

## **Gramsci's Interpretation of Marx: A Study of the State and Civil Society in Relation to Emerging Future Challenges**

**Muhammed Ali Abdelfatah Ali<sup>1</sup>, Othman Muhammed Othman<sup>2</sup>, Adel Abdulsamea Awad<sup>3</sup>, Magdy Muhammed Ibrahim<sup>4</sup>**

- 1- Ph.D. candidate in Political Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, Arish University.**
- 2- Professor of Islamic Philosophy and Dean of the faculty of Arts, Arish University.**
- 3- Professor of Logic and Philosophy of Science, faculty of Arts, Mansoura University.**
- 4- Professor of Islamic Philosophy, Faculty of Dar Al-Olum, Aswan University.**

### **Abstract**

This paper delves into Antonio Gramsci's reinterpretation of Karl Marx's concepts of the state and civil society, exploring how these ideas can address contemporary socio-political challenges. Gramsci, a prominent Marxist thinker, offers a nuanced understanding of the interplay between the state, civil society, and socialism, emphasizing the importance of cultural and economic reforms in achieving social change.

Gramsci's intellectual journey began with his engagement in the labor movement and political activism, leading to the foundation of the Italian Communist Party. His critical re-examination of Marxist principles provided fresh insights into the dynamics of power and governance. Gramsci's concept of hegemony highlights the role of cultural and ideological leadership in maintaining power, moving beyond Marx's economic determinism. He argues that the ruling class secures consent through the dissemination of cultural norms and values that align with its interests.

Civil society, according to Gramsci, is a crucial arena for ideological struggle. Institutions such as the media, education, and religious organizations shape public consciousness and promote the hegemony of the ruling class. However, civil society also offers a space for counter-hegemonic forces to challenge and contest the dominant ideology. Gramsci's idea of passive revolution refers to gradual and reformist changes that accommodate the interests of the ruling class while preventing radical social transformation. The historical bloc, another key concept, emphasizes the importance of forming alliances between different social groups to create a new hegemonic order.

Gramsci's theories remain relevant in addressing contemporary challenges, including the rise of neoliberalism, globalization, and the influence of mass media. His ideas on hegemony help analyze how cultural and ideological forces shape public opinion and political outcomes in the modern world. The paper underscores the need for a holistic approach to social change, engaging with civil society to promote alternative visions of society.

Gramsci's emphasis on cultural and economic reforms is crucial for understanding the complexities of social movements and the strategies required for achieving systemic change. He argues that civil society must absorb the functions of the state, creating a self-organizing society without state oppression. The future civil society should focus on educational and caring roles rather than ideological control.

The paper also discusses Gramsci's influence on contemporary political thought and the relevance of his ideas in addressing modern socio-political issues. Gramsci's legacy continues to inspire critical thinking and transformative action in the pursuit of a more just and equitable

society. By examining Gramsci's thought, the paper provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the relationship between the state and civil society and offers valuable insights for addressing future challenges in achieving social transformation.

**Key Words:** Antonio Gramsci, Karl Marx, Civil Society, Hegemony, Passive Revolution, Power Dynamics

## Introduction

Antonio Gramsci, a prominent Marxist thinker, significantly reshaped political theory and social thought through his reinterpretation of Karl Marx's ideas. Born in Sardinia, Italy, Gramsci's intellectual journey began with his involvement in the labor movement and his critical engagement with Marxist philosophy. His extensive work, especially his reflections on the state, civil society, and socialism, has left an indelible mark on contemporary socio-political discourse.

This paper aims to delve into Gramsci's reinterpretation of Marxist theory, focusing on the intricate relationship between the state and civil society and the role of socialism in achieving social change. Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which emphasizes the cultural and ideological dimensions of power, moves beyond Marx's economic determinism. Gramsci argues that the ruling class maintains control not merely through coercion but by securing the consent of the governed through cultural norms and values.

Moreover, Gramsci distinguishes between civil society and political society, viewing civil society as an essential arena for ideological struggle. Institutions within civil society, such as the media, education, and religious organizations, play a significant role in shaping public consciousness and promoting the hegemony of the ruling class. However, civil society also offers a space for counter-hegemonic movements to challenge and contest the dominant ideology.

By examining Gramsci's key concepts, such as passive revolution and the historical bloc, this paper seeks to understand the complexities of power dynamics and governance in contemporary society. Gramsci's ideas provide a comprehensive framework for addressing contemporary socio-political challenges, including neoliberalism, globalization, and the influence of mass media. Ultimately, this paper underscores the relevance of Gramsci's contributions to political theory and their potential to inspire transformative action toward a more just and equitable society.

## First: Gramsci's reading of Marx and responding to future challenges

Is it possible to achieve cultural reform and the elevation of the civilization of the lower classes of society without prior economic reform and a change in their social status and position in the economic world?

Antonio Gramsci's thought has remained strongly present in Western cultural contexts and distant geographical regions, exerting significant influence and serving as a reference authority on innovative concepts and intellectual revisions. He occupies a prominent position in discussions among political circles that are most distant from Marxism and differ from communism. Despite the setbacks that socialism faced in the electoral process and the conclusion of the historical cycle within which it is situated (Keucheyan, 2012).

Gramsci began his journey of physical and intellectual work early, and his thin body was suffering from severe fatigue, while his creative mind was able to accomplish many innovations in a short period, as he joined the University of Turin to study linguistics and achieved remarkable

excellence and quickly decided to leave academic life to join political life. He was fascinated by the humanism of the idealist philosophers, especially Croce, but he soon became a socialist. He showed great interest in the labor movement, strongly opposed the opportunism of social democracy, strongly criticized the economic tendency, led the "workers' council movement" and considered it an effective tool for achieving the social revolution. He contributed to the establishment of the newspaper "New Covenant", which played a role in organizing the workers and preparing them to control the means of production. He raised the issue of eliminating exploitation and opportunism and the working-class taking power at the national level. He combined labor, unions and political work, organized protests and strikes, and founded the party in the Leninist sense to achieve political goals. He tried to dispense with the mechanical and idealist conflicts that characterized Stalinist Marxism. He fought the humanistic Marxism of the petty bourgeoisie and linked the historical process with human action. Then he separated from the Socialist Party in 1921 and participated with his comrades in founding the Italian Communist Party. Gramsci visited Moscow, the capital of the Soviet Union, where he participated in workers' demonstrations and political celebrations. He underwent treatment and was able to marry, which helped him rise by election to the General Secretariat of the Italian Communist Party upon his return in 1924 and to carve his image alongside the leaders (Gramsci, 1959a).

It is worth noting that philosophizing according to Gramsci is equivalent to thinking through concepts and finding the challenges that our culture poses in confronting them and crystallizing critical thinking for social reality and establishing a liberation project and historical determination to move from a state of fragmentation, division and deterioration to a state of maturity, progress and unity. Gramsci was not just an economic thinker or political theorist whose mission was limited to building a critical theory for the working class, but he was known as a revolutionary leader par excellence and a social engineer who stuck to the historical destiny of the labor movement and strove to prepare leftist thought within its own social fabric and change old sayings and frameworks. Any attempt to get rid of and distance oneself from this tragic thinker of communism in the twentieth century is a futile and futile effort given that going beyond Marx allows us to find Gramsci and jumping beyond Gramsci allows us to restore Marx in his most splendid form and activates his critical texts in order to read reality.

From here, the researcher wonders why we read Karl Marx's texts through Gramsci's perspectives in order to respond to the challenges of the future? ([1]) And in what sense can we represent Gramsci in the Marxist process to the moment of revival and consciousness? What did Gramsci add to the course of social revolution among the Arabs? And is his concept of the historical bloc a historical turning point? Why have the Prison Notebooks remained extraordinarily vibrant? And how did his thoughts reshape the contemporary world in terms of power and knowledge relations between rulers and the ruled, and in terms of distribution among states? And below, I will address the previous questions by presenting the following elements. Please provide the text you would like me to translate.

### **A- The essential elements that constitute the policy**

Gramsci preceded Michel Foucault by decades in distinguishing between power and sovereignty, between force and capacity, between governance and leadership, and in addressing the concept of hegemony, which implies ideological dominance and social leadership of the historical era. Gramsci seeks to differentiate between the state and governance, and between the political society and civil society, and he calls for the integration of the state into civil society. This

is in order to establish a self-organizing society that dispenses with the pressure and oppression of the state.

The superiority of a certain social class manifests in two ways: as control or as intellectual and moral leadership. A particular class can exercise leadership even before seizing state power; in fact, it must do so because leadership is a fundamental condition for seizing power. The class in question will only achieve its control when it begins to exercise power (**Gramsci, 2017b**). However, no matter how dominant its control over the reins of power, it remains compelled to continue exercising leadership alongside its control. In the same analytical direction of spatial power relations, it is acknowledged that "this horizon does not lead to a new liberalism, although it places us on the threshold of an era of organic freedom. (**Gramsci, 1959**).

In this way, Gramsci starts his philosophy from a series of Marxist premises: Marxism has undergone a double distortion, as it merged with idealistic currents on one hand and married traditional materialism as a condition to maintain the latter's purity on the other hand. It transformed in several political experiments into the ideology of the ruling class, contributed to the birth of a new culture, enabled societies to express the needs of their era, practiced polarization, and pushed for action. In this regard, Gramsci acknowledges the importance of Marx when he linked man to his social conditions, saying: "The great renewal that Marxism introduced into political science and history is the proof of the non-existence of an abstract and fixed nature. (**Gramsci, 1959**)

However, he worked on crystallizing a critical review of several axioms and priorities on which Marxist texts were founded and disrupted their procedural role and interpretive function, namely the categories of party, politics, state, revolution, economy, philosophy, ideology, culture, religion, the individual, democracy, ethics, materialism, freedom, value, language, theory, practice, history, leadership, class, nation, nationalism and war. The field of politics did not remain a matter immersed in economics and society, and occupying a secondary position as is the case with Marx. Rather, he studied it as an independent field similar to *The Prince* by Niccolò Machiavelli and considered it a central human activity that exists within established frameworks thanks to historical development and allows individual consciousness to connect with social reality. As for the state, it is no longer just a device invented by the dominant class in order to preserve its interests by controlling other classes, but rather it has come to mean the organizational field of society through political leadership and rises above its class interests and transcends the status of a tool and becomes an end for individuals and groups. While philosophy is linked to the historical era in concrete reality and exercises a revolutionary ideological function and plays a critical role in its relationship with popular wisdom, common sense, religion, worldviews and beliefs. Gramsci then turned the equation around the economy as an infrastructure, culture, religion, ethics, ideology as a superstructure that reflects economic reality and rejected the dominance of the economic aspect over the cultural and political aspects and interpreted the movement of society outside the framework of historical determinism and objective laws and demanded the independence of culture in the comprehensive sense and conceived of history as a cumulative development of free wills and presented a new theory of revolution that creates a counter-hegemonic force. Human nature is a network of social relations that are determined by historical facts and can be monitored through the methods of criticism and linguistics and the attribution of special principles to political science independent of religion and ethics and represents a vision of the world and revolves around law, power, rule, leadership, organization, management and guidance (**Gramsci, 2018**).

Gramsci insists on completing the intellectual and moral revolution initiated by Machiavelli, making it a vessel for national culture, and distinguishes between the pragmatic doctrine and politics, between contemplative philosophy and the objectivity of knowledge, and between control and education. The revolutionary class of the era in which Gramsci lived is the social strata that represents the progressive direction of history and strives to rid themselves of the antiquated tools of production and perception, and to find new tools within a new world.

Politics is an independent science that occupies a specific space and a special field in which it builds a coherent and consistent theory of the world and man. Political work remains in a state of constant dialectic and belongs to the superstructure and includes the bottom of society as a whole. For Gramsci, reform is not a historical event that is achieved in a tangible way within the cultural context of the old system and helps it to restore the lost balance. Rather, it is a radical path that explores the origins of modernization and the sources of revolution, reactivates the energies of rejection among a broad sector of the people, and launches a movement of change that works to focus on a new cultural system. Gramsci worked in *The Modern Prince* to form the collective will that expresses in a practical and effective way political organization and political and moral reform, targeting the secularization of traditional relations and life in its entirety. He stipulates the organization of a specific collective will with political goals by creating a sensory imagination that affects the people, moves emotions, and motivates people towards productive work and sacrificing themselves for the sake of the homeland. This passion constitutes a motive towards establishing the state.

But what is Gramsci's perspective on the factors that help in the transition from revolution to state?

### **B- Interpretation of revolution between regression and progress:**

Rosa Luxemburg's statement that it is impossible to address some Marxist issues because they have not yet become current issues in the context of general historical development or for a certain social group - is still a useful and fertile statement. (Gramsci, 1959)

Gramsci analyzes the concept of passive revolution by verifying the validity of two basic principles in Marxism:

- 1- No social formation disappears if the forces of production grow and expand.
- 2- Society does not pose any tasks for itself except those for which the necessary conditions have matured to solve them.

Gramsci critically crystallizes the two ideas in terms of their consequences and works to purify them from mechanism and fatalism and passes them on to the basic moments of analysis: the balance of economic, political, and military forces. Gramsci also objects to the Gandhian concept of peaceful resistance in relation to the colonizer and to Tolstoy's theory of resistance to violence, likening them to the first stage of Christianity and considering them naive theories with a religious tinge (Gramsci, 1959).

The truth is that the negative revolution is a revolution of reaction that occurs when the political and moral resources thrown into the arena are exhausted and the inability to overcome the dialectical opponents is a result of a theoretical misunderstanding of the historical era and the inability to absorb the opposing position in a transcendent manner, and to maintain its conflictual energy. The negative revolution is the revolution of returning to the revolutionary situation after

the counter-revolution, proposing the transition of the political struggle from a war of movement to a war of positions. Gramsci here calls for transforming the political struggle from a war of maneuver to a war of positions after the great defeats suffered by the revolutionary forces when they engaged in maneuvering without carrying out good ideological and political preparation for the battle and without self-criticism, and being satisfied with liquidation, exclusion, and abandonment of the slacker elements. Consequently, the war of positions bets on the human element and revolutionary mobilization with the aim of possessing a great resistance energy that combines the power of organization and the charismatic power of political leadership while avoiding demagogic popular movements and the improvisation of traditional organic forces and interacting with radical democratic forces that have their weight in the final balance of power as a result of adopting more progressive and more modern options (Gramsci, 2017b). Thus, the strategic vision of the national revolution is formed by the conclusion of a new organic policy charter by the leading figures and the revolutionary complex (Gramsci, 1959). What are the constitutive elements of this revolutionary charter? How can the people be saved from backwardness and achieve progress? What is the difference between movement and becoming? Gramsci's theory moves within three circles and adheres to achieving the principles of the state within political thought, value within economic thought, and man in terms of his will and transcending his situation and making his destiny within philosophy (Gramsci, 2018).

It is clear that the keenness to modernize the state is linked to the independence of civil society from political society, and the pursuit of achieving value depends on resisting the economic vision and appreciating man requires activating the role of the organic intellectual. Gramscianism is achieved through the philosophy of praxis as a vision of the world based on Marxist texts and the independence of the self through critical activity, organic practice and living history - in the making - while the practical role of philosophy is based on building the revolutionary party, the historical bloc, the war of positions and the cultural revolution (Gramsci, 2018).

In this sense, the real subjective forces in the social revolution cannot assume political leadership unless they are able to connect with concrete reality and transform organic culture into an added political value through the crystallization of general popular awareness and a culture committed to change that works to rewrite history by linking the objective conditions and subjective initiatives in making events. How can the subjective forces of the revolution possess intellectual insight into the conditions of the conflict and acquire the historical political sense necessary to get out of the impasse?

### C- The importance of ideology in social change

"Ideologies are psychologically true because they organize human masses and are the field in which people move, understand their positions and struggle (Texier, 1966).

Gramsci restores the importance of the concept of ideology, which has been subjected to distortion, misunderstanding and misuse. Some have spoken about its end, misery and cognitive bankruptcy, while others have called for its replacement by epistemology.

It is essential to highlight the importance of the ideological moment in order to understand the historical process free of any trace of determinism. Marx's theory of ideology is necessary to understand the birth of a historical movement within the specific structural conditions because it is the basic principle that allows for the construction of a theory of knowledge and truth. All knowledge is ideology, and all truth and error are linked to the way people perceive their historical

and social reality. Ideology, according to Marx, only refers to a set of ideas and beliefs that are an inverted, distorted, illusory and false reflection of praxis and social and natural reality. Therefore, Gramsci uses it in a derogatory and defamatory manner and distinguishes it from philosophy.

After that, Gramsci uses ideology or superstructure in a Being a theory that is inseparable from historical praxis. In this way, ideology represents a set of ideas, whether objective or illusory, that always have a historical entry and a connection with human praxis and their rationality or irrationality, their correctness or incorrectness, is a pattern of historicity and practical practice. From this perspective, the creation of a collective will be linked to the construction of an organic ideological unity that eliminates the separation between high culture and the masses and produces the collective intellectual. Gramsci expresses his admiration for Marx's statement in the introduction to his book *Critique of Political Economy*: "Humans are aware of structural conflicts at the level of ideologies" (**Gramsci, 2018**).

He gives this statement a cognitive, psychological and moral value in the direction of building a dominant apparatus system, reforming consciousness and creating a new ideological space that destroys an old social system and establishes a new value system; Gramsci sees that ideology represented an aspect of the sensual doctrine or French materialism in the (18th century) and the term means the science of ideas and later came to mean the analysis of ideas, i.e. the analysis of their sources, and this requires returning ideas to their basic elements, which are feelings. Then the following important question arises: How did ideology, i.e. the science of ideas and the analysis of their sources, acquire a new meaning, which is a specific intellectual system? In fact, there is no single concept of ideology or unique use of it, but rather several concepts and several uses, and thus we can speak of several ideologies or, in other words, several ideological approaches to culture and society. Ideology in Marxist terminology implies a negative judgment, and its founder refused to return ideas to their sensory source, and thus to their physical source. Rather, Marxism considers that ideology should be analyzed historically as part of the superstructure of society. The evaluation of ideology involves a common mistake that usually results from the fact that we give the name ideology either to the superstructure necessary for any societal structure, or to the qualitative ideas that are issued by certain individuals. The term has become widely used in its empirical sense, and this has distorted the theoretical analysis of ideology as a concept. Those who commit this mistake take the following approach: They separate ideology from the economic infrastructure, then go on to say that ideologies are what change the infrastructure, not the other way around, and they conclude that ideology is merely an illusion, i.e. it is trivial and useless (**Gramsci, 2018**).

But how does ideology transform from a reflection and illusion into a scientific theory for analyzing reality and the revolution of liberation? Gramsci returns to Marx's famous phrase: "Ideas are transformed into material forces when they are embraced by the masses" and restores the consideration of ideology as a basic engine of revolution. From here we must distinguish precisely between organic historical ideologies - which are necessary for certain social structures - and arbitrary ideologies that are rational and voluntary. Because these ideologies are historically necessary, they acquire psychological effectiveness, as they organize human masses and constitute the basis on which people move, the field in which they become aware of their situations and engage in their struggles, etc. While arbitrary ideologies only lead to individual movement, and the like... We must remember what Marx constantly repeats about the solidity of popular beliefs as a necessary element of the elements that make up a certain situation. He speaks of a pattern of thinking that has the strength of popular beliefs, and confirms that a popular belief often enjoys dynamism no less than the dynamism of material force... This is a dangerous statement that proves

the validity of the concept of the historical front; Where material forces are the content and ideology is the form (Gramsci ,2018). What is the consequence of adopting a Gramscian methodology spiced with Marxism in reading the current events that the Arab region has witnessed?

### **D-Philosophical treatment of future challenges**

"No politics is practiced, and no history is made without this feeling - that is, without the emotional bond between intellectuals and the people - the nation (**Gramsci ,2018**).

Why did the revolutionary path deviate from its entitlements? Who seized the popular will and circumvented it? Do electoral stations translate the revolutionary demands of the masses? How do dependent societies innovate methods of liberation and tools of independence?

In *The Modern Prince*, Gramsci raises the issue of foresight and perspective or the dual perspective in political action and in the life of states and reduces it to two levels according to Machiavelli's approach to political science: brutality and humanity, power and satisfaction, authority of competence and domination, violence and civilization, the individual stage and the total stage, church and state, incitement and advocacy, tactics and strategy... Gramsci rejects reducing the dual perspective to proximity and directness and sees that the second level is not in time but within the framework of a dialectical relationship and acknowledges that foresight is the good vision of the present and the past as a movement: good vision is the precise definition of the basic and permanent elements of the process and links it to human life: "The more the individual increases in defending His direct physical presence, the more he establishes himself by seeing it from the angle of the most sublime and complex civilizational and human values (**Gramsci , 1959**). The double vision is not a vision based on pure objectivity, but rather arbitrary and controlling and based on pure bias in possessing the necessary elements to achieve the act of will. Whoever has a vision has a program that he would like to win, and a vision is specifically one of the elements of victory. Therefore, a vision does not turn into an objective vision except when it is linked to a consistent and balanced program within the general game of practical politics.

Achieving victory in social movements is based on analyzing political situations according to power relations and not according to value relations and within a struggle between classes and not just competition between parties according to an electoral game. We can find ourselves in Gramsci's reading of Marx through his presentation of the Southern Question and his treatment of the concept of subalternity and in his understanding of Marxism as a dialectical science of history and in making history a whole that is consistent with politics and economics and his belief in becoming and progress in thought and in creative philosophy and the international historical bloc. We also meet with him in the theory of intellectuals and their role in the class struggle and the replacement of revolutionary spontaneity with conscious guidance and his rejection of the idea that the revolution should be tolerant and his criticism of the party and the bourgeois state and idealistic materialism and his bet on religions in enlightenment and his treatment of Marxism as a moral and political reform for humanity. This is an attempt to liberate Gramsci from the fascist tendency that besieged his mind and prevented him from creativity and to rid his thought of reduction, distortion and distortion and to open a new era for philosophy and for man and hope for progress and liberation from injustice. He said: "I believe that the world has become civilized and we no longer see the scenes that we saw when we were children" (**Gramsci in 1979**).



Gramsci dealt with revolutions as a moment of explosion of popular movements seeking radical transformation in power and society and to clarify the relationship between objective conditions and subjective conditions in making the historical event. "The structure and the superstructures form a single historical mass in the sense that the complex, contradictory and discordant sum of the superstructures is a reflection of the entirety of social relations of production. Hence, a totalitarian ideology is the only ideology capable of expressing - rationally - the contradiction of the structure and realizing the meeting of conditions that allow for a revolution in practice. This analysis depends on the necessary interaction between the structure and the superstructures" (Gramsci, 2018).

### **E- Study of classes and class representation:**

The importance of organization in concluding a popular reconciliation at the level of the relationship between the countryside and the city and the necessity of rationalizing social differences, and the relationship between the state and civil society. To achieve compatibility between theory and practice in the transitional phase when the movement of change accelerates by supplying effective, comprehensive and organizational driving forces to become more practical and more realistic, and that is: "By starting from a specific practice to build a theory that coincides with the decisive elements in this practice and is represented by it, thus accelerating the ongoing historical process and giving all elements of practice more consistency, coherence and effectiveness... starting from a specific theoretical position to organize the practical element that is a condition for applying the theoretical position itself (Gramsci, 2018).

The responsibility of the political leadership, in terms of it being a revolutionary leadership, represents the role of the military leadership without imitating it and works to achieve success in a revolutionary political mobilization of popular forces capable of expelling the invaders, eradicating the corrupt and preventing the tyrants from returning by means of a sudden counterattack, and a change must be made in the political leadership. And enabling actual officials within a shrewd political leadership to replace the wrong policies followed by incompetent politicians with a correct policy that works to achieve goals appropriate to the tools it adopts in the war of positions. The set of theoretical movements and theoretical practices provided by the philosophy of praxis are represented in the following:

- Emphasizing the importance of the cultural moment in organic ties Between the philosopher and the people, defending individual freedoms and affirming the effective will in history.
- Reconsidering the national question: social dominance and organic culture, forming political leadership, military leadership and economic influence.
- Creative strategy and independence of praxis: The philosophical effectiveness of the organic intellectual integrates the religious dimension within a progressive historical outlook.

Marxist philosophy in its seed originality is independent of all materialist trends and does not need external theoretical support and is not based on different cognitive foundations. All these forms of struggle and revolutionary tasks are carried out by a group of organic intellectuals without representing an independent and self-contained class. And without being a segment of professional specialists and experts in specific fields of knowledge, we have the right to say that all people are intellectuals, with the addition that not all people practice the function of intellectuals in society...

This means that if we can talk about intellectuals, talking about non-intellectuals is meaningless (**Gramsci, 2018**).

So, what are the conditions that allow the birth of the organic intellectual? How does it work to criticize the prevailing intellectual activity and participate directly in the process of change and undertake the process of assimilation and transcendence and besiege the function of domination and leadership?

The researcher concludes from the Gramscian reading of Marxist texts several results, which are as follows:

- Anthropological result: enabling man to participate effectively in making his destiny
- Civilizational result: Cultural revolution, changing mentalities and drawing from progressive humanity
- Political result: Building the national historical bloc by tearing apart the old world and starting to build the new world.
- Economic result: Envisioning a cooperative development model based on harmonizing quantity and quality. As for the result of my effort, it is based on removing the historical misunderstanding between cultural identities and universal values, and refraining from issuing preconceived normative judgments on direct reality, and confronting conservative and reactionary currents by raising the cultural level and harnessing the energy of liberating revolutions to reject mediocrity, shame, and rigid sectarianism. From this standpoint, Gramsci's revolution against capital can be inspired in order to declare a revolution of those who oversee their calcified heritage, their wrong policies, their failed development experiences, their backward modernization, and their faltering renaissance. Thus, Gramsci demands that "cultural and moral reform be linked to the economic reform program, as the economic reform program is in itself the concrete method in which every cultural and moral reform is represented.

## **Second: The contemporary importance of Gramsci's critique of civil society**

### **A- Gramsci's problem:**

Gramsci launches a skeptical (liberal) view of authority in civil society on the foundations presented by Marx but on the basis of a revised understanding of Marx through a critical reading of liberalism.

He sees the need to maintain skepticism of the powers of civil society, without giving up the liberal belief in the essential advantages of civil society. Where Hegel was before Gramsci skeptical of the powers of the civil society. But his skeptical approach was expressed through the authority of the state rather than the standards existing within civil society. Hegel considers civil society as a complex set of institutions that believe in particularities while the state works to promote them globally (**Taylor, 1975**).

His definition of civil society is based on his view of the state. In contrast to Hegel, Gramsci clearly shows how civil society can be criticized on the basis of its own standards rather than state authority? Gramsci is reserved, as regards the liberal skeptical view of power: to start from an institution of power it must be critically examined from within its system rather than from outside. Gramsci for the first time applied his skeptical method to the reflection on the powers of civil

society within the Marxist tradition, although he failed to apply the same measure to state power, but succeeded, as will be shown later, in exposing the liberal apology for civil society more clearly than ever before. It is worth noting that scholars of Gramsci have found that he does not agree with Marx's vision of abolishing civil society. For Marx and Engels, there is no difference between civil society and class relations; (civil society as such only develops with the bourgeoisie (**Marx & Engles, 1847**)).

When classes, including the bourgeoisie, are abolished, civil society also disappears. Gramsci's study is partly confused by the contradictions in Gramsci's own recent views. Joseph Femia argues that Gramsci departs from Marx's apparent hostility to liberal values, which is also central to the post-Marxist movement in Europe (**Femia, 2001**).

Femia is skeptical of attempts to take Gramsci to liberal turns and also assumes a dichotomy between liberalism and Marxism. Buttigieg claims that for Gramsci civil society is an integral part of the state. This is as good as saying that civil society means the ideological apparatus of the state while the political society of the state is equivalent to its representation (presentation) by its coercive wing (**Buttigieg, 2005**). Chantal Mouffe also admits that she was unaware of the importance of liberalism in socialist strategy, including Gramsci's own strategy (**Mouffe & Laclau, 1990**), so an attempt is made in the following to show how Gramsci became a liberal within the socialist camp. There are two decisive forces in liberalism that Gramsci recognized.

#### **B- The division of liberal and socialist views on man:**

Gramsci is very skeptical about the liberal and socialist concept of man and expresses his dissatisfaction with the liberal Catholic view of man, which is defined by social units such as productive forces and relations of production, which are fundamentally unsatisfactory. Gramsci tries to evade the duality of concepts regarding man, as he states that it is necessary to reformulate the concept of man, one must conceive of man as a sequence of active relations, a process where individuality is perhaps the most important factor among the other elements that must be taken into account. Humanity reflected in the individual entity consists of three elements: 1- The individual, 2- Other individuals, and 3- The natural world. It is merely an Aristotelian rhetorical claim; the claim that man is a political animal, which entails saying that not all the necessary consequences have been used from this even at the individual level (**Gramsci, 1979**).

Why is everyone considered a philosopher in the sense that one is also a scientist? Why, for example, are all contemporary communists not like Karl Marx with the same level of productive forces and class relations as Marx? Here he anticipated Sartre's rebellion against Marxism and decades later Sartre asked a similar question: "If class determines the nature of each individual, why then do all his contemporaries' contributions pity bourgeois romanticism and are not remembered like Valéry?" And a similar question, after Gramsci or Sartre: Why are prominent figures like Rabin and Dranath Tagore so unique in each individual and even a small group? What are these individual aspects of each individual or substratum of his class? How can one understand each person's creativity or stagnation or decay within the same ideological class? He therefore demands a revision of the division of the divisive concepts of man that the individualism of socialism shares.

### C- Positive and negative functions of civil society:

Despite the presence of many unclear aspects in Gramsci's definition of civil society, he emphasizes the distinction between civil society and classes on the one hand, and civil society and state authority on the other hand. It can be said that civil society, for Gramsci, represents the reference bases of the state, while the state derives its evolutionary (progressive) ties from classes (**Femia, 2001**).

Bobbio discussed that the superstructure is formed of two elements, civil society and the state. Civil society expresses consent and moral and intellectual leadership (positive elements), while the state represents authoritarianism and political/ideological leadership (negative elements). From here, we confirm that Bobbio presented a different interpretation of civil society according to Gramsci. In Bobbio's interpretation of Gramsci, civil society is a positive phenomenon, while the state is a negative phenomenon. In contrast, Gramsci suggests that both positive (moral and intellectual) and negative (political and ideological) functions interact under the cover of civil society.

It is difficult for one thinker to grasp the different aspects of Gramsci's thought. Which made the thinker Tixi shed light on aspects that Bobbio had neglected, namely that civil society morally serves the intellectual functions of the ruling classes, which provides a rational means of domination that does not tell us at all about the needs of civil society in the future, as proposed by Gramsci. However, Gramsci emphasizes that civil society provides rationalization for the moral and intellectual development of the class state (the negative element) on the one hand, and the moral state (the positive element) on the other hand (**Bobbio, 1988**).

For Gramsci, civil society is not just a positive political phenomenon, as Bobbio claimed; as the concept of civil society expands to class instincts and their benefits and class struggle and tries to normalize them through the family, religious and cultural communities, and social capital networks. For example, not only neoliberal thinkers, but also the poor will feel that they are poor and then they will not seize opportunities because of moral inferiority (**Mydal, 1969**).

Such moral beliefs are cultivated through many networks such as family, secular religion, educational institutions, etc. that claim white supremacy and that there are inherent differences between whites and blacks in general that prevent solidarity on common issues. The subordinate classes tend to live in societies that are different in their awareness of themselves, their property, their education, their jobs, etc. This causes the normalization of the functions of civil society (**Patnaik, 1988**). Often, civil society institutions meet the demands of the subordinate class for private property, unemployment, better wages, housing, and education by stating that these demands are illegitimate, which produces a state of negativity (political and moral) in which some subordinate classes feel that they deserve what they face and deserve this much because of their weak position in civil society (**Gramsci, 1979**).

Thus, civil society ideologically prepares its members to justify economic exploitation through private property. Civil society receives economic results but recasts these results as ideologies, which overwhelm the economy with a kind of legitimacy under capitalism. It prevents economic crises from escalating and leading to political instability. Through civil society, class life appears (normal). It is through civil society that class life appears normal. Hence, it can be said that economic results resemble the progressive bonds of civil society. Through ideologies, civil society

apparatuses confront economic results such as crises or depressions and prevent those crises from turning into major class conflicts (**Gramsci, 1979**).

Gramsci calls for a thorough study of how civil society applies the fighting spirit of the subordinate class by organizing its defense system in a war of positions such as an economic depression to support the class state. It is worth noting that civil society organizations have basic functions of international power on the same economic scale. It can be said that these organizations support ideologies and policies in their connection with state power and provide the state with political and ideological ideas and standards of power. Civil society is a source of strength for state power and the state is represented by a political or ideological leadership complementary to the corporate leadership of capitalism.

Both types of ideological and political leadership are prepared by civil society institutions. First: it legitimizes the coercive functions of state power, and also the subordinate classes feel that the state monopolizes the coercive power of tasks; where every person in civil society feels that someone may encroach on the privacy of the other and his property and so on, civil society has created a neutral ground to justify the need for the existence of the state, as members of civil society feel that they do not have time to care for each other's security interests and that they need a special apparatus with special powers, and state employees are trained by civil society institutions to remain neutral towards the interests of economic institutions.

As **Sassoon** says: The state adopts some specific principles of civil society and appears as a moral teacher or a moral state. It not only educates leaders but also the public, it shapes public opinion on economic matters and in return the concept of law belonging to the state can be extended to the institutions of civil society through treaties, agreements can subject the public under university pressure which is a kind of implicit coercion; thus civil society strengthens the power of the state with many inputs and links it provides different types of leadership to the administration of the class state organizes its fanatical ideology support using a behavioral style of the coercive class state (**Sassoon, 1983**).

Gramsci rejects any distinction between consent and coercion and discusses how the institution of civil society and especially fanatical ideologies try to provide justification for coercion in the economic basis? And also the political society. Moreover, the customary pressure or the first implicit coercion operates within the scope of civil society as a kind of parallel to the legal coercion of state power (**Gramsci, 1979**).

From the above it is clear that we have seen a kind of ideological/political functions of civil society these functions can be called negative functions and now we will explain the moral/intellectual functions or what Poebo calls the positive functions of civil society. Civil society follows a fundamental moral principle, which is the consent of its members, and although it tries to gain the consent of the subordinate class, it goes beyond that. It trains members in citizenship, it educates people about the values of leadership, privacy, and individual freedom, and it trains people to respect each other's privacy. It imparts rationality and social thinking. Over time, each member feels that the means are available to him when his will is present, so ordinary citizens feel that they live in a world of equal opportunities, although other points of view may have more than one interpretation of these positive functions because they are generally based on the concept of consent - moral - Second: Civil society performs what Gramsci calls cultural functions, which are different from economic functions (**Gramsci, 1979**).

They depend on the ability (intellectual abilities) of its members through the education that civil society institutions provide them; as in civil society, the child is taught to be social and rational in the stages of his life, so the child becomes a thinker or philosopher and a scientist through civil society institutions. But these positive (moral/intellectual) functions coexist with negative (ideological/political) functions in civil society and the negative functions are justified by an ideology of persuasion, and members must be mutually persuaded to defend the coercive powers of the state. As a result, the positive functions are not universal as civil society sees them as the basis of the class state.

### **D-Civil Society: Marx, Gramsci, and Bobbio:**

While Gramsci shares Marx's view that socialism must abolish class exploitation and state violence, he also believes that socialism means re-establishing the pluralistic/positive state of civil society. Socialism for Gramsci implies reconstruction, rather than the preservation of civil society. Gramsci reviews Marx's assumption that social life is only institutional economics, and that politics is also the politics of production (**Gramsci, 1979**).

Although he agrees with Marx on the withering away of the state, he expands Marx's vision of politics by separating them - civil society from the economy - and by providing a broader understanding of them. Gramsci says: "It is only possible to establish a system of principles that confirms the goal of the state, namely the absorption of political society into civil society. For him, the pluralistic function of the current civil society is better to redefine than to abolish it as Marx emphasized. In the future, civil society can still engage in moral and intellectual functions such as education or care rather than purely ideological functions, or political functions such as training in control or coercion. Principles of consent are to be generalized by an "organized society" that must tear down principles of violence or domination. Current civil society has placed its ethics or principles of morality and consent at the mercy of the state and capital. Therefore, we cannot take civil society for granted with regard to the question of human rights. Moreover, claims against economic and family exploitation, domestic and political violence are ignored by a selfish civil society. As a result, it may limit the growth of human rights issues. Bobbio reminds us of Gramsci's vision of the need for a future "organized society" (**Gramsci, 1979**).

Bobbio then attempts to show how, according to Gramsci, civil society disappears with the disappearance of the state. Gramsci nowhere says this. On the contrary, Gramsci sees that future civil society will re-absorb the state and establish a very important cultural function. Gramsci assumes that a socialist society will have to face a fundamental question that was asked by both Aristotle and Hughes: How do we make man? Gramsci draws insight from the Catholic religion, which believes that man is born alone and is solely responsible for his crimes (**Bobbio, 1988**).

As a result, Catholics believe that every human being needs the moral order of his society, so that both become "rational" and "social." Gramsci sees an element of truth in these Catholic claims. He also points out that liberal individualism draws important philosophical insights from Catholicism and adopts its own ideology. Therefore, he clearly states that there should be several private institutions and be under socialism to transform the child into a rational human being in several stages through moral and intellectual functions (**Gramsci, 1979**).

The researcher also sees through his understanding of Gramsci that the future civil society must renew the dual tasks: economic functions, and cultural functions – which have shaped the present

civil society. Gramsci believes that the new society must include a variety of private institutions ranging from the family and educational to cultural organizations.

## **Discussion**

The exploration of Antonio Gramsci's reinterpretation of Marxist theory offers profound insights into the intricate relationship between the state and civil society. Gramsci's differentiation between political society and civil society, and his concept of hegemony, provide a nuanced understanding of power dynamics and governance. In discussing Gramsci's ideas, it is crucial to consider the following points:

### **1. Hegemony and Cultural Leadership:**

- Gramsci's concept of hegemony emphasizes the role of cultural and ideological leadership in maintaining power. Unlike Marx's focus on economic determinism, Gramsci argues that the ruling class maintains control not just through coercion but by securing the consent of the governed. This consent is achieved through the dissemination of cultural norms and values that align with the interests of the ruling class.

### **2. Civil Society as a Site of Struggle:**

- Gramsci views civil society as a critical arena for ideological struggle. Within civil society, various institutions, such as the media, education, and religious organizations, play a vital role in shaping public consciousness and promoting the hegemony of the ruling class. However, civil society also provides a space for counter-hegemonic forces to challenge and contest the dominant ideology.

### **3. Passive Revolution and Historical Bloc:**

- The concept of passive revolution refers to gradual and reformist changes that accommodate the interests of the ruling class while preventing radical social transformation. Gramsci's idea of the historical bloc highlights the importance of forming alliances between different social groups to create a new hegemonic order. This alliance-building is essential for achieving a socialist transformation of society.

### **4. Relevance to Contemporary Challenges:**

- Gramsci's ideas remain relevant in addressing contemporary socio-political challenges. The rise of neoliberalism, globalization, and the increasing influence of mass media have reshaped the dynamics of power and governance. Understanding Gramsci's theory of hegemony can help analyze how cultural and ideological forces shape public opinion and political outcomes in the modern world.

### **5. Implications for Social Change:**

- Gramsci's emphasis on cultural and ideological reforms underscores the need for a holistic approach to social change. Activists and scholars must engage with civil society to challenge dominant ideologies and promote alternative visions of society. Gramsci's framework provides valuable tools for understanding the complexities of social movements and the strategies required for achieving systemic change.

## Conclusion

Antonio Gramsci's reinterpretation of Marxist theory offers a profound understanding of the relationship between the state and civil society, presenting a comprehensive framework for social transformation. His concept of hegemony emphasizes the importance of cultural and ideological leadership in maintaining power, underscoring the necessity for counter-hegemonic forces to challenge dominant ideologies. Gramsci's differentiation between civil society and political society, as well as his idea of passive revolution, illustrate the complexities of power dynamics and governance in contemporary society.

The exploration of Gramsci's thought reveals the critical role of civil society as both an instrument of control and a site for potential resistance. Institutions within civil society, such as the media, education, and religious organizations, play a significant role in shaping public consciousness and promoting the hegemony of the ruling class. However, they also provide a space for counter-hegemonic movements to contest and challenge the status quo.

Gramsci's notion of the historical Bloc. highlights the importance of forming alliances between different social groups to create a new hegemonic order. This aspect of his theory is crucial for understanding the strategies required for achieving socialist goals and fostering social change. Gramsci's emphasis on cultural and economic reforms underscores the need for an integrated approach to societal transformation, where civil society absorbs the functions of the state, leading to a self-organizing society without state oppression.

The relevance of Gramsci's ideas extends to contemporary socio-political challenges, including the rise of neoliberalism, globalization, and the influence of mass media. His theories provide valuable tools for analyzing the impact of cultural and ideological forces on public opinion and political outcomes. Gramsci's legacy continues to inspire critical thinking and transformative action, offering a blueprint for addressing modern governance and the ongoing struggle for social justice.

In conclusion, Antonio Gramsci's reinterpretation of Marxist theory provides a comprehensive and nuanced framework for understanding the intricate relationship between the state and civil society. His insights into hegemony, passive revolution, and the historical Bloc. remain relevant in addressing contemporary challenges and achieving social transformation. Gramsci's legacy endures as a source of inspiration for those committed to pursuing a more just and equitable society.

## References:

1. **Anne Sassoon (1988): Civil Society, In a dictionary of Marxist Thought, Ed: Tom Bottomore, Publisher: Blackwell, Oxford.**
2. **Antonio Gramsci(1959): The Modern Prince & Other Writings, Publisher: International Publishers, New York.**
3. **Antonio Gramsci (1979) Letters from Prison, Trans& Intro: Lynne La Wner, Publisher: Quartet Books, New York.**



- 4. Antonio Gramsci (1983): Selection from The Prison Notebook, Trans & Ed: Quintin Hoare, Publisher: International, New York.**
- 5. Antonio Gramsci (2017): On Italian National Unity, Trans: Fawaz Traboulsi, Publisher: Al-Mutawassit, Italy**
- 6. Antonio Gramsci (2018): The Historical Materialist Issues, Trans: Fawaz Traboulsi, Publisher: Al-Mutawassit, Italy.**
- 7. Arun Patnaik (1988): Gramsci's Concept of Common Sense, Economic and political Weekly, Vol. 23, Issue 5, PP.2-10.**
- 8. Chantal Mouffe & Ernesto Laclau (1990): In Interview, Ed: Ian Angus, Institution of Humanities, Simon Fraser University.**
- 9. Charles Tayler (1975): Hegel, Publisher Cambridge university press, Cambridge.**
- 10. Gunnar Mydal (1969): Objectivity in Social research, Publisher: Gerald Duckworth, London.**
- 11. Jacques Texier (1966): Gramsci La Philosophie Du Marxisme Presentation, Publisher: SECHERS, PARIS.**
- 12. Joseph Buttigieg (2005): Gramsci on Civil Society, Boundary, Vol. 22, Issue.3.**
- 13. Joseph Femia (2001): Civil Society and The Marxist tradition, in Civil Society, Ed: S. Kaviraj & S.Khilnani, Cambridge University Press, Delhi, Vol. 131. Issue. 46.**
- 14. Marx and Engles (1847): The German Ideology, Publisher: Progress, Moscow.**
- 15. Norberto Bobbio (1988): Gramsci and The Concept of Civil Society, In Civil Society and The State, Ed: J. Keane, London,**
- 16. Razmig Keucheyan (2012): Gramsci, Un Penseur Devient Monde, Publisher: le Monde diplomatique. France.**