

HANNAH ARENDT'S CONCEPT OF FEDERALISM

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JULY 2015

HANNAH ARENDT'S CONCEPT OF FEDERALISM

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
IZMIR UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS

BY

BÜLENT KOÇAK

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

JULY 2015

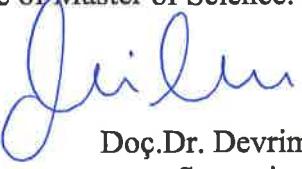
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ABSTRACT

HANNAH ARENDT'S CONCEPT OF FEDERALISM

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July 2015, 82 pages

This thesis is an attempt to prove that Hannah Arendt created a viable concept of federalism as an alternative to representative democracy and unitary nation-state model; as well, Arendt's concept of federalism is important to understand where Arendt stands in the theory of democracy.

I first analyze contemporary disputes about democracy and Arendt to get a picture of current understanding of democracy and Arendt. Then I will go on to explain Arendt's key concepts to see her political framework; afterwards I will study Arendt's concept of federalism, which is the backbone of this thesis.

Arendt never tried to create a systematical concept of federalism; I brought together her different ideas, which are scattered around in her different writings, to build her concept of federalism; Arendt's federalism has four dimensions: self-rule through local participation, delegated share of power, constitution as a source of authority and, free associations and civil disobedience. I believe that my thesis will be a contribution to understand Arendt's emphasis on constitution and free associations, which has been neglected in academic research. As well, throughout my research, I have come to conclude that Arendt's political philosophy has many similarities with capitalism and classical liberalism; on many issues, Arendt and advocates of classical liberalism share the same vision, notwithstanding Arendt's criticisms of liberal understanding of freedom. Thus, I concluded that Arendt is a republican liberal.

Keywords: Arendt, federalism, republicanism, liberalism, council system

ÖZET

HANNAH ARENDT'İN FEDERALİZM KONSEPTİ

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Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Devrim SEZER

Temmuz 2015, 82 sayfa

Bu çalışma, Hannah Arendt'in temsili demokrasi ve ulus devlet modeline alternatif olabilecek uygulanabilir bir federalizm konsepti yarattığını kanıtlama çabasıdır. Ayrıca, Arendt'in federalizm konsepti Arendt'in demokrasi teorisindeki yerini tanımlama açısından önemlidir.

Öncelikle Demokrasi teorisi ve Arendt hakkındaki güncel tartışmaları inceleyecek; daha sonra Arendt'in kilit politik konseptlerini açıklayacak; ve daha sonra, çalışmamın temelini teşkil eden Arendt' in federalizm konseptini inceleyeceğim.

Arendt hiçbir zaman sistemli bir federalizm konsepti yaratmaya çalışmadı. Ben bu çalışmamda Arendt'in değişik eserlerinde konuyla ilgili düşüncelerini bir araya getirerek onun federalizm konseptini oluşturmaya çalıştım. Arendt'in federalizminin dört ana yönü vardır: vatandaş katılımına dayalı yerinden yönetim, delege sistemine dayalı güç paylaşımı, otoritenin kaynağı olarak Anayasa ve sivil itaatsizlik ve bağımsız sivil toplum kuruluşları. Tezimin akademik literatüre katkısı akademik araştırmalarda görmezden gelinen Arendt'in Anayasa ve bağımsız sivil toplum kuruluşlarına olan vurgusu olacaktır. Ayrıca, Arendt liberalizmin özgürlük anlayışına çok büyük eleştiriler getirmiş olmasına rağmen araştırmamda, Arendt'in politik felsefesi ile klasik liberal anlayış arasında ciddi yakınlık olduğunu sonucuna vardım. Sonuç olarak Arendt Cumhuriyetçi bir Liberaldir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arendt, federalizm, cumhuriyetçilik, liberalizm, konsül sistem

To My Parents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I express sincere appreciation to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Devrim SEZER for his guidance and insight throughout my research. To my family, I offer sincere thanks for their unshakable faith in me and their willingness to endure with me the vicissitudes of my endeavors.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Although Hannah Arendt has been one of the most influential political thinkers, her ideas with regard to federalism have not received much scholarly attention. Many critics have stressed the nostalgic and utopic dimensions of Arendt's political thought. **My thesis is that Arendt provides us with a feasible concept of federalism based on sound principles as an alternative to the unitary nation-state model and the liberal approach to representative democracy and its party apparatus.** Arendt didn't try to build a systematical normative and institutional content for her concept of federalism; but I believe it is possible to bring together her thoughts about federalism to create a set of principles as a normative and institutional content for her concept of federalism. As well, this set of principles would guide us to find out **where Hannah Arendt stands in the theory of democracy.**

Arendt's thoughts and ideas about federalism are scattered around her different writings. *On revolution* is the book, in which she describes her concept of federalism as a council system more detailed than in any other of her writings. But we can find traces of her concept of federalism in almost all of her works. Arendt's thoughts are so interrelated with each other that as Canovan writes, "one cannot understand one part of her thought unless one is aware of its connections with all the rest." (Canovan,1992:6). Thus, the primary purpose of my analysis will be to comprehend Arendt's concept of federalism in the context of her works as a whole .

The fundamental argument of my thesis is that far from being nostalgic or utopic, Arendt is in fact a realist thinker through and through just like Machiavelli; Arendt is interested in “what is” rather than “what ought to be”. Arendt’s concept of federalism is not based on some personal assumptions or theories on abstract ideas that have never been applied in politics. Arendt infers her ideas from real experiences in the past. She searched history to find out what worked before rather than going after some abstract ideas. **The political significance of Arendt’s concept of federalism is that it is based on real experiences with an eye to shed new light on our contemporary political problems.**

Arendt argues that the world has been in a political crisis since the authority of Roman tradition was broken,

the crisis of the present world is primarily political, and that the famous "decline of the West" consists primarily in the decline of the Roman trinity of religion, tradition, and authority, with the concomitant undermining of the specifically Roman foundations of the political realm, then the revolutions of the modern age appear like gigantic attempts to repair these foundations, to renew the broken thread of tradition, and to restore, through founding new political bodies, what for so many centuries had endowed the affairs of men with some measure of dignity and greatness. (Arendt, 1961:140)

Arendt shares Rene Char and Tocqueville’s insights on this issue : “Char's "Our inheritance was left to us by no testament" sounds like a variation of Tocqueville's "Since the past has ceased to throw its light upon the future, the mind of man wanders in obscurity.”” (Arendt, 1961:7). But Arendt is not pessimistic about the future:

But there remains also the truth that every end in history necessarily contains a new beginning; this beginning is the promise, the only “message” which the end can ever produce. Beginning, before it becomes a historical event, is the supreme capacity of man; politically, it is identical with man’s freedom. (Arendt, 2004(1951):616)

For Arendt, the political genius of Rome was their understanding of legislation and foundation (Arendt, 1958:195); Roman concept of foundation was the source of the authority in Rome; Arendt argues that greatness of the Rome was in the political content of the religion in Rome;

to be religious meant to be tied to the past... Cicero could say, "In no other realm does human excellence approach so closely the paths of the gods (numen) as it does in the founding of new and in the preservation of already founded communities." The binding power of the foundation itself was religious, (Arendt, 1961:121).

A new beginning as a foundation would be the source of the authority in a truly modern republic, where people would enjoy public happiness by participating in public affairs. True, the loss of Roman tradition cannot be regained, but this doesn't mean that we cannot make a new beginning in the present. This is the main reason why Arendt admires the American founding fathers' understanding of the act of foundation, but she is very critical of the exclusion of town meetings and local participation from the American constitution. Arendt sees a connection between natality and political action,

The miracle that saves the world, the realm of human affairs, from its normal, "natural" ruin is the fact of natality, in which the faculty of action is ontologically rooted. It is, in other words, the birth of new men and the new beginning, the action they are capable of by virtue of being born (Arendt, 1958:247)

Although Arendt is not really pessimist about our capability of making new beginnings, she is very critical of the current understanding of politics. What she is trying to do can easily be seen in the following passages:

Like a pearl diver who descends to the bottom of the sea, not to excavate the bottom and bring it to light but to pry loose the rich and the strange, the pearls and the coral in the depths of the past—but not in order to resuscitate it the way it was and to contribute to the renewal of the extinct ages. What guides this thinking is the conviction that although the living is subject to the ruin of the time, the process of decay is at the same time a process of crystallization, that in the depth of the sea, into which sinks and is dissolved

what was once alive, some things suffer a ‘sea change’ and survive in new crystallized forms and shapes that remain immune from the elements, as though they waited only for the pearl diver who one day will come down to them and bring them up into the world of the living—as ‘thought fragments,’ as something ‘rich and strange,’ and perhaps even as everlasting Urphänomene [archetypal or pure phenomenon]. (Arendt, 1955:205-206)

Arendt is very well aware of the fact that Greek and Roman experiences cannot be resuscitated; what she is trying to do is to bring back the valuable experiences of the past to the attention of the world to make a new beginning. From this perspective, Arendt’s concept of federalism is mostly based on past Greek and Roman political experiences, which are like precious pearls for Arendt.

Although Arendt’s writings have attracted a lot of attention, Arendt’s ideas have not been taken seriously as a viable alternative for modern representative democracy and nation-state model. Especially her sharp separation of public and private realm and her insistence on ancient Greek model of participation attracted many criticisms. I believe there is a communication problem between Arendt and most contemporary political thinkers; Karl Popper explained this problem,

We are prisoners caught in the framework of our theories; our past expectations; our language, and that we are so locked into these frameworks that we cannot communicate with those encased in “radically different” frameworks or paradigms.(Popper, cited in Bernstein,2010:54)

From this perspective, Arendt is radically different from mainstream contemporary political philosophy and this radical difference causes a communication problem. Current mainstream political framework and Arendt’s political framework don’t fit at all; that is why we see that Arendt’s concept of federalism and her understanding of participatory democracy have been almost excluded from discussions as a viable solution to current crises of representative democracy. Thus, in third chapter, I will explain Arendt’s key concepts that draw boundaries of her political framework; as well, I will try to explain this communication problem between Arendt and

contemporary thinkers. I believe this communication problem arises out of blind faith in liberal understanding of representative democracy. For instance, Joseph Stiglitz pinpoints shortcomings of representative democracy in his book “ *The Price of Inequality*”, he clearly explains that it doesn’t work properly but his solution is mandatory voting to increase voter-turnout against citizens’ alienation from politics. Because of this blind faith, many thinkers, who criticize representative democracy and unitary nation-state model, don’t come up with any substantial solution like Arendt; they just see representative democracy like sacred principle, without which we can’t live. For instance, Benjamin Barber is as critical as Arendt with regard to representative democracy but he can’t think of replacing it but just want to complement it. Arendt explains that there were times men lived truly free because of his share in public affairs; Greek city-states, Roman Republic, American townships in colonial times, and councils during revolutions, where men enjoyed public happiness, which we lack today.

Since the fall of Communist regime in Soviet Union and its satellite states, we have witnessed many unsuccessful democracy attempts from these newly emerging countries. A part from a few countries that joined European Union, almost all of them have been governed by different kinds of autocratic governments. Developing countries, which have had longer democracy experience, like Turkey, Brazil or Thailand, have also failed to produce good running democracies. Moreover, developed countries that are deemed to have good running political systems are also going through difficult times; representative democracy have been in a crisis with regard to widening gap between rich and poor, diminishing voter turnouts, political recognition claims, and legitimacy of national and international organizations (such as central banks, IMF, World Bank, EU).

Benjamin Barber argues that the failure of liberal concept of representative democracy in developing countries and newly emerging democracies is a result of lack of civic foundation. He explains that although American democracy is also founded on a thin liberal democracy, American constitutional tradition rested on a century of colonial civic experience that endowed Americans with a strong sense of local citizenship and municipal engagement (Barber,2003: xvi). There is no space for citizens in developing countries to acquire this sense of local citizenship through representative democracy. Arendt's concept of federalism is actually based on this sense of local citizenship more than any other theory.

Seyla Benhabib argues that struggle over wealth, political position and access that characterized bourgeois and working class politics throughout the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century were replaced by the struggles that emerged out of experience of new social movements in liberal capitalist democracies, like abortion and gay rights, ecology and racial and linguistic politics (Benhabib, 2006:4). Although Benhabib is right to claim that struggles over wealth and political rights are over in developed countries because of economic developments and general suffrage, Occupy Wall Street movements, diminishing voter turnouts and growing influence of big companies on political decisions for their interests are signs that old struggles over wealth and political rights could come up in a different manner. Citizens' alienation from politics because of lack of space to participate is the root cause of the old problems emerging in a different manner over wealth and political rights. I believe Arendt's understanding of federalism with its strong emphasis on participation would be a cure to old and new problems.

Hannah Arendt believes that current representative democracy and sovereign nation-state model have many shortcomings and they are not compatible with the

essence of politics, which is citizens' direct participation in public affairs. She offers federalism instead of unitary nation-state model and participatory democracy instead of representative democracy. Greek understanding of participatory democracy is the basis of Arendt's concept of participation; *Isonomia* as "no rule" principle is a *sine qua non* for political equality, freedom and plurality for Arendt. Roman concept of "*potestas in populo, auctoritas in senate*" is the backbone of Arendt's understanding of separation of powers, constitution, and authority. Arendt's emphasis on Greek and Roman political principles clashed with modern liberal understanding of politics. Arendt's thoughts are idiosyncratic; they don't easily fit into any frame; she herself also denied belonging any group.

One of the most neglected aspects of Arendt's political philosophy is that her concepts of participatory democracy and federalism are quite compatible with John Stuart Mill's concept of individual liberty. Actually, what Arendt achieved is remarkable from this perspective; Arendt identifies individual liberties as prerequisites for political freedom and goes one step further and gives citizens a share in public affairs in addition to individual liberty. Actually, Arendt believes that positive liberties would strengthen negative liberties. Thus, Arendt is not opposed to individual liberties but she strongly oppose to the equation of political freedom with the security of individual liberties. As well, Arendt's approach to separation of public and economic spheres is quite compatible with capitalism. Arendt opposed to government's interference in economic affairs; Arendt makes a distinction between public and private domains and sees the government as the protector of the equality of the conditions with regard to business matters rather than protector of equality of outcomes.

The constitutional aspect of Arendt's concept of democracy brings Arendt closer to liberal understanding of legal protection of individual liberties from the tyranny of the majority and government's actions. Arendt's objection to current understanding of the constitution is that only negative liberties are protected by the constitutions; as Arendt emphasized in "*On Revolution*", American Constitution is the result of founding fathers' successful act of foundation; but positive liberties weren't taken into consideration. As well, Arendt doesn't hide her admiration for founding fathers with regard to their understanding of authority; establishment of Supreme Court as authority for the permanence and amelioration of constitution was formidable for Arendt. From this perspective, we understand better shallowness of the criticisms that accuse Arendt for being after Greek nostalgia.

Freedom of Association and civil disobedience are necessary against the tyranny of the majority. Arendt sees civil disobedience movements as voluntary associations, which are needed to bring necessary changes without violence and government breakdown. Arendt even goes further and asks for a constitution, which is compatible with civil disobedience.

We need to read Arendt's concept of federalism also as an answer to the crisis of the sovereign unitary nation-state model. Although The French Revolution brought equal human rights for mankind, the rise of nation-state perverted rights of men into rights of co-nationals (Arendt,2004(1951):297). For Arendt, this perversion has been the root cause of minority-majority problem. As well, Arendt argues that tribal nationalism in Eastern Europe paved the way for totalitarian movements.

Arendt's concept of federalism has four cornerstones:

- Self rule based through local participation
- Delegated share of power

- Constitution as a source of authority
- Civil disobedience and free associations

I will study Arendt's concept of federalism in fourth chapter with particular reference to these four themes. I will also analyze, in the second chapter, contemporary disputes about democratic theory and Arendt; in the third chapter Arendt's key concepts, which define Arendt's political framework.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEMPORARY DISPUTES ABOUT DEMOCRATIC THEORY AND ARENDT'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

2.1. CONTEMPORARY DISPUTES ABOUT DEMOCRACY, FEDERALISM AND PARTICIPATION

We live in a fast-changing globalized world order; many thinkers believe that we can't go on with current liberal approach to politics. In this chapter, I will study prominent contemporary thinkers and their solutions for shortcomings of liberal political system. Jurgen Habermas and Seyla Benhabib have been the most influential advocates of the deliberative theory of democracy; Robert Dahl's arguments about citizen participation in contemporary politics should be a part of any research concerning federalism; Chantal Mouffe has attracted a lot of scholarly attention with her agonistic approach to contemporary political problems; Philip Pettit stands out as the most prominent thinker for neo-republicanism with her concept of liberty as non-domination; Benjamin Barber's concept of strong democracy has many similar features with Arendt's concept of federalism.

The deliberative theory of democracy is based on the public sphere of deliberation about common concerns; within this public sphere, individuals recognize each other as moral and political equals. Public sphere consists of different modes of associations from political parties to citizens' initiatives, social movements to voluntary associations. Rational and fair deliberation conducted by free and equal individuals in this public sphere results in collective decisions concerning all common concerns. Jurgen Habermas believes that citizens, as the addressees of the law, are entitled to be authors of these laws that shape their lives; thus legitimacy of laws depend on popular sovereignty of citizens; he explains: "Only those statutes may claim legitimacy that can meet with the assent of all citizens in a discursive process of legislation that in turn has been legally constituted"(Habermas,1996:110). Habermas' understanding of popular sovereignty is based on communicative power of citizens, which requires people to talk to each other; any generalizable social agreement as a result of public discourse should have a means to affect decision-making process in parliament; in other words, informal public sphere should diffuse into formal public sphere to create legitimacy for laws. From this perspective Habermas' and Arendt's understanding of participation clash because Arendt is on the side of direct participation of citizens rather than informal opinion formation.

Habermas sees deliberative democracy as a fusion of liberalism and republicanism; he explains in his book "*The Inclusion of the Other*":

According to liberal view, the democratic process takes place exclusively in the form of compromises between competing interests. Fairness is supposed to be guaranteed by rules of compromise formation that regulate the general and equal right to vote...Such rules are ultimately justified in terms of liberal basic rights. According to republican view, by contrast, democratic will-formation is supposed to take the form of an ethical discourse of self-understanding; here deliberation can rely for its content on a culturally established background consensus of the citizens...Discourse theory takes elements from both sides and integrates them into the concept of an ideal

procedure for deliberation and decision making. Weaving together negotiations and discourses of self-understanding and of justice, this democratic procedure grounds the presumption that under such conditions reasonable and fair results are obtained. (Habermas,1998:246)

In other words, Habermas tries to complement liberal understanding of politics with a more deliberative decision making process; He tries to keep intact liberal parliamentary institutions but wants them to be open to informally formed public opinions.

Seyla Benhabib, in line with Habermas' vision, sees deliberative democracy as a sine qua non for the legitimacy of political decisions:

Legitimacy in complex democratic societies must be thought to result from the free and unconstrained public deliberation of all about matters of common concern. Thus a public sphere of deliberation about matters of mutual concern is essential to the legitimacy of democratic institutions (Benhabib, 1996: 68)

Benhabib also argues that deliberative democracy wouldn't put liberal rights and minorities in danger because accepted norms of universal moral respect and egalitarian reciprocity would give minorities and dissenters both the right to withhold their assent and the right to challenge the rules as well as the agenda of public debate (Benhabib, 1996: 79).

Benhabib claims that one of the biggest difference between deliberative theory of democracy and Rawlsian theory of liberal democracy is that deliberative theory locates public sphere in civil society as opposed liberal theory, which locates public sphere in state and its organizations. Benhabib argues that public sphere located in civil society by deliberative approach would allow interaction of background culture and political processes.

One of the shortcomings of deliberative theory of democracy is the citizens' lack of formal power to engage in public affairs. In other words, it is designed as a

complement or modification of representative democracy. Benhabib also accepts this argument by saying: “Deliberative theory of democracy ...is a theory that claims to elucidate some aspects of the logic of existing democratic practices better than other.” (Benhabib, 1996:84)

Robert Dahl approaches to the politics in a different manner; polyarchy is a word introduced by Dahl to define modern representative democracies with universal suffrage. Polyarchy has six political institutions:

- Elected officials
 - Free, fair and frequent elections
 - Freedom of expression
 - Access to alternative sources of information
 - Associational autonomy
 - Inclusive citizenship
- (Dahl, 2000:85-86)

Polyarchy is designed for large countries, not for small units. Dahl explored the ways to find a solution for the difficulty of self-governing in complex, industrial, pluralist and populous modern society. For Dahl, one of the biggest problems for self-governing societies is size issue; he explained,

The dilemma of size: The smaller a democratic unit, the greater its potential for citizen participation and the less the need for citizens to delegate government decisions to representatives. The larger the unit, the greater its capacity for dealing with problems important to its citizens and the greater the need for citizens to delegate decisions to representatives. (Dahl, 2006:59)

From this perspective, Dahl argues that in large societies there is a trade-off between citizen participation and government’s effectiveness on macro political. The problem with Dahl’s argument is that Dahl is not clear why participatory democracy can’t produce effective results for macro political issues. Jefferson’s ward system also requires representation for macro political issues but Jefferson’s system or Arendt’s council system also enable citizens to participate in public affairs.

Dahl explains in “*On Democracy*” that even in small towns, citizens might not be able to find enough time to speak in assembly democracy; as well, there would be de facto representative system in towns governed by assembly system (Dahl, 2000: 107-108). I believe these are not really shortcomings of participatory democracy because we can’t really expect that all citizens would speak in the assembly; but the point is that all citizens would have the right to speak; Benjamin Barber argues in his book “*Strong Democracy*” that citizens could be chosen by lot among candidates to speak in meetings to solve time problem. Hansen explains very well that Dahl’s argument regarding time constrain on assembly democracy is groundless,

Political activity can be divided into passive participation- that is, listening and voting- and active participation, which means proposing things and taking part in political argument: what the Athenians expected of the ordinary citizen was the former, which demanded enough common sense to choose wisely between the proposals on offer, whereas active participation was left to those who might feel called to it- he who wishes, *ho boulomenos*, in fact. Democracy consisted in every citizen having *isegoria*, the genuine possibility to stand up and state his proposal and his objection, but it didn’t require everyone to do so- indeed, if every citizen had insisted on making use of his *isegoria*, assembly democracy would have broken down there and then. (Hansen, 1999:306-307)

With regard to de facto representation in assembly democracy, Arendt also accepts that there would be representation in participatory democracy but elites would be chosen according to political criteria as different from representative democracy.

Dahl’s approach to capitalist economy in a democracy is a bit complicated; on the one hand, he favors capitalism because it works much better than other centralized economic systems; Dahl also draws attention to the incompatibility of nonmarket economies with democracy;

Contrary to the views of socialists, advocates of central planning, and other critics who hoped to replace markets wholly or mainly with a nonmarket economy of some kind, twentieth century experience demonstrated pretty conclusively that a nonmarket economy is both highly inefficient and,

because of the power to control economic decisions that it necessarily places in the hands of governments, incompatible with democratic controls over leaders (Dahl, 2006:64)

On the other hand, he thinks market economy is inherently prone to harm a part of population through unemployment, poverty, and damages to self-esteem; as well, he argues that market economy might destroy political equality by allowing some individuals or groups to convert their economic resources to political sources. In line with Dahl's argument, Joseph Stiglitz explains in his book "*The price of inequality*", how super rich 1 percent use their economic sources to influence political decisions. With regard to capitalism's harm on political equality, Dahl is wrong to blame market economy; my argument is that the problem is representative democracy and citizens' alienation from politics; I will explain this issue later.

Although Dahl explains the growing economic and political inequality in America, he believes that there would be a shift from consumerism to citizenship, which would diminish political equality; in other words, Americans might turn into active citizens from avid consumers. Dahl believes that happiness is a more powerful drive than consumerism; engagement in political affairs would seem a more satisfying objective to citizens (Dahl, 2006: 106-107). Dahl argues that one day Americans may ask themselves: " we are far richer than our grandparents, but are we happier?" (Dahl, 2006: 119). This argument is in line with Arendt's argument that the source of public happiness is active participation in public affairs.

Philip Pettit interprets Isaiah Berlin's concept of negative and positive liberties as non-interference and self-mastery; and argues that there is a third conception of liberty as non-domination; he goes on to claim that republican tradition should be based on conception of liberty (Pettit,1997:27). Pettit's concept of non-domination is a result of his concept of freedom; freedom for Pettit is the lack of a master or a

dominus who can arbitrarily interfere in your life (Pettit, 2006:138). Pettit considers republican sort of freedom as social freedom which is based on choosers as opposed to choice based liberal concept of freedom: “Choosers are socially free to the extent that they are more or less shielded against social obstruction” (Pettit, 2006:133). Pettit envisages a contestatory conception of democracy that would enable citizens to enjoy liberty as non-domination. There are three preconditions for a polity to realize the condition of contestability: polity has to be deliberative, inclusive and responsive.

Pettit is opposed to direct participation and sees it as mob rule. For him, success of Athenian democracy can't be attributed to direct participation. From this perspective, the backbone of Pettit's argument is that the state would be oriented to non-domination through contestatory concept of democracy. In other words, he tries to create a republican form of government without giving any real power to citizens. In line with Pettit's argument, Laborde and Maynor also argue that “Republicanism, after all, was historically a theory of popular self-rule and democracy. But how, and how much, should the people participate in politics to be free of domination?” (Laborde, 2007:9)

The problem with Pettit's argument is that he misreads republican understanding of non-domination. People in republican theory are not dominated because they have the political power to resist such interference. Pettit's concept of liberty as non-domination doesn't give any formal power to citizens. In other words, it is different interpretation of liberal concept of liberty as non-interference disguised in a republican form.

Chantal Mouffe sees a fundamental tension between the logic of democracy and logic of liberalism. Mouffe argues that liberalism's objective is to make differences irrelevant through its procedures and to locate pluralism to the private

sphere. In other words, liberalism tries to eliminate power and antagonism that contradicts with the logic of democracy. She argues that theories that try to solve this problem by procuring stable grounds for liberal democracy are putting undue constraints on the political debate (Mouffe, 2000:9), because power and antagonism are ineradicable and they are essential to democracy. Mouffe with Laclau depict an approach that claims that any social objectivity is constituted through acts of power; the point of confluence between objectivity and power is hegemony. Accordingly, for Mouffe, the question for democracy is not how to eliminate power but how to create forms of power that are compatible with democracy. Mouffe's concept of power is quite similar to Arendt's concept of power; they both believe that power is not something we need to eliminate but we need to create in a democratic society.

Mouffe sees Rawlsian well-ordered society as a dangerous utopia, because it is based on a conception of justice, which recognized by reasonable and rational citizens. In this system, politics and legitimate dissent is eliminated because this theory aims for final resolution of conflicts through rational consensus. This rational universal consensus is a utopia because it is based on disappearance of antagonism and exclusion, which is not even remotely possible.

Mouffe is also highly critical of the advocates of deliberative democracy because their aim is not to relinquish liberalism but to establish a link between liberal values and democracy. In other words, they try to reformulate democratic principle of popular sovereignty to eliminate the dangers that it could pose to liberal values (Mouffe, 2000:3).

Benjamin Barber strongly disagrees with liberal democracy's approach to political power and freedom. In line with Arendt's argument, Barber argues that freedom is not the precondition of political activity but is a product of it (Barber,

2003:4). As well, political power is not a threat to individual liberties and to private property as liberal theory argued. Liberal theory sees freedom and political power as mutually exclusive concepts; freedom and power are defined by the absence of the other. Barber argues that for liberal democracy, politics is the art of the power and freedom is the art of anti-politics (Barber,2003:35). Barber also claims that liberal and Marxist theories' approach to power and freedom are quite similar; both see power and freedom as antonyms. As Lenin said: "While the State exists there is no freedom. When there is freedom , there will be no State" (Lenin,1932:79). For Barber, participatory democracy is a sine qua non for a good running democracy; Representative democracy can't be a substitute for citizen participation. Barber argues that behind the success of America's representative democracy rests American experience of participatory citizenship during colonial times; countries that haven't had this kind of participatory experience have turned into different kinds of tyrannies in newly emerging democracies.

Barber offers Strong Democracy concept as an alternative to liberal democracy. Strong democracy is modern form of participatory democracy, which envisages a self-governing community of citizens. Active consent of participating citizens replaces voting system, which is about only preferences. Barber argues that representation is not compatible with freedom because it delegates and thus alienates political will (Barber,2003:145). Participatory process changes citizens' view of the matters because in such communities public ends are neither extrapolated from absolutes nor discovered in a preexisting hidden consensus. Barber is strongly opposed to pre-political or epistemological status of conceptions of freedom, law, right or justice.

Although Barber is a strong critic of liberal democracy, he envisages an institutional framework, which is complementary and compatible with liberal representative institutions. He believes that his concept of strong democracy is a modification of liberal democracy. He also envisages different kinds of safeguards for individual rights and minorities.

Barber envisages neighborhood assemblies for participation and national initiative and referendum process for decision making. At the first phase, neighborhood assemblies would be forums of public discussion without any substantial power; in the second phase they would become voting constituencies for regional and national referenda. Membership would be rotated at local assemblies by lot; as well, local offices would be also filled by lot, as Greeks did in fifth century B.C.

On the one hand Barber's understanding of freedom and citizen participation is very close to Arendt's approach; but on the other hand, although he is very critical of representative democracy, he envisaged a system for not replacing it but to complement it.

In summary, there is a tendency among contemporary thinkers to put more emphasis on positive liberties; but most of them are not after direct participation of citizens in public affairs; they just want to citizens to be more interested in politics through deliberative or contestatory politics. Benjamin Barber and Chantal Mouffe stand out as the ones who are inclined to change current order to give citizens more political power. Although Benjamin Barber's concept of strong democracy is very similar to Arendt's understanding of politics, Barber's insistence on keeping liberal representative democracy intact contradicts with Arendtian politics. Mouffe's understanding of politics is very similar to Arendt; Both of them see the essence of

politics as debate and also their concept of power is also very similar. Both sees political power as necessary for a good running democracy.

2.2. CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO ARENDT'S POLITICAL THINKING

Hannah Arendt has been considered one of the most creative political thinkers of twentieth century, but her ideas are excluded from the mainstream political discussions. Her strong emphasis on Greek and Roman concept of politics is the primary reason for this exclusion but most critics ignore her positive remarks regarding Founding Father's achievements through American Constitution.

Richard Bernstein is one of the rare contemporary political thinkers, who see Arendt's understanding of politics as vital to understand and solve current political and sociological problems rather than as irrelevant thoughts with modern complex societies. Bernstein argues that her most criticized concept of action, which critics call as nothing but an idealized and romanticized image of the Greek polis, is actually about a permanent human possibility (Bernstein, 1983:210). Bernstein explains,

On the contrary, her primary intention is to reclaim what she takes to be a permanent human possibility, one that is rooted in the human capacity to begin, to initiate, to act together, and which she claims has been exemplified in historical phenomena as diverse as the Greek polis, the American revolution, the Paris Commune, the original Russian soviet, the citizens councils formed in the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, and the beginnings of civil right movement and the anti-Vietnam War movement in the United States. Indeed, in *On revolution* she argues that there have been the brief and fragile manifestations of this form of politics, which she takes to be the quintessence of "the revolutionary spirit". This is the lost treasure that she seeks to reclaim. She can more easily be faulted for being ahistorical in her understanding of politics. For the essence of politics is always the same, wherever and whenever it spontaneously arises. (Bernstein, 1983:210-211)

As Bernstein argued, we can't deny that essence of politics hasn't changed since antiquity but some of us claim that it has changed and look back past experiences as

irrelevant. Bernstein makes this issue more relevant in the final pages of his book *“Beyond objectivism and Relativism”*,

When Aristotle sought to clarify what he meant by phronesis and the phronimos, he could still call upon the vivid memory of Pericles as the concrete exemplar of the individual who possessed the faculty of discriminating what was good for himself and for the polis. But today, when we seek for concrete exemplars of the types of dialogical communities in which practical rationality flourishes, we are at a much greater loss. Yet we can recognize how deeply rooted this frustrated aspiration is in human life. (Bernstein, 1983:230)

Bernstein openly accepts that Arendt is right about the essence of politics with her concepts of freedom, action and plurality. According to Bernstein the essence of politics is “debate” for Arendt. Bernstein draws attention to importance of “no rule” principle and Greek isonomy to explain the special meaning of debate for Arendt.

We can see more clearly why Arendt does not think of politics as involving rulership, where one person, group, or class dominates others. Rather it involves “no rule” the mutual and joint action grounded in human plurality and the isonomy of citizenship where individuals debate and seek to persuade each other. Persuasion is not manipulation of others by image making. Persuasion involves free and open debate among equals in which they mutually seek to clarify, test, and purify opinions. (Bernstein, 1983:209)

Although Bernstein agrees with Arendt on the essence of the politics and her concept of freedom and power, he argues that her sharp distinction between social and political causes ambiguity with regards to content of political and social realm. In other words, Bernstein argues that Arendt couldn’t address appropriately to “social question”;

...testing ground for politics in the modern and contemporary world has been in struggles in for social liberation. Arendt knows this, but fails to emphasize it. Consider again some of the exemplary moments of politics...the Paris Commune, the original Russian soviets; the councils formed in the wake of the Hungarian Revolution. No account of these movements is adequate that fails to consider how they originated out of the demand for social liberation. Arendt never fully appreciated a lesson that she might have learned from Marx. Marx realized, more profoundly than any other modern thinker, that the type of politics and action portrayed by Arendt is always in danger of

becoming hypocritical and repressive unless one addresses the “social question”. (Bernstein, 1983:214)

Arendt does know very well that liberation was one of the reasons for these revolutionary movements; she sees liberation as “*to be free from oppression*” and argues that at one point desire to be free from oppression ended in these movements and desire for freedom started. For instance, Hungarian revolutionaries were oppressed by a regime that they weren’t able to participate in politics; but first, they had to be liberated from oppression to be able to enjoy freedom as a participator in public affairs. Arendt doesn’t deny this issue; to be clear I need to quote a long text from *On Revolution*,

The difficulty here is that revolution as we know it in the modern age has always been concerned with both liberation and freedom. And since liberation, whose fruits are absence of restraint and possession of 'the power of locomotion', is indeed a condition of freedom - nobody would ever be able to arrive at a place where freedom rules if he could not move without restraint - it is frequently very difficult to say where the mere desire for liberation, to be free from oppression, ends, and the desire for freedom as the political way of life begins. The point of the matter is that while the former, the desire to be free from oppression, could have been fulfilled under monarchical - though not under tyrannical, let alone despotic - rulership, the latter necessitated the formation of a new, or rather rediscovered form of government; it demanded the constitution of a republic. Nothing, indeed, is truer, more clearly borne out by facts which, alas, have been almost totally neglected by the historians of revolutions, than 'that the contests of that day were contests of principle, between the advocates of republican, and those of kingly government' (Arendt,1965:32-33)

Arendt addresses to the social question and clearly identifies the boundaries between social and public domains. To be clear, although people should be liberated from oppression and life’s necessities in order to be able to participate in public affairs, liberation from oppression and necessities doesn’t produce necessarily a true republic where people can enjoy public happiness by being active participants in public affairs; throughout history, whenever people created these true republics, economic freedom was taken as a means to political freedom rather than politics as a means to

economic freedom. Greek city-states, Roman republic and American township model were based on the sharp separation of public and social realms. It is not fair to accuse Arendt of not taking seriously social question. In her essay “ *Reflections on Little Rock*”, Arendt made very clear herself about to what extent public domain stretches,

...when we come to “ the right to sit where one pleases in a bus” in a railroad car or station, as well as right to enter hotels and restaurants in business districts- in short when we are dealing services of which, whether privately or publicly owned, are in fact public services that in fact public services that everyone needs in order to pursue his business and lead his life. Though not strictly in the political realm, such services are clearly in public domain, where all men are equal.... (Arendt, 1959:52)

What Arendt is after is to distinguish public and private domain; she clearly explains that if everyone has a right to pursue his business and lead a life without obstruction in an equal manner; at the same time she sees enforcement of equality in private or social domain as destructive.

Bernstein explains Arendt’s distinction between *truth and opinion* and *interest and opinion*. Bernstein argues that Arendt sees an element of coercion in truth; and truth is used as standards on politics with disastrous results; On the other hand, Arendt sees opinions as the real stuff of politics. Although opinions belong to individuals, they are formed in political space by debating. Unlike truth, there is no certainty for opinions; opinions’ adequacy is based on public argumentation. With Arendt’s words, opinions need purification and representation in public realm to be formed. Bernstein also explicates the role of judgment in forming opinions and Arendt’s fascination with Kant’s analysis of reflective judgment.

Judgment is not the expression of private feelings or idiosyncratic subjective preferences. Neither is it to be identified with the type of universality that she takes to be characteristic of “ cognitive reason”. Judgment is communal and intersubjective; it always implicitly appeals to and requires testing against the opinions of other judging persons. It is not a faculty of Man in his universality, but individuals in their particularity. (Bernstein,1983:219)

In Arendt's words,

Judgment... cannot function in strict isolation or solitude; it needs the presence of others "in whose place" it must think, whose perspectives it must take into consideration, and without whom it never has the opportunity to operate at all. (Arendt, 1961:220-221)

Kant's understanding of judgment, which creates a mode that ascends from particular to universal rather than from general rules to particular, requires argumentation in public realm to be valid. Bernstein argues that this mode of thinking is quite similar to Arendt's concept of opinion formation in public realm.

Margaret Canovan is one of the best-known researchers about Arendt; she argues that Arendt sees the roots of totalitarianism in modernity and as a result she sought solutions in ancient republics within classical Republican tradition. Arendt's republicanism has different features than other Republican thinkers; Arendt is less interested in military power and institutional details but more interested in free discussion among citizens (Canovan, 1992:203). Despite these differences, Arendt was supporter of republican understanding of the state, which is common possessions of citizens, mixed and balanced political systems and government of laws. In a nutshell, for Canovan, Arendt was a classical republican with some significant differences.

Canovan answers questions with regard to Arendt's lack of realism regarding council system. Canovan argues that Arendt's council system is not a result of her lack of realism; but we, citizens, are so much accustomed to live with representative democracy that we don't want to be citizens; we are satisfied if our necessities are taken care of. In other words, Canovan argues that Council system is not a utopia. From this perspective, Canovan is one of the rare thinkers that is aware of the communication problem between Arendt and contemporary politics; current

framework of democracy doesn't let us to understand to understand that Arendt's concept of participatory democracy is a viable option to replace representative democracy.

Canovan also argues that council system would be the end of general suffrage as we know because self-chosen citizens would be in, those who are self-excluded would be out (Canovan, 1992:238). As well she argues that Arendt's concept of council system tries to reconcile republican principle of equal citizenship with the demands of modern society. Canovan emphasizes how Arendt's concept of republican equality contradicts with liberal concept of equality. For Arendt equality is only possible in an artificial space created for this purpose, which is polis; in contradiction, liberal political theory falsely claims that men are born equal; equality for Arendt is not something given but something to be established through a political project.

Canovan, in line with Welmer's criticism, sees a weakness in Arendt's concept of political autonomy; for Canovan, there is no possibility to put economic matters out of political realm as Arendt argued. Canovan argues that Arendt's dismissal of society and market economy is based on wrong assumptions: Arendt lived through post-war Keynesian economics and assumed that market economy is not different than Marxist concept and as a result she didn't take into account claims of liberal economists, like Hayek or Adams, with regard to personal freedom offered by market economy (Canovan, 1992: 121).

Albrecht Wellmer sees Arendt's idea of political freedom as her most productive contribution to modern democratic theory (Wellmer,(Villa, 2001:240)) . He sees Arendt's council system, as a metaphor for creating a system for public freedom, superior to Rawls' and Habermas' system. Wellmer criticizes Rawlsian

principle of equal rights as a insufficient because it represents only necessary conditions for democracy and is not able to explain institutional and practical forms for exercising these rights. Wellmer also sees Habermasian democratic consensus as inadequate for explaining conditions under which such a consensus would emerge

Wellmer argues that Arendt's concept of political autonomy has to be deconstructed to be able to engage in contemporary political philosophy in a constructive manner. According to Wellmer, Arendt's understanding of political realm as a separate sphere from social, economic, private and the protection of human rights is the weakness of her political theory. From this point, Wellmer goes to explain three points: interpretation and implementation of basic human rights, social justice and tendency toward particularism. Wellmer argues that liberal tradition has been wrong to put human rights prior to democratic discourse. In political or institutional sense, human rights need to be interpreted and implemented as a result of democratic discourse if they are not to enter the legislative process in a dogmatic and arbitrary way. With regard to social justice, Wellmer argues that Arendt was wrong to put social matters outside the political realm. Social matters such as economics, ecology and administration are common concerns for Wellmer and they have to be discussed and decided in political realm. Wellmer sees a clash between general and particular interest in Arendt's concept of federalism. Wellmer argues that polity can't be constructed only one way from bottom up; to find a balance between general and particular interest there is a need to construct a model that will enable top down approach to realize general interest (Wellmer,(Villa, 2001:236)).

Wellmer also argues that Arendt's opposition to representative democracy is groundless in the conditions of complex industrial societies; because there is a need

to balance between the particular interest of smaller units and general interest of larger polity; to strike this balance we need central legislative, executive and judicial institutions, which require representative democracy (Wellmer,(Villa, 2001:237)).

It is truly hard to understand why Wellmer thinks that Arendt's concept is just for smaller units and doesn't take into account general interest. Arendt clearly explains in *on revolution* that her system of federalism will look like a pyramid based on delegated share of power. As well, there is no evidence showing that the liberal approach to representative democracy is a sine qua non for complex modern societies. To be clear, Arendt explains that in her concept of council system also would be representatives but they won't be rulers for a definite time like current representative democracy; citizens would be able to control their actions. As well, in an assembly democracy, elites would be chosen according to political criteria for Arendt.

Roland Axtmann sees Arendt's concept of freedom and federalism as an answer to post-totalitarian global world's problems. Axtmann sees Arendt's theory of political theory of freedom as a result of her experience of totalitarianism. He argues that Arendt developed a political and philosophical understanding of federalism as an alternative to modern state in the shape of nation-state. Axtmann argues that Arendt doesn't clearly distinguish between a federal state and a confederation; on the one hand, Arendt sees the American federal state as a success, on the other she sees the British Commonwealth as a prototype (Axtmann, 2006:107). Axtmann sees the force of necessity as a threat to Arendt's concept of political freedom; during the French revolution people surrendered their political freedom for necessities. From Axtmann finding , can we argue that Welfare state is necessary for Arendt's concept of federalism?

Axtmann argues that, thanks to technological advances, communities have become less territorially delimited and defined by function rather than territory; as well, multilateral institutions such as United Nations, World Bank and IMF has curtailed sovereignty of nation-states. As a result of these developments, liberal Kantian cosmopolitan legal order has been offered to reinforce democracy. He draws attention to the tension between the liberal Kantian cosmopolitan legal order and the Habermasian deliberative democracy; main source of this tension is value conflicts that arise in global world order. Axtmann argues that even if there exists a consensus on some human right issues, there would be conflicts over specific policies to enact them. Abortion is a case in point for Axtmann for such conflicts. Axtmann believes that there has to be a solidarity or a sense of belonging together for a community to decide about such issues, this is where Kantian and participatory citizenship clash. From this perspective Arendt is on the side of a citizenship that retains its link with the particularity of distinct communities(Axtmann, 2006:96).

Axtmann analyzes the incompatibility of sovereignty and freedom in Arendt's theory: unpredictability of action prevents men of becoming master of their actions, thus no man can be sovereign, because sovereignty requires self-sufficiency and mastership which are contradictory to the Arendt's concept of plurality and freedom. Arendt's concept of isolated islands of certainty through making and keeping promises creates a world order against the unpredictability of political action. Axtmann also explains that from Arendt's perspective world government and world citizenship are not viable options to achieve freedom and human dignity, because freedom for Arendt is spatial and limited within a community as a living political reality (Axtmann, 2006:98).

Axtmann is worried about Arendt's concept of federalism on three issues: First, he thinks that Arendt is not clear about the implementation of the decisions taken by the elementary republics. Axtmann, himself, also is not clear about what kind of clarity he seeks from Arendt. Second, he thinks that in Arendt's system, there would be self-chosen and self-excluded citizens with regard to politics, what would be the relationship between them? Third, He asks about the structural and legal relationship between federated units; he answers his own question and argues that Arendt might have thought Roman *lex* and *societas Romana*, which constituted a unity between different entities in Rome, as a legal and structural solution. Axtmann also explores the possibility of positive solidarity in the global age through Roman *lex* (Axtmann, 2006:112).

Ronald Beiner explores the roots of Arendt's opposition to nation-state and argues that she was too quick to assume that nation-state was in decline. As well, Beiner accuses Arendt of not having a normative counter-argument against nation-state.

Beiner sees a paradox in Arendt's human rights argument; Arendt claims that men have the right to have rights; Arendt also claims that men need a national authority to exercise this right. Beiner sees the paradox between her opposition to nation-state and her claim that men need national authority to have the right to have rights (Beiner(Villa,2001:55). Beiner apparently missed the point in his critic; Arendt claims that as a result of the nation-state model, these people can't have rights because human rights are conceived as co-nationals' rights in nation-state model. Beiner also argues that Arendt is wrong to assume that some bad examples of nation-state don't mean that people's desire of defining citizenship in terms of nationhood should be canceled out.

According to Dana Villa, *Human Condition* (1958), *Between Past and Future* (1961) and *On Revolution*(1963) are the books that constitute Arendt's most enduring legacy in political theory (Villa, 2001:8). In these books, Arendt tries to separate public realm from other spheres of life. Villa argues that Arendt tried to explain what politics is and should be through explicating ancient Greek experience as an ideal.

On Revolution for Villa is the turning point in Arendt's political thought; Arendt sees fresh signs of political action in American founders rather than seeing political action as a thing of the past in Roman and Greek world. Villa also explains Arendt's difference from proponents of radical or direct democracy by showing her emphasis on legal framework and worldly institutions. Villa thinks that Arendt's institutional frameworks put her within the tradition of classical republican tradition of political thought (Villa, 2006:15).

To conclude, I agree with Villa that Arendt's political thought has matured in time and her latest works like *On Revolution* is more optimistic about modern world, but I need to emphasize that Arendt's core political concepts didn't much change from *Origins of Totalitarianism* to *On Revolution*; she still strongly favored sharp separation of public and private realm and importance of direct participation for a true republic. From this perspective, I think we should read Arendt's different writings as a part of a whole to understand better her earlier writings. Most criticized aspect of Arendt's political thought is her separation of public and private realm; Bernstein, Canovan and Wellmer criticize her from this point; I think what they miss is that Arendt's understanding of politics is out of our current modern political framework; she is talking about a different political order and separation of public and private is a sine qua non for her political order.

CHAPTER 3

ARENDRT'S KEY CONCEPTS

3.1. FREEDOM

What is freedom? For Arendt men are free when they are liberated from life's necessities and are able to participate in political affairs among their equals. In this context, liberation from life's necessities should be understood as not only as economic liberation but also as negative liberties in modern sense. Thus, according to Arendt, negative liberties are pre-requisites for freedom. For Arendt, the field of freedom is the political realm. Politics and freedom are interdependent, like two sides of the same coin: "Raison d'etre of politics is freedom, and its field of experience is action." (Arendt, 1961:146). Freedom can't exist outside political realm for Arendt; Arendt strongly insists on formal political institutions, which would enable all citizens to participate in public affairs: "Without a politically guaranteed public realm, freedom lacks the worldly space to make its appearance" (Arendt, 1961:149). In a nutshell, Arendt argues that men could be free only in a formal political space among his equals like ancient Greek polis or American Township meetings. Arendt is very critical of the modern understanding of freedom, which equate political freedom with security; freedom as security is understood as the protection of life

process and the private interests of society and its individuals outside political realm (Arendt, 1961:150).

Arendt argues that Christian tradition, starting with Paul, replaced freedom with free will; Arendt explains that freedom, as an attribute of the will, can't generate any political power because will formation requires self-struggle rather than participation of others. Thus, freedom as an attribute of will requires a bondage to self, which would result in extreme individualism; willing agent, in this individualist way, would become power-thirsty because of his impotence of creating power; as a result this equation of freedom with the human capacity to will is one of the causes that power is being equated with oppression. She goes on to explain that replacement of freedom as action among equals with free will has had fatal consequences because genuine political power, which can only exist in a public realm as a result of equals' action, was replaced with individual will-power; for Arendt, this is an illusion. Rousseau's concept of sovereign indivisible power is a result of this illusion. She argues that Rousseau, like many other eighteenth-century political thinkers, fell in this trap, which led to equation of freedom with sovereignty. Arendt also explains incompatibility of the concept of sovereignty and plurality:

identification of sovereignty with freedom which has always been taken for granted by political as well as philosophic thought. If it were true that sovereignty and freedom are the same, then indeed no man could be free, because sovereignty, the ideal of uncompromising self-sufficiency and mastership, is contradictory to the very condition of plurality. No man can be sovereign because not one man, but men, inhabit the earth—and not, as the tradition since Plato holds, because of man's limited strength, which makes him depend upon the help of others. (Arendt, 1958: 234)

Arendt believes that 'Men are not born free but they are born for freedom. Freedom for Arendt is not an inalienable or natural right. " Actual content of freedom...is participation in public affairs, or admission to the public realm"(Arendt,

1965: 32). There is a tension between Arendt's concept of equality and freedom, and liberal concept of rights. Pocock sees this tension between ancient and modern concept of liberty or between negative and positive rights. Although Arendt believes that negative liberties are prerequisites for political freedom, they have no meaning without any authority to protect them. History of fourteenth amendment is a case in point for her, African-Americans weren't able to exercise their liberties until Supreme Court's extra legal action as a result of civil disobedience movements. Stateless refugees' case also shows that inalienable rights don't belong to man but to people of a nation.

Arendt's concept of freedom is closely connected to her concept of action, to which Arendt regards as the highest human activity in *vita activa*. Action can't be done alone like labor or in isolation like work, action requires a group of people. Thus, human condition of action is plurality (Arendt, 1958:7). Action is done through words and deeds. Arendt sees natality and disclosure in action. She relates natality with action or deeds, and disclosure with words or speech (Arendt, 1958:178). Action has a beginning but its consequences are boundless and outcome is unpredictable. Against action's unpredictability, Greek city-states created polis where people can speak and act among their equals. Politics for them was action through words and deeds; even the legislation was regarded lower than speech and action. Organization of the people, where they act and speak together among equals, rather than physical structure was polis for Greeks in antiquity. "*Wherever you go you will be a polis*" was said to indicate active participation of people in politics through words and deeds was their power wherever they are. Greek polis' function was twofold. First, it created a space for citizens to show their distinctness through words and deeds. Second, it functioned

against the oblivion of great deeds and words. Deprivation of such places like polis in Greek city-state means deprivation of reality and living in illusions for Arendt. Arendt sees the history or political history as a story of speech and action rather than of trends and ideas.

Action was seen as dangerous because of its unpredictability, irreversibility and anonymity of its authors. Although action is a sine qua non for common world, its unpredictability made people to seek ways to get rid of plurality and public realm. Plato's solution was philosopher king, which is a one-man rule. Like other one-man rules they banished people from attending public realm. Actually it was a way to escape from politics. Concept of rule, which belonged to household realm, took over public realm. In short, Plato carried household administration to the polis. In the household, master knew what to do without doing and slaves did without knowing. Plato transformed knowledge to command and action to execution or obedience (Arendt, 1958:223,224,225). For Arendt Plato's formulation is a utopia and has been the inspiration for all other utopias like communism and socialism and even today's representative democracy; but at the end these utopias were crushed under the weight of the reality.

Arendt argues that there is a way to control action's unpredictability and irreversibility: making and keeping promises for unpredictability and forgiving for irreversibility. Arendt claims that without being forgiven, we would remain the victims of the consequences of our deeds. Vengeance instead of forgiveness would create a chain reaction and men can't go on in this vicious circle. Forgiveness, as an unpredictable action, releases both sides from the consequences of past deeds. Promise between equals as a social contract is the source of power and a way to save men from unpredictability of action; in this sense, Arendt is opposed to idea of

sovereignty, even the collective national sovereignty, because sovereignty keeps people together only for an agreed purpose; so promises or consents are limited to this purpose. Thus, Arendt believes that sovereignty is not a solution to action's unpredictability and can't provide enough power to keep public realm in existence. In Canovan's words: human beings can generate more power by acting together rather than giving an illusory omnipotence to a body politic (Canovan, 1992:211). With regard to action's unpredictability and boundless possibilities it can create, Arendt is also very critical of the rise of social and behavioral sciences, she believes that these pseudo-sciences lead people falsely to believe that future events can be predicted and controlled; that although theories of these sciences are far from predicting future events, they seem quite plausible because they take their evidence from actually discernible present trends which give a false sense of consistency; the danger is that this false sense of consistency may hypnotize our common sense which perceives and understands reality and factuality around us. (Arendt, 1969: 110).

Arendt explains the interconnection between equality and freedom in Greek political thought to describe freedom; According to Greeks men were not born equal but they were equal and free in polis where their activities are seen, heard and judged by others; men needed other people to be free; polis was an artificial institution for this purpose. Interesting point is that in Greek polis, there is no division between citizens as ruler and ruled; they are equals. Arendt explains that in Greek city-states, "citizens lived together under conditions of no-rule, without a division between ruler and ruled, this notion of no-rule was expressed by the word isonomy."(Arendt, 1965:30). Gregory Vlastos sees Isonomia as the expression of the spirit of Cleisthenean reforms, which gave masses the control of the state; he believes that

literal meaning of the isonomia is “equality of law”; but he argues that the law in question is not positive law but it denotes equal share of citizens in the control of state (Vlastos,1953: 349). Vlastos goes on to explain that isonomia was a term used for political domain (Vlastos,1953: 352). From this perspective, although citizens in Greek city-states were given equal rights in legislation, law-enforcement and taking positions in state offices, they were not equals outside public realm. In line with Vlastos’ argument, Arendt argues that Greeks understanding of interconnection between equality and freedom was correct; citizens of Greek city–states knew that they could be equal only in political space.

3.2. POWER

What is power? “Power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together” (Arendt, 1969: 143) Power for Arendt is always a potential, it exists where equal men act together. Whenever they split, power vanishes. Greeks called power as *dynamis* and they had faith in it. Existence of power is a sine qua non for the elevation of action to the highest level in the hierarchy of *vita activa*. Power is a condition for Arendt rather than a means or an end; Arendt explains power’s function in her essay “*On Violence*”,

power structure itself precedes and outlasts all aims, so that power, far from being the means to end, is actually the very condition enabling a group of people to think and act in terms of the means-end category. And since government is essentially organized and institutionalized power, the current question What is the end of government? Doesn’t make much sense either. (Arendt, 1969: 150)

Omnipotence can’t generate power because it kills plurality. Arendt describes

tyranny as an attempt to substitute power with violence. As well, Arendt explains that power can be divided without decreasing it; for instance separation of powers in USA can generate even more power. Power secures public realm where men can speak and act to reach reality and show their distinctness.

Arendt is more clear about the definition of power when she compares American and French revolutions in her book, *On Revolution*: Arendt argues that French and American Revolution had different approach to the concept of power. Americans knew well that promises and covenants, which are based on reciprocity and mutuality, was the source of power. French, on the other hand, assumed that power existed outside the political realm, they mistaken power with violence. In other words, the poor masses that are after not freedom but life's necessities were accepted as the source of power. This pre-political natural force was incorporated into political realm; this uncontrolled violence destroyed the French Revolution. Arendt also explains that what Americans experienced was not a common ideology but confidence that arose from mutual promises.

3.3. PLURALITY, REALITY AND COMMON WORLD

“Men not man inhabit this planet, plurality is the law of the earth” (Arendt , 1981: 19). Plurality is the law of the earth for Hannah Arendt; because plurality is the human condition of action, without which we would lose our sense of being human as different than other animals. “Plurality is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live.”(Arendt, 1958:8) Plurality has two aspects for Arendt: equality and distinction. Plurality requires equality because only equals can share ideas and discuss matters. “*Nobody is ever the same*”, thus

everybody has the capacity to see and hear deeds and words in a different aspect; this is what separates humans from other species, human distinctness. Through words and deeds human beings can initiate something new and reveal their distinctness. Arendt sees this initiation as a second birth. Beginning something new through words and deeds is the way men disclose who they are as distinct from others. Members of other species have no capacity to create such distinction among others.

“Only where things can be seen by many in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably appear” (Arendt, 1958: 57). Reality for Arendt can occur only in public realm where people can be seen and heard by their equals from different perspectives. Family or Private realm can't be a substitute for public realm and can't function in its stead; because there is no equality in household. Reality creates a common world where equal people can distinguish themselves through deeds and words and also see the sameness from different perspectives. So what if reality doesn't occur and common world is destroyed? Arendt lived through totalitarian regimes and saw what happened when plurality and reality disappeared. People lived in a fictitious world. They went after illusions like communism or fascism. Wherever plurality and human action constrained, different forms of barbarism or totalitarian regimes destroyed human lives; French Revolution is a case in point; public realm and common world destroyed for the sake of necessity during revolution. Mere appearance of poor in public can't have been a substitute for public realm and common world, where reality occurs. Public realm is a place for persuasion through argumentation instead of force and violence (Arendt, 1958:26).

3.4. SEPARATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REALM

Arendt's separation of public and private realm is very important for her concept of federalism because current nation-state model is a result of the perversion of this separation of public and private spheres. Arendt argues that public realm was a space for deeds and words, which would leave a mark and give immortality to doer or speaker in ancient Greece and Rome; but the rise of Christianity replaced earthly immortality with otherworldly immortality; as a result public realm vanished; the bond that kept people together under Christianity was *Christian Brotherhood* concept, which required that its members related to each other like family members; with the rise of modern age, nation-state as a political form replaced *Christian Brotherhood* concept. In other words, we became a huge family under nation-state model. To be clearer I need to quote a long text from "*The Human Condition*",

we see the body of peoples and political communities in the image of a family whose everyday affairs have to be taken care of by a gigantic, nation-wide administration of housekeeping. The scientific thought that corresponds to this development is no longer political science but "national economy" or "social economy" or Volkswirtschaft, all of which indicate a kind of "collective house-keeping"; the collective of families economically organized into the facsimile of one super-human family is what we call "society," and its political form of organization is called "nation." We therefore find it difficult to realize that according to ancient thought on these matters, the very term "political economy" would have been a contradiction in terms: whatever was "economic," related to the life of the individual and the survival of the species, was a non-political, household affair by definition.
(Arendt, 1958: 28-29)

Arendt's separation of public and private realm has attracted many criticisms; most criticisms have focused on separation of political and economic spheres and

Arendt's approach to discrimination in private or social domain. With regard to separation of politics and economics, Seyla Benhabib argued,

Arendt's attempt to separate the political from the economic via an ontological divide between freedom and necessity is, as I have argued, futile and implausible. The realm of necessity is permeated through and through by power relations: power over the distribution of labor, of resources, over authority, and so on. There is no neutral and nonpolitical organization of the economic; all economy is political economy. Even household labor is permeated by gender-based power relations and the sexual division of labor in the family (Benhabib, 2003:158)

We see a good example of communication problem that I mentioned in the introduction; Arendt and Benhabib, they seem like to speak different languages; Arendt says that economic and politics are totally separate issues; Benhabib argues that all economy is political economy even household labor is political for her. For Benhabib and many others Arendt's point is implausible; Richard Bernstein explains this situation, "the type of politics and action portrayed by Arendt is always in danger of becoming hypocritical and repressive unless one addresses the "social question" (Bernstein, 1983:214). Arendt was aware of this fact but she adamantly stuck to her position with regard to social question; because, had she changed her approach to social question she would have had to change her understanding of politics. To be clear, Arendt, at the expense of being excluded, stuck to her position with regard to separation of public and private realm. She explained in a clear manner what separates public and private activities

There are things where the right measure can be figured out. These things can be really be administered and are not then subject to public debate. Public debate can only deal with things which-if we want to put it negatively-we cannot figure out with certainty....On the other hand, everything which can really be figured out, in the sphere Engels called the administration of things-these are social things in general. That they should then be subject to debate seems to me phony and a plague. ¹

¹ In "On Hannah Arendt" in *The Recovery of the Public World*, p.317

From this perspective, we can easily understand that Arendt wants to keep economic and social matters out of public debate unless they become a common concern, which can't be solved in private realm. But there is other side of the Arendt's understanding of politics; Arendt argues that liberation from necessity is a prerequisite for political freedom; necessity should be read as economic and negative liberties. Thus, economic freedom or well-being is a prerequisite of political freedom. In this sense, the question is if politics is a means for economic freedom; or economic freedom is a means for political freedom. Milton Friedman answers this question better than anyone else; he simply advises us to look back in the history and see how it worked,

Because we live in a largely free society, we tend to forget how limited is the span of time and the part of the globe for which there has ever been anything like political freedom: the typical state of mankind is tyranny, servitude, and misery. The nineteenth century and early twentieth century in the Western world stand out as striking exceptions to the general trend of historical development. Political freedom in this instance clearly came along with the free market and the development of capitalist institutions. So also did political freedom in the golden age of Greece and in the early days of the Roman era...

History suggests only that capitalism is a necessary condition for political freedom. Clearly it is not a sufficient condition. (Friedman, 2002: 9-10)

Friedman's argument strongly supports Arendt's insistence on the separation of economic and political spheres. Tocqueville also is very critical of government's interference in economic sphere,

The moment it(*government*) tries to leave sphere of politics to embark on this new path(*control industrial activity*), it begins to exercise an intolerable tyranny, whether it wishes to do so or not. For a government can only dictate precise rules. It imposes the feelings and ideas that it favors, and it is always difficult to distinguish its recommendations from its orders (Tocqueville, 2004: 598) (*italics are mine*)

Tocqueville approaches to the issue from a different angle, Tocqueville brings the importance of civil associations in prominence; Tocqueville sees the science of

association is the fundamental science and all progress depends on it (Tocqueville, 2004:599). As well, Tocqueville regards social power as a threat for associations, “The more the social power tries to take place of associations, the more individuals, losing sight of the idea of associating, will need its help: here cause and effect engender one another in an endless circle” (Tocqueville, 2004:597). Tocqueville’s laissez-faire approach is in line with Arendt’s understanding of the separation of public and economic spheres. Arendt’s concept of the separation of public and private is a reflection of Greek polis. Vlastos also explains that in Greek city-states, demands for political equality and economic equality were separated; demand for equality in the land was dropped from political discussions (Vlastos, 1953: 353). Isomoiria, which denotes equal distribution of property, was never used in political discussions. Vlastos’ findings with regard to separation of economic and political spheres are important and I believe Arendt’s insistence on the separation of these two spheres was influenced by Greek experience. Historical experiences, as Friedman argued, prove that political freedom shouldn’t be a means for economic freedom. From this perspective, although Arendt is very critical of Adam Smith’s invisible hand and liberal understanding of freedom as security, Arendt and advocates of capitalism agree that political freedom shouldn’t be a means to economic freedom.

On the issue of discrimination in private or social realm, Arendt’s essay “*Reflections on Little Rock*”, which was written in 1957 and published in 1959, has attracted a lot of criticisms. Arendt wrote,

In American society, people group together, and therefore discriminate against each other, along the lines of profession, income, and ethnic origin, while in Europe the lines run across class origin, education, and manners...In any event discrimination is as indispensable a social right as equality is a political right. The question is not how to abolish discrimination, but how to keep it confined within the social sphere, where it is legitimate, and even prevent its trespassing on the political and the personal sphere where it is

destructive (Arendt, 1959: 51)

Arendt was against legal abolishment of segregation as much as legal enforcement of segregation; she argued that federal government shouldn't have enforced whites to go to same school with African Americans. Milton Friedman also shares Arendt's view and argues that law can't solve segregation problem,

We should not be so naïve as to suppose that deep-seated values and beliefs can be uprooted in short measure by law. I live in Chicago. Chicago has no law compelling segregation. Its laws require integration. Yet in fact the public schools of Chicago are probably as thoroughly segregated as the schools of most southern cities. (Friedman, 2002: 118)

Friedman, like Arendt, thinks that real problem is that schools are administered by government, that is why government is forced to enforce segregation or integration. Friedman's solution is privatization of all schools and voucher checks for families to pay school expenses; there could be all white, all black and mixed schools; families can choose what they want. My point is that capitalist or laissez-faire approach regarding separation of public and private realm is very similar to Arendt's position. What is missing from academic research is that most advocates of capitalism have been disregardful of importance of political participation for individual liberties and capitalism, and of harmful effects of representative democracy on capitalism. They have focused on protecting individual liberties in private realm but never thought about positive liberties to strengthen individual liberties. Tocqueville, in *Democracy in America*, draws attention to the importance of positive liberties for private liberties. According to Tocqueville, Americans were more enlightened than other people about public affairs, laws and procedures and they knew that their private interest depended on good running public affairs; As a result, they didn't hesitate to spend time and energy for supporting public affairs. Americans' enlightenment about public affairs didn't happen accidentally, Hannah Arendt explains that American

society is not based on historical memories or ethnic homogeneity but on the strength of the mutual promises, which promote active support and continuing participation in all matters of public interest, starting from Mayflower compact in 1620. Tocqueville, in *Democracy in America*, praise the township model in New England and explain its enormous impact on the whole country; Citizens' active participation in public affairs created a good running government structure and also private businesses flourished without limitations from central governments. Pericles brought forward a similar concept in his funeral oration:

In our private business we are not suspicious of one another, nor angry with our neighbor if he does what he likes; we do not put on sour looks at him which, though harmless, are not pleasant. While we are thus unconstrained in our private business, a spirit of reverence pervades our public acts; we are prevented from doing wrong by respect for the authorities and for the laws..²

Athenians also well understood the importance of public affairs for their private interests.

Arendt explains that discrimination in social sphere is legitimate but it should stay there. "The question is not how to abolish discrimination, but how to keep it confined within the social sphere, where it is legitimate, and even prevent its trespassing on the political and the personal sphere where it is destructive" (Arendt, 1959: 51). I would like to approach to this issue from a different angle; I believe abolishing or enforcing discrimination or equality in social sphere by law needs to be looked at from the perspective of interconnection between law and equality. To understand this issue better we need to look back in Greek city-states and isonomia. Vlastos argued that isonomia doesn't mean only law as the guarantee of equality but also equality as the guarantee of the law. He explains:

² Thucydides, Pericles' funeral oration

In the former sense...law appears as the means to the end of political equality; in the latter, law, or the rule of law, is the end, political equality is the means to this end. To take the word in this latter sense is to assert that its conformity to law will be ensured by its equalitarian distribution of political power. (Vlastos, 1953: 356-357).

In other words, Vlastos means that Greek believed that equalitarian distribution of political power results in law-abiding citizens; there was a harmony between rule of law and equal political power; in other words, law as a means to political equality and political equality as a means to law-abiding citizens created a harmony. I believe Arendt was very well aware of this issue and that is why she worried more about discrimination's destructive effects in public realm than in private realm. To better understand the issue we need to understand connection between law and equality, which Arendt explains in "*Reflections on Little Rock*",

The moment social discrimination is legally abolished, the freedom of society is violated, and the danger is that thoughtless handling of civil rights issues by federal government will result in such a violation. The government can legitimately take no steps against social discrimination because government can act only in the name of equality- a principle which doesn't obtain in the social sphere (Arendt, 1959: 51)

In a nutshell, Arendt was worried that if enforcement of equality, which belongs to public realm, is applied in social sphere, it would have destructive effects on equality in public realm; because when we start to legally enforce abolition of discrimination in social or private domain, law loses its function to be a means for political equality but starts to function as a means for social equality which would deprive some citizens from their rights to free association. Consequently harmony between law and political equality would be injured in the eyes of the citizens. In other words, citizens would start to question legitimacy of the laws that abolish discrimination in social sphere. Arendt explained this issue in the same essay,

What is frightening here is not 92 % opposed to integration, for the dividing

line in the South was never between those who favored and those who opposed to segregation, practically speaking, no such opponents existed-but the proportion of people who prefer mob rule to law-abiding citizenship. The so-called liberals and moderates of South are simply those who are law-abiding, and they have dwindled to a minority of 21%.(Arendt, 1959: 49)

Government enforced equality in social realm by legally abolishing segregation; as a result political equality lost its function as a means to law-abiding citizens in the South; because citizens in the South don't believe in the legitimacy of these laws. They see these laws as interference in their private lives.

The importance of Arendt's separation of public and private realm for her concept of federalism is that free associations are vital for a true republic but government's enforcement of equality in social realm hinders development of free associations; as Tocqueville noted, science of association is fundamental for all progress.

CHAPTER 4

ARENDRT'S CONCEPT OF FEDERALISM

4.1. SELF-RULE THROUGH LOCAL PARTICIPATION

From Arendt's perspective, citizen participation should be exercised through local assemblies with the participation of all citizens. All citizens should be able to participate in these assemblies as citizens. This is the reason why Arendt continually stresses the political significance of "*elementary self-governing republics*" which, in her view, represents the most important legacy of Jefferson's political theory. These small republics should be small enough to enable every citizen to participate. Citizens' contribution would be within their competence.

What Arendt is after, through local assemblies, is assembly democracy where decisions are taken as a result of persuasion through arguments; in Bernstein's words, "open debate among equals in which they mutually seek to clarify, test, and purify opinions". (Bernstein, 1983:209). Hansen explains difference between assembly democracy and Parliamentary democracy,

Debate plays a far more important role in an assembly democracy than in a parliamentary one. In modern democracies there is often a gulf between political debate, which takes place in the media, and decision-making, which

is mainly done in offices and committee rooms. In Athens, by contrast, debate took place in the assembly and led directly to decisions therein. (Hansen, 1999:305)

Arendt's understanding of political debate is based on opinion formation; men's judging capacity plays an important role for the formation of opinions in public realm.

That the capacity to judge is a specifically political ability in exactly the sense denoted by Kant, namely, the ability to see things not only from one's own point of view but in the perspective of all those who happen to be present; even that judgment may be one of the fundamental abilities of man as a political being insofar as it enables him to orient himself in the public realm, in the common world these are insights that are virtually as old as articulated political experience. (Arendt, 1961:221)

Public realm is constituted through exchange of opinions among equals for Arendt. Thus, public opinion or unanimity of opinion is an illusion because if there is just one opinion, there can't be a debate or exchange between different individuals.

When we take debate as the essence of politics, there is an awkward situation in parliamentary democracy; debate doesn't result in decision-making because it takes place in media by people who have no voting rights in the parliament and little influence on decision-makers in parliament. But criticisms argue against assembly democracy that there can't be enough room for everybody to join and debate in assembly. But they forget the main point of assembly democracy, all citizens would have the right to talk and persuade their equals or listen other speakers to decide. Arendt has been accused of being after Greek utopia on the issue of citizen participation by many contemporary political thinkers. As well, compatibility of modern complex societies with Arendt's concept of participation has been questioned. So we need to understand details of Greek city-states if it is really a utopia. Hansen explains, "Athens had a territory of 2,500 km² and, in the fourth century BC, a population of at least 200,000, of whom at least 30,000 were adult

male full citizens ” (Hansen, 2006: 12). Hansen also explains that Athens was a big economic center comparable to modern cities,

Athens must have had an enormous foreign trade, and this emerges from our sources. The most important is a passage from a forensic speech in 400 BC. The speaker, Andokides, declares that in the year 402/1 BC he took on the contract for the harbour dues of 2 per cent on all imported and exported goods; i.e. he guaranteed this sum to the state and recouped from what actually came in. The proceeds of the contract was 36 silver talents, and Andokides allows that he made a little profit on the transaction. So the whole of Athens’ import and export trade, including transit trade, that year (which was one of the worst in the history of Athens) must have been worth more than 1,800 talents, which equals 11 million drachmas. A drachma was a day’s wage for a daily worker, so 1,800 talents correspond to day-wages for 30,000 people, a whole year’s wages for every single citizen of Athens. (Hansen, 2006: 92)

Evidence clearly shows that Athenians succeeded in establishing institutions of participatory democracy in a comparatively big city in fifth century B.C. Athens became a cultural and economic center with assembly democracy. Another criticism raised against assembly democracy is that it could lead to anarchy. I find this criticism groundless because we just need to look back to history to see that assembly democracy brought order and success rather than anarchy to societies; there is no evidence that Greek city-states, Roman Republic or American Towns during colonial times experienced anarchy because of citizens’ participation in public affairs as some critics argued.

Arendt believes that not incorporating township model, which would enable all citizens to participate in public affairs, in American Constitution, was a big mistake. Arendt argues that oblivion of revolutionary spirit is the main reason for this failure; there should have been an institution to provide citizens public space to participate in public affairs. Americans, as distinguished from Europeans, were able to overcome the pitfalls of the nation-state model because of their federal structure and their involvement in public affairs, which was a legacy of colonial period. Arendt sees an

intimate **connection between revolutionary spirit and the principle of federation**; Arendt argues that councils and soviets that sprung up independently during revolutions integrated to form higher councils initially for regions or provinces and finally for whole country in a federated structure; what they did actually was the act of the foundation of a new republic based on federal principles(Arendt, 1965: 266-267). Councils, as spaces of freedom, regarded themselves as permanent organs and they weren't after any utopic ideology like socialism and communism but they aimed for true republic, in which people could exercise their freedom. From this perspective, we understand better Arendt's insistence on federalism and its importance. Arendt sees this spontaneous development not only in revolutions but also in America; she explains that confederation between independent units in America during colonial times was a result of this revolutionary spirit of action.

Arendt argues that Jefferson's ward system and popular councils, which emerged spontaneously during revolutions, are almost identical. Professional revolutionists, like Lenin, didn't see them as new form of government but just as a means to seize the power. The conflict between popular councils and party system resulted with the annihilation of councils.

- 1871, Parisian commune government
- 1905, soviets, workers in the factories organized themselves as into councils
- 1917, soviets, workers in the factories organized themselves as into councils
- 1918-1919, Rate system, workers and soldiers organized
- 1956, Hungary Council system spread all over country.

Arendt argues that all these popular councils emerged spontaneously and they brought a new order, which is not compatible with party system. They were all crushed by party machinery because they were seen as a threat to centralized

government and party. One of the differences between councils and parties was that party programs required not action but execution like a household where master knew and slaves executed. Councils' aim was to found true republic as against the party programs, which aimed socialism, classless society and so on. Arendt believed that all these councils were after only participation in public affairs and to establish a new republic, where they will find a space for political freedom. In other words, Arendt claims that councils were after political freedom through a new form of government rather than social or other egalitarian systems. Hungarian people's college movement's (NEKOSZ) anthem was:

“Hey our banner blows in the bright winds! On it is written! Let freedom live.
Hey winds, blow! Bright, winds, blow, for tomorrow we will change the world.”
(Applebaum, 2012: 182)

Anne Applebaum wrote about Hungarian Councils as democratic self-decision making groups and, their socialist leanings notwithstanding, they were not party institutions and they challenged central authority as Arendt argued. (Applebaum. 2012: 181)

4.2. DELEGATED SHARE OF POWER

Federalism encompasses a wide range of political organizations, including federations, confederacies, unions and leagues. Arendt's concept of federalism can be linked to confederation, which is described by Watts,

Confederations have generally been distinguished from federations as a species of federal system in which the institutions of shared rule are dependent on the constituent governments, being composed of delegates from the constituent governments and therefore having only an indirect electoral and fiscal base. By contrast with federations, in which each government operates directly on the citizens, in confederations the direct relationship lies between the shared institutions and the governments of the member states.

Historical examples include Switzerland for most of the period 1291–1847 and the United States 1776–1789. In the contemporary world, the European Union is basically a confederation, although it has increasingly incorporated some features of a federation. (Watts, 1998: 121)

Although Arendt saw American constitution as success in *On Revolution*, Arendt does favor a confederation over federation. But we should keep in mind that even a federation is much better than any unitary nation-state model for Arendt. Thomas Jefferson influenced Arendt on this issue,

By virtue of the Constitution, the public business of the nation as a whole had been transferred to Washington and was being transacted by the federal government, of which Jefferson still thought as 'the foreign branch' of the republic, whose domestic affairs were taken care of by the state governments.(Arendt, 1965:251)

Arendt draws attention to the ward system, which was envisaged by Thomas Jefferson in his later years, as a better example of councils that emerged during revolutions. They would exceed Parisian commune or other popular councils. But like councils during revolutions in Europe, historians and political theorists also neglected Jefferson's ward system. Jefferson's idea was to create a ward system under counties. These wards were to be elementary republics, where people could have a space for political freedom in the Arendtian sense of the term. Jefferson thought that although constitution gave all power to citizens, they had no space to exercise this power; these little republics would be the source of all power in the country because only through these republics could people be an acting member of the Government. Jefferson's design was along these lines: The elementary republics of the wards, the county republics, the state republics and republic of the Union. System depended on delegated share of power. In this system, there is no directly elected federal institutions like House of Representatives, Senate or President. In this system central government consists of delegates from the constituent governments

and therefore it has an indirect electoral and fiscal base. Arendt explains this issue in *'On Revolution'*

Once elected and sent in the next higher council, the deputy found himself again among his peers, for the deputies on any given level in this system were those who had received a special trust. No doubt this form of government, if fully developed, would have assumed again the shape of a which, of course, is the shape of an essentially authoritarian government. But while, in all authoritarian government we know of, authority is filtered down from above, in this case authority would have been generated neither at the top nor at the bottom, but on each of the pyramid's layers; and this obviously could constitute the solution to one of the most serious problems of all modern politics, which is not how to reconcile freedom and equality but how to reconcile equality and authority. (Arendt, 1965: 278)

this is a confederacy, in which federal government has much less power than current American federal system.

CRISIS OF THE REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

Hannah Arendt is highly critical of representative democracy and political parties. Arendt sees representative democracy as an oligarchic system, through which the few rule in the name of the many. Pocock also sees representative democracy as a fiction and doesn't consider it as a viable system as an alternative for direct participation. Arendt's alternative is direct participation in local assemblies and delegated share of power; in this system, power emerges horizontally within federated units with a set of check and balances (Arendt, 1969: 230).

Arendt's concept of freedom, power and plurality are not compatible with representative democracy. We, as distinct from animals, have the capacity to initiate something new through our deeds and words. But we need a space to participate and to initiate something new. Representative democracy doesn't provide a space for citizens to engage in public affairs. In other words, citizens are deprived of their freedom and happiness. Government turns into an administration office in

representative democracy; public realm vanishes; no space available for citizens to express their ideas, discuss them and decide about them. In such a system, there are only two choices for citizens: sinking into lethargy or to use the reserve power of revolution (Arendt, 1965: 237-238). Tocqueville explains that habits of liberty, which is participating in public affairs, are more important than institutions of liberty

Thus, local liberties, in consequence of which large numbers of citizens come to value the affection of their neighbors and relatives, regularly bring men together, despite the instinct that divide them, and force them to help one another (Tocqueville, 2004:592)

We can easily say that most people in the world sank into lethargy today. People turned into egoist consumers, who have no interest in public affairs. Jefferson explains the result of people's alienation from politics, " If once (our people) become inattentive to the public affairs, you and I, and Congress and Assemblies, Judges and Governors, shall all become wolves"³ (Cited in Arendt, 1965:238). In other words, people, in representative democracy, cannot be aware of the importance of public affairs because there is no space for them to participate in it .

Arendt draws attention to the struggles between councils and parties to explain differences between representative democracy and participatory democracy. Councils, which emerged spontaneously and organized like little republics during revolutions, were destroyed by central governments in each case. These popular councils were a new form of government but they were neglected. Factions, which emerged during French revolution as parties, became the roots of the whole continental party system; modern party system was born during French Revolution and it destroyed the revolutionary groups, which were true republics. The reason

³ Thomas Jefferson, letter to Kercheval, 1816

behind the success of party system and failure of council system was the same: rise of the nation-state.

Councils and parties were different organizations and they conflicted for power during revolutions. Arendt sees representation in direct opposition to action and participation. Although political party and council system are coeval and a result of the revolutions, councils emerged during the revolutions but parties emerged after or before revolutions. Arendt argues that councils prove that people are not inclined to violence or anarchy when there is no government. Councils that emerged in France, Russia, Germany and Hungary organized the political and economic life and established a new order. Arendt argues that one of the reasons for the failure of council system during revolutions was that councils couldn't distinguish themselves as only political organs and tried to administer or manage factories and they failed; because they were not fit for management as political associations. They chose their representatives according to political criteria but factories needed managers not political leaders. Parties, as opposed to councils, were good at managing and administrating factories during and after revolutions because their organization depended on command and execution principle rather than discussions among equals.

Arendt also explains the differences between elites of representative democracy and participatory democracy. Arendt is very critical of the elites of political parties; she believes that elites of political parties are not chosen according to political criteria because parties are not political organizations but administrative institutions and they select their elites according to these criteria (Arendt, 1965:277). In council system too there are elites but these elites are chosen in elementary republics according to political criteria and they are not nominated from above or supported

from below; they choose their deputies for next higher council, where selected deputy finds himself among his equals; they also don't get any pressure from above or below; their status rests on the confidence of their equals and this equality is political equality (Arendt, 1965:278).

Arendt calls attention to the differences between Anglo-Saxon two party and continental multi-party systems with regard to functions that parties assume within body politic. In Continental system, state is seen above parties, that is why governments formed by a party or a coalition becomes a party government; in other words government and state are separated. On the other hand, in Anglo-Saxon two party system, two parties alternately forms government and they know that their time in power is limited and they represent the state or as opposition they are the guarantee against one-party dictatorship; within this system, government is the state that is why they take fully responsibility and they are in the control of citizens. Arendt draws attention to opposition's role in the Anglo-Saxon model,

Since the rule of each party is limited in time, the opposition party exerts a control whose efficiency is strengthened by the certainty that it is the ruler of tomorrow. In fact, it is the opposition rather than the symbolic position of the King that guarantees the integrity of the whole against one-party dictatorship. The obvious advantages of this system are that there is no essential difference between government and state, that power as well as the state remain within the grasp of the citizens organized in the party, which represents the power and the state either of today or of tomorrow, and that consequently there is no occasion for indulgence in lofty speculations about Power and State as though they were something beyond human reach, metaphysical entities independent of the will and action of the citizens. (Arendt, 2004(1951):323-324)

Another difference that Arendt discovered between Anglo-Saxon and continental models is that in Anglo-Saxon two party system, parties are organized to handle public affairs but in continental party system, parties are organized to represent its members for their private interests. Thus, public good in Continental system could

only come from above “State” and from below as nationalistic passions. Anglo-Saxon two party system saved itself from this awkward situation,

In England, on the contrary, antagonism between private and national interest never played a decisive role in politics. The more, therefore, the party system on the Continent corresponded to class interests, the more urgent was the need of the nation for nationalism, for some popular expression and support of national interests, a support which England with its direct government by party and opposition never needed so much. (Arendt, 2004(1951):327)

Arendt’s findings lead us to a pathology of continental multi-party system; this pathology emerges in Arendt’s own concept of the separation of public and private realm, which can’t exist together with continental party system; because parties, which are created to represent its members’ private interests rather than to handle public affairs, become tools for the invasion of public realm by private interests. In addition to her correct assessment about differences between Anglo-Saxon and continental party system with regard to State and government’s fusion in Anglo-Saxon system in governing party and their separation in continental system, she explains destructive effects of continental multi-party system in public domain,

Since these parties did not organize their members (or educate their leaders) for the purpose of handling public affairs, but represented them only as private individuals with private interests, they had to cater to all private needs, spiritual as well as material. In other words, the chief difference between the Anglo-Saxon and the Continental party is that the former is a political organization of citizens who need to "act in concert" in order to act at all, while the latter is the organization of private individuals who want their interests to be protected against interference from public affairs (Arendt, 2004(1951):326)

Arendt, in *On Revolution*, draws attention to another shortcoming of representative democracy; it is believed that corruption and degeneration would come from public realm or ruling class; and remedies were built against this danger were separation of powers, controls and checks; but there was no remedy against the

corruption and perversion that could spring from private realm; in other words, private realm could invade public realm. Arendt explains in *On Revolution*:

However, under conditions, not of prosperity as such, but of rapid and constant economic growth, that is, of a constantly increasing expansion of the private realm- and these were of course the conditions of the modern age - the dangers of corruption and perversion were much more likely to arise from private interests than from public power. (Arendt, 1965:252)

Arendt argues that Jefferson foresaw this danger almost two centuries ago and insisted on providing a space for citizens to actively participate in public affairs as a remedy for corruption and perversion that would arise from private interests. Joseph Stiglitz explains in his book *"The price of the inequality"* that Jefferson's worst nightmare came true; according to Stiglitz, representative democracy has become an instrument of super rich 1 percent to manipulate political system for their own benefits. Joseph Stiglitz argues that private companies and super rich manipulate political system through media and other sources, like contributions to parties and candidates, by using their huge economic power for their interests. Stiglitz comes to a conclusion that manipulation of political system by top 1 percent has caused huge inequality, which might cause social conflict. He explains that real minimum wage in 2011 was 15 percent lower than 1980 (Stiglitz, 2013:303); as well productivity has been growing six times faster than wages (Stiglitz, 2013:302). Stiglitz is not alone on this issue; Thomas Piketty also makes attention to exploding inequality in America since 1980. Piketty also argues that growing inequality has been a threat to financial stability (Piketty, 2014: 296). Niall Ferguson is another economist, who shows the growing inequality in America: Between 1973 and 2010 average real income of 99 percent of Americans fell; in contrast this same group enjoyed over 400 percent rise in their real income (before tax) between 1933 and 1973. In other words, benefits of last 35 years growth has gone to super elite (Ferguson, 2012: 137). There is strong

evidence that market economy or Adam Smith's invisible hand hasn't been working properly. Market economy is supposed to work for general interest rather than for the interest of a few. Milton Friedman, who is one of the strongest advocates of laissez-faire economies, said: "the combination of economic and political power in the same hands is a sure recipe for tyranny" (Friedman, 1990:3). Arendt's concept of federalism, with its emphasis on citizen participation, local autonomy and delegated share of power principle, is politically significant solution for the corruption and perversion that arises from private interests.

CRISIS OF THE NATION-STATE

Nation-state, which emerged after French Revolution, according to Arendt, "is the perversion of the state into an instrument of the nation and identification of the citizen with the member of the nation" (Arendt, 1951:231). Habermas shares Arendt's vision, he sees the nation as pre-political group, but after French revolution, nation determined political identity of the citizen. Habermas argues that,

concept of popular sovereignty does not refer to some substantive collective will which would owe its identity to a prior homogeneity of descent Or form of life. The consensus achieved in the course of argument in an association of free and equal citizens stems in the final instance from an identically applied procedure recognized by all" (Habermas,(Steenbergen,1994:21).

Arendt also sees the nationality as a personal status and thinks that federalism could be a cure for nationalism and nation-state. Even in 1940, Arendt strongly opposed to the territorial nationalism,

There may soon come a time when the idea of belonging to a territory is replaced by the idea of belonging to a commonwealth of nations whose politics are determined solely by the commonwealth as a whole. That means European politics-while at the same time all nationalities are maintained. Folkloristics would no longer be a danger within such a comprehensive arrangement. Until we have reached that stage, it makes no sense for us to

return to the issue of minority arrangements-if only to prove that nationality does not perish when separated from soil.(Arendt, 2007:130)⁴

Arendt argues that French couldn't understand the act of foundation as a source of authority, as Americans correctly did when they founded American Republic, but they searched for a higher transcendent authority like absolute prince who is the source of all law. Arendt explains that their solution was nation; nation replaced the role of absolute prince after French Revolution. "Both power and law were anchored in the nation, or rather in the will of the nation, which itself remained outside and above all governments and all laws" (Arendt, 1965: 163). In this context, will of the nation is considered as the majority's decision. Thus majority's decision was taken as authority or *pouvoir constituant*; the problem was that constant changing will of majority was actually not will but the interest of the majority. Nation-state model doesn't bring any solution to tyranny of the majority because majority's decision is taken as supreme authority, which could easily oppress minorities. Arendt believes that only solution for this awkward situation is federal system; in other words, a state of law rather than of men. Concerning nation-state problem, Hansen's insights on Greek polis worth listening,

In the modern nation-state, ethnic and national identity is an essential aspect of political identity, and the nation-state is often held up as a model of the best form of state. In the polis, political identity was something entirely different from ethnic or national identity. The citizens of a polis shared their ethnic identity (language, culture, history, religion) with the citizens of other city-states within the region, whereas their sense of political identity (including patriotism) was centered on the polis itself and separated any polis from all its neighbors. Also, the Renaissance and Baroque concept of the sovereign as a supreme legislator who himself stands above the law is foreign to the ancient Greeks, who invariably emphasized the supremacy of the laws and held that a polis ruled by an absolute monarch was a tyranny, a perverted

⁴ The minority question(copied from a letter to Erich Cohn-Bendit, summer 1940)

form of community which in its extreme form had ceased to be a polis. (Hansen, 2006:63-64)

Arendt also calls attention to the incompatibility of nation and state and the tension it creates; Fusion of state as a legal institution and nation, which is a pre-political personal status, undermined the state's status as the protector of the men's rights. This issue is apparent in minorities and stateless peoples. As well Arendt argues that nation-state paved the way for totalitarianism in central and Eastern Europe where there was no established peasant class which would be the base of newly-established state. Pan slav and pan German movements based on tribal-nationalism became the roots of totalitarian regimes after First World War.

Hannah Arendt was also very critical of the State of Israel and its nationalistic passions. Arendt strongly opposed to the creation of a Jewish nation-state; she argued that that would happen at the expense of Jewish homeland. She proposed Jewish-Arab federalism instead of nation-state model,

“ Local self-government and mixed Jewish-Arab municipal and rural councils, on a small scale and as numerous as possible, are the only realistic political measures that can eventually lead to the political emancipation of Palestine.”(Arendt, 2007:401).

Arendt sees federalism as only viable option against the crises of the nation-state. Exclusion of minorities, stateless people problems can be solved through federalism.

4.3. CONSTITUTION AND AUTHORITY

Constitution is the act of foundation; which is the source of authority in republic for Arendt. Although Arendt admires Greek understanding of participation, with regard to constitution and the establishment of the authority Arendt sees Roman understanding of the act of foundation more successful. Roman concept of **potestas in populo, auctoritas in senate** is the description of true republic for Arendt. Dana

Villa describes Arendt's concept of Constitution as a new space of tangible freedom in the world, which is created by individuals who rely on nothing more than the power implicit in their own mutual promises and agreements.(Villa, 2001:13) In line with Villa's argument Arendt explains the success of American republic,

What was lacking in the Old World were the townships of the colonies, and, seen with the eyes of a European observer, 'the American Revolution broke out, and the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people came out of townships and took possession of the state.'" Those who received the power to constitute, to frame constitutions, were duly elected delegates of constituted bodies; they received their authority from below, and when they held fast to the Roman principle that the seat of power lay in the people, they did not think in terms of a fiction and an absolute, the nation above all authority and absolved from all laws, but in terms of a working reality, the organized multitude whose power was exerted in accordance with laws and limited by them. (Arendt, 1965: 166)

Arendt also praises founding fathers for their understanding of Roman concept of foundation. Arendt argues that one of the reasons for the failure of French revolution was their search for a higher law; Arendt explains that search for a higher unchangeable law has roots in absolutism, which was unknown to Greeks and Romans. Arendt draws attention to the interconnection between the act of foundation or Constitution and authority; she explains that Robespierre and others searched in vain for a higher law or immortal legislator as an authority for the validity of their laws. Romans correctly put the source of authority in the act of foundation. In other words, the act of beginning itself is the fountain of authority not any other transcendent source. She explains that what distinguished American Revolution from French revolution and other revolutions was their correct understanding of the act of foundation and authority:

American Revolution was most conspicuously different from all other revolutions which were to follow, one is tempted to conclude that it was the authority which the act of foundation carried within itself, rather than the belief in an immortal Legislator, or the promises of reward and the threats of

punishment in a 'future state', or even the doubtful self-evidence of the truths enumerated in the preamble to the Declaration of Independence, that assured stability for the new republic. (Arendt,1965:199)

From this perspective, Arendt sees the establishment of authority as an important part of the institutional content of true republic for its stability and endurance:

Authority, resting on a foundation in the past as its unshaken cornerstone, gave the world the permanence and durability which human beings need precisely because they are mortals the most unstable and futile beings we know of. (Arendt, 1961: 95)

Arendt goes on to explain the importance of authority for the stability and endurance of the republic. She argues that Roman concept of authority accommodated two meanings: permanence and change; Roman word *auctoritas* whose etymological roots is *augere* which means to augment and increase. Thus, conservation of the act of foundation through augmentation is what constitutes the authority. I would like to draw attention to similarity of Arendt's and at the same time Roman understanding of the authority and Charles S. Peirce's understanding of critical inquiry. Richard Bernstein explicates Peirce's doctrine of critical commonsensism summarized by Cristopher Hookway. I quote first Hookway's summary;

First, justification “ will have to come to a halt somewhere”, and rest upon some opinions which are accepted without grounds or justification. Second, the beliefs which provide “the bedrock of truth” are indubitable, and beyond rational support and criticism. Third, “they must be regarded as the very truth”, and so our reliance upon them does not leave out knowledge without secure foundations. In this spirit, Peirce wrote that “ if you absolutely cannot doubt a proposition ...it is plain that there is no room to desire anything more”(Hookway, cited in Bernstein,2010:33-34)

Bernstein argues that Peirce's commonsensism is critical commonsensism; “ there are numerous beliefs that we do not doubt and that provide “the bedrock of truth “

....what is indubitable is not to be identified with what is incorrigible”(Bernstein,2010:33-34). Likewise, Arendt’s understanding of the act of foundation or constitution, which is the source of authority, is accepted without justification and they are beyond rational support and criticism; but at the same time, they are not incorrigible.

the seat of power to them was the people, but the source of law was to become the Constitution, a written document, an enduring objective thing, which, to be sure, one could approach from many different angles and upon which one could impose many different interpretations, which one could change and amend in accordance with circumstances (Arendt,1965:157)

Supreme Court’s establishment in America was to amend constitution according to changing circumstances, “the true seat of authority in the American Republic is the Supreme Court. And this authority is exerted in a kind of continuous constitution-making,” (Arendt, 1965:200)

Arendt sees the Roman concept of *‘potestas in populo auctoritas in Senate’* as a wise political achievement because Romans were able to establish authority without giving it any power. Arendt sees the establishment of the Supreme Court in America like Senate in Roman Republic as a success for stability and endurance. Arendt believes that separation of powers in Roman and American politics strengthened these republics.

For Arendt Constitution is an artifice against the destruction of nature and ruin of time. On the one hand it has to provide permanency and durability, on the other it should be open to the changes or new beginnings, it shouldn’t represent only status quo. We can say that Arendt is in favor of Roman senate and American Supreme Court as a higher authority over federated units for stability and endurance. Although Arendt is very critical of Plato for killing civic empowerment, Arendt sees the Plato as the father of concept of authority, which could stabilize political system.

4.4. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

Although Arendt separates private and public realm, she supports the voluntary free associations. Arendt's approach to free associations is very much influenced by Tocqueville, who sees the liberty of association as a necessary guarantee against the tyranny of majority. Free associations are means for minority to change decisions of majority. "An association consists solely in the decision of a certain number of individuals to adhere publicly to certain doctrines, and to commit themselves to seek the triumph of those doctrines in a certain way" (Tocqueville, 2004: 216).

Tocqueville explains that at first stage an association starts with the representation of an opinion and then attracts supporters; at this stage an intellectual bond created between supporters; at the second stage association grows and establish assemblies throughout country; assemblies enable supporters to meet and combine their resources; at third stage electoral bodies are established and delegates are chosen for central assembly. Tocqueville resembles associations to a separate nation within a nation or a government within a government but he emphasizes that they constitute minority and they challenge the laws accepted by majority (Tocqueville, 2004:216). Larry Siedentop on his book "*Tocqueville*" explains that without the habit of association members of a democratic society are powerless. Siedentop argues that local autonomy and habit of association are what turn individuals into citizens. Siedentop explains, "political participation and habit of association lead people to learn to combine their own advantage with others" (Siedentop, 1994:91).

Arendt shares Tocqueville's perspective with regard to associations; as well,

she sees civil disobedience movements as voluntary or minority associations. They are necessary to implement change without civil war and revolution. In line with Locke's argument Arendt believes that citizens have the right to resist government's decisions; this resistance is necessary for the stability and permanence of the republic. From this perspective, civil disobedience as a minority association is one of the cornerstone of Arendt's concept of federalism. As well, we should read Arendt's understanding of voluntary association and civil disobedience as an informal means for citizens in different federated units to unite for different political purposes; civil disobedience movements for the rights of African-Americans is a case in point.

Arendt worried that importance of civil disobedience movements for the future of the republic is not understood at all. According to Arendt, civil disobedience movements are not a simple disobedience to particular Government policies or laws but they are symptoms of constitutional problems of the world and the United States. Arendt argues that it is not possible to solve these problems by treating them as common criminals or conscientious objectors because they are neither. Current Constitution is not adequate to solve this problem; there is a need for a new concept of law, which is compatible with civil disobedience. For Arendt, finding a constitutional niche for civil disobedience in Constitution is as significant as the founding of the *constitutio libertatis*. She also believes that American republic is the only country which could find a place for civil disobedience in his constitution. She believes that what makes different American republic from others is its spirit of laws, which come from the early experiences of first settlers: active support and participation in all public affairs (Arendt, 1969:83-84).

Hannah Arendt sees the change as constant and inherent in human condition. Velocity of change varies in different places and times. Our century has witnessed an

extraordinary speed of change, which established a gap between generations in four or five years instead of three or four generations (Arendt, 1969:78). This unprecedented rate of change challenges the legal order, which is designed to insure stability. Rapid change of our times will bring greater role for civil disobedience. The degree of civil disobedience's compatibility with law will decide whether or not current political institutions will survive the rapid change without civil war and revolution.

Things of this World are in so constant a flux, that nothing remains long in the same State. Thus People, Riches, Trade, Power, change their Stations; flourishing mighty Cities come to ruine, and prove in time neglected desolate Corners, whilst other unfrequented places grow into populous Countries, filled with Wealth and Inhabitants ⁵ (John Locke, 1689)

Although John Locke's words, written three hundred years ago, resonate in our century much more intensely; balance between stability and change hasn't changed. Law is the foremost stabilizing factor along with customs and traditions. For Arendt, law can stabilize and legalize change once it occurred but change is always the result of extra legal action. We should look at the history of the fourteenth amendment to understand Arendt's argument. Fourteenth amendment was adopted in 1868, after the American civil war to address citizenship rights and equal protection of laws in response to issues related to former slaves. Fourteenth amendment couldn't be enforced in southern states for almost hundred years. Fourteenth amendment is a very good example about what can law achieves and what it cannot. Fourteenth amendment was enforced by an extra legal action taken by the supreme court of the United States. So what changed the position of Supreme Court, which was silent about the enforcement of the fourteenth amendment for almost hundred years;

⁵ John Locke, Second Treatise, 157

movements of civil disobedience changed the opinion of the society about the situation of African American people in southern states. Civil disobedience movements, by changing public opinion, forced Supreme Court to take extra legal action to change the situation of African Americans in southern states. The right to organize and strike, the right to collective bargaining and many other changes happened the same way, lengthy disobedience movements changed the society's approach to these issues and then came the extra legal action for change. Arendt argues that law can't effect the change; change originates from citizens' participation in public affairs through voluntary or minority associations, which are sometimes called civil disobedience movements. Thus, in a rapidly changing world it is imperative to find a niche for civil disobedience in Constitution.

Civil disobedience comes into existence when a number of people are convinced that the change or the preservation of status quo that they desire can't happen through the channels of change that has functioned before. Civil disobedient challenge the government's policies even if majority backs them. They act not for their personal interest or common interest in the case of conscientious objector but for a common opinion of a group. What distinguishes civil disobedience from revolution is that the civil disobedient doesn't question the legitimacy of the authority or the system of laws as opposed the revolutionary (Arendt, 1969:77). Although civil disobedient and revolutionary have different motives, they both want to change the world.

Hannah Arendt is very critical of the way civil disobedience movements were regarded and treated in the United States in 1970's. On the one hand, civil disobedients are treated by Government as common criminals or they are asked for supreme proof of self-sacrifice; on the other hand, to justify civil disobedience acts,

Jurists attempt to portray them either as conscientious objector or as men who tests the constitutionality of a statue. For Arendt, Prejudice and ill will are the reasons for neglecting obvious distinction between ordinary criminal and civil disobedient. Arendt protests that dissenters are described as worse than ordinary criminals by officials in a country where most criminal acts have no legal consequences because of ill management of public institutions. Criminal disobedience is a result of the erosion of police competence and power. Dissenter, who acts without any personal wishes for an exception for himself, can't be held responsible for criminal acts that happen during these movements. Arendt argues that all these misunderstandings are a result of regarding civil disobedients as single individuals rather than members of a group. There is a need for a new concept of law that can clearly separate dissenters from ordinary criminals by recognizing civil disobedience movements as a group action rather than individual act. New concept of law, which would enable these movements to act under Constitutional safeguards against ill will and prejudices of public officials, is as important as *constitutio libertatis*.

Hannah Arendt strongly disagrees with the belief that civil disobedient is a single individual who acts as a conscientious objector for his own interests or opinion. Arendt argues that Socrates and Thoreau are wrong examples for civil disobedience; Socrates, although he acted against authorities and challenged them, his act can't be a civil disobedience act because he was alone and his challenge was for a particular miscarriage of justice. Although Arendt regards what Socrates did as an honorable act, Arendt is very critical that Socrates' self-sacrifice is expected today from civil disobedients. Arendt ridicules the idea that acceptance of punishment can justify the breaking of law. For Thoreau, although his action was against the injustice of the laws, his argument in his famous essay "*On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*"

was not compatible with the definition of civil disobedience. He acted on the ground of individual conscience and conscience's moral obligation. His actions was an example of individual morality and he acted alone and not in public. Arendt argues that conscience is unpolitical and Thoreau's situation reflects the conflict between morality and politics or good man and good citizen. Thoreau's and Socrates' arguments are not only unpolitical but they are also said in subjective statements which can't be accepted as political. According to Arendt, rules of conscience as explained in Socrates's writings in the *Gorgias* or in Thoreau's essay are entirely negative, they put boundaries for action, they don't say anything for action. Arendt believes that, in terms of politics, there are two problems with individual conscience: First, individual conscience is subjective and can't be generalized. Secondly, the innate faculty of telling the right from wrong and man's interest in himself can't be taken for granted.

According to Arendt, although civil disobedience is a worldwide phenomenon, only Americans have the chance to find a way to create a new concept of law, which is compatible with civil disobedience (Arendt, 1969:83). American republic could cope with the onslaught of change, thereby civil disobedience, not through its statutes but through the spirit of its laws. Montesquieu argued that there is such a thing as spirit of laws, which could have different formations in different places and regimes. According to Arendt, the spirit of American law is *consent in the sense of active support and continuing participation in all matters of public interest*(Arendt,1969:85). Spirit of American law is not based on theory but on the extraordinary experiences of early colonists. Consent, in America, is not a fictional result of the social contract between people and Government but it was real with different agreements, covenants starting with the Mayflower Compact in 1620.

Horizontal version of the social contract which mutually binds members of the American society is not based on historical memories or ethnic homogeneity but on the strength of the mutual promises. This is Lockean version of social contract, Locke argues that society remains intact even if government dissolves. According to Locke, the power that every individual gave the society, when he entered into it, can never revert to the individuals again, as long as the society lasts, but will always remain in the community; this new version of *potestas in populo* gives people the right to resist not only when they are deprived of their rights but also to prevent attacks to their rights. For Arendt, Civil disobedience movements in 1970's actually were actions to prevent Government's illegal attacks on institutions and on fundamental rights. These movements take their legitimacy and strength from the earlier American experiences and this new version of *potestas in populo* conceptualized by Locke.

Arendt believes that dissent implies consent: "one who knows that he may dissent knows also that he somehow consents when he doesn't dissent"(Arendt, 1969:88). In this sense, Consent is the spirit of American law. So this consent, a kind of *consensus universalis* with Tocqueville's words, doesn't cover consent to specific laws or policies, even if they are the result of majority decisions. Arendt strongly opposes the view that consent to the Constitution implies consent to the statutory law. Arendt accuses the current representative party system for this fictitious idea of consent. When it comes to resistance or civil disobedience movements in 1970's America, Arendt argues that these movements are not a result of the dissent to some national policies or to particular laws but a result of a Constitutional crisis because of two factors: withdrawal of consent as a consequence of administration's challenges

to Constitution and unwillingness of the black people and some other groups to recognize *consensus universalis*.

Consent, as spirit of the American laws, doesn't rely on majority decisions but on horizontal version of social contract (Arendt,1969:92). In other words, American way of social contract relies on mutual promises. Arendt argues that American government broke his promise by starting an illegal war and attacking on freedoms guaranteed by first amendment. People withdraw their consent as a consequence of Governments illegal actions. For Negroes and Indians, as Tocqueville predicted long time ago, the price for not including black people and Indians in *consensus universalis* is paid by their dissent to Constitution. Arendt claims that although there is no law against black people and Indians, they don't consent to Constitution because of the way they were treated as aliens even after the civil war by almost every notable person including Lincoln. They were tacitly excluded from the tacit consensus(Arendt,1969:90-91). They should have been an amendment specifically for Negro people. Even after the approval of fourteenth amendment, Federal Government was reluctant to enforce the law to protect black people. So they condemn all American institutions as evil because they didn't enforce the law against the evil of slavery.

Hannah Arendt believes that civil disobedience is the latest form of voluntary associations(Arendt, 1969:96). Since first colonists' arrival, voluntary associations have served as a remedy for the failure of the political institutions and unreliability of men. Failure of the United States' political institutions changed voluntary associations into civil disobedience and dissent into resistance. Apart from elsewhere in the world Americans remedied failure of institutions with emergency voluntary associations which were seen as the peculiar strength of the American political

system by Tocqueville. Arendt argues that civil disobedient movements in America is a proof that Americans haven't forgotten art of associating as Tocqueville wrote in the beginning of 1880's:

When Americans have a feeling or idea they wish to bring to the world's attention, they will immediately seek out others who share that feeling or idea and, if successful in finding them, join forces. From that point on, they cease to be isolated individuals and become a power to be reckoned with, whose actions serve as an example; a power that speak, and to which people listen. (Tocqueville, 2004: 598-599)

Tocqueville's words actually explain the turmoil in 1970's, why dissent turned into resistance and why more and more people started to support civil disobedience movements; because their language is not listened to anymore. What Arendt argues is that civil disobedience movements are simple voluntary associations that Americans founded since their first arrival. These voluntary associations served as a means for participation in public affairs. As well, these voluntary associations worked in times of emergencies, whenever there were political problems; Americans remedied problems through these voluntary associations. These associations strengthened the social contract, because they prevented tyranny of the majority by giving a place for minorities to be heard. Arendt calls voluntary associations also minority associations, because they usually work against the will of majority.

Civil disobedience for Arendt is not a subjective matter of individual conscience but a political issue, which interests a great number of people. Arendt argues that civil disobedience movements turned into resistance movements not because of their objection to specific policies or laws, but because of their withdrawal of consent from *consensus universalis*. Arendt believes that consent, in American understanding, doesn't rely on majority decision but on the horizontal version of contract, which depends on keeping promises. Arendt worried that

importance of civil disobedience movements and their meaning for the future of the republic is not understood at all. Treating civil disobedient as conscientious objector and expecting them to accept their punishment to justify their actions is not acceptable for Arendt. As well, trying to find criminal elements and accusing these movements for criminal activities are also unacceptable practices for Arendt, because civil disobedient acts in public for a common opinion to be heard and to change the world. American republic, thanks to its spirit of laws, has a chance to find a constitutional solution for growing resistance movements because Arendt believes that resistance movements are actually minority or voluntary associations and voluntary associations are a part of American political life starting from first settlers. Americans learned the art of associating on the board of Mayflower to cope with the political problems. Arendt sees the minority associations as an assurance against the tyranny of majority. Arendt's main point is that Locke's version of new *potestas in populo* with the experiences of American people already gives people the right to resist to prevent tyranny. Civil disobedience movements are needed to bring necessary change but current concept of law is not compatible with these movements. A new concept of law, which would remove all the misunderstandings about these necessary movements, would be as great as *constitutio libertatis*(Arendt,1969:83-84).

Free associations and civil disobedience movements have important roles against the tyranny of majority and governments' misdoings. Arendt believes that they are essential for a good running republic. Curbing people right to associate and treating civil disobedients as criminals are destructive for the legitimacy of government and for the future of republic.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

My research has been an exploration into Hannah Arendt's political philosophy to prove that her concept of federalism is a viable alternative to modern nation-state model and representative democracy. For Hannah Arendt, nation-state model and representative democracy are incompatible with the essence of politics and destructive to human lives. Thus, they need to be replaced with a federal system based on assembly democracy. Arendt's concept of federalism is not only about assembly democracy; constitution as an act of the foundation is the source of authority in Arendt's concept of federalism; as well, voluntary associations and civil disobedience are vital for a good running democracy for Arendt. With regard to structure, Arendt's concept of federalism is based on a confederacy of federated units.

As I mentioned in the introduction, Arendt's understanding of politics doesn't conform to current mainstream understanding of parliamentary democracy. Replacement of representative democracy with assembly democracy and her separation of public and private realm have been most criticized aspects of her

concept of federalism. Contrary to criticisms, I believe that assembly democracy and separation of public and private realm are feasible and realistic ideas. With regard to assembly democracy, there is no clear evidence for its incompatibility with modern complex world; Benjamin Barber explains very well feasibility of neighborhood assemblies in modern world; as well, assembly democracy ran very well over long periods of time in comparatively big cities in Ancient Greece, Roman republic and American towns during colonial period; assembly democracy, as opposed to current criticisms, was a source of great civilizations; Tocqueville's observations about the contributions of township model for good running public and private affairs are worth listening.

Arendt's separation of public and private realm is actually different interpretation of John Stuart Mill's individual liberties; this issue has been neglected and misunderstood by contemporary political thinkers. Milton Friedman, Frederique Hayek and many other advocates of capitalism share Arendt's vision with regard to separation of public and private realms; but I need to call attention to their equation of freedom with individual negative liberties, of which Arendt is highly critical. Notwithstanding their different definition of freedom, they speak the same language with Arendt. Actually Arendt goes further and explicates representative democracy's destructive effects on public and private realm; Joseph Stiglitz's findings proves Arendt's point with regard to invasion of public realm by private companies which undermines classical liberal understanding of laissez-faire economy, which is supposed to work without any interference from public realm.

Another cornerstone of Arendt's concept of federalism is her strong belief in Constitution as a source of authority; this is another aspect of Arendt's liberalism with regard to constitutional guarantees for individual liberties. As well, this is also

Arendt's foundationalist or pragmatist aspect. Arendt's ideas with regard to importance of constitution as a source of authority for permanence and stability have been also neglected in political discussions. Her emphasis on Roman experience misled many thinkers to label her as utopic; but we see that Arendt also praises founding fathers good understanding of the act of the foundation.

Voluntary associations and civil disobedience movements are needed in a good running democracy as a safety valve for wrongdoings of government and majority; the definition and limits of civil disobedience movements as a voluntary or minority association is an important issue for Arendt; we see that Arendt doesn't consider many student movements in developing countries as acceptable civil disobedient movements because of their ideological background. From this perspective, On the one hand, Arendt strongly emphasizes the importance of civil disobedience movements and of having a place in constitution for it; on the other hand, Arendt is very meticulous about the definition of civil disobedience; she insists that genuine civil disobedience should be separated from other individual actions and populist ideological movements; I believe this is a result of Arendt's objectivism; Arendt, like her approach to constitution, believes in necessity of a "bedrock of truth" , in other words, clear definitions about political matters, in which we can trust.

So, where does Arendt stand in the theory of democracy? This issue also has been neglected in political discussions in contemporary literature. Arendt didn't put herself in any category; she even didn't consider herself conservative or leftist. Her strong emphasis on participatory democracy and public happiness brings her close to republicanism; but her sharp separation of public and private realm along with her emphasis on constitutional framework for individual liberties brings her close to liberalism. To begin with her liberalism, I believe that with her sharp separation of

public and private realm, she is even more eager to protect individual liberties in social realm than many contemporary advocates of liberalism. From this perspective, Arendt's concept of federalism is more liberal than any form of neo-republicanism, which requires some government interference in social sphere in the name of citizens' liberation from domination. As well, Arendt's understanding of politics does not fit into Pocock's republicanism because Pocock's republicanism is kind of a remedy against selfish individualism of liberalism but Arendt's sharp separation of public and private realm is very similar to liberal laissez-faire approach in social realm. When it comes to Arendt's republicanism, Arendt's emphasis on assembly democracy and action, through which citizens could show their distinctness, have been misunderstood and Arendt has been considered as classical republican; although Arendt is a republican with her emphasis on participatory democracy and her acceptance of separation of powers, Arendt's sharp separation of public and private realm raises the suspicion about if individual rights or common good come first for Arendt; I believe none comes first for Arendt; Thus I think Arendt is a republican liberal. On the one hand, participatory democracy is the essence of politics for her; on the other hand, she strongly believes in laissez-faire approach in social realm. Of course, one might argue that her separation of public and private realms doesn't necessarily mean protection of individual liberties but I think the result is the same; both Arendt's separation of public and private and liberal understanding of individual liberties in social sphere mean the same thing. Another counter argument against Arendt's being a republican liberal would be her admiration of citizens' courage to put public good above private interests(Arendt, 1961:156). I think this argument would fail because protection of freedom in public

realm can't be interpreted as being against individual liberties or primacy of public freedom over individual freedom in social realm.

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