



## A Socio-political Analysis of Paul Hirst's Theory of Associative Democracy as Representing the English Pluralist Theory of the State.

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### Abstract

This theoretical study lies at the intersection of sociology, political science, and democratic theory. The study attempts to assess the validity of the resurgence of interest in the pluralist theories of the state, especially the contemporary English pluralist theory. In doing so, the study will be focusing on the critical account and assessing the main theoretical debates of the British sociologist and political scientist Paul Hirst (1946-2003). It should be emphasised that this study has been done according to a historical and explanatory approach method, which applied in both fields of political theory and Political Sociology. Therefore, the study offers a socio-political interpretation and exploration of Professor Paul Hirst's main themes and debates on Associative Democracy in a descriptive way. The study consists of ten sections. Section one is devoted to the introduction. The second section is explaining the objectives of the study and the method in which used in the study. The third section explores the vital questions of the study. The fourth section deals with a short biography on Paul Hirst. Section five is exploring the idea of Associationalism. Section six is exploring Paul Hirst's arguments on Pluralism, the English pluralist theory and the state. Section seven deals democracy, the welfare state and the "Third Way", from Paul Hirst's point of view. Section eight presents a critical assessment of representative democracy, by the exploration of Paul Hirst's associative democracy, governance and the free market economy. Section nine is dealing with the crisis of existing democracy. The last section is devoted to the conclusion of the study.

**Key Words:** Pluralist Theory, Associative Democracy, Pluralism, Government, Liberal Theory.

### 1. Introduction

Paul Hirst defines Democracy as a dominant idiom in political discourse in Britain, as in all other Western countries. Every citizen is a democrat irrespective of their other political views, and anyone with the slightest concern for political success carefully avoids criticising democracy for fear of the political wilderness. Representative democracy is such a powerful tool of legitimation of the actions of the government that no serious politician, even if they have just lost an election, will question it. Democracy is an unquestionable good and representative democracy is identified with democracy. To challenge the dominant idiom appears to be political suicide, but such a challenge needs to be mounted in the name of democracy. The dominant idiom-representative democracy as a democracy-serves to legitimate modern big government and to restrain it hardly at all. (Hirst, 1998 - A: 190).

In modern and contemporary political and social theory, there exist many debates over how the role of the state can be explained. Indeed, the traditional thinking on this topic maintains that the 'Pluralist theory' is the most efficacious in explaining both the role of the state and the power struggle, which has an impact upon policy (Hirst, P, 1989-B: 2-4). Pluralism permeates modern societies, dividing the loyalties of their members. Historically, Pluralism can be characterised in terms of three phases: (1) The early twentieth-century works of the three major exponents British Scholars; (G.D.H. Cole, 1889-1959), (J.N. Figgis, 1866-1919) and (Harold Laski, 1893-1950), which explore the criticism of the idea of the state as the centre of political life and concerned with rethinking representation. The post-World War Two, American political science Robert



Dahl's (1915-2014) argument that there are plural centres of power within the political system. (3) 1980 to the present, is concerned with associational practices of governance which represent Paul Hirst's argument with how political identities are formed in the process of political discourse (Hirst, P, 1989: 4 - 22). It is clear that in the first two decades of the twentieth century, English political pluralism criticized the state sovereignty and in the same time offered a federated and decentralized form of authority-pluralism- in which the affairs of society would be conducted by self-governing and independent associations. English political pluralism theory addresses contemporary debates on the nature and future of democratic government and Paul Hirst however, is the leading scholar of it. English political pluralism is a challenging school of political thought, neglected in the 1980s, but since 1990's it is enjoying a revival of interest. It is particularly relevant today because it offers a critique of centralized sovereign state power. Current in the first two decades of this century, English political pluralism offered a convincing critique of state sovereignty and proposed a decentralized and federated form of authority - pluralism - in which the affairs of society would be conducted by self-governing and independent associations. Paul Hirst's comprehensive introduction situates English political pluralism historically and gives a critical account of its main theoretical themes and the debate surrounding them. (Hirst, P, 1989: 6-7).

## 2. The objectives of the study and the method

This study offers a socio-political interpretation and exploration of Professor Paul Hirst's main themes and debates on Associative Democracy in a descriptive way. The objective of this study is to elaborate and discuss Professor Paul Hirst's major contribution to the field of English political pluralism and associative democracy by focusing on his very well-known books mentioned in the bibliography. The aim of the study, however, is to problematize the main points in which Hirst focused on his theoretical arguments on Associative democracy in the late twentieth century. Therefore, the study offers a socio-political interpretation of his views descriptively.

Methodologically, the study lies at the intersection of sociology, political science, and liberty theory. It should be emphasised that this study has been done according to a historical and explanatory approach method, which applied in both fields of political theory and political sociology. The explanatory approach is a method to make us understand something by describing or illustrating. It intends merely to explore the research questions and does not offer final and conclusive solutions to existing problems.

## 3. Research Questions

To achieve the objectives, the study tries to answer the following three vital questions:

In what way does Paul Hirst's theory of Associative democracy contribute to democratic reform in the British Society?

To what extent Paul Hirst's Associative Democracy as a liberal theory can resolve the resulting clashes of ideas, interests and identities?

Can the post-liberal society be renewed from the bottom -up through free association?

## 4. Who is Paul Hirst?

Professor Paul Hirst (1946-2003), was one of the most pioneering British political and social thinkers and academics of his generation. He began his carrier as a revolutionary Marxist, and his ideas were very significant in providing the intellectual path for New Labour Party in the United Kingdom. Academically speaking, he was awarded his Bachelor degree in Sociology from Leicester University, and then later moved to Sussex University in 1968, studied for a



Master degree under the supervision of the well-known British sociologist Tom Bottomore, (1920-1992). Not surprisingly, at the unusually early age of 23, he became a lecturer in sociology at Birkbeck College, London University. At Birkbeck, Hirst joined his former Leicester teacher, the Middle East expert Professor Sami Zubaida. They, in turn, were joined by the political scientist Bernard Crick (1929-2008), who was the first head of the department of politics and sociology (Pilmot, B, 2003). During the 1970s he became well known as the main figure in British Structural Marxism. By the late 1970s and 1980s, Hirst had become a critic of the French Marxist philosopher, Louis Althusser's (1918-1990), brand of Marxism. Hirst's optimistic personality found "expression in the rediscovery of one of the strands of early British socialism-associationism. Associationism, with which the names of both Harold Laski and G.D.H. Cole are linked, grounds decision-making at the lowest possible level and develops an egalitarian society by producing a host of pluralistic and decentralised associations which will balance and challenge the power of local government". (Cousins, M and MacCabe, C, 2003: ii). As I mentioned above by the late 1970s and 1980s, however, Hirst had become a critic of Louis Althusser. Drawing upon the French philosopher and social theorist, Michel Foucault, (1926-1984), but also the American Philosopher, Willard Van Orman Quine, (1908- 2000), and the Austrian-British philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, (1889- 1951), he criticised essentialism, epistemological discourses and the possibility of any general theory, in a move against careless sociological constructionist imperialism. In his work on democratic governance, he turned towards the ideas of the English political pluralists: John Neville Figgis, G. D. H. Cole, and Harold Laski. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Hirst developed a theory of associationism which attempted to revive social democracy by providing an alternative to state socialism and free-market liberalism. He also made important contributions to critical legal theory. ((The Times, 2003).

His later work, with Grahame Thompson, resulted in an influential criticism of fashionable theories of economic globalisation, demonstrating the continued importance of the nation-state, (The Times, 2003). His book 'War and Power' is a historical-sociological analysis of the development of the modern state and state system and addresses some of the current political challenges including climate change. His last book 'Space and Power' clearly demonstrated his intellectual scope. In the book he investigates the relationship between space and power, arguing that the exercise of power is both constrained by and shapes the character of the built environment. (Pimlott, B, 2003).

During his short life as he died in the age of 57, Hirst has published 12 books in sociology and politics and the one in which published two years after his death was "Space and Power: Politics", War and Architecture. Cambridge: Polity, 2005. (Cousins, M and MacCabe, C, 2003: ii). During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Hirst developed a theory of associationism which attempted to revive social democracy by providing an alternative to state socialism and free-market liberalism. He also made important contributions to critical legal theory. As mentioned above, Paul Hirst began his career as a Marxist, and in his later work, he made very much vital contributions to many important debates, the most notorious of which was his pronounced scepticism towards the idea of globalization. However, Hirst's principal legacy to political theory was the development of his normative theory of 'associative democracy'. ((The Times, 2003).

The figure of Paul Hirst, Professor of Social Theory at Birkbeck College, sometime editor of three journals, frequent contributor to others, as well as to numerous collections, author or co-author. Hirst occupies a prominent yet particular position within this latter constellation. His has been in many ways an exemplary career, typical of the trajectory of not a few of his generation, yet also preceding or exaggerating more general alterations of outlook and disposition. (Elliott, G, 1986).



### 5. What is Associationalism?

According to Professor Richard Bellamy, “pluralism within and without are weakening the coherence and competence of the nation-state, forcing it to come to terms with conflicting interests and values. Whereas liberalism has traditionally sought to exclude diversity and difference from the political sphere, we now need to reconstruct the liberal constitutional consensus in terms of a fair compromise achieved through new forms of democratic politics liberalism's origins, however, lie in the process of state-building of the nineteenth century and the attempt to create a national political community with shared interests and values”. (Bellamy, R, 1999: 10). As I mentioned in the introduction, associationalism doctrines have a long pedigree stretching back to the early nineteenth century. Associationalism is the original 'Third Way' between free-market capitalism and centralized state socialism. It declined from the 1920s onwards with the success of political movements advocating state socialism and the increasing concentration of state power inevitable in a century of social and international conflict. Associationalism returned in the late twentieth century as a doctrine of social reform and democratic renewal. It attempts to address a double crisis of the declining effectiveness of representative democracy and the increasing dissatisfaction with centralized and standardized state welfare. It attempts to address the issue of democratic accountability in extensive public service states by separating funding and provision, making the state responsible for core decisions about the scope and cost of services but not attempting to perform the conflicting roles of provider and source of accountability for provision. Associationalism argues that far from being one welfare state, there would be as many as citizens chose to organize, catering for the different values of individuals, but based on common basic public entitlements. Individuals could then top up the basic public provision distributed according to membership and thus craft or enhance services to meet their own needs. In this way, they would control their collective consumption and be willing to contribute to common public services (associations would only receive public funds if they were open to all and willing to provide a service based on public entitlements). (Open Democracy, 2011). Associationalism has returned as a doctrine of renewal in several contexts: as a means of promoting decentralized but public governance as a counter to economic liberal dominance of public debate in the USA; as a means of countering excessive centralization in the UK and also addressing the crippling effects of tax aversion on welfare; and in Italy as a means of coping with the problems of the failure of the central state by relying on civil society and the third sector to provide governance and services. Other societies like Denmark or the Netherlands have long put associative principles into practice, and it can be seen that their democratic institutions have benefited from such decentralization and pluralism. (Open Democracy, 2019), (Hirst, P, 1994), (Hirst, P, 1989).

### 6. Pluralism, the English Pluralist theory and the State

Generally speaking, Pluralism is in many respects both a product of and a problem for liberalism. (Bellamy, R, 1999: 20). The English Pluralists challenged the theory of unlimited state sovereignty and unitary centralized state embodying such sovereign power in the hierarchy of authority. According to Hirst, the "English political pluralism shared with the classical political theory of the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century a primary concern with political institutions, but it offered a critique of the institutions founded on and justified by classical political theory” (Hirst, P, 1989: 2-3). The pluralist theory arose in the context of a somewhat negative appraisal of the monistic theory of the state. The pluralists engaged in extensive



criticism of a certain notion of sovereignty, the State and Law. However, they did not all reject the state, but they were trying to theorise an idea of the state incorporating maximal diversity of group life and some kind of central authority. Political Pluralism, then, emerged at a time when the state was becoming increasingly active and powerful. The Pluralist emphasis upon the importance of groups within the state, and particularly upon the crucial role of small groups, was a protest on the one hand against individualism and on the other against idealism (Hirst, P, 1989: 4-8). Pluralism has functioned as a very effective ideology. It reigned supreme as a theory of social structure and politics from the 1930s to the 1960s. In essence, Pluralism is a modern liberal theory, which applies not to the individual of nineteenth-century liberal theory, but rather to the group, characteristic of twentieth century's Western capitalism and democracy. The Italian political theorist Norberto Bobbio (1909-2004) pointed out that, "democracies in our modern world have to come to terms with pluralism. Pluralism is not primarily a theory, but first and foremost an objective situation which is part and parcel of our lives, and has the advantage of making us aware of a basic trait of modern democracy" (Bobbio, N, 1987: 58-60).

Therefore, it is important to ask whether pluralist systems of government are necessarily democratic and, conversely, whether democratic systems of government are necessarily pluralist. The answer to the first question has to be negative. Pluralism is compatible with democracy but incompatible with totalitarianism, for the government cannot exercise total control over society if autonomous organizations are permitted to exercise any substantial degree of social and political influence. More to the point, most systems of government are neither democratic nor totalitarian. Precisely, it is not difficult to imagine a system of government that is characterized by competition between organised groups for influence and power, but is nevertheless undemocratic, either because only a minority of citizens are permitted to participate in political life or because the dominant groups use the power of the state to exclude other relevant groups from the competition. The answer to the question of whether democratic systems are necessarily pluralist depends upon how pluralism is defined. (Bobbio, N, 1987; Hirst, P, 1994). In its simplest form Pluralism refers to the competitive process where-by a plurality of organised interests strive to control government through taking part in electoral contests and /or to influence the policies of the respective government (Hirst, 1989: 3). The late twentieth century as Hirst pointed out, offers new conditions in which ideas marginalised for many decades can be redefined and developed to serve as an alternative, radical means of reforming and reorganizing economic and social governance in Western societies. Social democracy was always a pragmatic halfway house that lacked ideological appeal (Hirst, P, 1994: 2-3). Pluralists, therefore, call for a complex network of interest organisations throughout society, each of which possesses its power base and hence can function relatively independently of the government. Essentially, these associations rest on voluntary membership from those members of society that have a shared interest or concern regarding a particular issue (Hirst, P, 1994: 7-8). For example, such organisations include labour unions, business and professional associations, civic organisations, ethnic groups and cultural associations. Thus, under Pluralism, any resulting policy is seen as a direct result of bargaining and compromise between these groups and the government (Hirst, 1994). Hirst argued that the British society had become centralised, unaccountable and incapable of understanding and meeting needs or engaging with diverse citizens.

## 7. Paul Hirst's View on Democracy, Welfare State and the Third Way

The vital and very fundamental question Hirst raises in his book; *Associative Democracy*, is how and in which way "associational" forms of democracy should be developed, and how to rebalance the centralisation of the state and the dominance of big business. Hirst devotes special attention to the organisation of welfare (encompassing health, education and social insurance) and how it might be detached from the welfare state. He pointed out that the welfare state and democracy are intimately linked. Therefore, it is impossible to build new forms of democracy



without ensuring a measure of social security. The decentralisation of sovereign power has to be coupled with a welfare system and set of public services that is itself decentralised, but which ensures common minimum standards of provision. This can be achieved by maintaining public funding and common minimum entitlements (Hirst, P, 1994). In the introduction to *From Statism to Pluralism*, Hirst states that “associative democracy as a definite political doctrine is a practical “third way” between collectivist state socialism and *laissez-fairs* capitalism” (Hirst, P, 1997: 3). The conflict between liberal democratic capitalism and state socialism dominated political life for most of the twentieth century. State socialism is finished as a credible political idea. But liberal democracy is almost moribund, too, something most celebrants the collapse of communism failed to notice ((Hirst, P, 1997: 27-28).

According to Anthony Giddens, Paul Hirst’s work did not generate a political consensus in his lifetime. It inspired an academic and research interest but was ultimately eclipsed as a work of social democratic revisionism by the “Third Way” in terms of historical narrative, policy development and political potency” (Giddens, A, 1998). In criticising Anthony Giddens' Third Way, Hirst pointed out that there has only been one practical Third Way between authoritarian state socialism and *Laissez-faire* capitalism, and that is some form of social democracy (Hirst, P, 1998-B). Democracy itself, as Hirst argues, needs to be democratised. More specifically, associative democracy for Hirst as definite political doctrine is a practical third way between Collectivist state socialism and Laissez-faire capitalism (Hirst, P, 1997: 2).

The Italian philosopher of law and political sciences and a historian of political thought, Norberto Bobbio (1909-2004), unlike Hirst denies that a 'third way' exists between Western liberal democracy and Eastern socialism. According to Norberto Bobbio, the competitive model of democracy is better suited to the pluralist nature of modern society, and the important issue for the democrats today is "Where can you vote"? Not "Who can vote"? (Bobbio, N. 1987: 56). Democracy, as he requires, is not only equal civil and political rights but social rights as well. Therefore, the difficulty with modern democracy stems from the diversification and specification of contemporary life, which has produced the growth of many different agencies outside our control - bureaucracies, technocracies, and international corporations. Multi-party system (as a participatory democratic system) operating within a strong legal framework guaranteeing citizen's rights provides the most practicable avenue for reform. Moreover, as Bobbio argues, Democracy creates new bonds between the individuals and their fellow human beings, because their artificial union allows society to be reconstituted not as an organic whole, but as an association of free individuals. The guiding principle of democratic thought has always been Liberty. However, while direct democracy is the ideal form of political theory, representative democracy is the only form, which exists, in modern societies. (ibid: 43-49) For Bobbio however, both forms of democracies are not alternative systems, but necessary for the modern industrial societies (Bobbio, N. 1987: 53). As Bobbio seems to suggest, the way of a modern western society developing is not to be understood as the emergence of a new type of democracy, but rather as a process in which quite traditional forms of democracy, such as representative democracy, are infiltrating new spaces, occupied continuously by hierarchic or bureaucratic organisations. He characterised modern societies as once which have been "polycratic", soothing that easily strand the unsuspecting on the quicksand’s of pluralism. Thus, the problem of democracy encounters the problem of pluralism and subsumes it (Bobbio, N. 1987: .55-57).

### **8. Associative Democracy, Governance and the Free Market Economy: A Critical Assessment of Representative Democracy.**

Hirst argued that Associative democracy is a normative political theory. Its core propositions are as follows: (Hirst, P, 1994).



First: That as many social activities as possible should be devolved to self-governing voluntary associations. Second: That by doing so the complexity of the state will be reduced and the classical mechanisms of democratic representative government will be able to work better. Third: That self-governing voluntary association should, wherever possible, replace forms of hierarchical corporate power. This would give the affected interests voice and thus promote government by consent throughout society and not merely formally in the state. And fourth: That for many essential public functions, such as health provision, education and welfare, voluntary associations should provide the service and receive public funds for doing so. (Hirst, P, 1994), (Open Democracy, 2019).

Associationalists contend that there are in any complex and free society different versions of what the good life should be and the task of the state is to help realize as many of these as possible not to impose one of them. The state can and must perform the core functions of assuring public peace, adjudicating in clashes of norms and mobilizing resources for public purposes. Unlike economic liberal doctrines that seek to limit the functions of the state and expand the scope of the market, associationalism seeks to expand the scope of democratic governance in civil society. It also like free-market doctrines seeks to promote choice through competition, but it does so by giving individuals the option to move between non-profit-making associations. Individuals have a voice within associations and the option of periodic exit to move between them. This combination constrains associations to attend to the needs of their members, if voice fails or is too arduous then exit is an effective challenge to entrenched oligarchy. (Hirst, P, 1994: 20 - 40).

Associationalism is thus a political theory that combines a normative appeal with an account of the working of institutions. It is relatively unusual in that modern political theory has tended to become purely normative, concerned with exploring concepts like equality or rights, and in consequence concern for the effects of institutions has fallen to political science. In this sense, its combination of advocacy and reference to institutions is much more like traditional political theory, such as Aristotle or Rousseau. This does not mean that it is old fashioned. The present division between normative and supposedly value-free discourses does not help promote political debate about institutions.

Hirst's interpretations suggest that associative democracy provides new and clear models of governance that are applicable in the political system, in economic life and welfare services. Associative democracy responds directly to the problems of how to democratise a post-liberal organisational society since it aims to promote governance through democratically legitimated voluntary associations. Hirst points out that today we are facing a post-liberal organisational society in which the traditional relationship on either side of the public-private divide is that between a service provider and its clients, and in which the old liberal relationships of citizens and representative government, sovereign consumer and neutral market mean less and less (Hirst, P, 1997: 12-17).

Concerning the economic life in Western democracy, social democrats, for example, have stressed the need for equality and social welfare as the core of the government's economic policies. The market will be the primary form of social governance and non-market institutions have a distinctly secondary role in social governance. The notion of governance which has been introduced by Hirst in a very general sense can be defined as the means and become very problematic in recent decades as its prevailing forms have become more difficult to apply to change conditions and activities and less certain in their outcomes (Hirst, P, 1997: 3).

About British society, Hirst argues that in the past, this has entailed government ownership of the major components of the nation's economy, such as telecommunications, transportation, and some heavy industry. They also call upon the government to provide medical, unemployment, and other welfare benefits to those in need. By contrast, centrist and conservative political parties usually place much greater stress on the free market economy, unimpeded by government control or interventions as the most effective means of achieving economic growth,



technological progress, and widespread prosperity. In recent years, the collapse of centrally planned economies in many parts of the world has reinforced the emphasis on the critical role of the free market. In economic as well as in political affairs, it seems, that the indispensable element remains freedom (Hirst, P, 1994 & 1997). As mentioned above, in clarifying the principles of associative democracy, Hirst argues that "Associationalism" as a doctrine enjoyed some popularity because it appeared to offer a third way between capitalism and socialism. According to him, both capitalism and socialism are utopias and our modern organisational society has grown tired of these utopias. The radical alternative in the relation between state and civil society will only accept it if it makes sense locally, concerning particular strategies of institutional reform. (Hirst, P, 1997: 133).

In his radical criticism of the weaknesses and limits of modern representative democracy, Hirst explains that liberal democracy is inadequate precisely because changing political circumstances are making its institutions less and less able to cope with the new challenges. However, he referred to three main reasons behind this failure; Firstly, the representative democracy at the beginning of the twentieth century created a big government and an interventionist bureaucracy to secure their societies against external threats and internal conflicts. Secondly, representative democracy has atrophied, because it has become more a means of legitimizing of centralised and bureaucratic government than a check upon it. Western societies become more and more heterogeneous, and therefore it is difficult to govern. Thirdly, the distinctive feature of liberal democracy is its stagnancy in a way closely tied to the idea that the nation-state is the primary political community (Hirst, P, 1997: 28-29 & Hirst, P, 1994: 2-3). As Hirst pointed out perhaps by the early twenty-first-century politics will have no "centre". The classic institutions of representative government will be even less effective means of accountability than they are now. Liberal democratic theory is stagnant and it lacks the resources, without supplementation, to perform many tasks. The institutions that it has become identified with-national parliament, political parties and the majority choices of the citizens of a homogenous political community - seem less than effective means of organising the new politics (Hirst, P, 1997: 29-30). The changing international conjuncture and the collapse of the Cold War have weakened the military imperatives that sustained the nation-state. Liberal democratic politics centred on the nation-state are entering a period of growing problematic, in which their democratic effectiveness and legitimacy are questioned (Hirst, 1994: 7).

Considering Norberto Bobbio's view on this is very important especially as he explained that "the democracy of the modern state has no alternative but to be a pluralistic democracy". According to him what democratic and pluralistic theory has in common is that they are two different critiques of abuse of power, not incompatible but complementary and convergent. They represent two different but not necessarily alternative, remedies against the excessive concentration of power. The Democratic theory is directed against autocratic power, and pluralist theory is directed against monocratic power. (Bobbio, N, 1987: 59). However, Laclau and Mouffe rightly pointed out that "the logic of democracy is not a logic of the positivity of the social, and it is therefore incapable of founding a nodal point of any kind around which the social fabric can be reconstituted" (Laclau, E, & Mouffe, C, 1985: 188). Thus, democracy in modern states is characterised by the struggle against the abuse of power on two parallel fronts; against power from above in the name of power from below, and the concentration of power in the name of the distribution of power (Bobbio, N, 1987: 60). Bobbio gives three reasons for preferring democratic government to other forms. The first derives from Rousseau's formula that liberty consists in obeying laws we have prescribed to ourselves. The second, political justification, regards it as the best available protection against the abuse of power since it shares sovereignty among the people as a whole. Finally, from a utilitarian standpoint, democracy is preferable to autocracy because people are the best interpreters of their collective interest (ibid). Hirst, however, argues that at present 'pluralism' has become a policy of the state, promoting 'multi-cultural' programmes within uniform structures of a provision that satisfy no community and at



worst degenerate into a decluttered pap. Associative democracy as he pointed out is not tied to any given part of the left-right political spectrum. It can appeal to and be used as a guiding political doctrine by a wide variety of political and social groups subscribing to very different beliefs (Hirst, P. 1994: 11-12). Associative democracy has two fundamental distinctive features: that it bridges and transforms the division between "state and civil society", pluralising the former and 'publicising' the latter; second, that it promotes the democratic governance of corporate bodies in both public and private spheres, aiming to restrict the scope of hierarchical management and offering a new model of organisational efficiency (Hirst, P. 1994: 74). Modern associative democracy can only be a more or less extensive supplement to liberal representative democracy, it cannot seek to abolish the individual right to vote on a territorial basis, nor to abolish the state as a public power that attempts to protect the rights of individual citizens and associations (ibid: 19). Laclau and Mouffe pointed out that "A democratic struggle can autonomize a certain space within which it develops, and produce effects of equivalence with other struggles in a different political space. It is to this plurality of the society that the project for a radical democracy is linked, and the possibility of it emanates directly from the decentred character of the social agents, from the discursive plurality which constitutes them as subjects, and from the displacements which take place within that plurality"(Laclau, E, & Mouffe, C, 1985: 181).

Paul Hirst's theory of associative democracy has been criticized by the British Scholar Mark Wenman. Wenman argues that on a preliminary analysis, Hirst's project appears to have been predicated on a normative defence of voluntarism, individualism and pluralism. However, Wenman argues that Hirst's theory is undermined and contradicted in his work – and the work of the earlier English pluralists – by an implicit assumption of social unity. This "assumption is manifest in the functionalism and corporatism that Hirst presented as necessary components of pluralism, which in turn reflect his unwarranted presumption that industrial productivity, efficient economic governance and welfare provision represent impartial and incontestable axioms of social organisation" (Wenman, M, 2007: 801). Wenman believes that Hirst inherited from (G.D.H. Cole, 1889-1959) an essential "tension" or contradiction between a commitment to voluntarism and pluralism, on the one hand, a unified social purpose on the other (Wenman, M, 2007: 812 & 816). But this critique of Wenman has been challenged by Jason Edwards and Kelvin Knight as they respond to him by arguing that Wenman overstates the importance of G.D.H. Cole in the formation of Hirst's theory says that, he, therefore, misrepresents important aspects of Hirst argument, and that, as it stands his theory of 'agnostic pluralism' is less the alternative he claims that observation about the ineradicability of social conflict that Hirst would have regarded as true (Edward, J & Knight, K, 2008: 717).

### 9. The crisis of existing democracy

According to Hirst, there are no credible alternatives to the representative government based on universal suffrage as the principal form of governance in nation-states. This is what he was meant by democracy. In the early 1990s, there have been numerous regime changes in Latin America, Eastern Europe, East Asia and Africa, leading to the adoption of multi-party democracy. Thus, democracy is the only game in town, but it is in bad shape. There are no positive alternative regimes, only failed states and authoritarian regimes with little legitimacy other than the fact that real representative government is impossible under current social and political conditions. The two principal current intellectual challenges to conventional democratic theory, associative democracy and deliberative democracy, are seen, even by their advocates, as supplements to rather than complete replacements for representative democracy. Ideas of leader-democracy, direct democracy based on councils or soviets, and one-party developmental states have been almost totally discredited. Yet they were current into the 1970s. In the 1930s, moreover, the democracies were besieged. The democracies were few in number, they were



threatened by powerful authoritarian states, and liberal democratic ideas were widely perceived by intellectuals of the right and left as obsolete bourgeois notions. (Hirst, P,1994: 61).

In part, of course, democracy is in crisis because it is the only game in town and it does not have enemies. One can no longer point to the Hitler State or the Soviet Union and thus legitimate democracy by the vicious consequences of the alternatives. Democracy has to be legitimated by its values and it is increasingly failing the test. Political systems that do not face competitors will tend to stagnate in the absence of external challenge. If the representative government becomes taken for granted, merely part of the political plumbing, then the core democratic values will atrophy. The problem is that democracy, as a political system, requires at least a minimum level of public commitment and popular participation. (Hirst, P,1994: 86).

## 10. Conclusion

To sum up, one can conclude that Paul Hirst has contributed to rethinking democracy from an aggregative perspective, and again the power balance perspective is central. His associative model of democracy suggests that representative democracy at the state level is supplemented with being publicly funded, but autonomously governed service providing associations. The purpose of this is not to ensure a horizontal power balance between different elites but to establish a vertical power balance between democracy from above (representative democracy at the state level) and democracy from below (self-governing voluntary associations). In this vertical balancing of powers, the role of the state is to define the overall political goals and financial frames for the operation of the associations while the task of the associations is to produce public services in competition with each other. Paul Hirst argues that the principle of affectedness must play a central role in considerations about how to ensure equal access to channels of political influence. The equal right to vote for parliament must also play a central role in the future. However, this territorially defined representative democracy must be supplemented with a functionally defined democracy for the affected stakeholders. In this associative democracy, the access to channels of influence is distributed equally, not among all citizens, but among those who are affected by the decisions. More clearly, the pluralist theory challenged the theory of unlimited state sovereignty, and the conception of unitary centralised state embodying such sovereign power hierarchy of exclusively controlled authority. Hirst gave a central role to voluntarily formed associations of citizens in civil society. The central problem for Hirst is how to renew the post-liberal society from the bottom up through free association. Hirst asks us to imagine a system that combined citizen choice with public welfare (Hirst, P,1994: 6). As Maurice Glasman argues the very clear weakness in Paul Hirst's work, is that it does not encompass the full penetration of democracy into the economy (beyond a functional use of democracy to improve performance and growth); and that it does not consider the need for a democratic renewal of vocational governance, and further development of the relationship of association and democracy to capitalism, innovation and growth. (Glasman, 2011: 64). Finally, one may ask the pluralist, can the post-liberal society live by associational one?

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## تحليل سوسيو-سياسي لنظريه بول هيرست عن الديمقراطية الترابطية المتمثلة بنظرية التعددية الإنكليزية للدولة

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## ملخص

تناول هذه الدراسة في مضمونها تحليلاً سوسيو- سياسياً لنظرية عالم الاجتماع والسياسة البريطاني (بول هيرست: 1946-2003)، والتي تشكل فرضياتها من "الديمقراطية الترابطية"، متمثلة في محتواها نظرية التعددية الإنكليزية. وتتمحور الدراسة على التداخل والأندماج بين علمي السياسة والاجتماع في نظرية الديمقراطية، وتحاول الدراسة ان تقدم تقييماً لنظرية "بول هيرست" في التعددية الديمقراطية، والتي بدء الإهتمام بها في الثمانينات والتسعينيات من القرن الماضي. يُعد بول هيرست واحداً من أهم من تطرقوا الى مضامين علم الاجتماع والسياسة، وخصوصاً في مجال نظرية التعددية الإنكليزية، ولقد أسس العديد من الركائز النظرية فيها. تنقسم هذه الدراسة الى عشرة مباحث. عرض المبحث الاول مقدمة الدراسة، وجاء المبحث الثاني مقدماً أهداف الدراسة والمنهج المتبع فيها. أما المبحث الثالث فطرحنا فيه الأسئلة الحيوية الثلاثة للدراسة. وتناول المبحث الرابع، نبذة تاريخية مختصرة عن حياة بول هيرست الاكاديمية، في حين تطرق المبحث الخامس لمفهوم وفكرة الترابطية كمذهب سياسي. أما المبحث السادس فيتناول محاجة وإنتقاد بول هيرست للتعددية ونظرية التعددية الإنكليزية والدولة في المجتمع البريطاني. والمبحث السابع خُصص لأفكار بول هيرست عن الديمقراطية ودولة الرفاه والطريق الثالث. وعرض المبحث الثامن تقييماً نقدي للديموقراطية التمثيلية من خلال شرح الديمقراطية الترابطية والحوكمة وإقتصاد السوق الحر. أما المبحث التاسع فيتناول أزمة الديمقراطية الراهنة، والمبحث العاشر والأخير، فعرضنا فيه أهم ماتوصلت اليه الدراسة مع خاتمة توجز الفكرة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نظرية التعددية، الديمقراطية الترابطية، مذهب التعددية، حكومة، نظرية التحرر

شيكردنه وهيكى سؤسيؤ- سياسيه نهى تيؤرى پؤل هيرست سه بارهت به ديمؤكراسى پيكه وهيكى كه رهنكدانه وهى تيؤرى فرهيكى ئينگليزى بؤ دهوله ته

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## پوخته

ئه م توؤزينه وهيكى شيكردنه وهه وهه لسه نگانديكه بؤ تيؤرى كؤمه لئاس و زاناي سياسه تي برينانى پؤل هيرست (1946-2003) سه بارهت به ديمؤكراسى پيكه وهيكى يان ديمؤكراسى به يه كبه ستراوى (الديمقراطية الترابطية) كه له ناواخندا په نكدانه وهى تيؤرى فرهيكى سياسى ئينگليزىه. تيؤرى فره ديمؤكراسى پؤل هيرست كه له هه شتاكان و نه وه ده كانى سه دهى زابردو دووباره هاته وه مهيدانى بيرو وهزرى كؤمه لايه تي و سياسى له برينانيا.

ئه م توؤزينه وهيكى ده ته وهه له خو ده گريت. ته وهه رى يه كه م ده روازه يكه بؤ توؤزينه وهيكى. ته وهه رى دووه م به كورتى باس له ئامانجى توؤزينه وهه و ميتؤدى به كارها توله توؤزينه وهيكى ده كات. ته وهه رى سييه م سى پرسياره سه ره كيبه كه تى توؤزينه وهه له خو ده گريت. ته وهه رى چاره م به كورتى باس له زيانى ئه كادىمى پؤل هيرست ده كات. ته وهه رى يئنجهم باس له بؤچونى پؤل هيرست سه بارهت به (به يه كبه ستراوييون) وهك مه زهه ب ده كات. ته وهه رى شه شم ليكؤلينه وهيكى له بؤچوون و پروانگه و ره خنه ي هيرست بؤ فره يبيوونى سياسى و تيؤرى فرهيكى ئينگليزى و په يوه ندى به ده وله ته وهه. ته وهه رى جهفته م باس له پروانگه ي پؤل هيرست بؤ ديمؤكراسى و ده وله تى خو شكوزه رانى و ريگاي سييه م (الطريق الثالث) ده كات به تاييه تي له كؤمه لگاي برينانى. ته وهه رى هه شته م هه لسه نگانديكى ره خنه يى توؤزه ره بؤ ديمؤكراسى نوئنه رايه تي و چؤنيه تي پابه نديبوونى به فرهيكى سياسى و بونيداننى ديمؤكراسى پيكه وهيكى و ئابوورى بازارى ئازاد. ته وهه رى نوويه م باس له قهيرانى هه نو كويى ديمؤكراسى ده كات. ته وهه رى ده يه م به دريؤى باس له ده رته نجامى توؤزينه وهه كه ده كات.

دهسته واژه گرنگه كان: تيؤرى فرهيكى، ديمؤكراسى پيكه وهيكى، فره خوازى، حوكمه ت، تيؤرى ئازادى