

Discussion on the Relationship Between Civil Society and State and Its Practical Significance

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Abstract

The modern civil society theory was established by Hegel, and Marx perfected it. It is precisely from the question of the relationship between the state and civil society that Marx created a new philosophy of social history. On the basis of combing Marx's civil society theory, this article defines the modern civil society and the state. By comparing Hegel's and Marx's different expositions on the development trend of the relationship between civil society and the state, combined with realistic analysis, further expounds the tendency of the disintegration of the dual structure of civil society and the state. Learn from the experience and lessons of the construction of western civil society, so as to provide valuable practical significance for the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Keywords

Civil Society; State; Marx; Hegel; Social Governance.

1. Marx's investigation of civil society

The earliest definition of the concept of civil society was Aristotle, who actually defined "civil society" as a political community. This also confirms his famous saying: "Human beings are also a political animal by nature." Marx's investigation of civil society originated from his refutation of Hegel's understanding of the rational state. In his book "Principles of Philosophy of Law", Hegel clearly distinguished the state and civil society for the first time, and expounded in detail the composition, nature and function of civil society. Hegel understood the family, civil society, and the state as the necessary links in the process of objectification of ethical concepts.

Here, the characteristics of civil society in Hegel's eyes can be summarized into three points: one is that civil society is a union composed of independent but mutually dependent atomic individuals; the other is material needs and spirituality. It needs to constitute the main content of civil society and its activities; third, civil society has its own police and trade association organizations and a complete legal system. These characteristics also reflect that civil society is a field different from and independent of the state, but Hegel does not believe that civil society is a self-sufficient field. In Hegel's view, the state is the final result of the development of ethical concepts. Therefore, in his theoretical system, he constructed a system of relations between civil society and the state in which the state is higher than the civil society, and the state determines the civil society. For the first time, Hegel made a theoretical dual separation of civil society and political state. Marx fully affirmed this point. "Hegel regards the separation of civil society and political society as a contradiction. He is more profound." Hegel's concept of civil society is an economic category with the background of national economics. In Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law, Marx insisted on the dichotomy between the state and civil society than Hegel, because Marx accepted the economic regulations of Hegel's civil society.

The rational view of the state is the starting point of Marx's entire ideological exploration. Marx has shown a keen interest in Hegel's view of the state very early on. Through the rational state, an accurate analysis of the nature of freedom and an effective critique of the actual system can be achieved. However, in the "Introduction to Hegel's Critique of the Philosophy of Law" and "On the Jewish Question" written for the "German-French Yearbook" from October to December 1843, Marx's thinking has undergone a major change. The critique of national philosophy turned to the analysis of civil society itself. Except for the special experience during the work of the "Rhine gazette", this idea of Marx has changed, and there is no conflict between a rational state and a realistic state.

Therefore, not only the real country must be criticized, but the rational country must also be criticized. Among them, the most important factor is the concept of civil society and this concept. The nature of economics. Defining the concept of civil society from the perspective of the separation of civil society and the political state is the basic approach for Marx to study civil society issues in the context of Hegel's political philosophy criticism. On the issue of grasping the concept of civil society, Marx continued Hegel's work, and gave civil society the reality of economic life. But, more importantly, the difference between Marx and Hegel. The first is the different perspectives on "people" in civil society. In Hegel, people do not exist in reality, but Marx is concerned with people who exist in reality; secondly, there are differences in the specific provisions of the content of civil society; and finally, the differences in understanding of the relationship between the political state and civil society. Marx believed that Hegel reversed the relationship between civil society and the state, and that the family and civil society are the prerequisites of the state, "they are the real activists; and speculative thinking puts all this upside down." The difference is Fundamentally, it shows the objectivity and scientificity of Marx in investigating civil society.

Marx's re-examination of the relationship between civil society and the state is revolutionary. It breaks the status of the country described by Hegel as the "god on the ground" and seeks it out in the real world of human material life. On the basis of the "Paris Manuscript", Marx began to invest in the study of political economy in 1844. At this time, he gave up the huge criticism of Hegel's philosophy of law and proceeded to study political economy, and promoted the prior art. Civil society research has the most direct relationship.

It can be seen that Marx's investigation of civil society has gone through two stages. Before 1844, the concept of "civil society" was derived by criticizing Hegel's philosophy of law and political philosophy under the dual structure of civil society and the state. After 1844, it was obtained through political economy, but the content it refers to is still the sum of material life relations.

2. The definition of modern civil society and the country

Hegel believed that "civil society was formed in the modern world." Marx also pointed out that "the term 'civil society' was born in the 18th century, when property relations had already got rid of the communities of classical antiquity and the Middle Ages. True. The civil society of China only developed with the bourgeoisie." Therefore, the formation of this separation between civil society and the state has its historical inevitability and is an inevitable product of historical development. The prerequisites include the distinction between personal life and public life and the influence of enlightenment ideas on the relationship between western civil society and the state. The concept of civil society emerged in modern times and is the product of the obvious differentiation between personal life and public life after the emergence of the market economy.

2.1. The definition of modern civil society

In Marx's view, family and civil society are the constituent parts of the reality of the state, the spiritual existence of the reality of will, and the way of existence of the state. The family is the natural basis of the political state, while the civil society is the man-based basis of the political state.

Society as a whole is composed of individuals, and modern social life is also composed of individual lives. Today's personal life field is not composed of a single element, but a complex composed of many elements. It is composed of three different parts: the family, the market economy system, and the social public sphere. Among them, the family is the most typical area of personal life. The market economy system is a "system of needs."

The members of civil society are by no means atoms, because atoms are self-sufficient, and there can only be absolute emptiness outside of them. As a real person, every feeling of man forces him to believe in the world outside of his body and his personal meaning. "Even his secular stomach reminds him every day: The world outside is not empty. It is something that really enriches people." Therefore, people must establish connections in the process of pursuing self-satisfaction, that is, interests unite them. People's public activities will naturally form a non-state and unofficial intermediate field within a civil society, between the state's public life and personal life, and play a role in communicating the state's public life and personal life. Private public domain. Therefore, it can be considered that modern civil society refers to the entire field of private life in which society and the state go from inseparable to separate, independent of the political state under the conditions of a market economy.

Modern civil society represents independent individuals, and at the same time restricts and resists national public life with the organic overall image of the private sphere. Personal life exists in all societies, but in different social periods, personal life has different content, nature, structure and function, etc. Just as Marx predicted, with the tremendous development of productive forces and the enormous abundance of material wealth, civil society and the country will perish in the union of free men. "In the future communist society, with the productivity of With the full development of the old division of labor, the elimination of private ownership and class, the contradiction between private interests and public interests within the society will no longer exist, and the society will take back all the power that it has alienated into the state. This is the demise of the country, but also the demise of civil society."

Civil society is based on the market economy, and the nature of the market economy determines that everyone is independent and mutually recognized in civil society. At the same time, modern civil society is not only an organic combination of personal life spheres, but also the sum of various social relations. Its core content is the material relationship of people. As an independent and complete social form, it is based on the dependence of things. It is a society where different interests and different viewpoints among independent individuals gather and converge.

2.2. The definition of the modern country

According to Lenin's "State and Revolution", the state is regarded as a tool for class rule, a tool for one class to oppress another class. So in terms of modern society, public life refers to the public life of the country with the national public authority as the carrier. From the perspective of national public life, the concept of the country is the public authority of the society, which is located in a certain territory. A special social organization that controls, manages, and represents the highest sovereignty over civil society, an area of personal life. This seems to contradict the state as a "tool of class rule", but the two actually understand the state from different angles.

Engels once pointed out: "The state is the product of a society at a certain stage of development; the state means that this society is caught in an insoluble self-contradiction, split into irreconcilable opposites and unable to get rid of these opposites... The modern representative country is Capital is a tool for exploiting wage labor, and with the disappearance of classes, the state will inevitably disappear." Marx believes that the state is just a fake and false community, and in the true community, each person overcomes the separation from each other. , Overcome the alien relationship. Of course, Marx is also very clear that the emergence and existence of the state is related to a certain stage of the development of social material production. Even after the proletariat has gained state power, the state will still exist. With the practice of socialist construction, the "dictatorship of the proletariat" has become the core content of Marxist state theory and political construction. This has gradually formed the interpretive tradition of Marxist state theory—"the tool of class rule." Understanding the state as this is only a summary of the most essential content of the state. It is different from the essential characteristics of other social organizations because it is a machine for one class to oppress another class.

Since its emergence, the state has had dual functions, one is the tool of class rule, and the other is the public power of the social community for general management. With the progress and development of society, its second function has become increasingly obvious in modern society. If the state is only understood as the result of class struggle, it cannot explain the function of the state in managing society, let alone face social life itself. It is also a one-sided understanding of historical materialism. In modern society, the basic task of the country is to promote economic growth, ensure the continuous improvement of people's living standards, the continuous improvement of people's happiness, continuous improvement of people's livelihood, and ensure the orderly and stable development of society.

3. The development trend of the relationship between civil society and the state

While analyzing the dual structure of the state and civil society, Hegel and Marx also actively thought about the future unity of the two, and demonstrated the development trend of the relationship between civil society and the state. Hegel believed that the state would surpass civil society, and that civil society would eventually be unified with the state; while Marx believed that when society develops to the stage of a union of free men, the state will return and be unified with society.

3.1. Hegel's state transcends civil society

Hegel regards "family", "civil society" and "state" as the three forms of the combination of human society and the three stages of "ethical" development. "In Hegel's philosophy of law, the abandonment of private rights equals morality, the abandonment of morality is equal to the family, the abandonment of the family is equal to civil society, the abandonment of civil society is equal to the state, and the abandonment of the country is equal to world history." Therefore, The relationship between civil society and the state is embodied in the state's sublation and surpassing of civil society. This kind of sublation and transcendence power comes from the changes in the contradictory relationship between particularity and universality that run through the social combination at each stage. After the relationship between universality and particularity has experienced different forms in the family and civil society, the particularity of the independent individual finally returns to the substantive inner unity in the "state".

Therefore, for Hegel, the relationship between the state and civil society is not a simple binary

opposition. The country "divides itself into family and civil society, that is, into its own finite domains. The purpose is to exceed the ideals of these two domains and become its own infinite reality spirit." In civil society, Particularity and universality are opposed to each other, but in a country, particularity and commonality are in an organic unity. Therefore, only when civil society is promoted to the state can it truly realize itself. For the country, it contains the existence of civil society as a particularity, and it comes from the sublation of civil society. This sublation is not simply abandoning, but the state's internal transcendence over civil society, which means that its inherent rationality is presented. Come out and overcome its irrationality at the same time.

How did civil society transition to the state step by step? In Hegel's view, "civil society" is just a link, a link that transitions to the concept of "state". This stage itself is not the realization of the idea. To truly realize the idea of "state", it is necessary to sublimate "civil society". According to Hegel, civil society and political state are only two links of absolute spiritual development, but they are regarded as mutually opposed: civil society pursues personal interests, while political state pays attention to common things.

Hegel's attempt to resolve the antagonism between the two is to dominate and devour civil society by the political state. Hegel believes that the key role is "education." The inherent "education" function of "civil society" makes individuals consciously aware of the unity of their own existence and social existence. Individuals want to achieve true freedom. It is necessary to obey the universal and objective laws, that is, to obey the state and the law. Therefore, Hegel believes that the state is the ultimate destination of civil society.

3.2. Marx's civil society determines the country

Marx inherited Hegel's model of the dual structure of civil society and the state, but he corrected the historical misalignment of Hegel's "civil society" and "state" and put the two on the basis of reality. Thinking makes the opposition between the two have historical significance and realistic inevitability.

Man participates in public life as a social being, and as a private person for productive labor. "Man regards himself as a social being." But Marx profoundly reveals that the real basis of human life lies in civil society, because it contains human material. Relationship. Therefore, Marx believes that the civil society with material production activities as the specific content will always be the basis of all countries under the dual structure, and it is also the basis of the superstructure of all concepts such as laws and ruling consciousness.

In his critique of the relationship between Hegelian civil society and the state, Marx pointed out that the driving force of the dualization of this relationship lies in civil society, not the state. The political state is an inevitable product of the development of human society to a certain stage. Without the entire process of the development of human society from family to society as the basis, the state will not be produced. When history came to the capitalist society, the bourgeoisie ended feudal rule through the political revolution, society and the state moved from unity to separation, society gradually separated from its political attributes, and became an independent civil society that resisted and restricted the state.

Marx believes that this separation of civil society and the state is progressive, but it also has limitations. In civil society, freedom is nothing but an atomic pair of individuals. An intoxication of self-arbitrariness is based on the affirmation of personal private property, which means that without property, freedom does not exist. The prerequisites for human rights and freedom are self-interested, and neither transcends limitations. Therefore, Marx pointed out that "political emancipation itself is not human emancipation." Marx's view is contrary to Hegel, that society determines the country, and the country will return to society.

3.3. The disintegration of the duality of civil society and the state

In its essence, the state is nothing but an illusory community. "When the proletariat still needs the state, it does not need the state for freedom, but to suppress its enemies. Whenever it is possible to talk about freedom, The state itself does not exist. Therefore, we suggest that the word 'state' be changed to 'community'." From this, Marx put forward the concept of free people's association. Marx's vision is that between the capitalist society and the communist society, there is a period of revolutionary transformation from the former to the latter. Correspondingly, there is also a transitional period in politics. During this period, the country can only be The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, the demise of the state, even under the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, has a rather long process. Later, he optimistically predicted that in the communist society, that is, the stage of free people's association, the dual structure of the state and civil society will disintegrate and move towards true unity.

This kind of true unity is that society will take back the power granted to the country and realize that the entire social life is controlled and ruled by the people themselves, making the country lose the meaning of ruling. This is because in the free men' s association, the productive forces are extremely developed, the material wealth is extremely rich, and people are free from the shackles of survival. Private ownership of the means of production has also been eliminated, and the individual's possession of all productive forces. At the same time, the community of free people replaces the "illusory community," and public power is no longer alienated, and no longer overrides society and is controlled by a few people. The material production and exchange relations with capital as the link also ended, and class antagonism and class differences also ended with the elimination of private ownership. This kind of union is the fundamental existence of human beings, where people realize true freedom. Society is eternal. Although the state is an indispensable stage for the development of the entire human society, it is only a tool. In the stage of free people's association, the state will return to society. After the individual realizes the identity of the human nature, the dualization mode of civil society and the state will eventually end and be unified in the union of free men.

4. Realistic significance for the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics

After more than 40 years of reform and opening up, the development of my country's market economy has continued to deepen and improve, thus laying the foundation for the establishment, development and growth of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Drawing on and surpassing the experience and lessons of the construction of western civil society, avoiding large fluctuations in the relationship between the state and society, combining social practice and China's national conditions, using the power of the state to promote the construction of social life, and realizing the benign interaction between the state and society. This is the only way for China's social governance innovation.

First, it will help improve the socialist market economy system with Chinese characteristics. The socialist market system with Chinese characteristics provides the possibility and conditions for my country's social governance. Second, it is conducive to transforming government functions and establishing a model of positive interaction between the state and society. Third, it is conducive to strengthening the public ethics of society. It is also conducive to cultivating and developing social organizations and strengthening the standardized management of social organizations.

New interest subjects and new social needs continue to increase, the value orientation of

citizens is becoming increasingly diversified, and various social contradictions are emerging one after another. The solution to these problems can no longer rely solely on the power of the government, but also requires social organizations and citizens to actively play their roles to coordinate with the government in social governance. Strengthening the construction of social organizations is an objective need to promote the transformation of government functions and promote the development of democratic politics; it is an important means to improve the function of the market; it is an inherent requirement to strengthen social management and enhance the function of social autonomy; it is to integrate social resources to achieve a benign interaction between the state and society Effective Ways.

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