

Relationship between State and Civil Society: Theoretical Review

ABSTRACT. Relationship between state and civil society has been of great interest in the field of social sciences especially in the field of sociology and political science. There have been several theorist that tries to look into this relationship. The aim of this paper is to review the theoretical approaches of Marxist, Elites, and Neo-Consensualist on the relations between state and civil society in nowadays societies. Research are based on literature studies, on conflict perspectives in sociology. These theories are very prominent when talking about state-civil society relationship in sociology. Marxist looks the relationship between the two as conflictual, meaning dominant civil society use the state as an instrument in exploiting the weak economic class. Elites argue the relationship differently from that of Marxist and liberals, as for them, state is run by few individuals at the expense of the mass. In the eye of Neo-Consensualist is entirely a different story, as that of Parson view certain prospect in the social world of constituting the society that is; norms, and values. As for Bellah he sought religion as a mechanism in the spirit of acculturating a kind of doctrine in a sense that, state and citizens go by. Result for this theoretical views is elites show the relationship different from the Marxist and liberals, as for them the state is run by few individuals at the expense of the mass. This people are a minority group that has influence through economically, socially and the like but in short they have potentials in making things happen. This minority group the called them the elite as the mas they called the ruled.

Keywords: Civil Society, Democracy, Elites, Marxis, Neo-Consensualist, State

Introduction

The idea of modern day democracy is intertwine with civil society, that is any state that have democracy and good governance is believed to have strong civil society that hold the state accountable on the duties they are expected to discharge. The state civil society relations are believe to be cordial if there is what many civil society's sought from the state which are: transparency and rights of citizens to be protected at all time by the state. The concept of civil society was discussed by various scholars being in the field of sociology as well as political science. "The idea of civils society entered in political theory when theorist began to insist that a social community is capable of organizing itself independently of the direction of state power" (Dash. S.P, 2001). Therefore civil society is the sphere where the rational self-determining individual get enter voluntarily into social relationship with each other. This social relationship is based on equality, trust, respect, solidarity, networks and obeying the norms (Dash. S.,P, 2001). Another definition on the concept from (Chambers and Kopstein, 2006) as an "un-coerced associational life distinct from the family and institutions of the state".

"Civil society is a sphere apart from the state. It is a sphere in which individuals come together and form groups, pursue common enterprises, share interests, communicate over important and sometimes not so important matters. Churches, bowling leagues, service associations, chess clubs, and public interest groups are part of civil society. Legislatures, the army, police, government administration, and courts are not (Kymlicka,W, 2002). In thinking of civil society as a part of the state three features do stand out: the voluntary nature of participation; the plural quality of activities, and the negative character of civil society's

boundaries. Civil society is not just characterized by membership; it is characterized by voluntary membership” (Chambers and Kopstein, 2006).

Various theoretical explanation has been done on the issue of state-civil society relations. This paper intend to discuss some theoretical insight on the issue in which I would limit the argument on the theories of Marxist, Elites, and Neo-Consensualist in regard to the relationship of the state and civil society. Sociologically these theorist has different perspective on how state and civil societies should relate in running the affairs of the country. This discussions are well argued in the field of sociology of politics as argued by Talcott Parson one of sociological theorist. Marxism is another paradigm in sociology who argued that state and civil society relations is based on conflict, according to Marx state is just a servant to the dominant interest of the civil society, though state maybe view differently for some as a common entity for all parties while some may argue otherwise. Marx argue that only with the development of capitalism can civil society evolve fully. Looking at the historical stage the differences between the equal citizenship of the state and the inequalities between social classes become severe. When this happen state will clearly contradict itself in ensuring that class struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat is certain to happen. If that power struggle is resolved in the interest of the proletariat, then state will become no longer needed and civil society will become well. The relationship between the two for Marx is at the benefits of the one social group over others, civil society uses the state as a tool or instrument at the expense of the economically weak people.

The aim of the paper was to look into the relationship between state and civil society, which has been of a great interest in the field of social sciences especially in the field of sociology and political science. There has been various theorist that tries to look into this relationship. The aim of this paper is to look at this relations using the approach of Marxist, Elites, and Neo- Consensualist. These theories are very prominent when talking about state-civil society relationship in sociology. Elites argued otherwise as to them in any society irrespective of time and place the affairs are run by the few at the expense of the mass, the same spirit was used in the spectrum of civil society and state relations as well. They look at the few group of people in the society that has influence, power, or reputation that give them advantage over the mass. Those group of people rule over the mass with the use of those influence and power they have. In the eye of Neo-Consensualist is entirely a different story, as that of Parson view certain prospect in the social world of constituting the society that is; norms, and values. He believe the norms and value of the societies determine the entire faith and people needs to conform to those norms and values. For him conflict and inequality is abstract in the society meaning that is not present. As for Bellah he sought religion as a mechanism in the spirit of acculturating a kind of doctrine in a sense of certain that state and citizens go bye. In his famous work the civil religion where he use the speech of John F Kennedy as reference in the case of America.

Method

This article is based on literature studies, which take perspectives on conten analysis and study library on some literature pointed on marxist, elites and non-cocensualist in social sciences. Further, an author selecting and separating literature, based on international journals, books, articles and reports. analysis on this articles was made by classify and collecting the best views based on the issue.

Sociologically, it is comparative analysis on literature studies which compared marxist, elites theories and non-concensualist review on a state and civil society. Then, the linkage of each points are described and engaged to result the discussion section and conslusions.

Marxist

Marxism is a society-base theory which look at people in a particular society of being unequal, Marx argued that inequalities of civil societies shape the essentials of the state. The development of the industrial capitalism and the behavior of the state is seen as the stirring wheel to the social change. Individual's life and the political actions are determine by the relationship he or she have with the capitalist mode of production in other word bourgeoisie, which shows him as a member of a class rather than a citizen of a state. As Marx argued capitalism to be an evil practice which is an exploitative approach with a vast margin of inequality whereby some members of the society tend to gain while others stand to lose.

For Marx state is just a servant to the dominant interest of the civil society, though state maybe view differently for some as a common entity for all parties while some may argue otherwise. Marx argue that only with the development of capitalism can civil society evolve fully. Looking at the historical stage the differences between the equal citizenship of the state and the inequalities between social classes become severe. When this happen state will clearly contradict itself in ensuring that class struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat is certain to happen. If that power struggle is resolved in the interest of the proletariat, then state will become no longer needed and civil society with become well.

“Marxists clearly reject the major propositions of the liberal theories about the State. They believe that irrespective of how “liberal” or “democratic” a state claims to be, it is mainly an instrument for the domination, oppression and exploitation of the economically weak class (i.e., the class of the poor and non-owners of the means of production) by the powerful and dominant class (i.e., the class of the rich and owners of means of production). Briefly put, the state is principally a tool for the establishment and maintenance of the hegemony of the rich and the powerful over the poor. Indeed, “in an antagonistic class society the State is a political instrument, a machine for maintaining the rule of one class over another” (Obo, U. B., & Coker, M. A, 2014).

A State tending to its own dissolution, to be replaced by forms of free association - one might equally say that the philosophy which obsessed Marx, Lenin and Gramsci ought to be a “non-philosophy” – that is, one which ceases to be produced in the form of a philosophy, whose function of theoretical hegemony will disappear in order to make way for new forms of philosophical existence. And just as the free association of workers ought, according to Marx, to replace the State so as to play a totally different role from that of the State (not one of violence and repression), so it can be said that the new forms of philosophical existence linked to the future of these free associations will cease to have as their essential function the constitution of the dominant ideology, with all the compromises and exploitation that accompany it, in order to promote the liberation and free exercise of social practices and human ideas (Althusser, Louis and Balibar, Étienne, 1975).

Althusser insisted on a distinction between philosophy, science and political practice and on a certain conception of philosophy as under-labourer of revolutionary practice and theory that made it impossible to fully endorse something like Gramsci's philosophy of praxis as a theoretical laboratory producing new forms of theoretical and political thinking at the intersection of philosophy, science and politics (Frosini, F, 2017).

Furthermore, Althusser extracted from *The Prince* a forward glance situated in a Marxist periodisation of history, glancing towards absolute monarchy in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. But it is a tribute to the theoretical power of *The Prince* that it speaks of the promises, costs, contradictions and evasions of modern liberal secular society, combining both utopian and dystopian registers. Althusser's interrogation of Machiavelli also helps to assist us in understanding and appreciating the strong futuristic dimensions in the Florentine's texts, and suggests a reading of those texts which can bring out the prescience

of both Machiavelli's reflections on the emergence of modernity, and his hard-headed recognition of the costs of that process. (Geoghegan.V , 2017).

The relationship between the two for Marx is at the benefits of the one social group over others, civil society uses the state as a tool or instrument at the expense of the economically weak people. That means people with the economic influence control the state and make it work the way it desire them. Marx argue that that could only change when equality is introduces and the class system shall be get rid of and he believe that if the class is no more so as the state. Marx's argument is entirely base on the economic inequality between the civil society makes the state to stand in a funny situation in the state becomes an instrument for the lucky few at the expensive of the less fortunate once economically.

Nonetheless there has been some Marxist theorist who look into the relation of state-civil society other than Marx that is Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci did step on from the arguments made by Marx and Lenin. He made all the Marxist assumptions about the origins of class and the role of class struggle and consciousness in social change. He also look into the Marx's notion of bourgeoisie (hegemony). In his theory of hegemony highlights the importance of ideological manipulation by the ruling class over the working. Gramsci's hegemony is a kind of communicative power that refers to an ideological justification for the inequities of capitalism. According to him hegemony operates through institutions as media, such as the church and political parties. He see the use of hegemony as well as material class struggles, as being central in the overthrow of capitalism. He stressed the role of intellectuals in shaping alternation egalitarian hegemonic project to the dominant ideology of capitalism, with its emphasis upon selfish exploitation of the many by the few.

Elite's theory

Elite theory vary with the notion of Marxism and liberalism in the sense that elites approach looks power and influence in the society at a different lens as to the former. Elites sought the society into two separate class as the Marxist but not necessarily at the economical aspect only, elites look at the few group of people in the society that has influence, power, or reputation that give them advantage over the mass. Those group of people rule over the mass with the use of those influence and power they have.

“Elite theory is deep-rooted in classical sociology, especially that of Weber (2005 [1922]), Pareto (1935), Mosca (1939) and Michel (2009 [1915]). These authors are usually labeled as ‘classical elitists’. Beyond its strong roots in classical sociology, elite theory developed into a vibrant theoretical field, intersecting other theories, such as rational choice theory and political culture theory. Most elite theory reviews (e.g. de Hollanda, 2011; Khan, 2012) focus on the work of classical elitists, considered to be the founding fathers of the elitist school. Classical authors are important references as Lopez briefly reviewed their works in his paper as well, yet he intended to privilege contemporary elite theory and research, highlighting empirical findings and current research challenges” (López, 2013). The elites feels that Marxist and liberal prescription to state-civil society relationship is a threat of authoritarian socialism, due to this elite strongly rejects their prescription. Mosca argues that those who hold exercise state power are always a minority group, and below them includes the mass who never participate in the real terms in government and are subject to the will of the elite; they call them the ruled. Michel goes even further than Mosca in arguing the inevitability of the elite rule as the iron law of oligarchy. From this point they reject the notion of democracy is something they argue to impossible, because Michel believe that democracy cannot exist without organization and for him who says organizations says oligarchy (Michel, 1984: 364)

Due to the inevitability of the elite rule Mosca & Pareto dismiss the notion of popular sovereignty. Mosca even went further arguing that the democratic elections that are held are manipulated by the elite with their powers and influences or any or instrument relevant in making people to do what they want. As

to elite the two share common view but to the masses Mosca and Pareto have different view, as Pareto believes that the psychological and personal attributes suitable for government. On the other hand Mosca denies this claims that elites are morally or intellectually superior, and sees organizational skills as a key to elite rule.

Neo-Consensualist theory

Before commencing the theoretical arguments of neo-Consensualist I would briefly explain what consensualism is all about first then look into Neo-Consensualist such as Talcott Parson, Martin Lipset, Robert Bellah, and Putnam. **CONSENSUALISM** is an approach in the field of social sciences that argue that humans are born neither good nor evil. They are animals whose mind and behavior are largely shaped by their environment. When raised in a loving family and in a free and healthy society, they will be self-regulating, rational, productive, and ethical. Each human naturally strives to improve his and his children's' lives. All human improvement, material and psychological, requires the freedom of each human to pursue his happiness within a system of voluntary, mutually-beneficial social and economic intercourse. Coercion or violence is the antithesis of all human values. Therefore, government, if it exists, should do nothing but define ownership and prevent the use of force by humans against other humans.

Talcott Parson: Parson is one of the social theorist who took on from the arguments of Durkheim and Weber rather than Marx's. From Weber he adopted the role of ideas and culture in the creation of society, while from Durkheim he adopted the notion of social integrity and factors that strengthen those integrities in the societies. Parson view certain prospect in the social world of constituting the society that is; norms, and values. He believe the norms and value of the societies determine the entire faith and people needs to conform to those norms and values. For him conflict and inequality is abstract in the society meaning that is not present.

Parson saw politics as not an instrument that oppress one group of people over others; nor is it the use of state power against citizen and external enemies. However he saw power as a capacity of social system to mobilize resources to attain collective goal. Parson's view differ with that of elites and Marxist as they both see imbalance in the use of power between the state and society. For him, power is not use on personal gains as much as oppressing one group of people over others instead power is use at the interest of the masses. Talcott argued that conflict and inequality is not present in his view of the social world, while Marx argues otherwise on the case of inequality and conflict in the world.

Robert Bellah: Robert is another sociological scholar whose studies are mainly associated with the sociological study of religion, but as he work on the traditions of Durkheim and Tocqueville and also a student of Parson, what he said about sociology has a bearing on a view of politics, Bellah's arguments on the world is a distinctive way of talking about the bearing of civil society, or the civil order, on the character of politics. One of Bellah's contribution to sociology over the period of times was his thesis of civil religion. He adopt an idea of Durkheim, Bellah has argued that politics in America has become what he calls a civil religion. Durkheim originally suggested that there is no society that may not have something that they may see as a collective sentiment that fuses the people of that society together (Bellah, R. N., & Tipton, S. M. (Eds.), 2006).

Bellah look at the political system of America at that time and argues that the politics in America not as the conventional politics but as way of life or religion to American citizens. Because he sought the root of American civil religion from some political figures example John F Kennedy at his presidential inauguration 1961. He stated that Kennedy mention the word God three times in his same speech. Though American constitution has made it clear in the effort of separating churches from politics, but Bellah insist that this has not clearly been the case (Bellah, R.N, 2018). Religion has been as very vital thing in the lives

of average Americans at that time until now is seen as the case. American has a phrase that is common and unique to every American no matter your background “god save America” Bellah believes that religious values that were inculcated into citizens has created a room for citizens accepting diversity and equality.

Seymour Martin Lipset: Lipset has been a great social scientist who is one of the principle founders of the field of political sociology. Like Tocqueville, Lipset’s main intellectual passion has been the study of democracy in America or the political system of America. He was influence by the writings of Marx and Weber, but the sensibility and passion of Tocqueville seem to shine through his thoughts and writings most clearly. His analysis on the unions in New York with his collaboration with various scholars like James Coleman and others led those asking questions about unions in NY, the questions ask at that was t5rying to compare the democratic system of those unions and they ask why is it that ITU is more democratic than other unions. His “analysis in Union democracy represents an important illustration of the way that civil institutions of a society_ or in this instance, an organizations provide the means and foundation for politics, democratic politics in particular” (Ansori,M, 2009).

Through this single case studies (international typographic union) help to show how important that single case is to sociological study of the world of politics. This study has laid a foundation in the study of state and civil society relationship. In summary I would say organizations can help shaping a political democratic nation is those institutions are economically influential enough.

Robert Putnam draws from de Tocqueville to argue that civil society – citizen participation in formal organizations -- influences the success of democracy. In his study of Italy (1993), he observes that regions with higher levels of associational activity also have greater social capital and thus, he claims, more successful regional governments. He draws from Coleman (1988) to argue that membership in groups creates "social capital," or "networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam 1995:67). In this very influential 1995 piece Putnam uses the metaphor of "bowling alone" to express his concern that a decline of formal associational activity (such as bowling in leagues) erodes social capital and may thus be undermining democracy in the United States” (Booth, J. A., & Richard, P. B, 1998:792).

Contemporary Central America provides an ideal setting in which to explore the links among civil society, the formation of political and social capital, and levels of democracy. The region experienced dramatic economic growth that began in the 1960s, faltered with the oil price shock of the mid 1970s, and ended catastrophically in the late 1970s with the civil wars and depression of the 1980s.

Conclusion

There has been various theorist that tries to look into this relationship, which are very prominent when talking about state-civil society relationship in sociology. Example Marxist theory is one of the major paradigm in sociology called the conflict theory which was developed by Karl Marx as elites is more of political science and political sociology. Marxist looks the relationship between the two as conflictual meaning dominant civil society use the state as an instrument in exploiting the weak economical class. As for Marx state cannot be neutral and serve the interest of everyone as it is as source of depression to the working class through the economic advantages. Elites show the relationship different from the Marxist and liberals, as for them the state is run by few individuals at the expense of the mass. This people are a minority group that has influence through economically, socially and the like but in short they have potentials in making things happen. This minority group the called them the elite as the mas they called the ruled.

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