I agree with Cohen and Arato (1992) that Habermas’s model is more useful in hermeneutic terms. Although different from Gramsci’s model, it shares similarities with the role of civil society described by Gramsci. For Habermas, civil society operates within the lifeworld, not as a separate societal sphere that interacts directly with the system. It functions on the border of the private and public spheres of the lifeworld and occupies most of the space of the public sphere. Civil society mediates between the private and public spheres of the lifeworld, with the distinction between private and public being made on the basis of intimate/non-intimate.

Cohen and Arato posit there are two levels of differentiation in Habermas’s model. The first distinguishes between the system and the lifeworld and the second discerns the private and public realms of each. The state corresponds to the public realm of the system, while the economy refers to its private realm. In the lifeworld, the public
sphere denotes the public domain and the private sphere is matched with the private
domain. Civil society can be located in this scheme in its mediating role between the
public and private spheres of the lifeworld.

In Habermas's model, transactions take place between the system and lifeworld.
When the two interact, the public sphere of the lifeworld interacts directly with the
system. For the most part, civil society as an integrated public interacts with the system
by acting in and through the public sphere. Examples include peaceful protest and public
education campaigns. However, civil society also interacts directly with the system, as
illustrated by the lobbying efforts of special interest groups as civil society actors in
liberal democracies. Nevertheless, this too could be understood as taking place in the
public sphere.

In Cohen and Arato's map, it becomes difficult to conceptualize the relationship
between civil society, the public sphere and the system because visually, the state appears
to interact only with the public sphere and the economy with the private sphere. In order
to capture the civil society-public sphere-system relationships visually in a way that
reflects their interactions more clearly, the public and private spheres can be rotated so
that the public sphere borders the system.

In addition to representing interactions in the Gramscian and Habermasian
models, Figure 2 illustrates the lifeworld and civil society are not conceptually
equivalent. Both the lifeworld and civil society signify cultural realms of meaning-
making. However, the lifeworld is a metaconcept, while civil society figures into the
theoretical map at the conceptual level.
Cohen and Arato contend civil society is best understood as a socially integrated concept located at the structural level of the lifeworld that is expressed in its institutional forms. Understood at its most abstract level, the lifeworld is embedded in a linguistic-cultural background. The structural level of the lifeworld is made up of three components—culture, society, and person. Civil society functions in relation to all three structures of the lifeworld, playing a role as mediator between the intimate space and public sphere, as well as between the collective of the lifeworld as a whole and political and economic society.

Civil society can be understood in relation to the cultural structure in that it brings matters of common concern from the intimate space into the public sphere in which rational debate takes place, and the public sphere is also embedded in structure of culture of the lifeworld. The associational forms and the institutions through which they operate illustrate the relationship between civil society and the society structure. The person relates to civil society in the lifeworld in that the person can act in civil society. Civil society is still primarily construed as a socially integrated concept so it does not include individuals directly, but persons can act in it.

The Relationship between Civil Society and the Public Sphere

Although civil society and the public sphere are closely related, they are not one and the same. Cohen and Arato argue the public sphere is a category of civil society. However, in my understanding of Habermas, conceptually, the public sphere is not part of civil society; rather both civil society and the public sphere are part of the lifeworld. As previously stated, civil society mediates between the private and public spheres of the lifeworld. Civil society is not seen solely as part of the private sphere or the public
sphere; it operates where these two spheres meet. It is a space in which civil society actors articulate and broadcast matters of common concern that can be understood as operating at a meso-level of interaction between the macro public sphere and the micro private sphere. Civil society and the public sphere can therefore be seen as relational concepts that are mutually constitutive. When social actors in civil society come together, they do so as a public and the public sphere is fueled by civil society bringing issues from the private realm into the sphere of public debate.

Both Kant and Marx stressed the importance of a healthy public sphere that can prevent the retreat of individuals and groups into the private realm. In early work, Habermas (1987) recognized the relevance of the channels of communication in the public sphere, but did not yet suggest civil society connects the private and the public. It is through communicative action as a framework that differentiates the system and lifeworld that civil society gets located as the intermediary between the private and public spheres of the lifeworld.

Information and communication technology has added new dimensions to the notion of the public sphere. The multimedia space created by websites, forums, chat rooms and e-mail, referred to as the Internet public sphere or an electronic public space, links the intimate space with public sphere. Although there is no physical contact over Internet, people are connected to others in the public space in which they are participating.

Debates in academia are forms of participation by “intellectuals” in the public sphere. These deliberations do not only take place at an abstract level, but also in terms of daily experiences; they do not exclusively involve theorizing at the abstract level about
relationships and distinctions, but are also grounded in everyday life. It is the connection between the ways social actors think about the world and what occurs in their daily experiences that illuminate the reciprocity between theory and practice, as well as reflection and action. This can inform both social theories and radical approaches to democracy and can nurture healthy debate in the public sphere.

Discussions in the literature have raised questions about whether the public sphere is better understood as a space with established channels of communication that lend some permanence to it or conceived as emergent publics or many public spheres that are temporary in nature. These two perspectives of the public sphere are not contradictory but complementary. Both convey the idea of a space of intersubjective communication, regardless of venue or permanence/temporality. The public sphere can be understood as an integrated whole made up of many kinds of publics, such as the literary, artistic, scientific and popular public spheres, some of which emerge momentarily for varying periods of time and others that are more permanent. Moreover, publics can emerge in the intimate space of the lifeworld as well as in the economy and state.

In theory, all members of society have access to the public sphere. However, this is clearly not the case in reality. Part of the task of reducing inequality involves subverting relations of power so that more equal participation, especially by marginalized groups, can take place in a context in which power is more equally distributed. The public sphere can be used to reproduce inequality or to challenge it.
The Tension between the Universal and the Particular

The postmodern preoccupation with the particular is relevant in relation to the notion of 'equality' and to critiques of totalizing narratives. From a postmodern perspective, the idea of a universal public sphere is totalizing because it imposes universal truth claims and employs all-encompassing conceptualizations of societal members. Like critical theorists and educators, postmodernists are also interested in deconstructing truth claims. Postmodernists claim deconstruction is key in dereifying such claims; however, they also posit that the act of constructing is a modernist act that serves to reify them, resulting in a clear contradiction. If deconstructing and reconstructing concepts and conceptual structures are modernist acts, this would preclude postmodernists from engaging the process in the first place. The formulation of new constructions is not possible as the absolute relativism and radical individualism of the position they take precludes the legitimacy of their engagement.

It is likely postmodernists would argue the very claim that it is a contradiction is predicated on the modernist and positivist assumption of the legitimacy of rationality. Since they reject this assumption, the grounds on which the claim it is a contradiction is made uses the very reasoning they reject to argue the contradiction exists. However, postmodernists themselves develop arguments to critique modernism and positivism based on the mechanisms of reason. An argument inherently follows a certain logic, so it would seem postmodernists have placed themselves outside the ontological and epistemological space of inquiry and analysis. This results in an anti-human project that provokes a paralysis that cannot contribute to knowledge construction and reconstruction.
in civil society and the public sphere, or to a societal project that moves towards a
deliberative, plural and participatory democracy.

Using concepts to analyze and understand phenomena does not necessarily imply
absolutes. They are hermeneutic devices that overlap and interact, not closed concepts
written in stone. It seems more useful to think of universal in the sense of an integrated
whole, rather than as the imposition of a grand narrative. Focusing on the relationships
between concepts rather than positioning them as polar opposites means dichotomies can
be used hermeneutically, and that their relationship is far more important than the
dichotomy itself. With respect to the tension between the universal and the particular,
they do not have to be understood in opposition to each other; rather the dialectical nature
of their interactions means both are important in relation to each other.

Universal does not have to mean essentialist nor does equality have to necessarily
imply sameness. The values upon which members of a societal community draw in order
to act in the lifeworld and in the system can be articulated intersubjectively. However,
while most norms ought to be agreed to in this manner, some basic ‘rules of engagement’
need to be in place which can be thought of in terms of that which is human. There seems
to be agreement among scholars that some basic principles are needed in democratic
projects. Most argue for the expansion of liberal principles of equality, freedom, justice
and pluralism. Despite postmodern opposition to universal principles, the universal
principle of tolerance is necessary for the viability of the postmodern account. I cannot
think of a case in which a human, regardless of class, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality,
ability or age would not want to be treated with respect and dignity. Therefore, two of
these basic norms could include agreeing to genuinely treat each other with respect and
dignity when engaging in deliberations about the kind of social world in which we, collectively as humans, wish to live.

Rather than denying the significance of individual differences and experiences, what is important is to highlight the socially integrated nature of human existence. Persons act simultaneously as individuals and members of a social community. What makes each person an individual is their unique combination of differences and the experiences they have had as a result. However, these differences are only relevant in a social context. They become relevant because of the meaning that is collectively ascribed to structural and subjective differences. What defines the individualism of a person only matters in relation to others, since it is the social construction of difference that defines individuals and groups as Others. Neither focusing solely on difference nor attempting to impose one version of collective expression is conducive to democratic projects.

If a universal public sphere is conceived as universal in the sense of totalizing, then there is no room for diverse actors to form an intersubjective construction of reality or to articulate matters of common concern. If universal is understood as a whole that respects the differences that integrate that whole, then multiple social struggles can unite hegemonically on points of agreement. The continuous challenge is to balance plurality with a sense of wholeness that has the potential to form an historical bloc.

Coercion and Consent

In Habermas, consent is formed in the lifeworld, and coercion is used by the system, but for Gramsci consent is shaped in civil society and coercion operates in the political society or state. These variations stem from the different models employed to
frame the notions of consent and coercion. In both conceptions, consent is formed in the cultural realm; however, for Habermas, both the state and the economy employ coercion, while for Gramsci, only the state is coercive. Perhaps it is their definitions of coercion that give rise to this difference. If Habermas is defining coercion, as I would suspect, in the sense of the instrumental pursuit of money and/or political power, then it follows that the state and the economy operate through coercive means. Similarly, if Gramsci is defining coercion as command exercised by the state, in contrast to hegemony which is constructed via consent in civil society, then it follows he would only see the state as coercive.

The Chilean case provides an ideal example of what can potentially happen when the public sphere is invaded by system and illustrates why it is important to protect it. In colonizing the lifeworld, the state and the economy colonize the public sphere so that even though it is in the realm of consent, the state and economy are using it in a coercive manner. In Chile, the military dictatorship took over the public sphere, pushing civil society deep into the private sphere of the lifeworld. Civil society was seriously hurt, but it was hardly dead. It retreated from the public sphere, going underground until fear subsided enough for people to meet in intimate spaces that could pass for social venues. Since both the literary and political public spheres been had completely taken over by the unconstitutional, self-proclaimed military government, the main task of emerging social movements was to regenerate these two spheres thus stimulating others to break out of the private sphere in order to spark the formation of an historical bloc. As people organized, thus mobilizing civil society, they began to reclaim the public sphere. Flyers and graffiti with political messages appeared everywhere and protest locations and dates
were printed and distributed, all under the cover of night. People showed up at protests in ever increasing numbers, often clashing with police, and intellectuals kept the political literature alive. The military junta seized the entire system, using the state to enact arbitrary laws that assaulted human rights and almost completely removed existent limitations on the economy, giving rise to perhaps one of the most unrestricted market economies on the planet.

Understanding the public sphere as Keane does, as having three levels – the micro substate, meso nation-state and macro global public spheres – is also useful in this context. Keane’s emphasis on the power and ethics monitoring function of the public sphere is also important to understanding how coercive despotic states can be kept in check. Chileans engaged all three levels in their struggle for the re-emergence of democracy. They acted at the substate level in their neighbourhoods and municipal communities, as illustrated by organizational meetings and clandestine printing operations. They came together at a national level by holding general strikes, for example, and they acted at a global level by broadcasting human rights abuses to the international community and creating alliances with Chilean exiles all over the world.

The public sphere therefore can be a space in which transformation of common sense can take place to form a new cultural hegemony into a historical bloc capable of transforming oppressive relations imposed by the system. It can also be manipulated by despotic states to assault civil society. Moreover, this example illustrates how the literary and political public spheres are embedded in each other and cannot be separated. The literary and political public spheres as descriptive types are useful, but the two are completely enmeshed.
It will be interesting to see how the issues discussed in this section play out as the emerging global public sphere takes shape. Information and communication technology has contributed to the development of this growing macro public space of discursive interaction. It is in the global public sphere that transnational social movements can broadcast their diverse struggles to the world. The activities of social actors in the public sphere is crucial to drawing attention to local and global concerns and to energizing debate so that people are encouraged to engage in shaping and reshaping their communities at both local and global levels. This is central to any notion of a radical, plural, deliberative and participative democracy.

**Pluralism and the Contested Nature of Civil Society**

In recent decades, people have retreated from political parties largely because the state is not perceived as representing the collective will. The legitimacy of the state is called into question as a result and people look for other ways of struggling for social justice. Many choose to participate in civil society by joining associations and getting involved in social movements. The diversity of the social world is illustrated by the plurality of social actors, including women's groups, environmental movements, anti-poverty and Indigenous groups, among many others, that voice concerns and expose abuses of power in the public sphere. The differences between these groups in terms of their orientations can potentially lead to a fragmentation of the political force necessary for the formation of an historical bloc capable of generating changes in the system.

For Hegel, civil society is characterized by competitive pluralism. Although not all recent theorists agree the space in which it operates is necessarily competitive, many contemporary constructions also share Hegel's view of civil society as a contested and
conflicted realm of interaction. Laclau and Mouffe in particular emphasize the antagonistic terrain of civil society in which diverse struggles unfold in the context of a politico-ideological realm. Although Laclau and Mouffe argue the base/superstructure dichotomy needs to be abandoned, they borrow from Bobbio's interpretation of Gramsci's conception of a politico-ideological realm in which civil society and the state interact in the superstructure, arguing it is in a politico-ideological context that new hegemonic articulations can take place.

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) recognize the need for articulations that can unite the various discourses of different struggles. For example, the discourse of feminist and anti-capitalist struggles might join efforts in an anti-poverty campaign. They argue diverse groups can come together contingently in social spheres. Collective will articulations arise out of the multiple orientations of struggles in an antagonistic environment. Moreover, the non-identity of opponents in a war of position is an important aspect of collective will articulation. It is the non-identity of the opponents that has the potential to unite hegemonic forces into an historical bloc. The connection between struggles is what cements an historical bloc, but that bloc cannot be said to have one identity.

Coming together in social spheres occurs in the lifeworld through the activities of civil society mediating between the public and private spheres. By extending moments of solidarity, hegemonic forces can take advantage of momentum. While groups acting contingently in consort in certain social spheres contribute to unity, solid networks of solidarity are also needed. The pluralism required for democracy fragments civil society into diverse groups representing specific causes based on differences such as gender, race/ethnicity, class, ableness, sexuality, and age. These groups do not necessarily agree
on other matters like fiscal concerns, social programs, the environment, or the rights of
other groups in civil society. Not all feminist groups denounce racism, not all
environmental groups are fiscally liberal, not all groups formed by racial/ethnic
minorities believe in gender equality, etc.

Unlike political parties, social movements and other civil society actors do not
offer a platform that addresses a broader scope of concerns. Perhaps groups with similar
concerns from across groups could come together in order to present a more complete
platform. By fostering a culture of cooperation rather than competition, struggles can
build solidarity along lines of agreement and construct hermeneutical bridges between
fragmented groups, which can facilitate the articulation of a common vision across
movements. The cultures of civility discussed by Keane need to be nurtured in the
lifeworld in order for the activities of civil society to have a significant impact and a
healthy public sphere is essential for the continuous non-violent articulation of diverse
interests and matters of common concern.

**Expanding on the System-Lifeworld Model**

According to Habermas, although the system and lifeworld have been pulled
apart, if they are understood as complementary concepts, the two can move closer
together. Cohen and Arato argue seeing the lifeworld from the perspective of the system
is important because when the focus is on viewing the system from the point of view of
the lifeworld, political and economic society are seen as residing mainly in the system.
They suggest that by extending Habermas’s model at the institutional level, economic
and political society take on a mediating role between civil society and the steering
mechanisms of the system, thus infiltrating the system. The notions of economic and
political society proposed by Cohen and Arato are useful concepts in thinking about the connections between the system and lifeworld so that they can become more integrated in their values.

Building on the graphic representation presented in Figure 2, Cohen and Arato’s concepts of political and economic society can be located at the institutional level between the political and economic steering mechanisms of the state and economy subsystems respectively and the lifeworld institutions of civil society. Figure 3 maps these concepts within the model presented in Figure 2 (see page 119).

Figure 3. Locating Economic and Political Society

As ‘institutions of mediation’ political and economic society are useful concepts for thinking about how the state and economy subsystems can be infiltrated in order to make them more democratic. Moreover, Cohen and Arato simultaneously argue for the democratization of the state and economy and for the need to maintain the integrity of the
steering mechanisms of the state and economy. They assert while different preferences may exist with respect to political and economic choices, discussions about the kinds of democratization and extent to which the state and economy ought to be democratized have to be limited by protecting the integrity of the system. However, they make normative choices about the kind of steering mechanisms they seek to protect – administration and markets. For Cohen and Arato, administration refers to a welfare state structure. Therefore, while both these steering mechanisms can be democratized, their basic structure should be preserved.

Habermas argues meaning-making occurs in the cultural realm of the lifeworld. However, meaning is not only constructed in the lifeworld, but also in the system (see Figure 4 for a graphic conceptualization of the proposals discussed in the current discussion). The border between the two is porous and the two contribute to the construction of common sense. The money promoting values of the economy have influenced cultural constructions, creating the consumer culture of the late/post modern period and the power promoting values of the state have generated skepticism about state representation of collective will. Therefore, the cultural-linguistic background and structures of the lifeworld need to be extended into the system in order to account for the factors influencing cultural constructions. Furthermore, the three reproduction processes – cultural reproduction, social integration, socialization – that function in all three lifeworld structures – culture, society, person – need to be extended into the system as well.
Figure 4. Extending the System-Lifeworld Model
The public/private delineation between the public and private spheres of the lifeworld implies the private sphere of intimate relations is located exclusively in the lifeworld. However, economic and political relations also take place in the private sphere. For example, when a person invites a group of people to a dinner party in their home, the interactions are occurring in the intimate space of the private sphere. If the guests include business contacts and/or work colleagues, the interactions would encompass some of the economic space. If the guests include political figures, the interactions would in part take place in the political space. Therefore, rather than locating the intimate private sphere solely in the lifeworld, it can be thought of as an intimate space that overlaps the system and lifeworld. Moreover, non-intimate space exists in both the system and lifeworld. The public sphere can be thought of as a generally non-intimate space in which deliberation and broadcasting of matters of common concern unfolds.

While the public sphere has been colonized by the system, it is still hermeneutically desirable to keep it in the lifeworld. This is not meant to imply the state and economic subsystems do not use the public sphere; rather it is meant to reflect the need to protect the public sphere from the money and power promoting values of the system. Instead of extending the public sphere into the system to reflect reality, reality can be thought of in terms of the colonization of the public sphere. This conceptualization of the public sphere represents the more permanent understanding of this sphere, but temporary publics can and do emerge within the more permanent public sphere. Moreover, publics emerge in the system, in the intimate space and in political and economic society as well.
As previously discussed, the system and lifeworld are abstract metaconcepts that delineate the spheres of the social world. If we think of them in generic terms at the structural level, the state can be conceptualized as *form of governance* and the economy can be conceived as *form of relations of production and consumption*. The lifeworld can be thought of in generic terms as *form of civil relations*. Conceptually, this means the model can be used to analyze a wide range of contexts, since it does not define the type of forms of governance, relations of production and consumption or form of civil relations. Individuals and groups are embedded in the cultural-linguistic background and structures of the social world. The individual navigates the social world negotiating relationships, sometimes acting as part of the lifeworld or the system, and sometimes in both at the same time. Interactions take place in the non-intimate space and in the intimate space as well as in the public sphere.

In Habermas’s model, the instrumental power and money promoting values of the system are distinguished from the life and well-being promoting values of the lifeworld. The system and lifeworld are differentiated in terms of the logics – instrumental reason in the system and communicative reason in the lifeworld – operating in these realms. However, agents do not act exclusively based on one form of reason. Sometimes they act both instrumentally for financial gain or political power and at other times they act communicatively in the interest of well-being. Rather than asserting an agent acts either in the system or the lifeworld, an agent can be said to be acting in the system when s/he uses instrumental reason to for the purpose is for money and/or political power and in lifeworld when s/he employs communicative reason for the sake of well-being.
Additionally, social agents sometimes act alone and in socially integrated ways in both the system and lifeworld simultaneously.

Certain venues, such as the workplace and homeplace, are particularly important in that they create spaces in which instrumental and non-instrumental ends are pursued in intimate and non-intimate spaces (see Figure 5). In the workplace, persons act as productive societal members. They contribute to the economy and generate an income for themselves and/or their families. In the homeplace, persons and families act as productive societal members as well. Although the work involved in running a household is not paid, persons are contributing to the economy and in some cases raising children, which contributes to the social world in that as adults their cultural, political and economic formation will influence the ways in which they interact within the system and the lifeworld.

These two venues are significant sites because the overlap they have with many societal spheres creates potential for influencing both the system and the lifeworld. Their location in the model reflects the overlap with the system and lifeworld, as well as the intimate and non-intimate spaces in order to reflect two important points. There is an urgent need to recognize the unpaid work necessary for the homeplace to function and the reality of many people doing paid work from home. Paid work is no longer being carried out only in the non-intimate realm and unpaid work is no longer being carried out solely in the intimate space, as exemplified by volunteer work.
Figure 5. Locating the Homeplace and Workplace

The instrumental/non-instrumental distinction between the system and lifeworld reflects the reality of the late post/modern age. Moreover, as Habermas argues, the system has colonized the lifeworld. Visualizing them as occupying the same amount of space in the social world is not only not the ideal; the lifeworld ought to strive for keeping the instrumental motivations of the system to a minimum (see Figure 6). The most pressing concern of a project for democracy in this context is to reclaim the
Colonized space of the lifeworld. However, such a project needs to go further. The lifeworld needs to be constantly defended and nurtured in order to push the system even further back in an effort to foster and extend the life and well-being promoting values of the lifeworld. These values need to be woven into the system to the maximum extent possible.

**Figure 6. Colonization and Decolonization of the Lifeworld**

**Towards a Radical, Deliberative, Plural and Participative Democracy**

Cultivating a political culture in civil society and in the public sphere is crucial to defending the values of the lifeworld and rallying forces into historical blocs that can push back the system’s encroachment on the lifeworld. Civil society actors need to constitute themselves as historical agents of change. A healthy public sphere is also essential for re/constructing common sense, challenging hegemonic relations and building solidarity. The instrumental use of the public sphere by the system has created a culture of consumption that continues to transform active societal members into passive consumers, highlighting the urgency of reconstructing the political subject. Furthermore,
the depoliticization of social life and struggles calls for the repoliticization of civil society and the public sphere. Understanding civil society as political civil society recognizes and foregrounds its political nature.

Civil society is a space in which multiple actors can struggle for more democratic economic and governance structures and processes. Since civil society is located in the lifeworld, one could assume it is characterized by democratic processes. However, despite its location, this is not always the case. Another aim of democratic projects needs to be the democratization of civil society and the public sphere. The democratization of the spheres and spaces of the social world is an on-going process.

Civil society is self-organizing and characterized by voluntary association. Among civil society actors, much attention has been given to social movements. They are prominent actors that mobilize forces and broadcast issues of concern in the public sphere and by creating publics. The indigenous knowledge of these grassroots groups is particularly significant. The knowledge created in and by social movements is a central part of the democratic process because it is in the process of knowledge re/construction that oppressive power relations can be contested. It is the source of new ideas for dealing with local challenges and an important part of theory-practice and reflection-action relationships. Therefore, it is vital for indigenous knowledge to be valued and legitimized.

As a result of the perception that governance structures are no longer representing the collective will, some ideas have been suggested as to how these structures can be more representative of the diversity of the social struggles. In addition to proportional representation, the establishment of governance structures that mirror the multiplicity of
civil society has been suggested. In the global context, the transnational governance structures that are forming could also be oriented towards reflecting the range of agents acting in the social world.

With respect to global civil society, global refers to state boundaries. Hence, when a particular civil society emerges from the national level into the global, it is acting globally. However, this could also be understood as any civil society at the substate and national level that participates in a global public in such a way that their actions get the attention of other civil societies around the world, often resulting in increased solidarity among civil societies. A classic example is the case of the Zapatistas in Mexico. When they amplified their struggle in the global level of the public sphere, other substate and national civil societies joined them in their efforts.

The world appears to be in a transition phase in which neither the nation-state, nor global governance and economic structures have the capacity to coordinate collective human activity. A different form of ancient city-states could re-emerge in the global context. It is possible that cities and/or local communities could become more relevant than nation-states. It will be interesting to see if and how communities congeal as mini-collectives and how they interact in this new context.

Subverting hegemonic relations through the cultural institutions of civil society is crucial to rallying forces that can form an historical bloc capable of creating political and economic transformation. When civil society and the public sphere succeed in decolonizing spaces in the lifeworld and democratizing economic, governance and civil structures, the radical, deliberative, plural and participative democratic project is advanced.
Adult Learning, Civil Society and Democracy

If the social world is seen through a learning lens, adult education certainly has an important role to play in the formal and non-formal learning that takes place in the social world and particularly in civil society. Adult educators interested in fostering a more socially just world have drawn attention to the connections between learning and democracy. The anti-human colonization of the lifeworld by the neo-liberal project has created the myth that there are not enough resources/wealth on the planet for everyone to enjoy a dignified standard of living and the right to education and health. Alternative discourses are needed to dispel this myth and to deal with the fear and uncertainty of current conditions. This situation does not have to be accepted as inevitable. Persons and groups do not have to resign themselves to reacting and adapting to the present context. The structures and discourses that led to the uncertainty can be transformed and adult education can play a major role in the process of transformation.

The language of commerce and the unlimited pursuit of profits have penetrated formal educational systems and activities, resulting in their orientation towards fulfilling market demands by privileging instrumental knowledge. Moreover, the consumer culture fomented by the values of the market means persons are learning to be consumers, rather than active societal members. While the value of education and learning in terms of building the capacities necessary for work and the economy are important, these capacities do not have to be exclusively directed at acquiring marketable skills. For work to be fulfilling, persons need to be doing something they genuinely enjoy and to be paid a fair wage for the work they carry out. In addition to their intrinsic value, education and
learning is valuable for many other reasons, including personal development and for meaningful community and civil participation.

The learning that occurs in the context of social movements is especially relevant to education and learning for democracy. The epistemic community that is formed through the individual and collective creation of knowledge by participants in social movements is important for identifying local concerns and generating local ways of addressing these concerns. The learning processes that take place in the context of social movements play a key role in challenging hegemonic constructions that maintain oppressive situations. Moreover, the indigenous knowledge created by civil society actors contributes to collective will articulation. One of the main tasks of educators is to foster the development of organic intellectuals in social movements because of the central role they can play in cultural institutions to change common sense and articulate matters of common concern. Organic intellectuals can thus contribute to the formation of an historical bloc that can transform hegemonic power relations. Fostering a sense of agency then, is an important part of the learning process.

Gramsci argued all hegemonic relationships are educational relationships. Therefore, it is crucial that educators democratize learning processes as much as possible and advocate for the democratization of the structures and processes of formal education systems. Interactions among and between learners and educators in diverse learning contexts also needs to be more democratic. Freire proposes this can be done through minimizing the inherent power of the educator, by challenging relations of oppression through critical reflection, legitimizing indigenous knowledge and nurturing a sense of collective agency.
Formal and non-formal educational activities and programs oriented towards enhancing people’s critical understanding of the world can encourage people to participate in meaningful ways in their communities. Some of the capacities that need to be developed for democratic engagement include public speaking, conflict resolution/negotiation and discussion facilitation. While focusing on learning in civil society is vital for the advancement of democratic projects, the workplace and homeplace are also important learning sites. Adult education and learning that fosters creativity can contribute significantly to constructing a learning society.
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

While the democratic projects of the long line of scholars who have explored civil society in abstract and practical terms conceptualize it in a diverse number of ways, the recent thinkers of the last century tend to agree on some key points. They identify a social crisis resulting from excesses of capitalism and dark side of modernity and the need to generate new ways of thinking about cultural, political, economic and social relations. Democracy is understood as an ongoing project that ought to retain liberal notions of freedom, equality, justice and plurality. Furthermore, most contemporary theorists agree the differentiation between state and civil society ought to be maintained both for analytic and empirical purposes. In addition, the emphasis on discourse ethics and communication in the cultural realm of the social world is also underscored. There are intimate and non-intimate spaces in civil society and a public sphere in which matters of common concern are debated. The relevance of social movements is highlighted and civil society’s close relationship with the public sphere or publics is accentuated.

An important difference among scholars is the perspective they take on the economy. For some, the principle of free enterprise is fundamental and therefore, the mechanisms of the market ought to be protected because they are essential to civil society. Although for others more democratic economic structures and processes are desirable, few theorists go further in arguing economic relations ought to be socialized.
**Sparking Transformation in the System**

The hegemonic control of social and communication structures plays a significant role in the colonization of lifeworld. The state and economic subsystems are open systems and can therefore be affected by lifeworld activities and interactions. Currently, lifeworld and system values do not match, generating the social, political and economic crisis of the late/post modern period. Communicative action can contribute to lifeworld values becoming more integrated with the system, but the distinction between the two needs to be kept for both hermeneutic purposes and because of the potential danger of the system being overly bound to the lifeworld. Rather than working towards their synthesis, democratic projects can work towards closer symmetry of system and lifeworld values.

This process takes place in the lifeworld, with civil society mediating between the intimate and non-intimate spaces and the public sphere. It involves an on-going project in which the lifeworld defends itself from being (further) colonized by the system, and acts offensively to push back the colonization that has already taken place. Democracy demands the decolonization of the lifeworld and its continuous defense against colonization by the system. Moreover, the well-being promoting values of the lifeworld need to be enmeshed with those of the system at least enough to keep its instrumental aims to a minimum.

The link between democracy and a free market economy goes back to Adam Smith’s conceptualization of civil society. He argued market exchanges are the foundation of civil society and could thus benefit the collective if these exchanges occur in an environment free from the constraints of the state. Freedom is defined in terms of economic relations as the right to unlimited production and consumption. Ironically, this
narrow view of freedom is reminiscent of the critique of the primacy given to economic relations and class in Marxism, despite their philosophical differences.

An important dimension of democratic projects that seek to at least reduce if not eradicate oppressive capitalist relations is the socialization of the means and modes of production and consumption. This involves the social appropriation of the means of production and demands the equality of producers, as well as the genuine participation of workers in decisions about what is produced and how it is produced and distributed. To avoid causing corporate and cultural panic over state ownership, private collective ownership of companies organized as cooperatives could benefit all actors involved in the production process.

The constant assault on social and redistributive justice by neo-liberals argues against justified state intervention based on the normative assumption that equality denies individual freedom. The radical individualism of this view arises out of the interpretation of equality as uniformization, which negates difference, rendering democracy itself a totalitarian notion. Alternative discourses that recognize both difference and intersubjectively constructed shared norms are needed to challenge the anti-democratic neo-liberal project. Neither the privileging of the individual or the collective is conducive to a democratic project capable of approximating social and redistributive justice.

Emulsifying perspectives into a common vision retains the identity and autonomy of diverse struggles and unites them on points of convergence with other groups in civil society and the public sphere. Solidarity can be constructed around the intersections of goals and values of different groups. This takes place at the substate, nation-state and global level. Moreover, cultural leadership needs to be organized around a collection of
shared values among diverse struggles that can contribute to collective will formation capable of unifying forces into a historical bloc that triggers transformation when a critical pressure point is reached.

It is not then civil society itself that can transform the system; rather it is communicative action, which is more broadly embedded in the lifeworld, that can defend both the lifeworld as a whole and civil society as the link between the intimate and non-intimate spaces and the public sphere in the lifeworld. In order to address the limitations of civil society, the focus needs to be on the public sphere because it is mainly through the public sphere that civil society can make a vital contribution to a radical, deliberative, plural and participative democracy.

Where democracy is threatened or hijacked by dictatorships, not only are civil society institutions, associations and networks severely eroded, but also political ones. Perhaps people turn to participation in civil society because they do not have access to power. In Chile, social movements, such as women’s groups, families of the disappeared, faith-based groups, Indigenous groups and workers’ movements, played a major catalytic role in the re-emergence of democracy. However, while these groups were able to build a counter-hegemonic force by mobilizing civil society and using the public sphere effectively, they did not transform into the political parties that were subsequently elected. While it is likely those who participated in associations of families of the disappeared and workers’ movements voted for the Party for Democracy, which integrated the traditional centre and left-wing parties, it is not the case with faith-based, Indigenous or women’s groups, whose votes were divided. These groups surely favoured a return to democracy; however their votes were split along lines of economic vision.
Regardless of membership in any of these groups, some people voted for right-wing parties because they wanted the neo-liberal economic policies of the military junta to be maintained.

An important function of the public sphere, then, is the public monitoring of power and violence and the resistance of the violent exercise of power. A population that has been traumatized by state terror cannot allow itself to develop collective amnesia. Rescuing shared memories reminds people of past horrors, an important factor in ensuring they do not occur in the future. Although the healing process takes a long time, a vibrant civil society and public sphere can create spaces for peace and dialogue and nurture collective healing. The continual cultivation of these spaces is essential for the health of civil society and the public sphere.

Political society, which mediates between the state and civil society, is comprised of the political space occupied by both civil society and political society institutions. Political parties, located in political society, are not part of the state structure per se, but unlike many civil society actors, they have direct access to power. As exemplified by the Chilean case, most social movements do not form into political parties. However, in many “Western” nations, environmental movements have formed political parties, appearing as the Green Party. Although the emergence of political parties that have grown out of social movements signals an important move towards a more plural approach to representation and governance, diverse struggles that unite on points of common concern to form a political party are more likely to offer a platform that can speak to a broader spectrum of people.
In liberal democracies, a first step in moving in the direction of a radical, deliberative, plural, participative democracy in a nonviolent way is to act through political parties. By gaining power in the system, the necessary power can be accessed in order to introduce discourse ethics into the system and to reinforce and protect it in the lifeworld. Until then, persons and groups can apply it in various contexts to the maximum extent possible.

Although social change is a slow process, ideals and goals are needed. A political imaginary is vital for any democratic project. Creating transformational moments that generate structural change is part of the on-going nature of the democratic process, but a more extensive vision of the future is also necessary for the continuous re/construction of the social world. Knowing what the project will be once a given transformational moment has generated change is central to the political imaginary and constant reignition of hope through the language of possibility. Remembering past experiences contributes to the renewal of the democratic process; it connects people temporally with the past, linking history lessons with the present. Adult education has an important role in fostering a culture of hope that can counter the apathy that permeates today's world. The adult learning that takes place in civil society is especially relevant to the formulation of collective will and the meaningful participation of persons and groups in political, economic and social life. Focusing on learning sites, such the workplace and the homeplace that overlap system and lifeworld spheres, is essential because they are infused with the potential for democratization.
The Relevance of Conceptual Inquiry

Conceptual inquiry analyzes meaning making which is constructed in the cultural realm and contributes to the construction and reconstruction of concepts and conceptual structures. Civil society is a useful concept for historical and sociological analysis and for understanding democratic participation in the social world and how adult learning can contribute to a democratic project.

This inquiry sought to explore the meaning and uses of 'civil society.' Undertaking this conceptual analysis has clarified the term and led to a more fully developed understanding of the concept. Through concept interpretation, the meanings of the concept were explored. However, since no single inquiry can cover all the possible meanings of the term, one of the limitations of this methodology is that conceptual inquiry cannot be completely comprehensive.

Understanding the relationships among concepts within conceptual structures is another aim of conceptual inquiry. Relationships such as those between civil society and the state and economy were explored in various models and civil society, as a cluster concept, was analyzed by exploring its relationship with other related concepts, such as the public sphere, common sense, hegemony, articulation of struggles and collective will. Moreover, the comparison of the conceptual structures of diverse theories of civil society and democracy, as well as of broader social models facilitated the analysis of the concept within a given model and in relation to the way it is constructed in other models. Moreover, the ways in which they have informed contemporary theories and models was explored by tracing their historical development. Finally, conceptual structure assessment
led to the extension of the system-lifeworld model, which offers a higher degree of explanatory power than its previous construction.

Conceptual inquiry informs theory, research, policy and practice in a variety of ways. It contributes to theory because it creates the opportunity for extending and generating theory. The meanings and uses of concepts and conceptual structures and the relationships between and among them influence research choices by determining which questions are considered important and how those questions are framed. Moreover, conceptual inquiry informs practitioners in planning and facilitating educational activities and formulating educational policies.

The conceptual analysis carried out in this inquiry contributed to theory by extending the system-lifeworld model and demonstrating how related concepts can be understood in relation to this framework. It informed future research that seeks to explore the role of non-formal adult learning in civil society in transforming political and economic structures in a non-violent way by enriching and deepening my understanding of the concept in order to operationalize it. The points of convergence among scholars can help define the way in which the concept is used in future field research. Furthermore, it facilitated the identification of social movements as important actors in civil society and as learning sites.

The way civil society and its relationship with democracy are conceptualized affects policy decisions, which are made in the political domain. Policy decisions may not necessarily transform structures, but they can certainly change the guiding principles of social and educational programs. If a democratic project is to move forward, civil society needs to be nurtured and energized through policy formulations oriented towards
fostering education for democracy. With respect to practice, policies establishing and/or extending democratic educational processes and employing critical pedagogical approaches to foster active participation consistent with the social commitment tradition of adult education are of a fundamental nature.

Inquiries that seek to minimize social injustice through critical research need to attend to subjective differences, societal structures and the power relations involved in negotiating individual and collective relationships. Moreover, they need to be reflective and give voice to actors, through their writing, by opening up spaces in the research process for challenging ideas and engaging in critical reflection. From a critical perspective, conceptual analysis is important not only because of its role in investigating the meaning and use of concepts, an important aspect of exploring the subjective and structural variables, as well as the power relations that influence the construction of concepts, but also because it is an essential part of deconstructing hegemonic metanarratives. Inquiry into concepts and conceptual structures makes the underlying assumptions that buttress universalist claims explicit.

Discussions on transformation and change raise some important implications for critical conceptual analysis with respect to action at the individual and collective level. After completing a thorough analysis of the concept of civil society by integrating interpretations of the concept itself with its relationship with other relevant concepts, the deep and rich understanding of the meanings and uses of civil society that emerged contributed to the temporary interpretations under permanent construction sought by a critical approach. Critical conceptual analysis may not necessarily lead to action, but has
at least the potential for critical and reflective self and societal inquiry that can contribute to constructions of concepts and conceptual structures that are conducive to social justice.

**Closing Thoughts**

Contemporary theorists seem to agree civil society on its own cannot be expected to defend the lifeworld against colonization by the system. The relationships between and among civil society, the public sphere, hegemony and collective will articulation are crucial for the permanent re/construction of the social world. Societies that have suffered under a dictatorship that has eroded the public sphere so severely that it is almost non-existent as a space for rational discussion and intersubjective will articulation and expression, have managed to defend the lifeworld against colonization by the system. Even in the face of violence to control the offensive political strategies of civil society actors, civil society can be marginalized, but it cannot be eliminated. By reinvigorating the public sphere and acting in a socially integrated manner through communicative webs in the lifeworld, Chilean society generated radical political transformation. The fact that the neo-liberal economic agenda established under the dictatorship has been halted, but basically remains intact raises questions as to why political transformation took place, while economic structures and processes have hardly changed (Moulian, 1997). Future research that seeks to explore how non-formal adult learning in civil society generated transformation in Chile can contribute to understanding how adult learning in civil society defends the lifeworld and creates transformation in the political and economic realms.
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155


