QUSTION 1

Theories and concepts do not exist in a vacuum. Rather, they grow out of a historical context that both nourishes while constrains their development. In the process of development, these concepts and theories dialogue and interact with (perhaps agree, disagree, or complement) other components in the context. As Magraret Somers suggests, concept is produced, organized, constrained, and contained by its embeddedness in a conceptual network, which is a "structured relation matrix of theoretical principles and conceptual assumptions."(Somers 1995, p.134) Keeping Somers' idea in mind, I will attempt to locate several concepts of Polanyi, Adrent, and Harbermas in a conceptual network of utilitarian and liberal social thoughts.

Conceptual network: phantasms of Leviathan, Locke's dichotomy between public and private, and social naturalism

While Polanyi, Adrent, and Harbermas composed their thoughts in the twentieth centuries, we still can see their interaction with the 17th century specters of Hobbes' Leviathan and of Locke's civil society and social naturalism in their theories. To solve the "problem of order," Hobbes creates a powerful Leviathan, but Leviathan per se becomes a source of coercion. Locke then succeeds to address threats of Leviathan/absolutism/tyranny by devising a "civil society"-- a private sphere distinct from and independent of the state. In order to ensure *individual freedom* and *property* in this private realm, Locke adroitly arranges the temporal sequence of the occurrence of these two spheres. In his narrative, civil society, the prepolitical community, emerges first. Through the formation of a social contract by individuals in the civil society, state--a representative government-- is established and gains its legitimacy. In addition to this dexterous arrangement in temporal order, Somers suggests that Locke creates a super powerful "metanarrative" by grafting his narrative to the binary epistemological coding of social naturalism. In this combination of narrative and binary codes, the private realm, the civil society, wins its epistemological privilege over the public realm--the state, because the former falls on the natural side in the epistemological divide while the latter falls on the non-natural side(Somers 1999, p.145). In this way, the sole place of social organization in Hobbes' narrative, the state, is split into two parts—state/the public realm and civil society/the private realm(Somers 1999, p. 122).Meanwhile, because of its "naturalness", the private realm/civil society has sustained its superior position to the public realm/state, as well as its heroic reputation of "establishing the social foundations for individual freedom and

autonomy against the coercions of the state(Somers 1999, p.137).” The “great dichotomy” of modern political thought was born (Somers 1999, p.122). Afterwards, this dichotomy has become a shadow in which subsequent political and social thoughts have been built.

To facilitate relating the concepts of Polanyi, Adrendt, and Harbermas to this conceptual network, it is helpful to take a closer look at Locke’s private realm/civil society in advance. Distinct from Marx’s narrow notion of civil society that is merely associated with market, Locke’s civil society is a more comprehensive concept that refers to a plethora of institutions outside the state (Alexander 2006, p.24). It is true that Locke locates the sphere of commerce, property, and exchange in the private sphere, yet according to Locke’s arrangement, it is the political culture of public opinion and social trust that ensure order, freedom and moral cohesion outside the institutions of the state (Somers 1999, p.143). As Alexander emphasizes, this notion of civil society is “endowed with a distinctively moral and ethical force” (Alexander 2006, p.25). As I will mention later, the notion of civil society would be narrowed down to an economic realm or even to the market by subsequent thinkers.

Karl Polanyi’s concept of the discovery of society

Polanyi fundamentally diverges from the utilitarian and liberal tradition. His object in *The Great Transformation* is critique of economic liberalism. Distinct from utilitarian and liberal tradition’s dividing the society into two realms: state and anti-state, Polanyi takes a holistic view on the society. As Somers points out, the foundational concept of Polanyi’s theories is the idea of totality-- a social whole that provides the necessary context for grasping particular social dynamics. In *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi seeks to demonstrate the structural relationship among all parts of the social while rejects the genetic determinacy of any one aspect, such as economic determinism (Block and Somers 1984,p.62). His thoughts on the state and economy both reflect his totality. Instead of opposing and suspecting politics as the liberal tradition theorists, Polanyi views politics as fundamentally constitutive of human societies and necessary for social order and progress (Block and Somers 1984, p.69). Meanwhile, he rejects the notion of self-regulating/autonomous markets. His famous notion of embeddedness expresses his holistic view that economy is subordinated to politics, religion, and social relation (Polanyi 2001, p.xxiv).

Polanyi’s concepts of “the discovery of society” could be understood from his holistic

views. “The discovery of society” is his critique of the birth of “nineteenth-century consciousness,” by which he means naturalism espoused by Townsend, Malthus, Ricardo, and economists after them in the 19the century (Polanyi 2001, p.121, 131). The development of the utilitarian and liberal tradition from the 18th to 19th centuries drastically changed the landscape of Locke’s ontological categories. In chapter ten of *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi accentuates the rift between Smith and Townsend. While Polanyi disagrees with Smith’s view on individual economistic ontology, his treating material wealth as separated field of study, as well as his following Locke’s false start on the labor origins of value, Polanyi does appreciate Smith’s understanding that the economic sphere remains subordinated to the life of community and Smith’s deliberative exclusion of biological and geographical factors in his book (Polanyi 2001, p.116-17). According to Polanyi, for Smith, political economy is a human science rather than natural science.

Nevertheless, ten years after Smith’s publishing the *Wealth of Nations*, Townsend dramatically changed the utilitarian and liberal tradition. He developed his story of goats and dogs and attempts to apply it to the reform of Poor Law. Polanyi writes, “by approaching human community from the animal side, Townsend bypassed the supposedly unavoidable question as to the foundations of government; and in doing so introduced a new concept of law into human affairs; that of the laws of Nature. (Polanyi 2001, p.119)” Polanyi continued to write, precisely because Townsend insisted human beings are actually beasts, Townsend believes only a minimum government was required. Later, Townsend’s invention of naturalism (or “zoological determinism” in Somers’ term) was endorsed by Malthus and Ricardo. Under the paradigm of naturalism, according to Polanyi, the biological nature of man appears as the given foundation of a society that was not of a political power. As a result, Smith’s humanistic foundations were relinquished, and economic society, that was no more than the market system, had merged as distinct from the political state (Polanyi 2001, p.120-21). In sum, the society discovered by liberal economists in the 19th century lost the moral, ethical, and civilizing quality and thus diverged from the concept of civil society in previous utilitarian and liberal traditions. This society was not subject to the laws of the state any more; by contrast, it subjugated the state to its own laws--the laws of Nature.

For Polanyi, the most significant aim in social thoughts had been to reintegrate society into the human world. *The Great Transformation* is his wrestle with the economic fallacy/economic determinism shared by economists and orthodox Marxism, as well as

the naturalistic elements of the orthodox economics, such as the naturalness of market and the self-regulating market. Many of his other ideas, for example, fictitious commodities, double movement, are deployed by him to uncover the illusory "unnaturalistic" nature of the market. Polanyi believes the economy was not a matter of economics but a question of a moral construction of social relation generally. His alternative to the dyadic version of society, composed with market and state, is a triadic view: society watches the state and market, and the combination of social movement from the society and the regulation of the state enables true human freedom.

Hannah Arendt' concept of stateless

In chapter nine "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man" of "*The Origins of Totalitarianism*," Arendt depicts how ethnic minorities were expelled by the notion-states and became stateless/rightless people--"the scum of the earth." Her purposes in the chapter are twofold. First, she aims to attack the ethnic nationalism—a problematic hybrid of nation and state, under which nation devoured the state and the tyranny of ethic dominance conquered rule of law. Secondly, she intends to reveal the empty promise of the "Right of Man" (natural rights) in the liberal tradition and differentiate the "right to have rights" (right to citizenship) from the "Right of Man." As a follower of the republican tradition, Arendt diverges from the liberal tradition from the very beginning. For Arendt, human beings are constituted precisely through political engagement. This republican view is diametrically opposed to the great dichotomy of private and public on the liberalism ontological map.

One paradox Arendt would like to address is that given the existence of the Minority Treaties, which aimed to protect civil and political rights, why did non-state people become stateless and rightless? Arendt argues that the answer lies in the absence of "the right to have rights" in the Minority Treaties, which is a moral claim to a recognition to "membership," the recognition that one belongs to some organized human community (Benhabib 2004, p.57). For Arendt, precisely because the Minority Treaties inherited the liberal legacy--the a priori in Locke's thought experiment that human beings are born with pre-social and pre-political natural rights in the state of nature, "the right to have rights" was regarded unnecessary and thus did not exist in any positive laws including Minority Treaties. Arendt then presents an ironical comparison between individuals in the utopian state of nature, and the rightless, stateless individuals who were supposed to be free from absolutism and enjoy their paramount freedom but turned out to have nothing

more than themselves and became the scum of the earth in the crucial reality. By this way, Arendt tells that rights require the existence of political entity; without the guarantee to be a member of political community, liberal tradition's promise of human rights turns out to be nothing. This political entity she suggests is Republican tradition's willed community, a world of solidarity and collectivism.

Although Polanyi and Arendt used very different way to respond to fascism and focused on different perspectives of the social world, they encountered the same opponent: social naturalism in the liberal legacy. Similar to Polanyi, Arendt fought with the epistemological privilege of the "naturalness." As Benhabib points out, Arendt is advocating a "civic" as opposed to an "ethnic" ideal of polity belonging (Benhabib 2004, p.60). Ethnic belonging is established totally by biological connection, like German blood. Obviously, it falls on the natural side of the epistemological divide. In contrast, civil belonging rests on an artificial political decision, thus locating on the inferior side of epistemological divide. What's in parallel is the relatively epistemological location of liberal tradition's natural rights and Arendt's artificial "right to have rights." Thus, it is not surprising that Polanyi and Adrendt employed the same strategy—untelling an old story about the "naturalness." Polany's story is about "unatrualness" of the market, while Arendt's story is about the imperfectness of natural rights and the dark and brutal facts of the utopian "state of nature," which is actually reminiscent of Rousseau's horrifying version of civil society.

Jürgen Habermas' concept of public sphere in *The Structural Transformation*

The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere is Habermas' historical analysis of the emergence of bourgeois pubic sphere in the 17th and18th centuries and its decline, as well as his attempt to revive the progressive potential in "formal" democracy and law. As Somers points out, Habermas is essentially writing about the impact of public opinion on democratic political systems in this book (Somers 1995, p.123).

Basically, Habermas constructs his concept of public sphere based on the "great dichotomy" of the private and public realms in the utilitarian and liberal tradition--the theoretical constraint he assumes. He distinguishes the "sphere of public authority" (public realm) from the private realm. Nevertheless, within the private realm, he carves out a zone of "public sphere" that is adjacent to the public realm, on the one side, and the private sphere, on the other side. Meanwhile, the private sphere comprised civil society in the narrow sense (a realm of commodity exchange and social labor), as well as conjugal

family's internal space. According to Habermas, "the public sphere in the political realm evolved from the public sphere in the world of letters, through the vehicle of public opinion it put the state in touch with the needs of society. (Habermas 1989, p.30-31)" As Somers suggests, by describing and structurally locating the public sphere as interstitial between the public and private, Habermas attempted to resolve the problematic dichotomy inherited from the liberal tradition (Somers 1995, p.124).

The classical bourgeois public sphere mediated the market and the administrative state through the participation of agents of the state and private citizens (Calhoun 1992, p.8). Within the bourgeois public sphere, "practical reason was institutionalized through norms of reasoned discourse in which arguments, not statuses or traditions, were to be decisive. (Calhoun 1992, p.2)" Also, the emerging public was based on an inclusive principle; propertied and educated people could avail themselves to discussion. Calhoun suggests that the significance of the public discourse lies in its potential as another mode of societal integration other than state power and market economies, that suffer tendencies toward domination and reification (Calhoun 1992, p.6).

Despite Habermas' attempts to bring in a promising public sphere to overcome the great dichotomy of public and private, he was criticized for his giving ontological privilege to the private side in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. As Somers astutely points out, "The problem, it turns out, is that Habermas cannot synchronize his innovative analysis of the form or the triadic structural location of the public sphere with his depiction of the content of that sphere. In regard to content, also as in Parsonian concept, the triadic structural model is overdetermined by an ontologically prior and more deeply entrenched substantively dyadic model that is divided sharply between public and private zones. (Somers 1995, p.125)" Though Calhoun seems to suggest that Habermas' civil society (in the broad sense) also included institutions of sociability and discourse only loosely related to the economy (Calhoun 1992, p.8), if we read carefully, we can find Habermas' striking emphasis on economy. He not only stresses the economic foundations of the institutional basis for a public sphere, in many passages, his depiction of the discourse within the bourgeois public sphere is entirely about commodity exchange and social labor. Indeed, in contrast with the democratic outlook of the public sphere, the subject matters that the public deliberately use their reason to handle are quite infertile. Even though Habermas calls the third zone "public" sphere, it is rooted in the private realm. Thus, to some extent we could see the imprint of economic liberalism in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. This imprint distinguishes Habermas'

thoughts from Polanyi's more holistic, triadic view on the society. But on the other hand, Polanyi is also criticized by Alexander for his too much focus on economic life and his neglect of non-market, non-individualistic force in Western social life in his description of the "double movement. (Alexander 2006, p.32-33)."

Finally, the intellectual relation between Habermas and Arendt is noteworthy. As Calhoun points out, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* enters into an interesting and important dialogue with Arendt(Calhoun 1992,p.5). Habermas draws on Arendt's *The Human Condition* to show the public relevance of the private sphere of the society (Habermas 1989, p.19). However, the way in which Habermas cites Arendt's work does not reflect the poignant sentiment about the loss of public space in Arendt's work. As Benhabib writes: By "the rise of the social" Arendt means the institutional differentiation of modern societies into the narrowly political realm on the one hand and the economic market and the family on the other. As a result of these transformations, economic processes that had hitherto been confined to the "shadowy realm of the household" emancipate themselves and become public matters. In essence, Arendt sees this transformation as the disappearance of the universal, of the common concern for the political association from the minds of men, and in the process of this transformation individuals no longer "act" but "merely behave" as economic producers, consumers, and urban city dwellers (Calhoun 1992, p.74-75). Thus, although both Habermas and Arendt emphasize political participation and the widest-reaching democratization of decision-making process, Arendt, as other Republican theorists, takes a more hostile view on the modern civil society (Calhoun 1992, p.86).

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