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Theoretical Perspectives on Media and Modernity

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It is challenging to explain the difference between life world and theoretical world in a few words. Phenomenology1 1. Reduction of the theoretical world (Weltanschauung) tries to "reduce" experience to the "pure" consciousness. In order to reach this pure consciousness one has to follow the way of "reduction". In a way of a very superficial simplification, the following four or five steps may be addressed:

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Theoretical Perspectives on Media and Modernity

Joseph Alagha

Media, Modernity, Modernization and Secularization

I. Introduction: Theoretical Framework

My line of argument is informed by Husserl's phenomenological approach that distinguishes between life worlds and theoretical worlds, and Victor Turner's approach that makes the distinction between analytical and metaphorical constructs. The bottom line of both arguments is that an analytical concept or a life world, such as law, can be defined, analyzed, and expanded; while a metaphorical one or a theoretical word like modernity cannot be. The former is dissociated from the intellectual interpretation of the world; while the latter is build into it.

It is challenging to explain the difference between life world and theoretical world in a few words. Phenomenology[1] tries to "reduce" experience to the "pure" consciousness. In order to reach this pure consciousness one has to follow the way of "reduction". In a way of a very superficial simplification, the following four or five steps may be addressed:

1. Reduction of the theoretical world (Weltanschauung)
2. Reduction of the self evidence of the life world (the non theoretical world, i.e. all what seems to be "normal", "usual","daily")
3. Reduction of one's own intentionality
4. Development of a "typic" (*Wesensschau*).

Thus, one may describe the life world as the "direct experience of one' own world" (*Unmittelbarkeit der Lebenserfahrung*) and "theoretical world" (based upon a priori categories of experiencing) as the rational objective perception of the world. Both should be "reduced" within the process of "experience" (Erkenntnis) in order to reach the pure consciousness of being.

It should be noted that Husserl seems to have associated Lebens welt ("Common-Sense-World") with two different meanings: a) Universe of perceptibility (general world) and b) concrete universality (special world).

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[1] The following exposition relies heavily on the following two books: *Husserl's Phenomenology of Animate Being* and *The Critique of Naturalism*, by Peter Reynaert.

Husserl's critique of the naturalistic interpretation of human being as a psychophysical reality is linked to the foundation of the cultural sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*). [2] Scientific analysis and explanation must respect the ontology of their subject. The more fundamental material ontology of the world we experience, which Husserl later calls "the ontology of the life-world", leads to a distinction of the so-called fundamental regions or basic ontological categories of this world. He identifies three of these: material nature, animate being and spirit.[3] A regional being is the object of and thus for Husserl constituted by a specific experience. For instance, the perception of a material thing differs from the experience of an animate being. This original experience is the basis of the material ontology, that identifies the essential (eidetic) ontological structures of a regional being by the method of "ideative abstraction" (*ideierende Abstraktion*).[4] Scientific theory is bound by this specific experience and by the eidetic structure of its object, that must be taken into account in the conceptual framework.[5] With each different region comes a different set of concepts and thus a different explanation. Therefore the three kinds of experience of regional beings found three different kinds of science: the science of the material world, the science of animated nature and finally cultural science. [6] Since animate being is a unity of Body and soul (*Seele*), the science of this being consists of two disciplines: somatology and psychology.[7] When a scientific discipline explains a regional being by concepts that cannot be applied to it, a fundamental problem arises. (Hua V, p. 91) This is the case with the naturalistic interpretation of animate being.[8]

In order to clarify this, a further distinction, that is relevant for the foundation of the cultural sciences and cuts through this threefold classification, must be mentioned. For Husserl, scientific knowledge develops in the context of a specific attitude, of which he distinguishes two kinds: the naturalistic and the personalistic attitude. (Hua IV, §§2-3, §34, §49, §62) Although this distinction is typical for Husserl, it fits in the discussion in German philosophy of science at the time, where people like Dilthey, Rickert and Windelband were arguing for the specificity of the cultural sciences against the natural sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften* versus *Naturwissenschaften*). It is important to note that this distinction results in the constitution of two comprehensive scientific domains, viz. nature and spirit,

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which do not exactly map on the above identified regions. This is due to the ambiguous nature of animate being. Material nature appears in the naturalistic attitude that entails the interpretation of animate being as psychophysical reality. [9] Spirit is studied in the personalistic attitude that involves a completely different comprehension of animate being. Husserl claims that the naturalistic study of human being as a psychophysical reality, constituted by causal relations, has only a limited validity, because it does not succeed in clarifying the specificity of human existence. A crucial element of his critique is that this failure is the result of naturalism's subsuming of human existence under the wrong ontological categories. He ultimately derives his arguments for this critique from the analysis of the original experience and from the ontology of animate being. The proper study of human existence requires a personal attitude, which is foundational for the cultural sciences. [10].

II. Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities

Benedict Anderson in his book entitled *Imagined Communities* is deconstructing the notion of a community and the phenomenon of nationalism which is relatively new. A modern state is about the distinction between 'us' and 'them' and the mechanisms of deciding upon that. Anderson clarifies that the notion of national community developed in tales, novels, and historical writings. Surveying the conditions under which national identities were formed, Anderson argues that the most salient variables for the creation of these "imagined communities" are the decline of religion and the rise of vernacular languages under the influence of print capitalism as the most salient aspect of modernization in relation to commercialism and capitalism. As early as the 16th century, print capitalism was instrumental in creating a sense of nation. Print capitalism led to a mass production of mass audiences; people who communicate in print language form a community. In other words, the exploitation of print led to the emergence of a sort of a new consciousness of the community, a national awareness and the breakdown of religion, or the monopoly of the Catholic Church over Europe.[2] As a result, Latin was replaced by vernacular languages. Martin Luther took advantage of this eventuality and embarked on commercial printing as a best seller writer using the German language. Eventually, this led to the harmonization of linguistic reason making the dissemination of the message easier and within the reach of the masses, no longer being the prerogative of the elite. Also, the role of the media in this modernization process should not be downplayed because it helped to create a unity of thought, where people in an imagined community have knowledge of each other because they share the same experiences and implicit assumptions.

Unlike Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner (1981, 1992) argues that the most important factor is the rise of industrial society that creates a cultural hegemony[3], which appears on the surface of nationalism. Anderson argues that print capitalism – or the mass distribution of books, newspapers, and other printed media – was a distinctive feature of the development of the modern industrial society as were machines and factories. Education developed to provide skills of literacy and computation giving access to the world of printed media (1991). Noteworthy, nothing is more characteristic of the school than the school textbook.

Even though both Anderson and Gellner belong to the modernist school, they exhibit differences on their views concerning nationalism. In short, Anderson argues that nationalism in inherently modern; nationalism is a new phenomenon. There never was a nation before; these nations have to imagine themselves in history i.e. try to find events in history that have national identity. Therefore, all nations made an effort to create an imagined history. Nations are imagined communities a mental entity like a community where people are willing to die for others; an altruistic community. According to Gellner, nations are the creation of nationalists. It is worth mentioning that Gellner himself was a central European intellectual who suffered from nationalism; that is why he argues that it is always a lie, a big lie. For Gellner, it was industrialization, the need for industry, which created a sort of a homogenous group. Nationalists arise because a high culture demanded a state. He remarks that the nation and the state exist and they have to be congruent. Nationalists who believed in this congruence created this nationalism and embarked on the process of modernization.

III. Is Nationalism an Imagined Community?

Although Turner rehabilitated the use of metaphors, he argued that a metaphor such as modernity is a name and cannot be defined or employed analytically; there is nothing traditional or modern in its own sense. Using the same line of argument one can contend that Durkheim did not define 'society' precisely because he knew that it is a metaphorical construct that could not be defined. The use of this line of reasoning puts Anderson's analysis in jeopardy since he has no ground to classify liberalism and fascism as political ideologies placing them under

[2] Cf. Wilson (1982) who argues that secularization led to the transformation of religious consciousness.

[3] Gramsci defined hegemony as "the ideological ascendancy of one or more groups or classes over others in civil society" (Bellamy 1994, p. 33).

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life words, and placing nationalism under theoretical words, not as an ideology. In my opinion, his position is simply untenable. If I can prove that nationalism is a *legal abstraction*, and not as an abstraction or 'Imagined Community' as Anderson contends, then it would be an ideology like liberalism and fascism. The fact that the Dutch read their newspapers only in the boarders of Holland, while the Belgian-Flemish speaking citizens do not read them and are not part of this public sphere and vice versa, proves beyond considerable doubt that a state is a *legal abstraction* and nationalism is a political ideology, not an 'imagined community' since the Dutch public sphere stops at the boundaries or boarders. If it were an imagined community, then the Flemish speaking part of Belgium would have considered itself part and parcel of Holland, but it did not, and it refused to be part of Holland in the referendum that was held to test prospects of unification. Likewise, similar examples illustrate the same point; namely, in the lands taken by France and Poland from Germany after WWII the 'Germans' living there refused to go back to their mother country or homeland because they now belong to a new *legal abstraction*, not an imagined community. In short, if Anderson's theory is right, then Anglo-Saxon political science books ought to be rewritten; however, it is not the case that a single one of these books consider nationalism as an 'imagined community.' A WW II historical example that illustrates my point is that when General Petain was being court-marshaled for treason, he was asked: "Why did you corroborate with the Nazi's under the umbrella of Vichy government?" He answered: "But there was no France." Did he mean France as a legal abstraction or as an 'imagined community'? He definitely meant the former since an imagined community never ceases to be. Based on the aforementioned, I find Benedict Anderson's argument not that convincing, especially when it comes to nationalism. Nevertheless, Anderson "refers to a growing sense of reading together, the public sphere emerges less from associations, more strictly the domain of civil society, than from ways of dealing confidently with others in an expanding social universe of shared communication" (Eickelman and Anderson, p.16).

IV. Islam and Modernization

Ayubi argues, "movements of political Islam appear to be more vigorous in countries that that have openly discarded a schema for modernization" and secularization such as Egypt, Algeria, Iran (during the Shah's time), Sudan (during Numeiri's regime), Syria (before 1982 Hama crack down), Afghanistan (before the collapse of Zia Haq's regime), etc. (p. 118). He adds that the threat of Islamic movements in Sharifi Arab monarchies such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and some smaller gulf countries such as Oman, Qtar, and UAE "remains relatively muted." Again, Ayubi repeats his thesis, namely, that "political Islam appears to be basically a response movement to regimes that are avowedly more 'modernist' and secularizing" (1991: 188-19).

Roy contends, "*Islamism* is a product of *modernization*" (1994: 50) (Leaders of most contemporary Islamic movements are technocrats who are educated in the West). He adds that,

The Islamists readapt *modernity* to a newly rediscovered identity. They favor industrial development, urbanization, education for the masses and the teaching of science. They offer the oppressed (*al-Mustad'afin*) of all the countries the dream of access to the world of development and consumption, from which they feel excluded. Islamism is *sharia* plus electricity…The masses of revolutionary Islam are also a product of *modern society*. Revolution means *social integration* and *upward mobility*… *Modernization* involves the juxtaposition of ostentatious consumption on the part of the new rich with the new needs of the poor. Hence riots over prices and the attacks against symbols of wealth and Westernization…Islamists are products of actors upon the *modern urban space*" (1994: 52-53; 55; 59).

In a similar vein, Eickelman and Piscatori contend in argument that "The Iranian revolution helped trigger a rethinking of *modernization theory* [namely, no modernization without secularization] in the West" (1996: 24). While, M.K. Masud claims that if *'Ibadat* are rationalized and removed, implies it would be a victory for the secularization thesis and Islam will be like Protestantism in this respect (Masud, et al. 2009). (This is possible only if every Muslim becomes a *musafir*! Or as Gellner remarks, if everyone becomes a Mamluk having no communal root (1981, 1992). Employing Anderson's argument, the Islamic Revolution in Iran can be seen as a modern revolt by tapes and media —as a reaction against a corrupt-un-Islamic system of government—resulting in a regime of "truth", and a new political rationality and spirituality. Thus, religion has to re-enter the public sphere (and politics) as a post-modern revolution.

V. Habermas' Public Sphere as Precursor to all Media

Habermas' trace of Marxism can be seen in his call for the reconstruction of the manifestations of class consciousness as well as for a revision of theory so as to avoid a mechanistic treatment of the relationship of base to superstructure. Habermas argues that capitalist societies, in which modernization takes place, tend to destroy the moral order on which they in fact depend. We live in a social order where economic growth tends to take precedence over everything else; this situation creates a lack of meaning in everyday life. In this respect, Habermas retorts to Durkheim's anomie,

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although he applies it in a new and original way. In my opinion, Habermas is influenced by both Marx and Weber.

According to Habermas, the public sphere which refers to an arena of public debate and discussion in modern society is the indicator of modernity *par excellence*. In line with the views of the Frankfurt School of social thought, Habermas contends that Marx had not given enough attention to the influence of culture in modern capitalist society. The Frankfurt School made extensive study of 'culture industry' i.e. the entertainment industries of films, TV, popular music, radio, newspapers and magazines. They contend that the dissemination of the culture industry, with its undemanding and standardized products, undermines the capacity of individuals for critical and independent thought. Building on these themes, Habermas analyses the development of the media from the early 18th century up to the present, tracing out the emergence, and subsequent decay, of the public sphere. He defines the public sphere as an area of public debate in which issues of general concern can be discussed and opinions formed. The public sphere first developed in the salons and coffee houses of London, Paris and other European cities. People used to meet in such salons to discuss issues of the moment, using as a means for such debate the news sheets and newspapers which had just begun to emerge. Political debate became a matter of particular importance. Although only a small number of the population were involved (the tyranny of the minority) Habermas claims that the salons were vital for the early development of democracy because they introduced the idea of resolving political problems through public discussion. In theory, the public sphere involves individuals coming together as equals in a forum of public debate. As Peter Burke puts it, "Habermas discusses the invasion of the traditional public sphere, restricted to a small elite, by the bourgeoisie… 'private people came together as a public', who developed their own institutions such as coffee-houses, theatres and newspapers, especially in large cities" (p.78).

VI. Thompson and the Media

Unlike Habermas, Thompson argues that the public sphere is not as lucid as it seems He contends that "different periods, different cultures and different social groups[4] may well draw the line between the public and private in different places." Nevertheless, the promise offered by the early development of the public sphere has not been fully realized. Democratic debate in modern societies is stifled by the development of the culture industry. The development of mass media and mass entertainment causes the public sphere to become a false pretence. Politics is stage-managed by the government and the media, while commercial interests triumph over those of the public. He argues strongly that public opinion is not formed through open, rational discussion, rather through manipulation and control (Cf. Grasmsci, Bourdieu, and Foucault), as is the case in advertising.

By way of an interpolation, Thompson argues that mass media change the balance between the public and the private in our lives. Unlike Habermas, he argues that much more comes into the public domain than before; this leads quite often to debate and controversy. Thus, Thompson broadens the mandate of Habermas' public sphere from an elitist to a populist arena. To elaborate, Thompson argues that mass media don't deny us the possibility of critical thought as Habermas contends, rather they provide us with many forms of information to which we couldn't have access before. Simply put, Habermas treats us too much as the passive recipients of media messages. Thompson writes,

Media messages are commonly discussed by individuals in the course of reception and subsequent to it…[They] are transformed through an ongoing process of telling and retelling, interpretation and reinterpretation, commentary, laughter and criticism…By taking hold of the messages and routinely incorporating them into our lives…we are constantly shaping and reshaping our skills and stocks of knowledge, testing our feelings and tastes, and expanding the horizons of our experience (*The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995, pp.42-43).

a) Wilson and the secularization thesis

Wilson contends that the secularization thesis implies that "there are processes of society 'becoming more secular' which extend backward in time over the long course of human history, and which have occurred intermittently, and with varying incidence and rapidity…secularization is not only a change occurring in society, it is also a change of society in its basic organization… [leading to a] fundamental social change" (p. 148). He adds that secularization is "that process by which religious institutions, actions, and consciousness, lose their social significance… [it] is a long-term process occurring in human society" (p. 149; 151). Wilson defines secularization in a nutshell form on p. 174 as "the transformation of religious consciousness" i.e. as the diminishing public role of religion in society (one of the serious impediments to secularization is folk, popular, or local religion; low Islam using Gellner's terminology). Bruce and Wallis, in line with Wilson, define secularization as "the diminishing social significance of religion" (p.11). (It appears to me that Bruce and Wallis were highly influenced by Wilson's analysis; that is why they copied closely Wilson's argument, but in an abbreviated form offering a

[4] For instance, Bourdieu remarks that men and women have different *habitus* (field practice). See Part II of this paper.

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compressed version of Wilson. In this context I take their views to express and represent his views). In other words, secularization cannot be caused because the scientific worldview has proven religion to be false. Therefore, science cannot prove that religion is false; this is not the basis of secularization. Bruce and Wallis argue that the religious worldview is holistic where everything is connected to everything else. Therefore, there is something in the scientific worldview that has contributed to secularization. Therefore, the *modernization thesis* runs as follows: modernization brings inevitably secularization, i.e. modernization without secularization can't take place; this is how the social significance of religion diminishes. In answering the question of why does modernization bring about secularization, they notice three different elements or features of modernization: (1) social differentiation: i.e. the transition from organic to mechanistic solidarity. According to Wilson, "societalization" brings secularization and demoralization (p. 178).

b) Gellner's pendulum-swing theory

In this context, Gellner offers his pendulum-swing theory. (2) societalization or the withering, disappearance of community and the flourishing of society. The social function of religion has disappeared, but the private function is still instilled. This falls under the functional definition of religion, i.e. what religion does. Secularization creeps in because the public and social role of religion disappears or becomes less important. (3) Rationalization is a very important aspect of modernization in the West; it's having its toll and is gradually sweeping toward the Islamic world. Ethical routinization leads to disenchantment of the world, which in turn leads to the augmentation of purpose rationality because reaching the objectives becomes more central. Wilson analyses the symptoms of secularization and its various applications. He writes, Secularization relates to the diminution in the social significance of religion. Its application covers such things as, the sequestration by political powers of the property and facilities of religious agencies; the shift from religious to secular control of various of the erstwhile activities and functions of religion; the decline in the proportion of their time, energy, and resources which men devote to super-empirical concerns [such as thinking about salvation]; the decay of religious institutions; the supplanting, in matters of behavior, of religious precepts by demands that accord with strictly technical criteria; and the gradual replacement of a specifically religious consciousness …by an empirical, rational, instrumental orientation; the abandonment of mystical, poetic, and artistic interpretations of nature and society in favor of matter-of-fact description and, with it, the rigorous separation of evaluative and emotive dispositions from cognitive and positivistic orientations (p. 149).

VII. Secularization and Islam

The pressing question that comes to mind is that has secularization occurred in the Muslim world? Or has the Muslim countries modernized with no secularization? Gellner argues in *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* on p. 5, that "the secularization thesis does hold", but Islam is the only exception to the secularization thesis and it will remain so, "Islam is inherently unsecularizable/impervious to secularization" in theory and in practice and this will never change (1981, 1992). In other words, he essentializes Islam. Essence determines social progress in society. In his neo-Ibn Khaldunian discourse, Gellner contends that ant society determined by Islam is influenced by Ibn Khaldun. Again, this is a very essentialist view of post modernism. However, in my opinion, his argument is untenable because he can't simply explain present day Islam by looking where, when, and how it started. Now I attempt some kind of a heuristic comparison between Gellner and Wilson. Gellner argues that high Islam (puritans and scripturalists) remain the dominant force. According to Wilson there is a shift; there are no multidimensional relations in society, rather a single relation. Change in society implies that certain things disappear. This is what Gellner attributes to folk Islam. On p. 171, Wilson distinguishes between magic and religion. Since religion is more rationalized, he calls this secularization. Unfortunately, Wilson does not write about Islam or contemporary Islamic movements, rather about revival movements in Christianity. (In my opinion, the room is wide and the floor is open to comparison or at least enlightening tools for comparison with and applicability to Islam, as the long quotation illustrates). Revival movements in Christianity mobilize previously non-socialized people by the church; they eradicate magic by: reducing immantism[5], stressing transcendent values and rationalization, i.e. rationalize understanding and commitment. Gellner argues that nationalism does a better job than religion. According to Wilson, nationalism is strong only when the community is strong. He adds that besides salvation, religious institutions have many social functions. As I have shown, according to Wilson very much of religion is associated with community, not society. Is this the case in Islam? It is certainly true for folk religion. Is high Islam a religion of community? According to Gellner, the 'functional equivalent' of religion is nationalism; in the West nationalism took the place of religion. While, in the Arab and Islamic world we see an opposite trend, namely, Islam took the place of nationalism, or some kind of 'Islamic nationalism' emerged. (Does not take

[5] An immanentist tries to bridge facts and values by arguing that the rational order is present in the world of senses as a potential and a causal principle. This way of bridging the "is" with the "ought to be" makes possible for the historical polity to grow into perfection.

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into consideration the level of conscious motivation). According to Gellner, "Islam provides a national identity, notably in the context of the struggle with colonialism- the modern Muslim 'nation' is often simply the sum-total of Muslims on a given territory. Reformist Islam confers a genuine shared identity on what would otherwise be a mere summation of the under-privileged" (p. 15). It is worth mentioning that there is nothing in Christianity resembling pan-Islam. The question that comes to mind is does Islam resist secularization? Or is it just a stage? Wilson writes on p. 149 about the "super empirical concerns" i.e. thinking about God and salvation. Islamists have empirical, oriental, and instrumental orientations. As Eickelman and Piscatori remark, everyone is his own knowledgeable authority (*'alim*). The question that comes to mind is, is a form of modernization possible where community does not disappear (a collective multi-dimensional community, or a virtual community on the Internet or the Social Media)?

Wilson argues that the society is the nation state and the internet travels across state boundaries. Finally, Bruce and Wallis argue that science leads to a certain way of looking at things by being secular and by imposing different orders of logical structures including religion. Therefore, science leads to secularization. Indeed, it is very hard to use modern technology without being influenced and fascinated by it.

Peter Burke writes on p. 145, that "Earnest Gellner, is particularly interested in the interplay of production, coercion, and cognition in human history, but concentrates on the last of these factors."

Gellner's pendulum-swing theory of Islam: Benefiting from Hume's doctrine of the tendency of society to oscillate endlessly from polytheism to monotheism and back again, Gellner finds this constant oscillation between the two poles to be the most interesting fact about Muslim religious life. He attempts a sociological characterization of the two opposing poles based primarily on his study of Moroccan society. High Islam: One pole is distinguished by a set of characteristics that include strict monotheism, Puritanism, a stress on scriptural revelation (i.e. on literacy using Messick's terminology), egalitarianism between believers, the absence of special mediation, sobriety rather than mysticism, and a stress on the observance of rules rather than emotional states. Low Islam or Folk Religion: The other pole is distinguished by a tendency toward hierarchy, a multiplicity of spirits, the incarnation of religion in perceptual symbols or images rather than in the abstract recorded world, a tendency to mystical practices, and a loyalty to personality rather than respect for the rules. Gellner argues that the first set of characteristics is favored in an urban setting, while the second set is favored in rural communities. Cities are the center of trade, Muslim learning and power. The rest of the society is composed of tribal lands and resist central authority. Such a paradigm of the traditional Muslim state tries to incorporate Ibn Khaldun's theory of the tribal circulation of elites and Hume's schema of religious life. However, the situation is not completely symmetrical because Gellner is more of an 'Ibn Khadunian' in his overall approach.

Like his pendulum-swing theory of Islam, Gellner has oscillated between Orientalist and sociological analysis. His sociological characterization treats Muslim religious life in terms of rural-urban dichotomy. In Arab cities he sees strict monotheism, scriptural revelation, and the observance of traditions. In contrast, Muslims in rural areas emphasise hierarchal relationships and expresses belief thru reliance on sainthood, symbolism and mystical practices. However, in his pendulum-swing theory of Islam, Gellner shifts towards an Orientalist position by drawing comparisons among Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, and other religions without taking into account that they exist in different societies. He argues that in contrast to other religions, Islam is more "a blueprint of a social order…more total in number of dimensions" and possesses "a kind of independent existence in scriptural record." That is why he declared Islam "inherently unsecularizable/impervious to secularization" in theory and in practice.

Gellner points out that "Islam offered "a dignified identity" to the "newly uprooted masses." In Istanbul and Ankara, Cairo and Asyut, Algiers and Fes, and on the Gaza strip, Islamist parties successfully organized and appealed to "the downtrodden and dispossessed." Oliver Roy argues that "The mass of revolutionary Islam is a product of modern society…the new urban arrivals, the millions of peasants who have tripled the populations of the great Muslim metropolises."[6]

a) Final Word

Historically secularism has been furthered as an alternative to divine right of kings. What is of concern to us is that secularism in the context of social and political integration has to become a genuine and integral part of Arab and Islamic nationalist ideology because of the urgent need to achieve national unity and to secure equality for all citizens before the law regardless of religious affiliation or other differences. The promotion of rationality and scientific thinking, the liberation of women from discriminatory traditions, the enhancement of modernity, the liberation of religion from government control, and the democratization of the state and other institutions should also result from the adoption of secularism.

To the extent that Arab and Islamic secularism resembles Western secularism, it is because both are related to the process of urbanization, industrialization,

[6] E. Gellner. "Up from Imperialism." *New Republic*. 22 May 1989, p.35; O. Roy. *The Failure of Political Islam*, p.53.

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democratization, modernization, and nation building. What the process of secularization involves is the separation of religion from state. The abolition of political sectarianism, the encouragement of rationalism, and the scientific interpretation of reality all follow from the aforementioned. These alterations in the relationship of the state to its citizens in turn strengthen basic civil rights and ensure the universal application of laws.

Unfortunately, however, secularism continues to be one of the most controversial and sensitive notions in the Arab and Islamic world, particularly in times of Islamic resurgence. Therefore, serious discussions of secularism are avoided for fear of a possible clash with religious institutions and movements. At the root of the controversy over secularism is its ambiguity regarding several related issues and questions such as the following: Does Islam allow for secularism? Is secularism an alien concept imported from the West and externally imposed on the Arabs? Is secularism necessarily anti-religious and atheistic?

It seems that opinion is almost unanimous that Islam is opposed to secularism by its very nature. Muslim traditionalists and reformers agree that a Muslim state must in theory be governed according to the shari'a. Thus, Sayyed Qutb claims that Islamic government is opposed to "human positive laws" and is obliged to carry on the "total revolution" of Islam. Fazlur Rahman broadens the mandate of Qutb arguing that "Secularism destroys the sanctity and universality of all moral values…secularism is necessarily atheistic."[7]

Qutb's and Rahman's views have also been expressed by the religious establishment. For example, The Lebanese Council of Ulama declared in 1976 that "Secularism is a system of principles and practices rejecting every form of religious faith and worship. Secularism has no place in the life of a Muslim; either Islam is to exist without secularism, or secularism to exist without Islam."[8] Orientalists see to agree that Islam is necessary opposed to secularism. Von Grunebaum observes that "the Arab most fully realized the integration of religion and what we now call nationality. To him, state and religion become co-extensive to such a degree that …he…became immune to the movement of complete secularization …even where he took the side of progress and reform."[9]

And so, I contend that secularism was not borrowed from the West out of imitation. Most likely, the concept has genuinely emerged out of and in response to urgent needs in Arab and Islamic countries, particularly in pluralistic ones. Secularism is not necessarily atheistic or anti-religious. On the contrary, it may contribute to the creation of a better climate for the development of greater spiritual purity when religion is outside the arena of power politics. Instead of being used as a tool for of control and instigation (cf. Gramsci) or reconciliation (cf. Durkheim's consensus theory), religion could pursue the more enriching enterprise of achieving its central, sublime goals.

Gramsci's Hegemony, Bourdieu's habitus, and Foucault's Interpolations

It seems that the fulcrum of Gramsci's, Bourdieu's, and Foucault's works rests on the notion of power. Gramsci sees power in hegemony or cultural predominance; Bourdieu views power in *habitus* (field practice); Foucault puts the icing on the cake when he radically argues that what appears as apparent hegemony is domination and power relations which are usually not recognized as so. Therefore, unlike Durkhiem who elaborates the consensus theory of culture, the trio, in line with Marx, propound the conflict theory of culture against the backdrop of the classical definition of culture as an area of consensus and shared norms.

To begin with, Gramsci defined hegemony as "the ideological ascendancy of one or more groups or classes over others in civil society" (Bellamy 1994, p.33). Gramsci, in line with Weber, believed that the state should be the sole authorizer of the use of force or "coercive power." He shares with Foucault the conviction that the state legally enforces discipline when there is no room for consent. The examples of hegemony that Gramsci gives are "Catholicism" … "he was fascinated by the history and organization of the Roman Church. He regarded Croce's philosophy as serving a similar functioning legitimizing Giolittean Italy, albeit only to fellow intellectuals" (p.34).The hegemony of the Catholic Church is clear through its vertical hierarchy and institutions that crush any chance of class consciousness among the masses. Other examples of hegemony, domination, or control are the totalitarian states such as Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Socialist China that not only control the behavior of the subjects, but also manipulates, brain washes them completely, and orders them how and what to think. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that Mussolini's imprisonment of

[7] Tamara Sonn, "Secularism and National Stability in Islam" *Arab Studies Quarterly*. 9. 3 (Summer 1987): 284.
However, Sadiq al-Azm in his book entitled *Naqid al-Fikr al-Dini* shows how religiously oriented intellectuals grant Islamic legitimacy to the government they are linked to irrespective of its coloration. He observes that some Islamic intellectuals and ulama "make great efforts to grant legitimacy to the order…they are linked to irrespective of its nature…Every Arab order, irrespective of its coloration, posses respected Islamic institutions prepared to issue a religious decree [fatwa] to the effect that its policy is in complete harmony with Islam" (pp. 45-46).

[8] "Declaration of the Council of Ulama in Lebanon on Secularism" in *Islamic Law and Change in Arab Society*. St. Joseph University, Beirut: Center for the Study of the Modern Arab World, 1976.

[9] G. E. von Grunebaum. (1961). *Islam: Essays in the Nature and Growth of a cultural Tradition*. New York: Barnes and Noble, p. 60.

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Gramsci in order to force him not to think was a total fiasco. The two examples of hegemony that I want to elaborate upon are Gramsci's expansion of the Marxian concept of the state as an instrument in the hands of the ruling class, and the petite bourgeoisie or capitalists who own the means of production and dominate the organization of production as well as the relations of production. In this respect, Peter Burke questions if the ruling class' power depends on coercion or consensus or a reconciliation process in between. He contends that Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony is that the ruling class reigned by force as well as by influence and persuasion, at least indirectly. He writes, "the subordinate classes learned to see society through their ruler's eyes thanks to their education and also to their place in the system" (p.86).

According to Gramsci, the proletariat contributed to their own misery by accepting a political doctrine advocated by the petite bourgeoisie against their own interests as a result of false ideology or false consciousness. This brings in the role of the state and its institutions. Since the Italian culture was hegemonic, there was no revolution: the state dominated and determined everything, while the other organ of the suprastructure, namely, civil society tried to function as an independent private institution from the state. The solution he proposes, by working on the cultural sphere, is to replace Marx's false consciousness with his concept of cultural hegemony, thus making the struggle a conscious one, ridding the masses of the delusions and illusions that haunted them. Commenting on Gramsci's hegemony, Mesick writes on p. 159 that "Gramsci was generally concerned with how an elite-developed 'conception of the world' came to constitute the quietly constrained received wisdom of ordinary people [masses]. One facet of the complex workings of hegemony concerns scholarly efforts to anchor 'ruling ideas' systematically in the thought of those [the masses] who, as Marx put it, 'lack the means of mental production'."

And so, Gramsci in his materialist cultural theory directed us towards a Marxist theory of politics. (Gramsci is a bridge-builder between the old [Ibn Khaldun] and the new tradition [Bourdieu]). His emphasis on hegemony or dominance of some social group or class in power has promoted some critics to suggest he was advocating reformist interpretations or undialectically separating politics from economics. Gramsci tended to use categories of analysis, for example, in distinguishing between state and civil society, as did Hegel and Marx, in his early work. However, Gramsci's conception of state is varied. Crises occur in the hegemony of the ruling class because it fails in some political undertaking and the masses become discontented and actively resistant. Such a crises of hegemony is a crisis of authority, or a crisis of state. Under such conditions a ruling class may seize control and retain power by crushing its adversaries (cf. Khumayni and the Islamic Revolution). Gramsci examined this activity in Europe in terms of the experiences of Italy and other nations in Europe. He seems to be agreeing with the structuralist position that the activities of the state are determined by the structures of society rather than by persons in position of state power. He writes that, The fact that the state/government, conceived as an autonomous force, should reflect back its prestige upon the class upon which it is based, is of the greatest practical and theoretical importance, and deserves to be analyzed fully if one wants a more realistic concept of the state itself…It can, it seems, be incorporated into the function of elites or vanguards, i.e. of parties, in relation to the class which they represent. This class, often, as a economic fact …might not enjoy any intellectual or moral prestige, i.e. might be incapable of establishing its hegemony, hence of founding a state.[1]

In other words, Gramsci bridged the gap between domination, hegemony and civil society when he made the latter part of the superstructure, where the state practices its control and domination through culture and ideology – i.e. through the school, church, political party, syndicate, press, and all social and interest groups (pp.32-33). Also, the state practices its direct control through bureaucracy, economic and monetary policies and institutions such as the army and police, etc. (cf. Foucault). While previous theories looked at the political, social, and political-organizational structure of civil society and the classical functioning of the state, the importance of Gramsci's theory for civil society is the opening of horizons for reflecting upon the role that culture and cultured/educated people play in control and domination, and the role of ideology in influencing public opinion and disseminating state influence.[2]

In answering the question of how does culture work, and how does it influence behavior? Gramsci sides with consensus rather than coercion. Thus, the standard interpretation of Gramsci (which is a bit simplistic) is that hegemony or cultural predominance is achieved by consensus in civil society, rather than

[10] Antonio Gramsci. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Edited and translated by Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971, p.269.

[11] In this respect, Thompson argues that "Ideology is about the exercise of symbolic power" or how ideas become used to hide, justify or legitimate the interests of the dominant groups (Gramsci's ruling class) in the social order. (cf. Bourdieu's gift as an act of symbolic violence). Thompson offers a major new analysis of the role of the media in the rise of modern societies. He believes that mass media greatly expand the scope of ideology in modern societies. They reach mass audiences and are based on "quasi-interaction" i.e. audiences can't answer back in a direct way. It is worth mentioning that Habermas also argues that ideology is tied to communication that is 'systematically distorted' by the exercise of domination.

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coercion by the state. But, cultural hegemony can trod the battle lines between civil society and the state. Indeed, in the cultural sphere, the state exploits civil society to achieve hegemony and control its subjects.

VIII. Battle of Semantics or a Tug of War?

Perry Anderson in his article entitled "The Antinomies of Gramsci" published in 1975 argued that it is not the case that hegemony is taken as a solution to cultural problems. James Scott in his book called *Weapons of the Weak* acknowledges that although there is cultural hegemony, the poor don't revolt in order to abolish class differences. What they do as a result of relative deprivation is to protest, commit arson and sabotage the belongings of the rich. According to Scott, Gramsci makes too much of his alleged notion of consensus, but one should doubt that as well as question whether shared values be emphasized or downplayed. Scott concludes that there is too much debate and conflict in civil society that ruptures the chances of achieving consensus.

Peter Burke broadens the mandate of Gramsci's concept of hegemony by posing the following three questions:

1) Is cultural hegemony to be assumed to be a constant factor has it only operated in certain places and at certain times? If the latter, what are the conditions and the indicators of its presence?
2) Is the concept purely descriptive, or is it supposed to be explanatory? If the latter, is the explanation proposed one which refers to the conscious strategies of the ruling class (or of groups within it) or what might be called the latent rationality of their actions?
3) How are we to account for the successful achievement of this hegemony ? Can it be established without the collision or connivance of some at least of the dominated? Can it be resisted with success? Does the ruling class simply impose its values on the subordinate classes, or is there some kind of compromise? " (p. 86).

Building on the aforementioned three questions one can inject Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence as a correlate of habitus in order to explain how hegemony is established or maintained. First, I will Endeavour to give a nutshell definition of habitus.

According to Bourdieu habitus can be defined as "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a *conscious* aiming at ends or expresses mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them…[it is done] without any calculation, in relation to objective potentialities, immediately inscribed in the present, things to do or not to do, things to say or not to say, in relation to a probable, 'upcoming' future which… puts itself forward with an urgency and a claim to existence that excludes all deliberation…*The habitus is a spontaneity without consciousness or will*" (emphasis added) (pp.96-97, 100). Building on Bourdieu, Peter Burke defines habitus as "a set of schemes enabling agents to generate an infinity of practices adapted to endlessly changing situations" whose essence is a type of "regulated improvisation" (p.120). According to Messick, Bourdieu's habitus puts "emphasis on the bodily basis and implicit qualities of the dispositions involved, reference to language models, and emphasis on the importance of repetition/practice for inculcation and reproduction …there is a separate habitus associated with each of the class-based 'conditions of existence' of modern societies."[10]

In other words, habitus is internalized and historically determined (it changes over time and it is instilled as a result of external things), not fully conscious and goal directed (subconscious, half-conscious). Habitus is between structure and agency; it is a second nature. Moreover, habitus is an embodied structure and a system of *dispositions* towards behavior that determines concrete actions; not 'actions' as such, rather what underlies them. Habitus always involves relations of symbolic power that are hidden. (For example, in giving a gift power relations should be mastered; therefore, false consciousness is a necessary aspect of social behavior which underlies conflict). According to Peter Burke, Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence (or symbolic capital exhibited by gift exchange) "refers to the imposition of the culture of the ruling class on dominated groups, and especially to the process by which these dominated groups are forced to recognize the ruling culture as legitimate and their own culture as illegitimate" (p.86). (cf. example of gift). In this respect, I would like to point out that upper and middle-class French people (Gramsci's petite bourgeoisie) practice conspicuous consumption in order to maintain their status and hegemony over the lower classes. Finally, Gramsci argues that an ideology should lead to emancipation. He writes on p. 36, "An ideology would be legitimate to the extent that it led to the maximum freedom for individuals." Bourdieu mirrors a similar notion, namely, that social theory should contribute to the emancipation and delegitimization of repression and power by cracking what Baudrillard calls hyperreality. It maintains class differences, social taste, and masks social inequality.

[10] Brinkley Messick. (1996). *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society* (Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies). California: University of California Press, p. 226.

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Both Gramsci and Bourdieu argue that culture is a prime area of conflict. Therefore, unlike Huntington who propounded a 'clash of civilizations', they propagated a clash of cultures. In their work, culture is related to key terms such as hegemony, consensus (cooperation using anthropological terminology), and conflict (competition using anthropological terminology). Therefore, some of the questions that come to mind are the following: How to account for culture in terms of conflict, knowing that conflict is omnipresent anywhere and everywhere? And how to localize relations of power in the sphere of culture? (Foucault claims that Gramsci furnished the tools of thought). This brings us to Macloed's works on "Accommodating Protest" which enquires into the question of 'why do women cooperate in their own misery or oppression?

IX. Modernity and Cultural Authenticity

Macloed's book entitled A*ccommodating Protest: Working Women, the New Veiling, and Change in Cairo* and her article called "Hegemonic Relations and Gender Resistance: The New Veiling as Accommodating Protest in Cairo" are a welcomed addition to the debate between modernity and cultural authenticity. According to her, veiling is a social movement that "refers the political re-appropriation of Islamic religiosity and way of life… [it] is the most salient emblem and women the newest actors of contemporary Islamism … Islamic veiling cross-cuts power relations between Islam and the West, modernity and tradition, secularism and religion, as well as between men and women and women themselves." Veiling for Westerners is "the main obstacle to modernization"; for Islamists "it is the leading symbolic force [cf. Bourdieu] against the degeneration of society." Commenting further on Macloed's argument, one can reflect on the issue of women's own choice, and being forced by others to do so. Thus, not every woman wearing a scarf is an Islamist. Women wear it not necessary to engender support for a certain political party, or as a religious duty. It might be the reflection of something going on for generations that quickly becomes popular as a fashion, a new model. This more modern fashionable Islamic dress breaks the barriers between lower class women and higher class ones, simply because they look the same. Further, it engenders respect and grants women privileged access to the public sphere and public space socially and politically; they are regarded by society as pious Muslims and good mothers. In short, they wear the *hijab* and Islamic dress as a sort of coping strategy in order to accommodate protest being fully conversant of the tension between the woman's role as a mother and a wife on one hand, and working to make like better for her children and family on the other hand. (Foucault offers another answer to the question of why are women conniving in their own oppression? His answer is *discourse*, discourse that controls people's behavior and conditions their thoughts. He writes that, "It is impossible for knowledge not to engender power"; therefore, discourse is a form of power and domination). Thus, on close scrutiny, it turns out that veiling is a sign of upward mobility; women wear the veil to elevate themselves socially and politically, thus contributing to their emancipation by creating public spaces for themselves as did the Welfare Party in Turkey, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Lebanon. As Eickelman and Piscatori remark, "In Iran as of 1994, 30% of the government employees were women, and 40% of university students were women, up from 12% in 1978" (p. 95); in Lebanon 95% of the educators of the "Party of God" (Hizbullah) are women.

a) The Power of the Word: Discourse

Discourse can be defined as the entire corpus or body of writing (or unwritten) on a certain subject written in a certain period and cultural area or era. The late Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd defined discourse as "text in communication pattern."[11] Discourse is a way of speaking and writing aimed at control, hegemony, and domination exhibiting an 'elective affinity' between knowledge and power. According to Foucault, in fighting or analyzing a discourse, we will be creating another; therefore, discourse is a prison. For example, Foucault claimed that sexuality is always bound up with social power. He challenged the idea that acquiring knowledge leads to increased freedom; rather he saw knowledge as a means of constraining, confining, and controlling people. Even in the field of education, Foucault has shown that schools flourished as part of the administrative apparatus of the modern state. According to him, the hidden curriculum was discipline and about the control of children. This brings to mind Bourdieu's notion of cultural reproduction, which refers to the ways in which schools, in conjunction with other social institutions, help perpetuate social and economic inequalities across the generations. Through the hidden curriculum, schools influence the learning of values, attitudes and habits.

The common theme of "Truth and Power" and "Powers and Strategies" is the 'power' of repression. The pressing question that comes to mind is that: is truth outside power, and does knowledge free from truth? Foucault conveyed a distrust of social conventions (cf. Bourdieu's phenomenon of 'good taste') for their power to normalize individuals. He questions if there is an authentic self, or if an individual's selfhood is determined by all different discourses one is a subject of and is subjected to. Foucault analyses aspects of history such as knowledge not usually

[11]Nasr Abu Zayd. (2006). *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

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touched upon by Marxism, but is against its historicism and economic determinism. His analyses are specific, not global and holistic, focusing on practices and technologies, rather than on theories, ideologies, or rationalities. His common grounds with structuralism are the insider/outsider criticism of modern western culture (comparison with the other building on anthropology), cultural conditioning, and determinism in the constitution of the self. He argues against objectification (making individuals into objects), disciplinary power, docile bodies, dividing practices, and the eye of surveillance (cf. Gramsci and Bourdieu). He writes that "My objective has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made into subjects." He assumes that all social reality is assumed; therefore, it has a history. His major concern is to refute Freud's "repressive hypothesis" and replace it by relations of power and domination (cf. Gramsci). He argues that the truth about one's sexuality can and should be liberated with the help of expert knowledge. He contends that Freud's hypothesis is attractive due to the feel-good factor and the promise of unimagined future pleasures. He illustrates how the discourse of sexuality developed in the 19th and 20th centuries. He highlights two poles: social body (populations) and individual body. The relation to class is the utility of the incest taboo in upholding class domination (cf. Gramsci). Foucault criticises the negative model of power derived from the idea of the sovereign dispensing justice downwards. His view is that power is productive, producing discourse and forming knowledge. Turning upside down the pyramid of power (sovereign-as-visible to subject-as-visible), the result of new technologies and concerns: "Cutting off the king's head."

Media: Democracy, the Public Sphere, and Civil Society

Before I address the topic, I would like to clarify my conceptual understanding of the terms in question: democracy and civil society. Noteworthy, Habermas's concept of public sphere has been discussed in Part I.

Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as "government *for* the people, *by* the people, and *to* the people." Before I define civil society, I think a historical survey of the concept is enlightening. The social contract tradition exemplified by Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Montesquieu and others stopped short of the concept of the state; their major concern was with civil society. Hegel was the first to distinguish between civil society and the state laying the foundations of the former. Unlike Kant who contended that the thesis (positive) and its anti-thesis (negative) annihilate each other, Hegel argued that out of this opposition or dialectic a higher stage is reached which he labeled as synthesis. As such, he started to construct history in the form of triads. The first one witnessed the opposition between: being-nonbeing, resulting in becoming (or change). The final triad, which is our concern, elaborated the dialectic between: family-civil society, resulting in the state where history ends. To elaborate, Hegel's theory of the development of the modern liberal state: the mind (*Geist*) in the liberal state: Hegel describes the characteristic elements of liberal politics based on his methodological assumptions, namely, dialectic and *Geist*. They are intended to display the manner in which ethical recognition or substance manifest itself in institutional life. He called them the three moments of life:

1. 1st moment: family: It is in the shared life of the family that individuals find their ethical relations and selfhood. It is not as individuals, but as husband (subject) and wife (object) in the institution of marriage as a synthesis. In this institution men and women receive concrete ethical rights and obligations. One of the obligations is the moral formation of the offspring of their union.
2. 2nd moment: civil society: The subject (citizen) resulting from the synthesis of the family goes out in civil society to experience the next phase of the dialectical development. In the new context (i.e. civil society) "the other regarding" and "group regarding morality" learned at home of the subject passes over into particularistic selfishness (egoism) as object. Civil society was for him/her an expression for the individualist and atomistic atmosphere of the middle class commercial society (Aristotle: no middle class --- no stability) in which relationship is externally governed by unseen hands of economic laws, rather than by self-conscious will of persons. In this context, the individual receives ethical recognition. He/she acquires property rights and other civil rights simply as a person. Thus, individual rights and liberties are those corresponding to the duties imposed by the person's station in society.
3. 3rd moment: state: The individual rights cannot be complete and secure in civil society. This requires the state whose role is to protect the universality implicit in the particularity of civil society through its institutional order and coercive powers. This (stage) is the 3rd moment of the mind in which the universal (idea of state) and particular (family, society, etc.) are brought into a final synthesis. The state is a historically emergent organism. It is not a utilitarian institution engaged in the common place business of providing public services and performing police duties; all these functions belong to civil society as Lawrence Krader argues in his book entitled *Formation of the State*, "Hegel showed that a contract was not made to form the state, because the state is the instrument which validates the power of parties to enter into the contract" (p. 102). The civil society must be dependent upon the state for intellectual supervision and moral significance

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because it is the complete actualization of reason. The state's power is absolute, but not arbitrary; its absolutism reflected its superior moral position increasing universal and objective freedom embodied in the institutions of the emerging capitalist liberal state. Thus, freedom was revealed as the essence of human nature and men had become capable of realizing freedom in the state--which is the highest ethical value, rather than against it; (2) The state must always exercise its regulative power under the forms of law i.e. the state is an embodiment of reason and the law is rational; it the highest manifestation of the world spirit. This process of becoming is not just philosophical, but political.

To recapitulate, Hegel in his book entitled the *Philosophy of Right*, considers civil society as the space between individualism and family in order to uphold self-consciousness – which is the concept behind the greatness of modern centuries/cultures – and the arena of the state which is considered as a monolithic, irrevocable entity that gives to the nation-state its spirit and historical aim. By this, and for the first time, Hegel distinguishes clearly between civil society and state without separating it from civil society since he made a strong link between civil society and the evolution of social strata and class struggle, as individual struggles, in relation to an expanding liberal capitalist system. He considered that opposition between social strata furnishes the ground for civil society because there is no way to go ahead of it except through the existence of a state, not to erase or annihilate these contradictions, but to uphold the state which is obliged to furnish the arena for these contradictions without encroaching on the deep social solidarity of the nation-state. Hegel does not equate civil society with political society or the state, rather he constructs among them a relationship based on competition and cooperation.

X. Freedom of Speech and Press

The point behind the aforementioned exposition is to highlight Hegel's anti-liberal ideas. Despite some similarities with welfare liberalism, Hegel was rather skeptical about the importance of two traditional liberal values: freedom of speech and freedom of press. He argues that such freedoms should be despised and treated as crimes! (This is completely abhorrent to the modern mind). However, if we combine Hegel's description of civil society with Tocqueville analysis associating the notion of civility with civil society, then we can contend that civil society is composed of free associations of individuals that link the function to the whole making democracy possible. In this respect, contemporary authors such as Mardin (1995) placed civil society between the people and the state. This is similar to Tocqueville and Hegel's definition of civil society as a free association of individuals who stand between the family and the state.

a) Media: Civil society and Identity Problems or Identity Crisis

The concept for civil society is as much debated as the concept of democracy and have, similarly, many different meanings and definitions among the scholars. In its institutional form civil society can be composed of non-state actors NGOs such as political parties, trade unions, professional associations, community development associations, and other interest groups.[12] Civil society emphasizes collective and popular aspects: individuals united in temporary associations, people's movements, political parties, and interest organizations with the purpose of acting collectively in questions concerning them. Together with private enterprises and mass media, these organizations compose the civil society.

Cohen and Arato define civil society as the "third realm" of society. Thus, they differentiate it from the other two; namely, the economy and the state. Civil society is here also considered to be a filter between the citizens and the state.[13] Gordon White states that the most current use of the term endorses the idea of, "…an intermediate associational realm between state and family populated by organizations which are separate from the state, enjoy autonomy in relation to the state and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests or values."[14]

Norton argues that the true character of the civil society is based on a correct mental condition. He writes, "…a robust civil society is more than letterhead stationery, membership lists, public charters and manifestos. Civil society is also a cast of mind, a willingness to live and let live."[15] He continues by stating that a civil society, with a potential to have an effect on the democracy process, must embrace the concept of civility[16], not just between the state and organizations or between organizations, but also within the entity itself. What is worth mentioning is that both Norton and Putnam agree in their discussion that there is a visible bond between the civil society and democratization.

In light of the above conceptual difficulties, does the concept of civil society seem suitable to describe and analyze Muslim societies? And does civil

[12] Saad Eddin Ibrahim. (1995). "Civil society and Prospects for Democratization in the Arab world", in *Democratization in The Arab World*. Vol. 1 ed. A.R. Norton. Leiden: Brill, p. 28

[13] Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato. (1992). *Civil Society and Political Theory*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, p.18

[14] Gordon White. (1994). "Civil Society, Democratization and Development (I): Clearing the Analytical Ground", *Democratization* 1. 3: 379.

[15] (Norton 1995, p.12).

[16] According to Norton, "Civility implies tolerance, the willingness of individuals to accept disparate political views and social attitudes; to accept the profoundly important idea that there is no right answer" (1995, pp.11-12).

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possible to address it in these societies – take on the same forms as it does in the West?

Reflecting on the aforementioned questions led to the search for a contextual analysis of civil society, and questions were raised concerning this concept.

This led to the following:

First, this engendered a close scrutiny of the historical origins, development, and intellectual delineation of the concept of civil society. Whether this concept is confined to the West from its historical and intellectual trajectories, or if it expresses a long-standing phenomenon present in all cultures and societies, was then considered.

Second, the first question then led us to closely follow the Arab Islamic historical experience in order to evaluate the constituencies of the 'communitarian society' or civil society and its role in the solidarity of the Muslim *umma* and its relation with the authorities in terms of connection with fairness, equity, and strife.

Third, consideration was then given to research on the intellectual roots of the Arab renaissance and its innovative outlook towards globalization with respect to the relation with the 'other', the general mode of Arab thinking, and the contemporary Arab political experience that failed to bring together the credentials of identity and democracy.

Forth, the problematic nature of identity in relation to a global understanding of civil society and the imposed challenges on regional globalization and its economic and political subordination to the West were highlighted. Also, the issues of democracy that are imposed from the outside/by the West were questioned, as well as the relationship between democracy and identity in the light of imagining a national agenda that is capable of responding to the challenges of globalization in order to guard the self taking into consideration the demand of democracy as a condition to any reforming, rehabilitating, and modernization processes.

Historical origins, development, and intellectual delineation of the concept of civil society

The concept of civil society appeared for the first time in the Arab philosophical tradition in the 17th and 18th centuries in relation to the social contract along with concepts and ideas such as freedom, sovereignty, democracy, and civility that were propagated by the philosophers of modern thought such as Locke, Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau, and others.

In this respect (thought) the social contract was considered the cornerstone of civil society, i.e. the transition from the state of nature where people were free of social bonds to an ordered society where people forfeit their radical freedom for public interest.

If the state was the political organization reflecting public interest and securing people's sovereignty, the state, as an evolving organism from civil society and an expression of individual freedom and equality, will work on maintaining this freedom and equality and the protection of rights, especially the right to private property.

It is worth mentioning that the theoretical construction of the philosophy of contract was a reflection of the intellectual, historical, and social changes in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries that were aimed at rupturing church authority and divine right theory, and rupturing with the feudal system in the direction of the establishment of a capitalist society as an arena for the competition of the individual will.

In the 19th century, and especially in his book entitled the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel looked at this concept where he considered civil society as the space between individualism and family in order to uphold self-consciousness – which is the concept behind the greatness of modern centuries/cultures -- and the arena of the state which is considered as a monolithic, irrevocable entity that gives to the nation (*umma*) its spirit and historical aim. By this, and for the first time, Hegel distinguishes clearly between civil society and state without separating it from civil society since he made a strong link between civil society and the evolution of social strata and class struggle, as individual struggles, in relation to an expanding liberal capitalist system. He considered that opposition between social strata furnishes the ground for civil society because there is no way to go ahead of it except through the existence of a state, not to erase or annihilate these contradictions, but to uphold the state which is obliged to furnish the arena for these contradictions without encroaching on the deep social solidarity of the nation (*umma*). Hegel does not equate civil society with political society or the state, rather he constructs among them a relationship based on competition and cooperation.

The concept of civil society experienced many changes after the Marxist criticism of Hegel. Marx considered civil society the economic-materialistic basis for the state or infrastructure that is governed by class struggle, while the state, according to Engels, is an instrument in the hands of the ruling class to control and crush one class over the other. The emancipation project in Marxist thought is the withering away of the state in civil society, thus there is no need for civil society, which withers away with the demise of the capitalist state.

Gramsci made the connection between control and civil society when he made the latter part of the superstructure, where the state practices its control and domination through culture and ideology (i.e. through the school, church, political party, syndicate, press, and all social and interest groups). It practices its direct control through bureaucracy, economic and monetary policies and institutions such as the army and police, etc.

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While previous theories looked at the political, social, and political-organizational structure of civil society and the classical functioning of the state, the importance of Gramsci's theory for civil society is the opening of horizons for reflecting upon the role that culture and cultured/educated people play in control and domination, and the role of ideology in influencing public opinion and disseminating state influence.

If the concept of civil society disappeared from contemporary political thinking after WWII, it returned with vigilance in the beginning of the 80s in the socialist camp, with criticisms directed towards one party rule, especially with protest movements led by the Church in Poland and the Solidarity Movement as well as the social forces among the masses. All of these forces combined were able, according to Miklos Molnar, to represent 'the authority that stops the authority.' By this, the idea of civil society emerged as a substitute for the autocratic state and its institutions headed by its one party rule.

The concept of civil society regained the same vitality in Western Europe with the emergence of what is dubbed the 'New Social Movements' that Europe experienced during the last decades, such as student movements, human rights institutions, environmental organizations, women's movements, and others that convey forms of social rebellion and opposition to the state and its strategies.

b) Discourse on civil society: media and modernity

Now we move from the narrow confines of civil society to the discourse on civil society i.e. how do people think and speak, instead of questioning how society is organized. Although there is no single universal or authoritative definition of civil society, I employ Bryant's as a workable definition with some modifications. Bryant in his article entitled "Civic Nation, Civil Society, Civil Religion" defines civil society as "civil society refers to social relations and communications between citizens. These may sometimes be informed by the law and by state policy but even then they are not dependent on them" (p. 145). Noteworthy, this definition excludes market and property – i.e. the economic sphere from civil society.

My main line of argument is that public sphere and public space are the backbone of civil society and democracy. In other words, a democracy is not possible without civil society. But the pressuring question is that: is it true that civil society is needed for democracy? If we claim that civil society is the people, i.e. a form of solidarity as struggle against the state, then the state is viewed as the enemy of the people. In other words, what is dangerous to civil society is a also a peril to democracy. Civil society consists of many different voluntary and non-voluntary associations; therefore, by strengthening civil society, any state will become more democratic. And so, the 'good political order' of western liberal capitalist democracy is only possible in a flourishing civil society that provides an integrating role; the best form being a bottom-up process or democracy from below, the most representative example is the solidarity movement in Poland aided by the Church. Norton contends that Muslim voluntary organizations, especially NGOs, have social capital (cf. Bourdieu) i.e. social networks that can mobilize, as such being a necessary condition for democracy because these associations become vehicles of political participation. In this respect, as Eickelman argues, the educating function of civil society is important. Unfortunately, in most cases, the public sphere stops at state boundaries; therefore, one can claim that civil society and public sphere coincided with the nation-state. Exception to this rule range from MNC's (Microsoft, Pepsi, GMC, IBM, Apple, etc.), transnational organizations and media giants (BBC, CNN, Facebook, Google, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Google+, etc.).

I would like to end with the antithesis of Hegel, namely, Habermas who argues that civil society is the social anchor of public sphere where public opinion is formed and expressed in a public space where ideas meet and travel; this is made lively by public debates, mass media, electronic media, and all forms of high-tech communication. Therefore, contrary to Hegel's contentions, freedom of press, speech and expression are always sacred and ought to be upheld if public sphere is to flourish.

According to Eickelman and Anderson, there are multiple paths of modernity available to the emerging Muslim public sphere leading to the creation of a new civil society where Islamic values can be created and injected into new senses of a public space that is "discursive, performative, and participative (p. 2). "Throughout the Muslim world…increasingly vocal debates on what it means to be a Muslim and how to live a Muslim life frequently" led to highly educated intellectuals who write and create a new public sphere (pp. 7-8). New people, new publics, and new media come into being as a result of various degrees of education. "By new people, we mean those who have emerged and have benefited from the huge increase in modern mass education, especially higher education…new media expand education constituting a market for new mixes of ideas…new media engage wider and more public communities with claims to interpret and to provide additional techniques of interpretation " (pp. 10-11). Norton contends that "The focus on new media overlaps with a heightened interest in civic pluralism in the Muslim world" (p.19)."New publics emerge along a continuum between mass communication aimed at everyone and directed personal communications to specific others with whom one already has a personal relationship" (p. 15). "One feature of the new public sphere is a reintellectualization of Islamic discourse…by reintellectualization we mean

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presenting Islamic doctrine and discourse in accessible, vernacular terms (cf. Benedict Anderson), even if this contributes to basis reconfigurations of doctrine and practice" (p. 12). The public started consuming many forms of communication engaging in hotly-debated discussions. Because new electronic media formed new publics and a new sphere of communication, filters and screens as well some kind of cyberspace police was created to monitor the new situation. Two sides resulted from this move: 1) a liberating side (bringing messages not known to other people; 2) being drowned out by another unwanted participants. Some media are more democratic than others (tapes very easy to hide and very easy to camouflage the contents). Therefore, political communication can be circulated. For example, Khumayni's sermons, satellite TV opposition, jamming fax machines as the opposition in Saudi Arabia tries to do, etc. indicate that dissident groups can invade the home country. Moreover, pirating and hacking websites and social media are on the rise. Eickelman contends that the spread of education contributed to a thriving Muslim public sphere (p.48). This led to the emergence of a new Muslim middle class, which is open and moderate, even in looks, and very proud to be Muslims. In addition, a new form of consumption appeared such as the ceremonial breaking of the fast in a very luxurious place so that everyone will see and know it. There are also other forms of Islamic consumption such as very expensive Muslim clothes exhibited at a special Muslim corner. Therefore, being more Islamic is a sign of distinction, haute couture, or different life-styles. This resulted in a demand over Muslim reading material, theatre, cinema, cultural activities, etc. in order to convey their different identity. Muslim intellectuals started from social issues, not the scripture. A real social and economic change resulted leading to a growing middle class. Therefore, it turns out that it is not bad at all to look a Muslim, act as a Muslim, consume Muslim clothes, books, etc. indeed Islam can be very modern. Unfortunately, there are hardly any interesting debates on political thought. The new intellectual sphere leads to new material and new debates, such as debates about genetic engineering. The existence of wealthy people with different Muslim tastes lead to innovations such as the creation and printing of their own Muslim magazines that deal primarily with science and religion. Therefore, their public sphere is always colored by religion; a Muslim public sphere debating religion. And so, important debates within Islam take place in this public sphere. This result in a social competition and power struggle between the *ulama* and the new elite who are on the who technocrats educated in Western universities and scientifically oriented. In addition, the internet may result in a fragmentation of authority rupturing the long contested authority of the *ulama* i.e. the emergence of counter elites to reach wider audiences. "…those media contribute to the fragmentation of political and religious authority by bypassing religious channels" (p. 3). Because of the emergence of many parallel authorities, the major authority is broken and wider alternatives are available to the people. Fragmentation of authority "increases the numbers of persons involved in creating and sustaining a religious-civil public sphere" (p.14). The question remains, who is the authority?

Eickelman and Anderson put the icing on the cake by arguing, "that by looking at the intricate multiplicity of horizontal relationships, especially among the rapidly increasing numbers of beneficiaries of mass education, new messages, and new communication media, one discovers alternative ways of thinking about Islam, acting on Islamic principles, and creating senses of community and public space. Such a realization among large numbers of people is a measure of the *potential for a rapidly emerging public sphere and a civil society that plays a vital role within it*" (emphasis added) (p. 16).

Norton contends that " Civic pluralism meets the state in civil society, the realm where norms are contested and were boundaries of state and society overlap it is in civil society that contemporary citizenship is being redefined and public space is negotiated…The 'discovery' of civil society as a topic of debate in the Muslim world… a more differentiated view of the state-society relations is necessary, one that recognizes the opportunities for a dialogue at arm's length with a powerful state" (pp. 25-26). Norton's seminal contribution lies in pinpointing that "…networks of informal civic associations, which have filled the void left by governments' failure to meet the needs of the urban lower classes and the rural poor…impressive array of service organizations created by Islamist movements [Hizbullah, Hamas, Muslim Brotherhood, Algerian FIS, Virtue Party & AKP in Turkey, etc.]. what the Islamists have accomplished is impressive and should be seen as an important step toward a more inclusive civil society" (p. 27). Finally Jon Anderson, points to the importance of the "internet discourse" and the "recency of the introduction of its interpreters to a more public realm brings out the priority of responsibility and how taking responsibility, particularly for the interpretation, in public is the intermediating step for 'civil society' " (p.53).

c) Religious Movements: Islamism and the Media

Glock's and Stark's article entitled "On the Origins and Evolution of Religious Groups" which is seminal in its discussion and treatment of "What accounts for the rise and evolution of new religious groups in society?" They give an elaborate definition of deprivation and discuss five types of deprivation, namely, economic deprivation, social deprivation, organismic deprivation, ethical deprivation, and psychic deprivation. All five categories seem to apply to the rise of Islamic movements and the success of the Islamic

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Revolution in Iran. Under ethical deprivation, building on Lawrence Stone's famous sociological hypothesis of relative deprivation ("…revolutions occur not so much when times are bad as they are worse; or more precisely, when there is a discrepancy between the expectations of a group and their perception of reality" [Burke, p.30]), one can analyze Islamic movements as movements of socio-economic and political protest that dwell on the economic development argument. Making use of Seymour Martin Lipset's analysis, they argue that "current theories of revolution specify that there must be a deflection from the ranks of the elite in order that direction and leadership be provided for lower class discontent, if revolution is to occur" (p. 397). For instance, this might explain why the supporters of the secular AMAL moved to their opponent, the Islamist party of Hizbullah. Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, the current secretary general of Hizbullah, was AMAL's district leader of the *Biqa'*, in east Lebanon before he shifted his allegiance.

Under psychic deprivation, Glock and Stark offer a general theory, namely, "that a necessary precondition for the rise of 'any' organized social movement is a situation of felt deprivation. However, while a necessary condition, deprivation is not, in itself, a sufficient condition. Also required are traditional conditions that the deprivation be shared, that no alternative institutional arrangement for its resolution are perceived, and that a leadership emerge within an innovating idea for building a movement out of the existing deprivation" (*Ibid*., p. 397) This analysis applies to Iran before 1979, Algeria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Sudan, etc.

To conceptualize, the modernization theory introduced by Seymour Martin Lipset during the 1960s, stressed the positive influence of economic development on the democratization process. There is a wide agreement among scholars that capitalism is a necessary, though not sufficient condition for democracy. The reason is simply believed to be that, up to this date, there is no existing competitive electoral system without a market based on capitalism. Georg Sörensen writes that modernization and wealth will always be accompanied by a number of factors conducive to democracy such as higher rates of literacy and education, urbanization, the development of mass media. Moreover, wealth will also provide the resources needed to mitigate the tensions produced by political conflict.[17] Dahl, in the 1970s, considered it "pretty much beyond dispute" that the higher the socio-economic level of a country, the more likely that it would become democratic.[18] However, modernization theory is rarely adopted among political scientists since there are cases where this it is not valid. In the context of the Middle East, one could state that the democratization process is more vivid in countries that are "populous, poor, and politicized." This while the "well-to-do" Arab countries – the exception here claimed to be Kuwait – are those furthest away from democratization.[19]

Another useful theoretical framework encompasses mainly the "equality theory" advocated by Aristotle and Alexis de Tocqueville[20], the "frustration-aggression" hypothesis advocated by Ted Gurr and James Davies, the "surplus-value exploitation" hypothesis advocated by Marx, as well as theories of the media. Moreover, the preconditions and accelerators of revolution derived from Thomas Greene and other theorists on revolution are useful in order to trace the factors enhancing the position of Islamic fundamentalism in Lebanon. Furthermore, the obstacles to revolution derived from Eckstein are examined in order to explain the relatively successful counteraction by the state in confronting political Islam in Lebanon (Including capital punishment by hanging). As a consequence of this study, I claim that the Lebanese case demonstrates the following facts: the increasing popularity of the Islamic movement is due to the state's poor economic performance, from which the fundamentalists largely benefited. The Lebanese four main 'ism' of corruption: sectarianism, confessionalism, favourtism, and nepotism are also rhetorically used by Islamists, at least on the psychological level, to attract supporters. The fundamentalists' popularity in Lebanon is also enhanced by the rhetorical power of Islamic discourse and the hegemony, control, surveillance, and repression (cf. Gramsci, Bourdieu, and Foucault) of the Lebanese political system. However, the Islamic movement functions in the context of a secular state whose strategy consists mainly of two elements. First, the state uses political liberalization, which is an incremental phenomenon, whereby expanding freedom of expression gradually draws a greater proportion of the population into political participation. In the Lebanese case, liberalization may draw the people closer to the government, or at least away from the radical fundamentalists – as was the case with AMAL that was incorporated into the Lebanese corrupt political system. AMAL has representatives in the cabinet and the parliament; while till 2005, Hizbullah refused to join the cabinet and practiced *hizbiyya* through the

[17] Georg Sörensen. (1993). *Democracy and Democratization: Processes of Projects in a Changing World.* Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, p. 25

[18] Robert A. Dahl, (1982). *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy versus Control.* New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 25.

[19] Larbi Sadiki (2000), "Arab Democratization" in *the Journal of Middle East Studies*. 32.1 See also his most recent book: (2016). *Handbook of the Arab Spring: Rethinking Democratization*. London: Routledge.

[20] Alexis, de Tocqueville. (1994). *Democracy in America.* London: Harper Collins.

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parliament and municipality councils. Related to liberalization is the cooptation of the moderate fundamentalist. Cooptation takes the form of allowing them to run for parliamentary elections through political alliances, as well as to participate in economic life and express criticism of government politics as a political party. This secured the Hizbullah's representation in the parliamentary elections starting 1992, and the municipal elections since 1998. Second, the state uses repression, which essentially exposes the military's role as the backbone of stability in Lebanon because of its economic and institutional prestige that is at stake. The government's status in this struggle for stability is enhanced by two internal factors: Islamic internal divisions (collapse of Sunni fundamentalism and the contestation of power among the Islamists) and the capability of consensual politics in exercising patronage.

Moreover, the concept of relative deprivation might be useful in analyzing political conflict and repression and explain the resurgence of political Islam, especially, the rise of Hizbullah in Lebanon, and the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Therefore, a thorough and detailed examination of the concept and its applicability is fruitful and rewarding because the theory of relative deprivation fosters conflict (Wilson, pp. 115-118). Accordingly, aggressive behavior ("frustration-aggression" hypothesis developed in a rudimentary form by Freud and advocated by Ted Gurr and James Davies) stems from frustration arising out of a feeling of relative deprivation. People may act violently or aggressively not because they are poor or deprived (*mahrumin*) in some absolute sense but because they *feel* deprived relative to others or to their expectations of what they should have. Feelings of relative deprivation can arise by comparing a person's past, present, and expected future condition. Images of this condition are strongly affected by where one (or one's country) fairs within the hierarchy of various global or regional systems based on status, prestige, military power, wealth, etc.

Nevertheless, feelings of relative deprivation are likely to arise when a formerly prosperous individual or state experiences a severe economic setback. Such feelings are widespread during recessions and depressions and often result in severe political unrest (The Islamic Revolution). In other words, the most dangerous time for social unrest, or for challenges to the status quo in any sort of system, is when a sustained period of improving conditions is followed by a sudden, sharp setback. The period of improvement may lead people to expect continuing improvement; thus, when the setback occurs, it causes more distress than if it had followed a period of unchanged conditions. For example, in 1978 Iran had experienced a decade of unprecedented growth in its national income. However, these economic rewards were distributed very unequally and left a variety of groups – such as peasants, urban workers and the urban unemployed, followers of traditional religion, and some intellectuals – very dissatisfied. Many rebelled culminating in the shah's overthrow.

Another perspective emphasizes the importance of people's comparisons with one another: "I may be satisfied, even with a bad lot, providing that you do no better. However, to the degree I make comparisons with others and find my situation relatively poor, then I am likely to be dissatisfied."

These two perspectives, emphasizing comparisons across time and across groups, can be usefully combined. The first suggests when serious discontent may arise; the second suggests where in the social system it will be most manifest. The present day seems to be a period of substantial change in people's status or in their consciousness of differences in status. Feelings of relative deprivation may also arise among those who are excluded from the benefits of improved economic conditions. For example, many people in the slums and ghettos of the developing countries may sometimes be better off economically than they had been. However, satellite TV, the Internet, social media, and other forms of modern communications have made them more aware of how well off people in other countries and elites in their own countries really are. This might explain their "rising expectations".

To recapitulate, unequal distributions of the national pie tend to induce conflict, as some groups or classes see others moving ahead rapidly while they themselves gain little or in some instances even slip backward. In highly non egalitarian societies (such as Lebanon and Iran before the revolution), any appreciable change – either positive or negative – in the overall national income will stimulate greater conflict over how the expanded or contracted pie should be divided, but there will be conflict during periods of decline due to the hegemony (cf. Gramsci, Bourdieu, and Foucault) of the few (power elite) over the many (masses). The best strategy that the government is following to accommodate process is to be aristocratic with the few and democratic with the many; however, this fake civic conformity does not always work.

d) Media Overkill: Baudrillard's hyperreality and simulacra

Jean Baudrillard's work on hyperreality and simulacra illustrates the misconception and damage media coverage, or the media overkill phenomenon might cause. Baudrillard regards the impact of modern mass media as being quite different from, and much more profound than, that of any other technology. The advent of mass media, particularly electronic media such as TV, the Internet, and social media has transformed the very nature of our lives. According to him, the TV does not just represent the world to us; it increasingly defines what the world in which we live actually is. O.J. Simpson's trail is an illustration of what

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Baudrillard calls hyperreality. There is no longer a 'reality' (the events in the court room) which the TV allows us to see. The 'reality' is actually the string of images on the TV screens of the world which defined the trial as a global event.

Just before the outbreak of the hostilities in the Gulf in 1991, Baudrillard wrote a news paper article entitled "The Gulf War Can't Happen." After the end of the war, Baudrillard wrote a second article, "The Gulf War Didn't Happen." What did he mean? He meant that the war was not like other wars that have happened in history. It was a war of the media age, a televisual spectacle, in which, along with other viewers throughout the world, George Bush and Saddam Hussein watched the coverage by CNN to see what was actually 'happening.' Finally, Baudrillard argues that, in an age where the mass media are disseminated everywhere, in effect a new reality, a hyperreality, is created, composed of the intermingling of people's behavior and media images. The world of hyperreality is constructed of simulacra i.e. images which only get their meaning from other images; therefore, they have no ground in an 'external reality.' For example, no political leader today who does not appear constantly on TV and the social media can win an election. In fact, the TV and social media image of the leader is the person most viewers know. That explains the excessive use of multimedia, high-tech, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by political leaders and parties in order to boost and improve their image.

To conclude, the aim of the aforementioned theoretical exposition was to furnish the reader with alternative visions, perspectives, and angles of thought directed at bridging the gap between theory and practice vis-à-vis media and modernity. It is a drop in the ocean of a largely contested field.

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