

CHAPTER 1

VOLUNTEERISM AND ACTIVISM

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The view in contemporary societies that citizens must be actively involved in the decision-making mechanisms for the better functioning of democracy is seen to be more and more accepted with each passing day. Whether informally or formally, organizationally or individually, citizens need to take the initiative in order to prosperously arrange the social and political life on an equal and free basis. Volunteerism and activism support active citizenship in different ways. Nevertheless, these two concepts are often handled in a completely different context both in the social science literature as well as in everyday language. This is because the profiles of volunteers and activists are thought to differ in terms of their fields of activity and their purposes. The common meaning of volunteering is to provide services to better social life in fields such, as poverty and education while the meaning of activism is to engage in a political struggle to democratize the political sphere. If so, then do these two concepts/ phenomena clearly differ from one another? Have these two concepts/phenomena converged in any way with the changes in today's democratic processes and practices? Do the historically ascribed meanings allow the differences between them to disappear? This chapter describes the framework of the meaning that volunteerism and activism express in contemporary society and will additionally show the relationship civil society as volunteerism's main field of activity has with social movements as activism's field of activity and evaluate the sociological and theoretical similarities and differences of volunteerism and activism.

Introduction

Volunteerism and activism are components of social participation. Participation expresses the processes of being able to develop the society/community in which one lives, being able to make a difference, and believing in one's ability to do this. In societies where participation is commonplace, quality of life is expected to increase through political or civic activities (Ehrlich, 1997, p. 57) and citizenship is expected to be strengthened based on active participation.

A person's social participation can be measured through three indicators. The first one is participation in elections. Voting regularly; carrying a political badge, sticker, or such; making propaganda for a political party or a candidate; donating to this party or candidate; or performing volunteer activities on their behalf can be evaluated under this heading. The second one is participation that occurs by expressing political opinion. Examples that can be shown for this heading are contacting public authorities to ask for help or express opinions on an issue, communicating with a media channel to convey an opinion or express an opinion directly on a media channel, signing a written or digital petition regarding a political or social issue, buying products from companies with similar values or boycotting products from companies with wrong values, and participating in a protest march or demonstration. The third one is civil participation, and working informally together with an individual or with a community for solving a social problem, working as a volunteer at a non-governmental organization, making a donation or becoming an active member at a non-governmental organization, and collecting donations for a charity fall within the scope of this heading (Keeter et al., 2002).

Volunteerism and activism are inherent in these three indicators of social participation and are interrelated in terms of being types of social action aimed at participation. As the social conditions that lead to volunteerism and activism are related, no sociological reason can be given for considering these two phenomena separately (Marwell & Oliver, 1993). The social condition that brings volunteerism and activism together has three stages from being individual directly to being collective: 1) Helping those in need around the individual and making friends and/or partners in this voluntary activity, 2) registered volunteerism conducted without pay in volunteer organizations, and 3) social and political activism conducted wage-free in social movements and political organizations (Janoski, 2014, p. 100). These stages involve all activities the common feature of which is *volunteerism* and that vary from taking up roles in cleaning social areas, such as a neighborhood, a neighborhood school, or a mosque

to making demonstrations with the purpose of demanding social and political rights, such as for immigrants and women.

Meanwhile, Caputo's (1997) research on women activists and volunteers was able to drive forth that volunteers and activists have different profiles, and these two phenomena need to be handled differently. Accordingly, these have two different profiles: Activists tend to aim at social change, and volunteers tend to be oriented toward the agency that focuses on solving individual problems. Therefore, while volunteerism expresses the types of actions in the first two stages that are carried out either individually or by volunteer organizations, such as associations and foundations and that involve the individual and civil participation of the social conditions listed above, activism brings to mind the activities addressed in the third stage and carried out in social movements or political organizations. Despite affecting the structural change of society in the long term while serving at the individual level, volunteering does not directly aim at structural change as activism does. The primary goal of volunteerism appears to be improving social life through service. However, activism mostly refers to the agency conducted through methods such as revolution or reform efforts that mostly aim at political and economic transformation. Although these two phenomena are observed to converge in today's world, they should be underlined as having been given different meanings in the historical process in accordance with political and social conjecture. For this reason, the focus will be on how volunteerism and activism are understood in the contemporary world, and how they are handled in the context of the literature on *civil society* and *social movements* in order to clarify their meanings.

Volunteerism and Participation

While dealing with the problems of the despotism of the modern state and the individualization of modern humans, Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) constructed perhaps the strongest theoretical groundwork regarding volunteerism through his analyses that were able to hold a mirror to individual-state relations in today's democratic systems. According to Tocqueville, the most important problem of modern states is to ensure equality while guaranteeing freedoms. Modern states have become increasingly centralized while ensuring equality through the process of removing innate social and economic privileges. As a result of the elimination of intermediate institutions such as churches and corporations, which act as communication channels between states and individuals, the state becomes more centralized and despotic, and people become individualistic. Tocqueville has two suggestions for this dilemma that modern states and societies may face. The first one is the decentralized management approach in which local governments are empowered. The second suggestion is

the empowering of the civil society that will prevent individualism and despotism (Kabakcı, 2020, pp. 71–79).

Arguing that increasing equality through civil society would prevent the emergence of despotism and that citizens would gain the ability to unite while protecting their freedoms, Tocqueville (2016) has drawn attention to individual and civic dimensions of volunteerism participation. Meanwhile, voluntary civil social activity can be acceptable as political participation due to its indirect aim in strengthening democracy. Focusing on the mechanism processes of liberal democracy, however, Tocqueville is seen not to have talked about the activism that has emerged within the social movements protesting political power. Therefore, according to Tocqueville, while volunteerism is the whole of activities that ensure individual, civic, and political participation, political participation is limited to involvement in non-governmental organizations and political parties.

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Social Movements

Social movements are difficult to define due to being informal and varying with respect to the political and social conjuncture within the historical process. In general terms, defining social movement is accepted as the “organized effort by a remarkable number of people to change (or resist changing) one or more of the main features of society” (Marshall, 1999, p. 746). In this framework, the main features that distinguish social movements from any collective action are: a) The existence of an opposing force or forces and conflicting relations of the movement with this/these, b) the members of the movement are connected through dense and informal networks, and c) they have a unique collective identity/ideology (della Porta & Diani, 2020, p. 29). In the second half of the 20th century following the 1960s, a change occurred as opposing forces in social movements from the political and economic straight to the social, from hierarchical organizations straight to flexible organizations, and from macro ideologies straight to micro ideologies.

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Robert Putnam (2000) addressed all the dimensions of participation from the individual to the civic and political as the factors that strengthen society’s “social capital”. Putnam can be said to have taken Tocqueville’s views one step further by portraying political participation to include membership in social movements aimed at protests and resistance. Unlike Tocqueville, however, Putnam is not optimistic about participation and active citizenship in the contemporary world. Putnam’s research in the USA and Italy argued social participation, and thus social capital, to have weakened in the 20th-century societies due to the great decline in membership rates, especially in voluntary non-governmental organizations, and this situation to have led to the decline of democracy. Yet, three trends regarding active citizenship participation did

show promise for strengthening social capital, especially in the second half of the century. According to Putnam, three participation trends should be taken into account for assessing social capital comprehensively. The first one is the organized initiatives individuals informally carry out. These initiatives, which correspond to activities such as material and non-material assistance activities, reading groups, educational campaigns, and religious meetings, occupy an important place in individuals' social lives as well as their emotional and spiritual states. These small group meetings are the most important components of social capital but have a weak connection to public life. Membership in social movements, which is the second tendency of participation, has the feature of establishing a strong relationship directly with public life. Social movements are closely related to social capital because they construct both new identities and also social networks. The third participation tendency emerged with the development of telecommunications and the Internet. Although communicating by phone has been criticized for having replaced face-to-face communication in terms of changing and transforming social relationships, the telephone, according to Putnam, has had the long-term effect on increasing relationship channels, and as a result on social participation as opposed to replacing traditional relationships. Research has yet to clarify the extent to which the Internet is able to provide a solution to the problem of citizenship participation. While social participation truly has weakened in the Internet age, whether or not this is directly due to the Internet is debatable.

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What is Social Capital?

The concept of social capital, which James Coleman contributed to the sociological literature, is used to describe types of relationships of an individual within family or other social groups (Marshall, 1999, p. 675). According to sociologists, the basis of social capital is the acceptance that social communication networks benefit individuals. Coleman and Hoffer (1987) found students who lack social capital to have low academic achievement in their study on schools. For example, students with no social environment except for with their parents and whose parents are uninterested may have a disadvantage in later years. According to Coleman (1998), social capital should be defined according to its function that is independent of human and economic capital. As a result, a person with low economic capital may have an advantageous position in terms of their social capital. Pierre Bourdieu (1986), meanwhile, showed the interrelations among types of capital and argued social segments with low cultural and economic capital to be at a disadvantage even if they have high social capital. Putnam and Goss (2004) differed from other thinkers by associating social capital with what is social at the individual level. Social capital is as decisive in social relations as physical and human capital, and social networks are the most important component of social capital. The relations people establish such as through one's extended family circle, the people met at weekend courses, the ones met regularly on public transport, school friends, and the people met in the local associations of which one is a member are examples of social networks and the social relationships that form social capital as a result. Having elevated social capital means the strengthening of active citizenship and democracy.

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Also, Mark Musick and John Wilson (1997) revealed studies addressing the conditions for expanding volunteerism in the contemporary world and determining volunteer profiles. Musick and Wilson also comprehensively addressed volunteerism and participation through various dimensions, from the individual to the political field, which also contains activism. This comprehensiveness is also observed in their studies in which they showed the relationship between various forms of capital and volunteerism. Musick and Wilson showed the formal and informal forms of volunteer work and identified which forms of capital are effective in volunteerism. Accordingly, human capital is required for productive volunteer work, social capital is required for collective volunteer work, and cultural capital is required for ethically shaped volunteer work. Social networks based on institutional membership, high socio-economic level, and family relations as social resources are effective at spreading volunteerism. As a result, volunteer work is nurtured from both individual and social resources (Musick and Wilson, 1998). Natural interactions of people in individual areas facilitate voluntary engagement in civil society. This situation also provides an understanding of volunteerism that includes registered and unregistered collective actions while sociologically and theoretically uniting volunteerism, which aims to improve social life, with activism, which aims for social change. Yet in any case, the arguments suggesting the aims and means for change to be different between activists and volunteers are too consistent to ignore.

The Differences Between Volunteerism and Activism

Volunteerism and activism are activities based on self-sacrifice and altruism. The results from these two types of actions have a nature that will affect society by going beyond the individual sphere. *Yet, while activists are people who engage in political altruism, volunteerism is not a form of political activism because it does not directly involve a political purpose.* Volunteer associations indirectly assume political roles despite not having a clear political purpose or demanding social change by making political claims (Passy, 2001, p. 8).

Volunteerism and activism differ from one another as types of action. Unlike political action, volunteerism corresponds to daily actions that improve life such as caring for orphans, providing shelter and food, and packing (Milroy & Wismer 1994). *In this context, while volunteers turn toward activities aimed at improving individual problems, activism strives for social change in a radical way.* For example, while volunteers produce services that facilitate daily lives of the elderly in order to reduce disadvantage, activists struggle to change the structural reasons that put the elderly in disadvantaged situations. *Therefore, volunteers can be said to target people and activists to target political and social structures.* Volunteers pursue individual solutions for change, while activists seek institutional solutions (Eliasoph, 2003,

p. 175). Volunteers work to improve people's situation, while activists try to change political or social structures that bring about these negative situations.

Neoliberalism having become an effective state administration in the last quarter of the 20th century has further increased the contradictions between the social change strategies of volunteerism and activism. As a result of neoliberal programs, the state has withdrawn from social services and transferred the struggle against poverty to NGOs; in other words, NGO volunteerism has had to undertake the mission of filling in the gap left by the state's withdrawal from its role of distributing welfare. Many thinkers have criticized this mission of NGO volunteering, stating it to legitimize the state's withdrawal from its obligation to meet citizens' basic needs (Mohan, 2002; Georgeou & Engel, 2011). In other words, the provision of certain services by NGOs, and therefore volunteers, services that are expected to be provided by the social welfare state, has been subjected to severe criticism for eroding and disrupting fundamental social rights (Erdoğan et al., 2020, p. XVIII). Activism, however, pursues the strategy of fighting against structural forces that create poverty by way of solidarity. As a result, *activism is different from volunteerism in the face of neoliberal state programs as activism fights for states to recognize fundamental rights of citizens while volunteerism fights for states to take responsibility for eradicating poverty.*

Research on the profiles of volunteers and activists has also shown the two to differ in terms of socio-economic status and worldviews. While volunteers have the profile of being middle-aged, married, and with children, activists appear as young, single, and childless. According to recent research (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 20), activists are more educated and have higher economic status compared to volunteers. Volunteers generally do not want radical changes in their lives and keep their distance from activism (Markham & Bonjean, 1995, p. 1556). At the same time, volunteers have higher levels of life satisfaction. When compared with activists, volunteers are more certain about what the actions they perform mean and think more positively about the difference their efforts make in life (Eliasoph, 2003, p. 175).

The Similarities of Volunteerism and Activism

Despite the differences, similarities that bring volunteerism and activism closer to one another in the same theoretical framework are also available. Firstly, activism should be noted as being a type of volunteerism that aims to fight for change. As activist activities are not supported by any institution or funder, they are performed without the expectation of any financial gain, just like volunteer activities (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001, p. 116). From this perspective, most activists are also known to be volunteers (Ellis & Noyes, 1990, p. 8). This is

because civic participation reshapes collective identities, and volunteers in NGOs can rebuild their citizenship identities as well as their individual identities independent of small groups such as their families. For example, someone who is involved in voluntary activities related to women’s rights can become a women’s rights advocate by gaining a collective and political female identity while helping women who experience victimization in their individual lives. (Abrahams, 1996). According to Putnam (2000, p. 338), NGOs in fact undertake a mission that enables citizens to develop their social and civic skills. An NGO is able to transform into a social movement as much as it fulfills a social “duty” (Lundberg, 1970, p. 365), and *experience the direct transition from volunteerism to activism*.

The context in which volunteerism and activism come closest to each other is undoubtedly the collective action of advocacy. Volunteer activities in the public interest or in the defense of individual rights are voluntary actions that can be considered as activism. Therefore, volunteerism includes advocacy and activist actions (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001, p. 116). NGOs that undertake advocacy missions act as a bridge between citizens and states and as a mediator for defending rights (Halman, 2003, p. 180).

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Advocacy

Advocacy is an attempt to influence and direct public policies or laws for the interests and rights of social segments. Volunteers in positions of advocacy encourage public decision makers to act in favor of the public. Lobbying and media campaigns can be given as examples of advocacy for public interests. Aiming to involve citizens and civil society focal points in decision-making mechanisms for stronger democratic governance is participatory advocacy. There is also a type of human-centered advocacy that fights for the rights of disadvantaged groups in society (Aksakoğlu, 2006, p. 4). The idea of volunteering for great issues in the 20th century such as ethnic, social class, and gender inequalities as well as homelessness, poverty, environmental pollution, war, and terrorism has led to the spread of advocacy requiring political struggle while the social state gradually withdraws from taking responsibility in these areas.

According to 2018 data from the Turkish Republic Ministry of the Interior Department of Associations, Türkiye has 112,000 operating associations. 1,498 of these have expressed their field of activity as “rights and advocacy” (Ministry of Development, 2018, p. 30). Among the 12-item general organization fields of non-profit NGOs in the world, organization in the field of “law, advocacy, and politics” ranks 7th (European Commission et al., 2009, p. 458).

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Despite occurring at different phases, volunteerism and activism are types of civil and political participation. It has been claimed that volunteers seek solutions to a problem in individuals’ daily lives by acting with a sense of “compassion”, while activists demand structural change to eliminate the causes of the problem by acting more with a sense of

“anger.” However, a volunteer may not always be insensitive toward structural changes. Being aware of the need for radical and systematic changes, a volunteer can resort to individual solutions using micro approaches to the extent the social context requires (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 22). *Therefore, collective action that starts with volunteerism is likely to evolve into activism.* Beyond being opposites, these two phenomena can be considered parts of complementary processes.

As a result, activism can be accepted as a type of volunteerism possessing some sub-features, such as advocacy. Activism appears to be approaching volunteerism more, especially with the change in social movements in the 20th century. In addition, advocacy at the end of the same century had an important place in civil society, but it also expanded to include volunteer activities. Paralleling the convergence between volunteerism and activism, the theory of social movements has begun to intersect with the ideas of civil society. The relationship between these two conceptual frameworks in the historical process constitutes the points where volunteerism and activism meet.

Civil Society

Civil society refers to institutions and relations regulating social life at the level between the state and the individual/family (Calhoun, 2001, p. 701). For this reason, the idea of civil society is generally accepted as a plane distinct from the state and the private sphere.

Although it can be traced as far back as antiquity, civil society took its contemporary form in the 17th-18th centuries mostly in parallel with the emergence of the modern state. In the face of the development of the commercial classes in the 18th century and the changes in society, the thinkers from the Enlightenment sought an answer to how society could remain harmonious and integrated. According to David Hume (1711-1776), civility is the basis of courtesy, good manners, culture, and social harmony. The social-contract thinkers (i.e., Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632–1704), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)), however, tried to establish the legitimate foundations for the (modern) state by underlining the rights and the obligations individuals have while defining a civil sphere separate from the private one. This is because political power, which had become increasingly centralized and been developing toward a strong state structure, was trying to control the expanding commerce activities. The struggle of social segments defending the free movement of private property against this state control formed the core of the 19th-century democratization movement. The defense of the social sphere where legal equality was ensured against the state and personal freedoms were protected evolved into the idea of civil society. One of the leading figures of the Scottish

Enlightenment and of economic thought, Adam Smith (1723-1790) distinguished between “civil economic activity” and the state, advocating for the economic sphere to be purified from the political society’s network of relations. In this case, the duties of eliminating the inequalities created by the market and of ensuring justice and security should be undertaken by the state (Islamoglu, 2015, pp. 708–710).

The idea of modern civil society was systematized by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). According to Hegel, civil society is at the intermediate stage of the evolution of the historical spirit that occurs directly from family to state. All institutions and social relations between the family and state, from market economy to volunteer organizations and individuals, form civil society. Unlike individual and family spheres, an ethical understanding dominated by competition, selfishness, and self-interests dominates this sphere (Çaha, 1994, pp. 81–82). Contrary to Smith who advocated of states that take on the mission of ensuring justice and security in the market and civil society where conflicts of interest and inequalities prevail, Hegel’s state would achieve elevated ethical identity as a synthesis of the ethical understanding of the individual/family and civil society spheres in the historical evolution. However, this would not occur by undertaking a mission, but rather as a result of an evolutionary process.

Having reached a defined framework through Hegel’s thoughts, civil society is one of the most important indicators of democratic liberal society. This is because civil society emerges through the defense of principles such as the individual freedoms, property rights, and legal equality that had been set up in the political and class struggles of the new commercial class (bourgeoisie). Therefore, civil society is closely related to the idea of liberal community and democratic political order (Özbek, 2004a, p. 243).

The idea of civil society experienced its most vibrant period in the 18th century when modern states strengthened by centralizing, when the nation-state system was born, and when the market economy and democracy began to be institutionalized. The focus and understanding of civil society began to change in the beginning of the 19th century with the emergence of revolutionary social movements. Karl Marx (1818-1883) expressed the liberal democratic system and civil society through different conceptualizations based on the developments in that century. According to Marx, “pure democracy” or civil society is an inadequate means of ensuring freedom and justice. Contrary to Hegel, Marx did not accept that the modern state would also evolve into a regulatory mission (Calhoun, 2015, p. 702). This was due to capitalists as the main actors of the market economy defending individual freedoms against the state in civil society while making the state a tool for their own economic interests (Negt

& Kluge, 2004, p. 137). As a result, no civil society is independent of the state. The interests of the ruling classes shape the state and civil society. Therefore, economic relations in civil society must be transformed through revolution by mobilizing social conflict (Islamoglu, 2015, p. 710). This is because, while market mechanisms are considered an element of the private sphere, they've gained a dominant feature in the political sphere, and this situation has harmed civil society's autonomy against the state.

The activism organized by social movements enabled civil society to expand to include disadvantaged groups, such as workers, with the struggle it waged throughout the 19th century, and it was effective in the development and institutionalization of democracy. The meaning civil society had gained in the 18th century began to transform with the activist movement. The struggle of workers' movements gained a decisive character in state-society relations, and civil society was positioned against the state. Since the 1960s, civil society has expanded beyond workers' issues to include the problems individuals experience in the private sphere, and this expanded area has formed the basis of struggle for new social movements (Touraine, 1985, pp. 778–779).

After the collapse of communism in the 1990s, once the United States as the representative of the liberal world began to promote civil society for strengthening democracy against totalitarian systems, civil society returned to the agenda with greater force. It was argued that governments should benefit from voluntary organizations in the empowerment of citizens and the provision of public services, especially in Eastern Europe and East Asia, based on the acceptance that governments cannot overcome economic and political problems on their own (Encarnacións, 2011, pp. 469–470). In this process, two theoretical frameworks regarding civil society are seen to have emerged in the fields of politics and sociology. The first framework addresses the social relations and institutions formed by autonomous individuals who are aware of their individual rights and responsibilities. This theoretical framework explaining the civil society model in the modernization of Western Europe in particular is based on the social contract tradition represented by Rousseau where, as mentioned earlier, civil society is defined as individuals' areas of free movement to ensure market freedom against the state. In the second framework, civil society undertakes the mission of democratizing political regimes. This second type is exemplified by the role civil society has undertaken in the experience of democratization, especially in countries with former communist regimes and in non-Western countries. Accordingly, the realization of organization in civil society far removed from the tutelage of the state is an indicator of democracy. In this model, volunteers carry social demands to the political arena by means of the non-governmental organizations they can freely organize.

The idea that these two models remained insufficient prevailed in the last quarter of the 20th century, and an alternative understanding of civil society began to be advocated. According to this new understanding, civil society organization involves the aim of directing state policies. In this direction, new missions were taken up based on advocacy such as taking a role in solving social problems, cooperating with political actors, realizing active citizenship over a wide area from individual and small-scale problems to national and macro-scale problems, and enabling the democratic representation of various segments (Keyman, 2006, pp. 19–21). This new understanding of civil society has been nurtured by the historical developments that have brought civil society volunteerism closer to activism of social movements. Meanwhile, a change had also been experienced in the activist tradition in the socio-political environment created by the 1968 uprisings, and social movements settled into a “new” framework of meaning closer to the new understanding of civil society. This situation has provided the basis that allows for volunteerism in civil society to be compared with activism in social movements.

The Activism of New Social Movements

For many people, volunteering is a political action. Some actors who take part in any activity prefer the concept of activist over volunteer to describe themselves in order to be effective in the political decision-making mechanisms specific to the sphere of civil society (Erdoğan et al., 2020, p. XVIII). This situation is closely related to the increase in the intersection points of the field of civil society with the social movements in the second half of the 20th century.

Social movements have also differed in terms of their organizational forms and themes in parallel to the change that emerged in the international system and nation-state practices since the 1960s. Activists criticized not only the oppressive state bureaucracy but also the bureaucratic structure that contained the hierarchy of the old social movements that had alienated social movements from society. Apart from this “anti-bureaucratic momentum” of social movements (Hopkins & Wallerstein, 1995, p. 42), they were also observed to differ from the old movements thematically. Since these times, cultural and identity-oriented themes such as feminism, ecology, environmentalism, and peace advocacy have been on the agendas of social movements. Within the framework of the 19th-century modern nation-state understanding, the issues that had been excluded from the public sphere by being counted as elements of the private sphere became the themes of social movements’ struggles. With the political and social developments experienced after the Second World War, the distinction between private and public spheres began to blur, and the elements of the private sphere

found a place in the public sphere. For example, feminism used the slogan of “the personal is political” to oppose excluding women’s problems from the field of struggle because they were seen as related to the private sphere (Bora, 2004, p. 531). Thus, before political and economic goals, a new type of social mobility advocating to change the private and cultural spheres and transform individual lives within the framework of the new understanding of citizenship took its place on the stage of history.

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The Public Sphere

The public sphere is the space open to participation and communication from all citizens and allows for public opinion to form. Issues of public interest are discussed in this sphere with “specific tools” such as media (Habermas, 2004, p. 95). The activities of citizens in the public sphere may become a factor that increases their social participation (Putnam, 2000, p. 498). For this reason, the emergence and strengthening of civil society and the public sphere have been seen to be related to the development of democratic political systems.

Hannah Arendt followed the traces of the public sphere from Greek city-states and pointed out the distinction between the public sphere (the condition of democratic politics) and the social sphere (the family and the market). Jürgen Habermas' (1962) *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* [Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere] is an important source for the concept of the public sphere in contemporary sociology. Habermas associated the emergence of the public sphere with that of the bourgeois society under the influence of liberal capitalism. He described the public sphere as a fourth sphere separate from the state, the market, and the private (family) spheres. The public sphere is a discursive interactive platform open to all where citizens can discuss issues of public interest freely and rationally (Hansen, 1993, p. 197).

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The intellectual currents advocating the differentiation of social movements acted on the argument that political, economic, and social structures had changed in the 20th century. According to this, the opposition between the state and civil society that emerged with the labor movement activism of the 19th century left its place to a tendency to advocate for narrowing the “political” sphere and expanding civil society in parallel with governments’ agendas. That new understanding of civil society was not positioned opposite the state. As a result of this, by increasing the responsibilities and functions of the state as a regulatory power regarding non-political (private sphere) institutions such as families, the market, and science, state authority paradoxically began to decrease. Social movements, which had previously tried to bring about political and social change by seizing state power, moved to limit state authority with this new paradigmatic transformation. New social movements stand against the aim of restructuring the private sphere (e.g., property, market, family, science, and work ethics) within the framework of the nation-state ideology in order to strengthen states’ integrity and

national dominance (Offe, 1999, pp. 53–55). To reiterate, the paradoxical situation emerges when new social movements demand weakening state authority while advocating increasing the state’s responsibility and functioning with regard to regulating the private sphere. In this context, these movements demand the private sphere under the influence of the old paradigmatic orientation be regulated according to the values advocated on the basis of the new ideologies (e.g., feminism, ecologism) upon which the new social movements are based.

The Differences Between the Old and New Social Movements

The old social movements are accepted to have generally aimed at structural change involving the transformation of political and economic order, while the new social movements primarily aim at social change involving the transformation of the cultural field. Offe (1999, p. 67) summarized the paradigmatic differentiation between the old and new social movements in four categories:

	“The old paradigm”	“The new paradigm”
Actors	Socioeconomic groups acting as groups and involved in income distribution conflicts	Socioeconomic groups that act not as groups but in favor of communities that unite around specific themes
Themes	Economic growth and distribution, military and social security, social control	Protecting peace, the environment, and human rights
Values	Freedom, consumer security, and material advances	Personal autonomy and identity versus centralized control
Movement Styles	Intrinsic: Official organizations, large-scale representative associations Extrinsic: Pluralistic or corporatist mediation, political party competition, and majority vote	Intrinsic: Informality, low levels of vertical and horizontal differentiation Extrinsic: Protest policies based on demands formulated in negative terms

Two theoretical explanations of the new social movements stand out: the theory of new social movements (identity-oriented paradigm) and resource mobilization theory. The theory of new social movements from the European thinkers Alain Touraine and Jürgen Habermas makes structural and systemic analyses by focusing on the relationship these movements have with capitalism and post-industrial society. Resource mobilization theory, the prominent representative of which are the American thinkers Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, and Doug McAdam, focuses on social movements conditions of emergence and explains their sources and how they gain continuity in regard to the political and social environments (Melucci, 1999, p. 81).

Among these thinkers, Touraine is the one who is relatively clearly dealt with the relationship new social movements have with civil society. According to him, the aim of new

social movements is neither the state nor market mechanisms. The new social movements target civil society. When social movements get stronger, civil society gets stronger, and they support democracy in the communities in which they operate. On the other hand, non-democratic, totalitarian governments may resort to suppressing or even destroying both phenomena. For this reason, social movements must have a certain autonomy from the state (Cohen, 1999, p. 124).

Based on Touraine's opinions, civil society can be said to be the area of struggle for social movements and social movements to be the form of struggle that occurs in civil society. Therefore, although civil society has become a broad concept that includes social movements, it cannot be reduced to social movements as civil society also expresses active and participatory citizenship that involves not only struggle but also the realization of earned rights and obligations. Civil society also includes the public sphere as an area of cultural and social organization. Meanwhile, the public sphere forms the basis of conducting the political struggle rationally (Calhoun, 1993, p. 269). The public sphere is an abstract area that allows individuals to participate in the social sphere whether within an organization or not. Organized social participation has two types. The first is volunteerism in non-governmental organizations, such as associations and foundations, and the second is the activism in non-institutional social movements. However, the intersection of the themes of the new social movements and the struggle areas of non-governmental organizations, especially those advocating for rights, have caused volunteerism and activism to resemble each other more and more each day.

Touraine (1985, pp. 778–779) described the expansion of civil society from the 18th to the 20th centuries and the expansion experienced in the themes of social movements in a way that includes the individual/private spheres as follows:

The public space -Öffentlichkeit- strictly limited in a bourgeois society, was extended to labor problems in an industrial society and now spreads over all fields of experience: private life becomes public and social scientists who announced some years ago that, after a long period of public life, we were withdrawing into private life, did not see that the main political problems today deal directly with private life -fecundation and birth, reproduction and sexuality, illness and death, and, in a different way, with home-consumed mass media.

New social movements that bring the issues of private life to an area of struggle have socio-cultural features rather than sociopolitical ones. This is because the distance between states and civil society is widening while the distinction between the private and public spheres has blurred, and new social movements based on the framework of the expanding civil society have enabled the minorities, disadvantaged groups, and oppressed who have

been excluded from the public sphere to organize and fight for their rights (Touraine, 1985, p. 780, 782). The rate of political participation in civil society is expected to increase due to this struggle, with the understanding of active citizenship developing and citizens getting more involved in the representation and decision-making mechanisms. New social movements organized around the cultural themes arising from the problems common to large segments of society will be able to have a role in developing the democratic system, while ensuring active citizenship gets strengthened through the advocacy of rights.

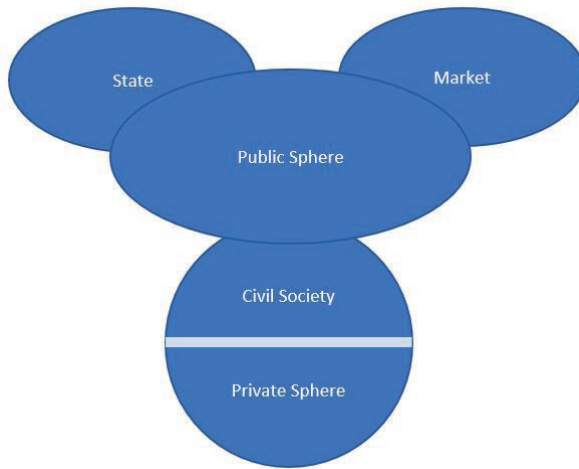


Figure 1. The social spheres.

One of the most fundamental problems of liberal democratic systems is “the gap between civil society and the mechanisms of representation and decision making” (Melucci, 1999, p. 82). Therefore, having civil society demand rights in an organized or unorganized way for disadvantaged groups is important in places where state institutions are insufficient even if they operate with democratic practices. According to Habermas (as cited in Özbek, 2004b, p. 202), new social movements and autonomous civil structures in general can become actors of the alternative public sphere as spokespersons for disadvantaged groups. The alternative public sphere can empower democracy by increasing the civil and political participation of the societal segments whose representational rights have been restricted in the democratic system or who have not been able to have the opportunity to take part in the decision-making mechanisms. For this reason, advocacy-type civil society volunteers and new social movement activists with cultural demands are actors for sociopolitical development in the contemporary world.

Summary and Evaluation

This chapter has examined the relationship between volunteerism and activism. Volunteerism is related to civil society, while activism is related to social movements. Civil society and social movements (in modern times) have emerged under similar social and political conditions. Both have played a role in history as part of the adventure of democracy's emergence, reform, and empowerment in a way that has ensured the representation of broad social segments.

Volunteerism and activism are components of participation. Volunteers in contemporary societies are observed to have tendencies toward activism. Advocacy in particular is the type of volunteerism that has brought these two types of social participation closer together. These two areas do, however, differ from one another in some respects. While volunteers tend toward activities aimed at improving individual problems around the axis of service, activism radically strives for social change. Volunteerism aims at serving people, while activism aims at structural change.

The changes experienced in social movements since the second half of the 20th century have opened the way for these two areas to come closer together. Since the 1960s, the organization of social movements around cultural rather than political and economic themes has caused activism to go from being the type of action that involves opposition to the state to being a type of social struggle. In order to liberate the individual and social spheres, new types of organization experienced within the framework of themes, such as human rights and environmentalism have the potential to increase civil and political participation. The struggle of civil society is additionally expected to facilitate the political representation of large social segments and their acquiring a place in the decision-making mechanisms by creating alternative public spheres, ultimately strengthening democracy.

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