
UNIT 2 ELEMENTS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Civil society refers to those aspects of human existence that are outside the purview of political authority or the state and government, namely, economic relationships, family and kinship structures, religious institutions, cultural organisations and so on. It is an analytical concept because civil society does not exist independently of political authority and vice versa. It is generally believed that neither can continue without the other and that no clear boundary can be drawn between the two. From the eighteenth century onwards the distinction between state and civil society has been drawn by the liberals to undermine the absolutist state. As such the concept of civil society, like the constitutional state, is essentially a liberal innovation though paradoxically the major debates about its proper meaning and importance has been within Marxism, particularly, Western Marxism.

Civil society, according to some, is seen as a mean of reducing the role of politics in society by expanding free markets and individual liberty, while others see it as 'the single most viable alternative to the authoritarian state and the tyrannical market' (WSF). There is also a perception that it constitutes the missing link in the success of social democracy and compassionate conservatism; something that cannot be explained is attributed to civil society. For Adam Seligman, civil society is 'the new analytic key that will unlock the mysteries of social order'. The United Nations and the World Bank perceive it as crucial to good governance and poverty reducing growth. The Administration Officials in the Washington DC see kick starting civil society in the Middle East as the real reason for the Iraq War. The Institute for Foreign Policy, Washington-based think tank observes that 'the US should emphasize civil society development in order to ensure regional stability in central Asia'.

Historically, civil society as a concept that features in the writings of thinkers from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards in an attempt to distinguish it, as an organised society over which the state rules. Some trace the origins of civil society to the writings of Aristotle and Seneca of the classical period. The civil society-state distinction is not valid as the state is itself part of society. Formal authority and political control exists with help of stable social institutions that exert considerable influence on, or control individual lives. Many consider voluntary associations as the life breath of civil society as these inculcate values of tolerance and cooperation that are essential prerequisites for democratic life. However, real associational life also harbours all kinds of different and competing values and beliefs. Moreover, the values of trust, tolerance, reciprocity and cooperation, reiterated by the advocates of social capital, are also fostered in families, schools, workplaces, colleges and universities –places that a person grows; learns and spends a greater part of one's life, more than in the voluntary associations that one may belong to. Within NGOs and other voluntary associations there is so much difference of opinion and divergences that securing a level political consensus to secure and enforce broad-based social reforms becomes difficult. Civil society, on the one hand, offers an opportunity for collective action to counter individualism and on the other hand, provides a balance to an overbearing influence of state authority and the allurements of the market.

Aims and Objectives

This Unit would enable you to understand

- The origins of civil society;
- The elements of civil society;
- Gramsci's decisive contribution to the concept of civil society.

2.2 ORIGINS OF THE CONCEPT

In the late eighteenth century the idea of the civil society was formulated by the Scottish Enlightenment with its forceful articulation by Ferguson. However, the primary focus of the theory at the time of its inception was mainly in the realm of economics and not in politics except for restricting state activity which became imperative with the philosophy of *laissez faire* and rejection of mercantilism. However, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the concept developed into a powerful concern mainly because of Hegel's efforts to incorporate civil society as a crucial and most dominant element in his ideal of constitutional monarchy. Hegel divided the life of an ordinary citizen in three distinctive parts: (1) the family which was the arena of love and affection beyond the strife and turbulence of contemporary life; (2) the civil society as the arena of the turbulence and strife and (3) the state with its most important component, of well trained efficient bureaucracy.

When the Left Hegelians, the most important of whom were Marx and Engels rejected Hegel's classification, they had to come to terms with dealing with the complexities of civil society. Within the larger framework of economic determinism, Marx insisted that the rule of the bourgeoisie or the ruling class in any order is perpetuated more by controlling the ideological apparatus of the state rather than by the use of brute force. This led Marx to discuss the concept of ideology in the political process in which he found out that the ruling class rules more by perpetuating a false consciousness among the people by which it projects its own values as universal and inevitable, whereas in reality it is particularistic

and transitory. As such, one of the important purposes of Marx's formulation of revolutionary consciousness was to transform this false consciousness into a true consciousness. This problem got further aggravated when Marx developed the theory of relative autonomy of the state in the context of failed revolutionary process in Europe in 1848. However, Marx never developed a detailed independent theory of civil society nor developed a framework in which it would be dissected and it was left to later Marxists in the twentieth century to articulate and theorise the notion of civil society.

2.3 GRAMSCI'S SEMINAL CONTRIBUTION

Civil society is the key concept in Antonio Gramsci's (1887-1937) political thought. No other Marxist in the twentieth century paid as much attention to civil society from a Marxist point of view as Gramsci did. Conceiving of a revolutionary strategy to fight fascism in the Italian context, he understood that the Marxist revolutionary strategy has to be analysed not on a singular note but on a differentiated basis looking to the stages of economic development, political culture, the external influences and the question of relative economic and political independence and identity. Furthermore, Gramsci's analysis of the process by which the proletariat could gain hegemony in the West led him to examine the relationship between the civil society and the state and to compare the situation in the former USSR with that of the West. This led Gramsci to use his famous sentence differentiating Western Europe from the Russian situation by dismissing the Leninist strategy as inappropriate as in Russia the 'state was everything and civil society, nothing'. In the more developed areas of Western Europe, there is a powerful and vibrant civil society and any serious Marxist analysis has to comprehend this as part of its revolutionary strategy. In formulating this, Croce played a decisive influence on Gramsci.

2.3.1 Croce's Influence

Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) had a decisive influence in the early twentieth century in the Italian intellectual tradition and can be compared to Hegel's influence within Germany. Croce was well versed with the writings of both Hegel and Marx, learnt a lot from them but was also critical of them. He viewed the entire process of history as a record encompassing human activity, art, economics, philosophy and emphasised like Hegel, on the supreme importance of the human spirit. Croce forsakes Marxism declaring it to be useful only as a 'simple canon of historical enquiry and research' and pronounces the 'death of theoretical Marxism in Italy'. Croce's secularism and opposition to positivism remains influential among the intellectuals. Politically Croce's role is ambivalent. He supported Mussolini in the early twenties. He was also an associate of Georges Sorel (1847-1922) giving the impression that his commitment to the philosophy of the Left was intact.

Gramsci describes critically his early intellectual leanings as 'Crocean' and his philosophical notebooks contain a rigorous critique of Crocean philosophy in connection to Marxism. In his prison writings, Gramsci emphasizes the need to counter "Croceanism both as a diffuse ideology and as a specific philosophical system, sometimes casting Croce in the role of a Eugen von Dühring (1833-1921), to be polemically destroyed, but more often seeing him as comparable to Hegel as a thinker whose work could be profited from in the struggle to renew Marxist thought and liberate it from positivistic accretions" (Hoare and Nowell Smith 1971, xxiii).

Gramsci was attracted a great deal in the early 1920s to a series of essays written by

Croce that endorsed Machiavellian approach to the study of politics and popularised by the Italian elitist thinkers, Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) and Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941). He was pleased with this approach as it shared the Marxism distrust for traditional political categories. Both Croce and Gramsci believed in a close relationship between consensus and force, and liberty and authority.

In one crucial area of Gramsci's thought, Croce exerts an extraordinary influence, namely the concept of civil and political societies. In using these terms Gramsci uses the language of Hegel and Marx but gives them novel meanings. For Hegel and Marx, civil society is discovered not in the structure but in the superstructure of society, not in commerce and industry but in ideology and cultural organisations. For both Croce and Gramsci it is in the sphere of 'Church' or civil society that the intellectuals operate and "for both men, whatever 'ethical' content a state may have is to be found in this sphere, not within the state proper" (Bates 1975, p.157). Gramsci acknowledges the instrumental value of Croce to Italian Marxism as highlighting "the importance of cultural and intellectual factors in historical development, to the function of great intellectuals in the organic life of civil society or of the state, to the moment of hegemony and consensus and the necessary form of the concrete historical bloc" (Ibid, p.356).

2.3.2 On Civil Society

Civil society for Gramsci does not belong to the structural sphere but to the superstructural sphere (Bobbio 1988, 82) and that is its distinctiveness. "What we can do, for the moment, is to fix two major superstructural 'levels': the one that can be called 'civil society', that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private' and that of 'political society' or 'the State'. These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of 'hegemony, which the dominant group exercises throughout society, and on the other hand, to that of 'direct domination' or rule exercised through the state and juridical government" (Gramsci cited in Hoare & Nowell Smith 1971, p.12).

Citing major historical examples, Gramsci points out that civil society in the Middle Ages was the Church understood as 'the hegemonic apparatus of the ruling group, which did not have its own apparatus, i.e. did not have its own cultural and intellectual organization, but regarded the universal, ecclesiastical organization as being that'. For Gramsci, the civil society comprises not only of 'all material relationships' but all ideological- cultural relations; not 'the whole of commercial and industrial' but the whole of spiritual and intellectual life'. He derives his concept of civil society not from Marx but is 'openly indebted to Hegel' (Bobbio, 1988, p.83). This is evident from Gramsci's work *Past and Present*, in which he points out the meaning of civil society to mean 'the political and cultural hegemony which a social group exercises over the whole of society, as the ethical content of the state' (Gramsci, 1966, p.72). Two aspects get highlighted in the process: (a) that Gramsci's conception is derived from that of Hegel and (b) that Hegel's concept of civil society, as understood by Gramsci, is superstructural. Gramsci's conception of civil society includes private and non state sphere, including the economy; his portrayal of civil society is different from that of Marx. It is not simply a sphere of individual needs but of organisations with the potential for self-regulation and freedom.

Gramsci uses the term state in different ways: in a narrow legal-constitutional sense, as a balance between political and civil society; or as encompassing both. He argues that the nature of political power in advanced capitalist countries, where civil society includes complex institutions and mass organisations, determines the present order. He defines the state as force plus consent, or hegemony armed with coercion, in which political society

organises force and civil society provides consent. While Marx insists on the separation of civil society and state, Gramsci stresses on the inter-relationship between the two, arguing that whereas, in the everyday sense, the word state implies government the concept of state includes the elements of civil society. The state narrowly conceived as government is protected by hegemony organised in civil society while the hegemony of the dominant class is fortified by the coercive state apparatus. The state also has the ethical function as it tries to educate public opinion and to influence the economic sphere. As a consequence the concept of law has to be extended, suggests Gramsci, as elements of habit and custom do exert a collective pressure to conform in civil society without coercion and sanction.

Gramsci points out that the distinction between civil society and state is blurred in actual society. He also cautions any attempt to equate or identify the two. He accepts a role for the state in developing civil society and warns against perpetuating state worship. For him, the withering away of the state in effect means the full development of the self-regulating attributes of civil society. The end of the state is the 're-absorption of political society in civil society'. He refers to a society without a state as 'regulated society' as the civil society enlarges, absorbing hegemonic forces and eliminating all the space occupied by political society. While for Marx, civil society is the sphere of individual egoism, Gramsci sees civil society as representing collective will as it consists of estates and corporations. The bureaucracy and the legal system regulate the civil society and connect it to the state. He could foresee that the hegemony of the proletariat would abolish the distinction between the civil society and the state. He realised that during the transition period the proletariat might have to rely on state power to transform civil society thus producing the phenomenon which he titled as 'statolatry' (Gramsci 1965, 268f). Like Marx, Gramsci's final aim was re-absorption of political society by civil society in a classless society.

At times Gramsci uses the term state to include both civil society and political society: "The general notion of the State includes elements which need to be referred back to the notion of civil society (in the sense that one might say that state = political society + civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armour of coercion" (Gramsci cited in Hoare and Nowell Smith, 1971, p.263). Elsewhere, Gramsci observes that the State equals dictatorship and hegemony and that the 'civil society and State are one and the same'. In 1931, writing about the intellectuals he points out "this study also leads to certain determinations of a concept of State, which is usually understood as political society (or dictatorship; or coercive apparatus to bring the mass of people into conformity with the specific type of production and a specific economy at a given moment) and not as an equilibrium between political society and civil society or the hegemony of a social group over the entire national society exercised through the so-called private organizations (like the church, the trade unions, the schools, etc.); it is precisely in civil society that intellectuals operate specially" (Gramsci, 1966, p.481).

2.3.3 Theory of the State

Gramsci's theory of the state develops out of his notion of the proper relationship between the state and the civil society. Whereas Marx's most important emphasis is on the totality of all the economic relations, in Gramsci there is an enormous emphasis on the superstructure. The hegemony of the dominant class is exercised through the civil society, culturally, and not through coercion. But this hegemony of the civil society does not exist equally in all societies. For instance, making a categorical distinction between

Russia and the West European countries he asserts that “in Russia the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper balance relationship between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earth works” (Gramsci cited in McLellan 1979, p.189).

From this, Gramsci lays down different revolutionary strategies. In primitive societies, the object of the frontal attack is the state while in more developed societies it is the civil society. Using military vocabulary, the frontal attack is characterised by Gramsci as ‘a war of movement or manoeuvre’ and the other a ‘war of position’. For a well developed capitalist state, the second course is the correct one. Gramsci believes that Lenin, before his death, had accepted this fact whereas Trotsky continued to be “the political theorist of frontal attack in a period in which it only leads to defeats” (Kiernan 1972, p.25). Gramsci’s position is similar to that of Kautsky’s polemics against Lenin, a position that enjoyed considerable support among the Marxist theoreticians of that time. Gramsci’s analysis significantly influences developments within Western Marxism in the post-Second World War period ultimately leading to the emergence of Euro-communism (McLellan, 1979, p.181).

2.3.4 Relative Autonomy of Politics

Gramsci dissects the vital relationship between economics and politics and the nature of the state in order to answer the pertinent question about the causes that led to the survival of fascism, in spite of the latter’s inability to solve basic contradictions of the Italian society. In the process, he discovers that the art of politics has a dynamics and autonomy of its own which could be clearly distinguished from the realms of economics, morality and religion. For him, as it is for Machiavelli, political activity is the human activity par excellence. One of his major unfulfilled ambitions was to deal specifically with this political aspect in a book significantly titled *The Modern Prince*.

Apart from Gramsci’s interest in the period of Italian unity, *Risorgimento*, he put a lot of efforts in comprehending the political theory of the Italian Renaissance in general and of Machiavelli in particular. Following Croce’s description of Marx as the ‘Machiavelli of the Proletariat’, Gramsci tries to analyse the contemporary situation. Many pages of the *Prison Notebooks* are devoted to notes on Machiavelli and for Gramsci, Machiavelli’s greatness consists in his distinction of politics from ethics. The Modern Prince, for him, has to be the Party.

The Modern Prince, the Prince-myth, cannot be a real person, a concrete individual: it can only be an organism, a complex element of society, in which a collective will... begins to take concrete form. Such an organism had already been provided by historical development and it is the political party, the first cell in which germs of a collective will come together and tend to become universal and total (Gramsci cited in Hoare and Nowell Smith, 1971, p.129).

Gramsci accepts the fact that the economic and the political factors are inter-linked and that the politicians could be relatively autonomous. But he also asserts that the political developments have their own independent characteristics. The degree and extent of this autonomy depends on a number of variables. In the case of Italian fascism Gramsci perceives that it enjoys a great deal of autonomy both internally and externally and as such any immediate collapse of it could not be expected. However, he was also confident

that because of its own internal contradictions, fascism would not be able to continue indefinitely. It is no small credit for Gramsci that his formulation of relative autonomy of politics is reaffirmed by Poulantzas four decades later.

2.3.5 Hegemony and the Role of Intellectuals

Gramsci points out that people are not ruled by force alone but by ideas, summed up by the word Hegemony, a key and unifying concept in the *Prison Notebooks* and of his entire theoretical edifice. Hegemonic crises arise when the rule is by force and not primarily of the ideological apparatus of civil society. Hegemony is created in the civil society by intellectuals and if successfully done, then the ruling class rules by controlling the apparatus of the civil society and if unsuccessful, then the rule is through coercion. Distinguishing between traditional and organic intellectuals, Gramsci observes that traditional intellectuals thought themselves as one and performed the functions in that role independently. The organic ones are however closely linked to the class to which they belong. An example of traditional intellectuals was the clergy and their relation with the feudal ruling class in The Middle Ages, which was organic but subsequently became autonomous. Another example of traditional intellectual was Croce. Gramsci argues that the idea of independence is an illusion as the intellectuals are linked to the class structure in which they live. An independent class of intellectuals do not exist, but rather every social group has its own intellectuals.

However, the intellectuals of the historically progressive class... exercise such a power of attraction that they end... by subordinating the intellectual of other social groups and thus create a system of solidarity among intellectuals, with links of a psychological (vanity) or caste nature. This fact is realized spontaneously in historical periods in which the given social group is truly progressive (Bates, 1975, p.353).

The shift from traditional to organic intellectualism takes place when the revolutionary class itself produces its intellectuals. The role of the intellectuals is a practical one.

The mode of being of the new intellectuals can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, 'permanent persuader' and not just a simple orator (Gramsci cited in Hoare and Nowell Smith, 1971, p.10).

Again emphasizing the need for a linkage between the intellectuals and the masses, Gramsci states,

The position of the philosophy of *praxis* is the antithesis of that of Catholicism. It does not tend to leave the 'simple' in their primitive philosophy of common sense, but rather to lead them to a higher conception of life. If it affirms the need for contact between intellectuals and 'simple' it is not in order to restrict scientific activity and preserve unity at the low level of the masses, but precisely in order to construct an intellectual-moral bloc which can make politically possible the intellectual progress of the mass and not only of small intellectual groups (Gramsci, Ibid, pp.332-33).

Gramsci rejects the Leninist conception of Party and its principle of democratic centralism. He contends that such a party would be more a policing organ than a deliberative body. He believes that a cultural consensus around a shared moral vision would render a coercive state redundant under communism. He argues that factory system is self-regulating and what is required is to ensure that production is related to needs of the producers, to raise workers' consciousness of their role within the productive process and

their relationship with the rest of the global economy. In course of time a collective will would emerge. In fascism, the hegemony of the dominant class remained only partially successful thus leading to perpetual hegemonic crises.

2.3.6 Analysis of Fascism

Gramsci characterises fascism as a passive revolution which is congenial to the situation of Italy as that enables it to modernise and restructure the economy within capitalism with massive state support, a situation that was just the opposite of the modernisation process initiated in the former Soviet Union after the proletarian revolution. Fascism, as such, was not mere Bonapartism as described by Trotsky but rather it was a new kind of an organisation with mass support from the petty bourgeoisie. Gramsci contends that this has happened for the first time in history. Fascism could contain but not solve the Italian crisis and the consequent static equilibrium could usher in true hegemony. Gramsci predicts a 'long life' for the fascist regime but denies that it constitutes an epoch. His analysis is vindicated by subsequent history when within eight years of his death fascism was wiped out not only from Italy, but also from entire Europe.

In the process of analysing Fascism, Gramsci develops three general concepts: Caesarism, War of attrition and passive revolution. Caesarism refers to a situation when some previously dormant or unknown forces capable of asserting domination intervene politically and restores a static equilibrium in a hegemonic crisis situation. There may be variants in this intervention, progressive (Caesar and Napoleon I) and reactionary (Napoleon III and Bismarck). Such a struggle, for Gramsci, represents a War of Attrition. Fascism is an example of this. He contrasts this with the War of Movement which means seizure of power through military confrontation. The example for this is the Bolshevik coup of November 1917. The rise of fascism demonstrates that such methods are outmoded and the War of Position whether won by incumbents or insurgents became decisive. Discussing the process of the War of Movement becoming the War of Position, Gramsci stresses their differences and on this basis, criticises Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. The third concept is passive revolution where there is no frontal attack "because they possess either substantial hegemonies force without a capability for domination or like Caesarism, a capability for domination without substantial hegemonic force" (Adamson, 1980, p.629). Under the Roman Empire the passive revolution of the Christians was an example of the first type and the Italian *Risorgimento* was an example of the second.

2.3.7 Post-Second World War Debate

Ralph Miliband, in his *The State in Capitalist Society* (1969), argues that there is state intervention, of varying degrees, in the economic life in all the countries of advanced capitalism. The most significant political fact of advanced capitalism 'is the continued existence... of private and ever more concentrated economic power. As a result of that power, the owners and controllers in whose hands it lies, enjoy a massive preponderance in society, in the political system, and in the determination of the state's policies and actions' (Miliband, 1969, p.265). The basic fact in these societies is that unequal economic power produces unequal political power: '...it is the capitalist context of generalized inequality in which the state operates which basically determines its policies and actions. The prevalent view is that the state in these societies can be and indeed mostly is the agent of a 'democratic' social order, with no inherent bias towards any class or group; and that its occasional lapse from 'impartiality' must be ascribed to some accidental factor external to its 'real' nature. But this too is a fundamental misconception; the state in these class societies is primarily and inevitably the guardian and protector of

the economic interests which are dominant in them. Its 'real' purpose and mission is to ensure their continued predominance, not to prevent it (Ibid, pp.265-66). Miliband's views are known as instrumentalist because he argues that capitalism uses 'the state as its instrument for the domination of society' (Ibid, p.23).

The Structuralists, beginning with Louis Althusser (1918-85), challenge this contention. Althusser begins with Gramsci's assertion of the relative autonomy of the state which explores not only the economic dimension but also the various other components – political, legal and ideological segments- society. The repressive apparatus of the state works out the mechanism of domination of the working class by the ruling class with its apparatus like the bureaucracy, police, courts, prisons and the army. Besides these, there are the ideological and structural dimensions like the Church, schools, family, political parties, trade unions, communications and cultural organisations. Althusser argues that in advanced capitalism, the ruling class maintains itself in power by using both the repressive and ideological apparatuses. In mature capitalism, education is a mechanism of ideological domination and is similar to the role performed by the church in the pre-capitalist phase. It is the real mechanism of control behind the formal parliamentary setup with universal suffrage and competing party system.

Nicos Poulantzas elaborates on Althusser's basic formulations and relates them to the major function of capitalism, namely, the reproduction of the capitalist society in its totality. The state, along with maintaining the political interest of the ruling class, also performs the functions of ensuring cohesion and equilibrium in society in a manner that blurs class divisions. As a result, social relations appear competitive and individual-based. Any notion of class and class struggle disappears in that situation. The competitive party system conceals the contradictions, factions and disunity. It does not allow hegemony of any particular class, including the bourgeoisie. Since the state is not the instrument, as assumed by Miliband, of a dominant class, the state is relatively autonomous and a stabilising factor. The structuralist view, like the instrumentalist one, does not deal with the mechanism of change or the essential reasons for the continuance of the capitalist state.

The refreshing originality of Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979) is in the fact that though he accepts the fact of inequalities in advanced capitalism and its irrationalities, yet he concludes that there is no probable escape from it because there is some rationality in these irrationalities which are cherished and valued by all, irrespective of class and status. One of these is the prevailing false consciousness in an overwhelming number which allows disguised violence of the state to continue making the state look legitimate to the majority of the people. His uniqueness is in the fact that he is a first-rate critic of this system as well as one of its best defenders.

2.4 CONCLUSION

Like Marx's concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, both in content and emphasis, the concept of civil society has become one of the most contested concepts in the twentieth century Marxism. The reason for this extraordinary attention to the doctrine in Marxism is that unlike Liberalism, Marxism never formulates a well developed theory of the state nor details the institutions that would be essential in a socialist society. The liberals, always being conscious of human deficiencies and cautious about the dynamics of power, develop a well formulated institutional basis of a constitutional and limited state. However, all these remain elusive in Marxism and to find a way out of Marxist dogmatism, the phenomenon of civil society is dissected again and again but without a

satisfactory solution discovered for a proper balance between the state and the civil society.

2.5 SUMMARY

Civil society refers to those aspects of human existence that are outside the purview of political authority or the state and government, namely, economic relationships, family and kinship structures, religious institutions, cultural organisations and so on. It is an analytical concept because it does not exist independently of political authority and vice versa. It is generally believed that neither can continue without the other and that no clear boundary can be drawn between the two. From the 18th century onwards the distinction between state and civil society has been drawn by the liberals to undermine the absolutist state. As such the concept of civil society, like the constitutional state is essentially a liberal innovation though paradoxically the major debates about its proper meaning and importance has been within Marxism, particularly, Western Marxism. Civil society is the key concept in Antonio Gramsci's (1887-1937) political thought. No other Marxist in the twentieth century paid as much attention to civil society from a Marxist point of view as Gramsci did. He differentiated Western Europe from the Russian situation by dismissing the Leninist strategy as inappropriate as in Russia the 'state was everything and civil society, nothing'. In the more developed areas of Western Europe, there is a powerful and vibrant civil society and any serious Marxist analysis has to comprehend this as part of its revolutionary strategy.

2.6 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Define civil society and identify the components of civil society.
2. Critically analyse Gramsci's concept of civil society.
3. What did Gramsci mean when he observed that 'in Russia the state was everything, civil society nothing'?
4. Explain the concept of Hegemony in Gramsci and its relationship with civil society.
5. What were the differences between Gramsci and Marx with regard to civil society

SUGGESTED READINGS

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