

Part 2: Civil Society and its Development in Singapore

Definitions of Civil Society

- The term 'civil society' has been defined in a variety of ways... More commonly, it is distinguished from the **state**, and the term is used to describe **institutions** that are '**private**' in that they are **independent from government** and organised by **individuals in pursuit of their own ends**.
- 'Civil society' therefore refers to a realm of **autonomous groups and associations**: businesses, interest groups, clubs, families and so on.
- The term 'global civil society' refers to **transnational organisations**, such as NGOs and social movements that are 'private', non-profit-making, self-governing and voluntary.

(Heywood, 2007)

Definitions of the State

- The state is a **political association** that establishes **sovereign jurisdiction** within defined territorial borders, and exercises **authority** through a set of permanent **institutions**.
- These institutions are those that are recognisably '**public**' in that they are responsible for the **collective organisation** of communal life, and are **funded at the public's expense**.
- The state thus embraces the various **institutions of government**, but it also extends to the courts, nationalised industries, social-security system, and so forth; it can be identified with the entire 'body politic'.

(Heywood, 2007)

The State

+ **Military and Bureaucracy**

*(eg. Law enforcement and other public services
eg. healthcare & education)*

government

+ **Legislature & Judiciary**

(law-making body and the courts)

Government

Executive

(decision-making body)

Public vs. Private Realms

Civil Society (Private)

Groups set up and funded by individual citizens to satisfy their own interests, rather than those of the larger society.

The State (Public)

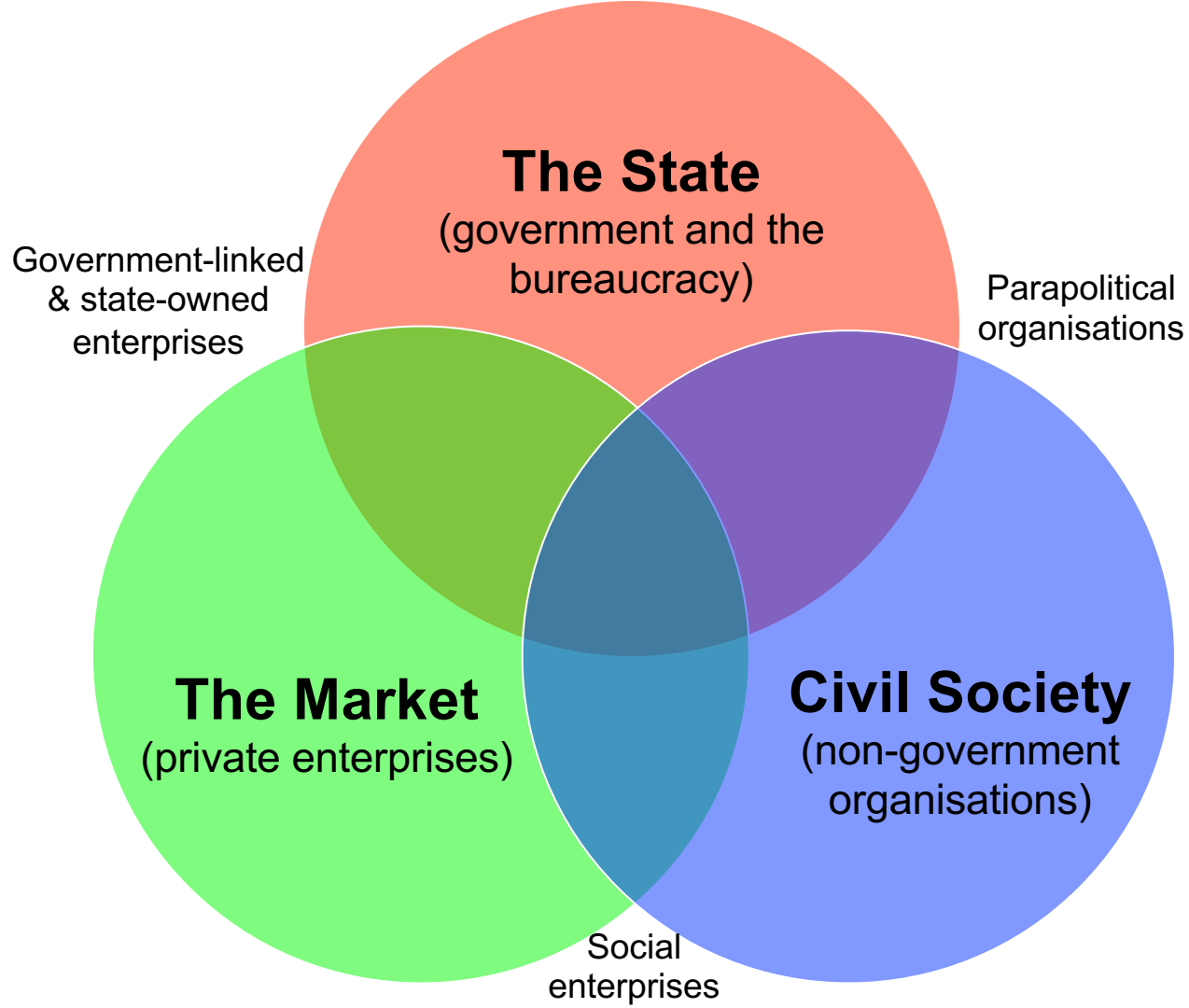
Institutions of the state responsible for the collective organisation of community life, funded at the public's expense, out of taxation.

(Heywood, 2007)

Definitions of Civil Society

- A **social sphere** separate from both the **state** and the **market**
- Includes all **organisations** that occupy the “social space” between the **family** and **state**, excluding political parties and firms
- Term may include certain businesses and for-profit associations

(WHO, 2014)



Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Non-state, not-for-profit, voluntary organisations

Nongovernmental Organisations (NGOs)

- Seek to **influence** policy of governments and international orgs. and/or **complement** government services
- Usually have **formal** structure, offer **services** outside membership, and are **registered** with authorities
- May operate **nationally** or **internationally**

Definitions of Civil Society

CSOs distinguished by **purpose**:

- Voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs)
 - Charities, foundations, trusts, self-help groups
- Trade unions and professional bodies
- Religious groups
- Clubs and societies
- Special interest/advocacy/lobby groups



aware



Transient Workers Count Too
DIGNITY OVERDUE



Definitions of Civil Society

CSOs distinguished by **scale**:

- **Community-based/local** e.g. NUS Geographical Society, Care Corner Family Service Centre (Toa Payoh)
- **National** e.g. SPCA, AWARE, NSS, Singapore Association for Mental Health
- **International** e.g. WWF, Amnesty International, International Red Cross

Discussion Question

- Name one example each of the following types of organisations:
 - Government agencies
 - Private companies
 - Civil society organisations

For discussion:

- How are they **funded?**
- Who do they **serve?**

Roles of Civil Society

- **Complementary** role (“civic society”)
 - NGOs (typically VWOs) that operate **autonomously** or in **cooperation** with the state to **fill gaps/deficiencies** in state provision of public services
- **Adversarial** role (“civil society”)
 - NGOs (typically interest groups) that **challenge** government agendas and policies by attempting to **change them** more in their favour

(Mauzy & Milne, 2002)