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The Languages of Civil Society – Europe and Beyond

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INTRODUCTION: EXPANDING HORIZONS: THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY BEFORE AND AFTER 1989

NEITHER PRINCE NOR MERCHANT: MARC NERFIN'S "CITIZEN"

In a visionary article published in 1986¹, MARC NERFIN provided a powerful and dynamic model to help in understanding the new interconnectedness of local and global social change and the emerging worldview coupled with it.

According to NERFIN, the roots of the global crisis that unfolded in the 1980s was the growing gap between the perception of the world in 1945 when the UN was founded, and the second half of the 1980s when development policies proved ineffective *vis-à-vis* the growing anomalies of globalized capitalism. Developmental strategies essentially reflected a white, western, Christian and elitist worldview and were based on the Newtonian paradigm that “... have more often than not proved unable by themselves to offer solutions to the crisis and even less to contribute to the search for alternatives.”²

The beginnings of this alternative-seeking and systemic approach go back to the late-1970s to a rather modest initiative of The International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA), or the Third System Project which tried to offer an alternative to the UN International Development Strategy in the 1980s.

There is a conscious reference in the concept of the Third System to the Third World, and even to Third Order which could be interpreted as a reference to the transcendence of the *ancien regime*. Whatever the original intentions of the inventors of the term, its sweeping popularity and heuristic nature is beyond question. In other words, it struck a chord at the time by exposing a widespread social need and political sentiment.

Although NERFIN never mentions civil society *expressis verbis*, this is *de facto* what he means when he elaborates the concept:

The third system is not coterminous with the people. It brings together only those among the people who are reaching a critical consciousness of the role they may play. It is not a party or an organization, but the movement of those associations or citizens who perceive that the essence of history is an endless effort for emancipation ... The third system does not seek governmental or economic power. On the contrary, its function is to help people to assert their own autonomous power *vis-à-vis* both Prince

¹ First published in, *IFDA Dossier No. 56* (Geneva: November-December 1986), pp. 3-29.

² From now on all references to this article are taken from the 1987 publication. Marc Nerfin, “Neither Prince, nor Merchant: The Citizen. An Introduction to the Third System,” *Development Dialogue* (1987), p. 172.

and Merchant. It endeavors to listen to those never or rarely heard and at least to offer a tribune to the unheard voices.³

NERFIN's definition can be called an "activist" version of the concept of civil society, taking special account of the problems of people living in underdeveloped societies. His words echo many voices from the social movements of the 1980s and are expressions of a new world view emerging "from below." This powerful metaphor, the locally and globally self-organizing Citizen *vis-à-vis* the already well-organized financial and market forces of the Merchant and the states and governments of the Prince, proved to be not only visionary and persistent, but also became a rich source of linguistic and theoretical innovation and proliferation.

In contrast with some of the recent usage, especially the "third sector" approach, NERFIN's model is neither static nor rigid. His "third system" is a terrain of diverse and self-organizing movements, initiatives and associations. He mentions peace, women's liberation, human rights, environment, local self-reliance, alternative lifestyles, consumer defense, solidarity with the third world, and new forms of trade unionism such as *Solidarnosc* among them. The new spirit is an obvious continuation of the social movements from the late 1960s and early 1970s, expressed in a vocabulary of a new and emerging global consciousness.

Citizens and their associations usually act in a determined space – local, regional, national, multinational, global – but also, and increasingly so, in several spaces simultaneously. Amnesty International ... acts in the global space through representations to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, in the national space through pressure on governments, and in the local space through the many groups which "adopt" a political prisoner and campaign for his/her liberation.⁴

NERFIN recognizes an important capacity and powerful characteristic of future civil society: its networking capacity.

Civil society associations, NGOs and civic initiatives started to gather together at parallel summits already in the early 1980s. UN conferences opened new space for networking. Here it is worth quoting NERFIN *in extenso*:

Networking is the other approach to third system linkages. There is nothing new in its practice: since the beginning of history, some people have always been in touch with others on the basis of common values and interests. What is new is that networking becomes progressively global because of the new perceptions of the oneness of humankind, and because technology makes it possible: air travel and the photocopying machine, and the tapes, and now, in a new revolution, telecommunications.

Above all, networking already offers a concrete alternative to conventional institutions serving Prince and Merchant. These are usually designed and operated in a pyramidal manner so as to provide for hierarchical relations between a centre and a periphery, a leader and those led ...

In sharp contrast, networks operate horizontally. Their centres are everywhere, their peripheries nowhere. Networking simply means that a number of autonomous,

³ Nerfin (1987), p. 182.

⁴ Nerfin (1987), p. 186.

equal and usually small groups link up to share knowledge, practice, solidarity or act jointly and/or simultaneously in different spaces.

They exercise an inner power over themselves. ... networks are cooperative, not competitive. Communicating is of their essence. ... leadership, if and when needed, is shifting. The *raison d'être* of networks is not in themselves, but in a job to be done. When there is one, they set themselves up. ... When they are no longer useful, they disappear. ... They expand the sphere of autonomy and freedom.⁵

This ideal-type description or rather prescription of civil society networks certainly shaped the imagination of many NGOs during the past decades and served as a model for their activities. NERFIN's straightforward formulation strongly influenced the language of civil society organizations working in the fields of development, human rights and the environment. NERFIN's model, as one of the earliest constructs, had a strong impact on the formulation of a new worldview by global civil society networks and social movements.

NERFIN also warns about the habit of the UN "to consider NGOs as conveyor belts of intergovernmental or bureaucratic wisdom distilled from above, to the public which is seen as a passive receptacle," and believes that "only full accountability will help the third system to avoid bureaucratization, resist cooptation, keep its role of countervailing power, preserve its capacity for permanent renewal ..."⁶

NERFIN's vision became a catechism for civil society and his warning still surfaces in the global NGO and civil society literature (see EDWARDS, 2002; SCHOLTE, 1999,2002; PEARCE, 1993, etc.).

These rich metaphors gave rise to a whole literature during the 1990s dealing with the "third sector". The statistical approach to NGO research suggests directly or indirectly that only recognizable and measureable NGOs count, the rest of civil society is a play of fantasy or belongs to the wishful thinking or romantic imagination of activists and intellectuals. This super-realist approach, however, has recently retreated, and the civil society discourse has arisen with greater vigor on the regional, transnational and global levels.

From the mid-1990s there is a sudden explosion in understanding and interpretation of the role of "civil society" in democracy, democratization and development. The confusion about the meaning of the notion, however, has contributed to the corruption of the concept by players (mostly authorities, governments, transnational organizations and politicians) in whose interest, on the one hand, is to keep the politically correct discourse moving ahead creating the impression of openness and readiness for change; but whose interest *de facto* lies somewhere else (if not in the completely opposite direction).

The phenomenal carrier of the notion in the last decade deserves not only attention, but also a careful and more detailed analysis. The language of civil society has become a crucial determinant of the game of "Who Speaks to Whom?" And on what terms? What definitions are adopted by donors and authorities (e.g., "partners") of civil organizations?

⁵ Nerfin (1987), pp. 186-187.

⁶ Nerfin (1987), p. 189.

Is there a genuine language of civil society yet to be heard from independent, grassroots circles and social movements? Or can one no longer distinguish the real voices from below from the more sophisticated “dear-friend”-type⁷ of discourse emanating from above?

By analyzing the different “languages of civil society” we come closer to understanding its strength. In order to “measure” the real weight of civil society in particular political-sociological contexts, one has to be able to separate out genuine civil society talk from pseudo-civil society language. Hence critical discourse, correctly emphasized by JÜRGEN KOCKA⁸ and other participants in CiSoNeT, is the key to the survival of the meaning of civil society.

This social criticism, however, presupposes a widespread presence and consensus on “common good” among constituting elements of civil society, as well as a readiness to fight for the realization of those “common goods”. What is understood as common good in a community depends, among other factors, on the cultural-political context and the existence of independent mediating institutions such as the media, the educational system and the availability and accessibility to channels of information and communication (information technology).

CIVIL SOCIETY AND NGOS: CONCEPTUAL AND LANGUAGE WARS

Most authors agree that the meaning of the term “civil society” has significantly changed since the end of the Cold War. According to MARY KALDOR, the core of what is new in the concept since 1989 is globalization. The prerequisite social contract between civil society and the state is seen in the constitution of “a global system of rules, underpinned by overlapping inter-governmental, governmental and global authorities.”⁹ The fact that no consensus can be reached on the definition of civil society, its inherent ambiguity, says KALDOR, reveals one of its attractions.

HABERMAS also points out that its’ “rediscovery” today has placed it in “wholly new historical constellations”:

The expression “civil society” has in the meantime taken on a meaning different from that of the “bourgeois society” of the liberal tradition, which Hegel conceptualized as a “system of needs,” that is, as a market system involving social labor and commodity exchange. What is meant by “civil society” today, in contrast to its usage in the Marxist tradition, no longer includes the economy as constituted by private law and steered through markets in labor, capital, and commodities. Rather, its institutional core comprises those nongovernmental and noneconomic connections and voluntary associations that anchor the communication structures of the public sphere in the society component of the lifeworld. Civil society is composed of those more or less spontaneously emergent associations, organizations, and movements that, attuned to how societal problems resonate in the private life spheres, distill and transmit such reactions in amplified form to the public sphere. The core of civil society comprises a network of associations that institutionalizes problem-solving discourses on questions

⁷ See the IMF approach in Thomas C. Dawson and Gita Bhatt, “The IMF and Civil Society Organizations: Striking a Balance,” *IMF Policy Discussion Paper*, (September 2001), p. 11.

⁸ See Jürgen Kocka, *Civil Society from a Historical Perspective* (Berlin: WZB, 2001).

⁹ Mary Kaldor, *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), p. 2.

of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres. These "discursive designs" have an egalitarian, open form of organization that mirrors essential features of the kind of communication around which they crystallize and to which they lend continuity and permanence.¹⁰

Civil society can express itself in a large variety of forms, from individual initiatives through social movements, clubs, associations, societies and other organizations. It is never, however, a mechanical sum total of existing or potential formations. To quote ALAN FOWLER, "civil society is the location from where legitimacy must be obtained if one is to talk of a democratic political system."¹¹ Civil society in this sense is more a philosophical concept than a set of organizations.

It is the terrain of self-reflection, self-articulation and autonomy which inherently presupposes and necessitates a self-organizing public arena, where the critique, the control and containment of existing and prevailing power-monopolies (i.e., the state, the army, the police, multinational companies, intergovernmental institutions) can be practiced. Civil society has to be seen as a potential, *ad hoc* melting pot and battleground of diverse interests and actors, ranging from public individuals to international NGOs. This public arena is not homogenous; it is constituted rather as a permanent regrouping and renegotiating process between and among new and old actors. Its non-constant social fabric and catalyzed interdependencies are built on the autonomous and voluntary will of the individual who actively takes part in social and political affairs. The uninterrupted social need for civil society stems from democracy's deficiencies. This special social space or public arena assumes citizen participation in social processes as well as a strong consciousness of being a citizen. This interrelatedness is correctly emphasized in recent literature on civil society and NGOs.

LARS JORGENSEN, for example, envisions civil society as a "meeting place for debate and common endeavour," acknowledging that "the right of each individual to participate in the workings of society, and the recognition that periodical elections and referendums ... are not sufficient."¹² MARY KALDOR suggests that "the advantage of the language of civil society is precisely its political content, its implications for participation and citizenship."¹³ In other words, there is nothing stable or mechanistic about civil society, especially not as far as "institutions" are concerned.

Those who do take up the challenge of reframing the conceptual discourse are conscious of the dangers of the lack of self-reflection on the part of NGOs and the lack of conceptual clarity on the part of intellectuals which has led to confusion in practice.

What and who is your practice for? Among other outcomes, the failure to ask such questions has led to the false linguistic consensus of the 1990s and ... to

¹⁰ Jürgen Habermas, "Civil Society and the Public Sphere," in *Between Facts and Norms* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), p. 367.

¹¹ Alan Fowler, "Strengthening Civil Society in Transition Economies – from Concept to Strategy: Mapping an Exit in a Maze of Mirrors," in: *NGOs, Civil Society and the State: Building Democracy in Transitional Societies* (Oxford:INTRAC, 1996), p. 25.

¹² Lars Jorgensen, "What are NGOs doing in Civil Society?," in Andrew Clayton, ed., *NGOs, Civil Society and the State: Building Democracy in Transitional Societies*, (Intrac: 1996), p 36.

¹³ Mary Kaldor, "Transnational Civil Society," Manuscript (Sussex: European Institute, 1997), p 23.

an intellectual lazy reliance on a handful of concepts and words as a substitute for thought.¹⁴

We can invest meanings in such concepts through learning from praxis and being guided by theoretical clarity and ethical principles. But if we treat them as unproblematic, neutral or technical terms, they can become words whose meaning is defined by whoever chooses to do so and for whatever purpose. ... if participation is to mean anything, it will challenge existing power relations and will bring about conflict: the absence of conflict in many participatory programmes is something that should raise our suspicions.¹⁵

JENNY PEARCE articulates the crucial consequences of the lack of debate on fundamental issues:

There is no “correct” view of civil society, but there is an essential point to make about the way the concept is used. The use of the term as a normative concept, i.e. what we would *like* civil society to be or what we think it *ought* to be, is often confused with an empirical description ... the constant slippage between the two in the development literature and in the practice of multilateral agencies, governments, and NGOs has contributed to a technical and depoliticising approach to the strengthening of civil society which ultimately has had political implications. It has, for instance, mostly privileged the vision of Western donor agencies and turned “civil society” into a project rather than a process. In other words, by assuming that there is no debate around what we would like “civil society” to be, assuming it is an unproblematic and empirically observable given whose purpose is unquestionably to build democracy and foster development, the vision of powerful and well-resourced donors predominates. Failure to clarify their own position means that many NGOs end up simply implementing that vision on the donors’ behalf. If doing so coincides with their own objectives, there is no problem; but if it is an unintended outcome of lack of reflection, there is.¹⁶

There is certainly not one model and one discourse for civil society. The concept does not allow for one definition. Its very essence lies in its diversity, difference and pluralism. Hence, the effort to meet Mr/Ms Civil Society to begin a polished dialogue, often expressed by governments and politicians, will never be possible. This is what distinguishes the Citizen (and its public space), to use MARC NERFIN’s metaphor, from the Merchant and the Prince. Civil society is multi-lingual and cannot be taught one exclusive and particular language.

The compulsion of institutions is to what some term “colonize” the language of civil society - to objectify, normatively define and compartmentalize the concept, whereas civil society actors often see themselves and their activities rather as a dynamic and fluid process. In fact, as we try to demonstrate in this report, much of the critique from international institutions, like the WTO and IMF, relates to the limitations of “dialogue” (more prescriptively “monologue”) with/about civil society is focussed on their perception of the problem with civil society being non-static, ungraspable and ultimately undefineable. Where is Mr./Ms

¹⁴ Jenny Pearce, “NGOs and Social Change: Agents or Facilitators?” *Development in Practice*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (October 1993), p. 12.

¹⁵ Pearce (1993), p. 13.

¹⁶ Pearce (1993), p. 14.

Civil Society they ask? Since no one seems to sign up, governments and politicians constantly strive to carry out their own "civil society," expressed by employing their own language of civil society.

This perception has led to the construction of frames to compartmentalize NGOs and civil society organizations which ultimately has led to selective exclusion of certain groups from participation at the global institutional level.

Several such classifications related to the WTO are mentioned below:

Ala SCHOLTE, et. al (1999: p. 166ff): **Conformers**: those who accept present trade discourse, as well as aims and activities of the WTO. **Reformers**: those who accept the need for a global trade regime, but seek changes to current theory, policy or procedures. **Radicals**: those who seek to extensively change the WTO's scope, powers or even existence.

Ala MCGREW (1999:203f): **Reformist**: those who seek minor reforms to the WTO for more openness, accountability and representation. **Stakeholder**: those who seek representation stakes for a wider range of view points or interests. **Cosmopolitan**: those who seek more direct democracy and participatory structures.

Ala DUNKLEY (2000): **Responsive globalist**: those who accept globalization, trade liberalism and the WTO, but also accept the need for slightly wider input to and participation in WTO processes. **Participatory**: those who accept the above mentioned premises but want more participation for particular key changes; LINGOs (labour NGOs) typically take this view. **Reformist**: these groups vary in their degree of acceptance of globalization and the currently-constituted WTO, so they propose a wide range of changes to WTO's scope, subject matter, procedures, transparency, representativeness, etc.; most environmental NGOs and development NGOs fit this bill. **Radical Critics**: those who fundamentally question the legitimacy of current trade and globalization mechanisms, thus proposing extensive changes to the present global order, without wanting abolition of all global trade or economic structures.

The internal discourse of civil society on the nature of definition is addressed by MARY KALDOR when she strategically selects five working definitions of civil society which she employs throughout the analysis of her work on global civil society.¹⁷ These are:

Societas civilis: Civil society as a rule of law and a political community, a peaceful order based on implicit or explicit consent of individuals, a zone of "civility". Civility is defined not just as "good manners" or "polite society" but as a state of affairs where violence has been minimized as a way of organizing social relations. *Societas civilis* requires a state, with a public monopoly of legitimate violence.

The activist version: It is a definition that presupposes a state or rule of law, but insists not only on restraints on state power but on a redistribution of power. What is important at the transnational level is the existence of a global public sphere – a global space where non-instrumental communication can take place, inhabited by transnational advocacy networks which through the international media bring their campaigns to global attention.

¹⁷ For the full discussion of these definitions, see MARY KALDOR (2003), pp. 1-13.

The neoliberal version: This version might be described as "laissez-faire politics", a kind of market in politics. Civil society consists of associational life – a non-profit, voluntary "third sector" – that not only restrains state power but also actually provides a substitute for many of the functions performed by the state. In the absence of a global state, an army of NGOs perform the functions necessary to smooth the path of economic globalization.

The postmodern version: Civil society is an arena of pluralism and contestation, a source of incivility as well as civility. Some postmodernists criticize the concept of civil society as Eurocentric. In particular, it is argued that classic Islamic society represented a form of civil society in the balance between religion, the bazaar and the ruler. In particular postmodernists emphasize the importance of national and religious identities as well as multiple identities as a precondition for civil society. From this perspective it is possible to talk about global civil society in the sense of the global spread of fields of contestation.

KALDOR puts the five versions of civil society into the following table:

Type of society	Territorially bounded	Global
<i>Societas civilis</i>	Rule of law/Civility	Cosmopolitan order
<i>Bürgerliche Gesellschaft</i>	All organized social life between the state and the family	Economic, social and cultural globalization
Activist	Social movements, civic activists	A global public sphere
Neoliberal	Charities, voluntary associations, third sector	Privatization of democracy building, humanitarianism
Postmodern	Nationalists, fundamentalists as well as above	Plurality of global networks of contestation

Who Talks? Dialects in the Everyday Usage of Civil Society Language

We were able to differentiate according to the user's attitude quite a few languages of civil society. Some of the most outstanding are:

The "Innovative": The best example of this category is probably ANTHONY JUDGE, an unnoticed language virtuoso. Other examples include JOHN KEAN, JAN AART SCHOLTE, MARC NERFIN, RONNIE LIPSCHUTZ, MANUEL CASTELLS, etc.

The "Patronizing": Most of the great intergovernmental organizations "civil society language" belongs to this category. An outstanding example is the IMF-initiated newsletter "Dear Friend ...," and the entire process of "accrediting" civil society organizations as partners in dialogue. GUY VERHOFSTADT's open letter is another good example.¹⁸

The "Radical": Those who refuse the patronizing language and demand real participation in dialogues and decision-making at the global level. The best examples are the movements and networks categorized as "absolutists" by Multi-Lateral Economic Institutions (MEIs). such as *50 Years was Enough*, *Greenpeace*, *Jubilee 2000*, *Ruckus Society*, etc.

¹⁸ Guy Verhofstadt, "Ethical Globalization – Workable Globalization," *UNIDO Publications* (26 November – 2 December 2001), <http://www.unido.org/en/doc/4889>.

The “Global Enthusiasts”: Those who speak the ”pozy” language of ANTHONY JUDGE. EDWARD COMOR’s ”global civil society progressives”; JOHN KEANE’s ”civil society purists”. There are too many to name them all.

“Civil Society Fakers”: A lucrative job for benefactors of former authoritarian regimes who have the skills and networks to create fake coalitions that they represent at national, European or global fora. This is particularly evident in post-communist, feckless democracies.

The “Practical Practitioners” of the “Third Sector”: They rarely talk civil society explicitly and show little enthusiasm for theoretical debates.

“Theoreticians of Civil Society”: Academics who do the opposite of the practical practitioners.

The “Totalizing”: From ARISTOTLE to ALAN GREENSPAN, ”the whole world is civil society,” including, of course uncivil society!

The “Empiricist”: “Statistics Please!” Only measurable NGOs count. The rest is fantasy. Representatives of Americanized mainstream social sciences literature.

“Neggies” in ANTHONY JUDGE’s classification are those who are always sceptical. They help detect the mistakes and shortcomings of others in the civil society literature.

There are obviously many overlaps between the users of these ways of speaking and these categories can, of course, be extended. The different languages used by rather influential representatives of the above-mentioned categories are reflections of the significance of this peculiar term and the new social, political and economic terrains it occupies.

DEFINITIONS AND THE LANGUAGE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

VACLAV HAVEL understands civil society as the universality of human rights that allow us to fulfill our potential in all of our roles: as members of our nation, our family, our region, our church, our community, profession, political party, and so on. In other words, by becoming citizens “in the broadest and deepest sense of the word”¹⁹. Civil society, and the organically related concept of citizenship therefore provide a protective umbrella, a guarantee of security, an experience of belonging, of home. JEFFREY ALEXANDER voices a similar idea:

Civil society should be conceived as a solidarity sphere in which a certain kind of universalising community exists, it is exhibited by “public opinion”, possesses its own cultural codes and narratives in a democratic idiom, is patterned by a set of peculiar institutions, most notably legal and journalistic ones, and is visible in historically distinctive sets of interactional practices like civility, equality, criticism, and respect. This kind of civil community can never exist as such; it can exist only “to one degree or another”.²⁰

¹⁹ Havel is quoted by Ralph Dahrendorf, *After 1989: Morals, Revolution and Civil Society* (Oxford: St Anthony College, 1997), p. 58.

²⁰ Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Real Civil Societies: Dilemmas of Institutionalisation* (London: SAGE, 1998), p. 58.

The key actor of civil society is the sovereign individual who possesses rights and responsibilities and is ready to accept the rules of cooperation for the good of him/herself and the community, in this way sacrificing a part of his/her own sovereignty. However, there is no complete, strong and efficient civil society without the universal status of citizenship. It is the set of rights and capacities related to citizenship that guarantees a defence against *anomie* and protects against an over-indulgent market of turbo-capitalism.

DAHRENDORF characterises citizenship as the epitome of freedom, and civil society as the medium through which this freedom is projected, boosted and dispersed. It thus constitutes the home of the citizen.

But citizenship and civil society go one important step further than elections and markets. They are goals to strive for rather than dangers to avoid. In this sense they are moral objectives ...²¹

In the footsteps of NORBERT ELIAS, ALEXANDER calls our attention to the fact that although civil society is dependent on other spheres, the sphere of solidarity still enjoys relative autonomy (and as such should be studied independently). He emphasizes that civil society cannot be reduced to the realm of institutions. The world of civil society is also the world of structured, socially constructed conscience, "... a network of understandings that operates beneath and above explicit institutions..."²².

ALEXANDER points out that the world created by the discourse is polarized. It offers the image of open society in contrast to the model of a closed, secret, conspiratorial world. The symbolic characteristics on the positive side guarantee the preservation of society; the networks of solidarity on the negative side serve the purpose of undermining mutual respect and destroying social integration.

Language, therefore, he argues, carries with it the danger of polarization and the creation of enemies. The questions are always the same: Who is it that speaks in the name of civil society? Who delineates the "insiders" and the "outsiders"? Who has access to the necessary resources to sustain civil society?

In societies that are in the early stages of democratic development, the danger of misunderstanding or misinterpreting the language of civil society is especially great. On the one hand, adversaries are created through the use of language and, on the other hand, the discourse of civil and open democratic society is kidnapped in a way that is not civil, not open, and not democratic.

²¹ Dahrendorf (1997), p. 60.

²² Dahrendorf (1997), p. 97.

CHAPTER I. THE RENAISSANCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN EAST CENTRAL EUROPE

The great emancipatory powers of East and Central Europe needed new ways and forms for self-expression. MICHNIK's "New Evolution" and the new language arose from strong needs that could not find proper channels for expression. Entrapped in the ambiguities of the *Realpolitik* of the Yalta system, East and Central European societies had to proceed on a long path of learning in order to find the right language and modes of self-organization and articulation to defend their values and identities *vis-à-vis* dictatorship and authoritarian rule. Revolts and revolutions of workers and intellectuals during the 1950s, and the more peaceful but radical reforms "from above" that culminated in the Prague Spring in 1968, were heroic; but as far as their immediate aims are concerned they were ineffective experiments.²³ At the same time, these bitter lessons most likely contributed a great deal to the emergence of a new "strategy," a new vision which has materialized in the emerging political philosophy and the political and social practice of civil society. This development would not have been possible without a rather gradual but nonetheless fundamental change in political thinking and goal-setting expressed in the development of the new language of civil society.²⁴

It is quite revealing that at another periphery, Latin America, discussions around the same kinds of ideas were taking place simultaneous with developments in East and Central Europe. According to FERNANDO CARDOSO,²⁵ "In Brazilian political language, everything which was an organized fragment was being designated **civil** society. Not rigorously, but effectively, the whole opposition ... was being described as if it were the movement of Civil Society."²⁶

Although no direct link can be found between intellectuals in the two peripheries, KALDOR admits, "the term came to reflect an emerging reality (in Latin America), which was reminiscent of the way it was used in Central Europe." She quotes the Brazilian FRANCISCO WEFFORT whose words parallel JACEK KURON'S, arguing the necessity of the discovery of civil society:

The discovery that there was something more to politics than the state began with the simplest facts of life of the persecuted. In the most difficult moments, they had to make use of what they found around them. There were no parties to go to, no courts in which they could have confidence. At a difficult time, the primary resource was the family, friends and in some cases a fellow worker. What are we talking about if not civil society, though still at the molecular level of interpersonal relations? In a situation of enormous ideological complexity, the discovery of civil society was much less a question of theory than of necessity.²⁷

²³ They all assumed a rapid and fundamental political change: the reclaiming of national independence and the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

²⁴ Obviously, these "changes" occurred in close connection and interaction with each other.

²⁵ Cardoso is quoted by Kaldor (2003), p. 75.

²⁶ Kaldor (2003), p. 75.

²⁷ Kaldor (2003), p. 75; Quoted in Jude Howell and Jenny Pearce, *Civil Society and Development: A Critical Exploration* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001), p. 209.

KALDOR continues by mapping the spread of the term to other parts of Latin America, Asia and Africa. Her conclusion strengthens NERFIN's thesis:

It was not that the East Europeans invented a new form of politics. On the contrary, what was happening in Central Europe was also happening all over the world. ... they invented a new language and a discourse that seemed to explain and express what others were doing. ... in India from the 1960s onwards – the Naxalites, the anti-caste movement, the women's movement and, after the lifting of the Emergency, the civil liberties and environmental movement as well. These movements pioneered a new form of politics which broke the hegemony of the Congress Party, and which took place outside formal party politics. . . .

Likewise, civil society was an important concept in the development that took place in South Africa in the last years of apartheid. As in Central Europe, the term had a strong transnational element. In Latin America and South Africa, North America and European human rights groups, often the progeny of the new social movements, played a crucial role in providing support, public pressure and publicity where necessary. The various international instruments, fashioned beneath the structures of the Cold War – the Human Rights Conventions and other treaties – could be used to question the role of the Cold War as a legitimizing ideology not only in Europe but in the rest of the world as well.²⁸

Certainly, the crossborder, transnational, European and even global dimensions of the emerging actors who define themselves as civil society can be traced from the beginning.

BACK TO EAST CENTRAL EUROPE

The Message and Shortcomings of Solidarnosc and the Proliferation of the Language of Civil Society

In the shade of the victorious Red Army after WW II, and driven by a curious missionary spirit, the Communist parties in East Central Europe considered it their duty to either cut the horizontal fibers of civil society, or to hinder their development. Society, kneaded into an atomized mass, would deliver reliable and obedient subjects. The state, intertwined with the Communist party, was engaged in demobilizing society by many different means: by the dismantling of democratic and social actors; by monopolizing interest intermediation through the "etatization" of trade unions, etc. But by far the most effective means of demobilization was the atomization of society through the destruction of social networks and the undermining of social identities and value systems.

Fortunately, the complete liquidation of civil society failed in East-Central Europe. The undercurrents of civil existence were never eradicated from the collective social consciousness. Social networks survived in semi-latent and semi-legitimate forms. In the mid-1960s, the slow regeneration of social networks began. After the trauma of the 1956 revolution, the nature of the dictatorship started to change throughout the Soviet bloc countries. A modern "paternalism" or "enlightened socialist absolutism" emerged in Poland and Hungary that was in harmony with the permanent precariousness and transitory character of East Central European history.

²⁸ Kaldor (2003), pp. 75-67.

The lessons of the early attempts at liberation taught independent-minded East Europeans to look for alternative methods to democratize their regimes and increase autonomy and political, social and cultural freedom within the stable framework of the bipolar world order. The first alternative was the introduction of economic reforms and a cautious, state-controlled opening towards the world economy coupled with the attempt to avoid political change in the 1960s in Hungary. The internal contradictions of this reform experiment reached a climax in the early 1980s and led to the end of the unwritten compromise between state and society. The artificially maintained image of the country as an economic success story became untenable. This was the historic turning point for Hungarian society that then started to rid itself of political paralysis and social muteness.

Self-mobilization from below, in different grassroots activities, gradually emerged. With increasing recognition of the evolving political and economic crises, the culture of silence was step-by-step replaced with more open dialogue among formerly isolated circles of independent-minded citizens. Cautiously, the media became involved in the new critical discourse. The long list of taboo themes began to shrink. In other words, **a new public arena** emerged to openly and critically discuss social, environmental, cultural and, in a restricted way, political issues. In the 1980s, a modern critical discourse of dialogue was born in Hungary.

In Poland, *Solidarnosc*, quickly became a nationwide, self-supporting political, cultural, social and economic network and a metaphor for an emerging civil society. The political philosophers behind the movement deliberately built their strategy on non-violence, involving the party-state and local authorities in a dialogue with the representatives of the officially unrecognized movement. The enforcement of dialogue, in the form of radical demands and systematic negotiations, was tempered with the readiness to compromise. Non-violence and strong solidarity characterized this unique East Central European social movement. As part of a new logic of association, expressed by a new, emerging discourse the adjective “civil” was reborn and referred to those characteristics. “Civil,” in everyday parlance, also meant autonomous, independent, non-military, non-violent and non-official.

The pervasive success of *Solidarnosc* proved throughout the region of the Eastern bloc that there was a chance to peacefully challenge the authoritarian and dictatorial Soviet-type regimes and their apparatus **from below**. Naturally, the forms of organizing civil movements differed from country to country according to historical traditions, the nature of the dictatorship, political culture and social structure. A wide variety of civil initiatives, movements and associations emerged at the beginning of the 1980s in Hungary in the absence of a large and strong independent moral authority like the Catholic Church in Poland which functioned as an umbrella. At an early stage, there was a strong tendency for cooperation and solidarity among these civil groups called “alternative social movements” or “civil initiatives.” There was a unifying and consciously shared concept of civil society that had its origin in Hungarian political thought. ISTVÁN BIBÓ, a prominent and independent historian and political writer, introduced the metaphor “small circles of freedom” in one of his essays written after WW II.²⁹ This concept was then used and developed further by the emerging student movement, the environmental and peace groups and other civil initiatives - from populist writers to the first independent trade union.

²⁹ See Kaldor (2003); also Bibó, Michnik, Kumar, Howard, Krygier, Glenn, etc.

The vision commonly shared by the alternative movements and new civil organizations was the natural growth of these “small circles of freedom” into interdependent networks and alliances. They gradually emerged during the second half of the 1980s.³⁰ Rivalry among these groups remained secondary to the unifying force of challenging the authorities of the party-state.

Using post-Gramscian terminology, KUMAR speaks about the need and search for alternatives and the reconstruction of civil society in Eastern Europe:

The failure of revolution (Hungary 1956) and reform from above (Czechoslovakia 1968) led in the 1970s to the idea of a third way: reform from below, by the construction or reconstruction of civil society. The Polish experience of the 1980s seemed to confirm the validity of this strategy. But whatever its strengths as an oppositional strategy ... it offers little guidance to societies seeking to construct a genuine political society out of the debris of post-communist systems. Solidarity as a social movement achieved something like »hegemony« in Polish society; it left open the question of how this hegemony should express itself in political terms...³¹

THE IDEAS OF 1989: THE ORIGINS OF THE CONCEPT OF GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE OVERTHROW OF AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN SOCIETIES

Differing views of civil society in the East and Central European Context can be summarized in the words of some its main proponents:

According to MICHAEL BERNHARD, civil society is “a public space ... located between official public and private life” composed of “autonomous organizations” separated from the state by law.³²

For WEIGLE and BUTTERFIELD³³ “expanding independent activism increasingly contradicted the legitimacy and power base of the single ruling party, leading to the end of Communist rule”.

³⁰ Besides single issue movements, a whole set of colourful initiatives oriented more directly towards actual social and political issues also came into existence. By the mid-1980s, discussion and study circles known as the “Club Movement” and the “Movement of University Colleges” emerged around the country. Communication and “networking” among these new groups occurred naturally and created a special spirit for civil society and dialogue. A strong feeling of solidarity and the new experience of increasing freedom of expression released creative energies and blurred or hid political, cultural and ideological differences between them.

³¹ Krishan Kumar, *1989: Revolutionary Ideas and Ideals* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. 157.

³² Bernhard (1996), p. 309.

³³ Jim Butterfield and Marcia A Weigle, “Civil Society in Reforming Communist Regimes: The Logic of Emergence,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (1992), p. 1–2.

Similarly, COHEN and ARATO³⁴ believe that “groups, associations, and indeed movements outside the official institutions would have the primary task of pushing the reforms through”.

In TISMANEANU’s interpretation³⁵ the “nuclei of autonomous social and cultural initiative contributed sufficiently to the ‘smooth, non-violent change’ in 1989”.

More recent evaluations of the “alternative movements” and their civil society discourse during the 1980s provide different interpretations. In his recent book *Framing Democracy: Civil Society and Civic Movements in Eastern Europe*, JOHN K. GLENN talks about the “monocausal logic and conceptual imprecision of the above mentioned interpretations”.³⁶

They obscure the impact of the Leninist regimes as repressive agents and negotiating partners in the reconstruction of the states. These regimes were not simply overcome by political protest led by independent groups but shaped the patterns of reconstruction independently of the efforts of the movements. They cannot explain the reconstruction of the state because they lack a model to explain the interaction between states and movements that created the political institutions of post-communist states. ... They misunderstand the strategic nature of the discourse of civil society and the conditional nature of public support for the civic movements.³⁷

GLENN’s conclusion is that we need to reconceptualize civil society “as a master frame with which civic movements across Eastern Europe sought to mobilize public support in light of changing political opportunities.”³⁸

GLENN tends to accept STANISZKIS’³⁹ evaluation that stresses continuity in East Central European societies after 1989 and sees the self-limiting strategy of social movements as rather defensive, and not suited to fundamental social change.

It seems that from the perspective of the society the aspect of continuity is more strongly experienced than the sense of change, and this perception itself ... may take on the features of a self-fulfilling prophecy, inducing social apathy and feelings of revolution for the elite only.⁴⁰

The literature on civil society first concentrated on the democratic opposition movements during the Cold War, usually taking *Solidarnosc* as a model and outstanding example of social self-reliance and political resistance. But soon the concept was used for the analysis of fundamentally different societies from the United States via the former Soviet Union to Africa and the Far East. (See among others BUDIMAN, 1990; EMMERSON, 1995; ARATO and COHEN

³⁴ Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1992), p. 64.

³⁵ Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Re-inventing Politics*. New York, Free Press, 1992.

³⁶ John K. Glenn, *Framing Democracy: Civil Society and Civic Movements in Eastern Europe* (Stanford: Stanford Univ Press, 2001), p24.

³⁷ Glenn (2001), pp. 26–27.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Jadwiga Staniszkis, *The Dynamics of the Breakthrough in Eastern Europe. The Polish Experience* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1991). (Society and Culture in East-Central Europe.)

⁴⁰ Staniszkis (1991), p. 181.

1992; BOZÓKI and SÜKÖSD, 1993; ELANDER and GUSTAFSSON, 1995; LIEBICH, et al., 1995; TISMANEANU 1995; YAMAMOTO, 1995; HALL, 1995; RUESCHEMEYER, et al. 1998; etc.)

MUETZELFELDT and SMITH⁴¹ in a recent comprehensive analysis of the different species of civil society theories have shown the one-sidedness of most of the earlier civil society approaches. Instead of biased approaches which either over-emphasize the importance of the state or of civil society, MUETZELFELDT and SMITH suggest a more balanced view:

In contrast to those who give primacy to either civil society or institutions of governance at the global level, we emphasize their mutually emergent features, and recognize the importance of the two-way interaction between global civil society and governance. This mutually emergent approach emphasizes the reciprocal constitution of a strong facilitating state and a strong civil society...⁴²

This approach follows KUMAR's⁴³ and WALZER's⁴⁴ train of thought. They stress that "Only a democratic state can create a democratic civil society: only a democratic civil society can sustain a democratic state."⁴⁵

MUETZELFELDT and SMITH rightly emphasize that what they call the "mutually emergent approach" offers a more complex understanding of the relationship between states and civil societies.

States are not homogenous, and have contradictory features because of their contradictory position in relationship to capital and civil society. ... This approach provides an analytical framework that allows for reciprocal socio-political reproduction between state and civil society. This in turn opens the possibility for developing models for action that build civil society and good governance through virtuous cycles of effective active citizenship."⁴⁶

This more sophisticated, complex and balanced approach was elaborated in the civil society literature by MARTIN KRYGIER⁴⁷

Poland has a special and far-reaching significance for my themes. For it was there, more than anywhere else, remarkably resilient, and was ultimately successful beyond anyone's imaginings. ... Much can be learned about civil society from the manifestos,

⁴¹ Michael Muetzelfeldt and Gary Smith, "Civil Society and Global Governance: the Possibilities for Global Citizenship," *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2002), p. 58.

⁴² Muetzelfeldt and Smith (2002), p. 58.

⁴³ Krishan Kumar, "Civil Society: a Reply to Christopher Bryant's Social Self-organization, Civility and Sociology," *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (March 1994), pp. 127–130.

⁴⁴ Michael Walzer, ed., (1995) *Toward a Global Civil Society* (Providence: Berghahn Books, Vol. 1 (1995). (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Series on International Political Currents.)

⁴⁵ Walzer (1995) p. 170.

⁴⁶ Muetzelfeldt and Smith (2002), p. 59.

⁴⁷ Martin Krygier, "Virtuous Circles: Antipodean Reflections on Power, Institutions, and Civil Society," *East European Politics and Societies*, Volume 11. No. 1 (Winter 1997), pp. 36-88.

struggles, ambitions, and fate of *Solidarnosc*, from what it understood civil society to be, and from what it failed or was uninterested to understand about the concept...⁴⁸

KRYGIER detects the important difference between civil society in *statu nascendi* and a well-established and functioning civil society.

Civil societies depend upon distinctive configurations of economic life, civility among acquaintances and strangers, and tolerant pluralism. These in turn depend upon particular configurations of state and law, and gain support from particular sorts of politics. In each of these domains, civil society has ... elements that *Solidarnosc* did not have ... Moreover, the elements interrelate. A truly civil society has a strong - though not despotically strong - political and legal infrastructure and liberal democratic politics.⁴⁹

The problem is that we don't know where to find a "truly" civil society. **Real** civil societies, as suggested by ALEXANDER, might and should have ideals and therefore the foundation of an ideal-type can be useful. Real civil societies may even be measured against them, and they would certainly feed further academic debate. JADWIGA STANISZKIS pulls us back to the soil of Eastern European realities.

...the creation of a civil society is a much more complex process than mere political liberalization: it demands both property rights reform and deep cultural change. It is painful, just as is the creation of new politics occurring now in the Eastern bloc. Not only the old, facade institutions are activated (thus is usually the first step, before new institutions are created and oppositions recognized) but both the old and the new elites have to resist the temptations of unlimited power. The evolution from the situation when only society (not the ruling elite) is bound by rules to the legal structure limiting all actors is not completed yet in the Eastern bloc; oppositional reformers as well as "revolutionaries from above" of the old establishment demonstrate temptation to use techniques (and philosophy) of the prerogative state in the name of reform.⁵⁰

Understanding 1989

For some Western authors such as FRANCOIS FURET, TIMOTHY GARTON ASH, and JÜRGEN HABERMAS 1989's main characteristic was its complete lack of innovation. MARY KALDOR agrees that the velvet revolutions of 1989 did not produce new policies or strategies for governments, but she argues correctly, that the period of the 1980s, preceding the velvet or negotiated revolutions, was foment with ideas.

Indeed, thanks to the movements and networking of the pre-1989 period, a new understanding of citizenship and civil society as well as "transnationalism" was born. KALDOR claims that "the notion of European or global civil society, which could be said to have emerged during this period, in some sense encompassed or encapsulated this strand of thinking."⁵¹

⁴⁸ Krygier (1997), p. 59.

⁴⁹ Krygier (1997), p. 64.

⁵⁰ Staniszkis (1991), p. 26.

⁵¹ Kaldor (2003), p. 50.

As suggested earlier, East Central European dissidents and independent intellectuals and activists digested the lessons of 1956 and drew new conclusions by the late 1970s and early 1980s. The new way of thinking in East Central Europe represented by MICHNIK, KURON, KONRAD, HAVEL, among others, regarding the relationship between an oppressive authoritarian state on the one hand, and society on the other, contributed greatly to political and theoretical conceptualization.

From the outbreak of the 1956 revolution onwards, there was permanent tension between the non-acceptance of Soviet domination and the logic of the bipolar world system throughout the region. Original and effective ways were found to democratize and support the building of a new relationship with the political ruling class. After the failures of 1956 and 1968, *Solidarnosc* proved efficient and victorious. It revitalized and reformulated the concept of civil society.

On the other hand, the change in thinking and acting in civil society was supported by powerful “external” international trends as well. The 1975 Helsinki Accord’s third basket on Human Rights helped Charta ‘77 in Czechoslovakia, KOR in Poland, and the democratic opposition in Hungary to act more openly not only within their societies, but also with each other.

At the core of these ideas and analyses, there was a strong belief that events could proceed in new, historically unprecedented ways. Terms and phrases of a new language, like “parallel polis” and the “power of the powerless,” surfaced in the new discourse of Charta ‘77. This new vocabulary expressed a new way of thinking, and a new attitude towards the weakening authoritarian regimes. VACLAV BENDA emphasized that the “parallel polis” does not compete with power, and accordingly Charta ‘77 was seen not as a political movement, but as a “civic initiative”. In short, the new language signalled a new type of politics from below.

The birth of the new language and new thinking was primarily restricted to the national level, but there were also promising crossborder civil initiatives. There was regular cooperation between East Central European opposition groups and alternative movements in order to strengthen each others’ cases and support each others’ activities.⁵² This risky and unprecedented enterprise produced a growing regional, i.e., Central European, awareness of a shared and common identity that strengthened solidarity. There was not only cooperation among the main democratic oppositional movements, but also among smaller movements and groups, like environmentalists, peace activists and professional circles. In order to protect the emerging civil society and its new social movements throughout East Central Europe, VACLAV HAVEL,⁵³ suggested to establish an alternative European Parliament for social movements which became the Helsinki Citizen’s Assembly.

KALDOR draws our attention to the fact that the emergence of social movements and citizen groups was global. The “growth of small circles of freedom” (*Solidarnosc*, Charta ‘77,

⁵² Mary Kaldor, *Transnational Civil Society*, Manuscript (Brighton: Sussex European Institute, 1997), p. 8.

⁵³ The Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly (HCA), established in 1990 in Prague, is the only international and institutional offspring of efforts to create civil networks across borders in the 1980s. It reveals a significant continuity in the protection of human rights and support for local grassroots initiatives.

Swords into Ploughshares (GDR), the Dialogue Groups, *Wolnosc i Pokuj*, the Danube Circle, Fidesz etc.) did not occur in isolation. The 1980s also saw the re-emergence of strong and dynamic social movements in the West. This was an expression of the need to radicalize democracy and of the emergence of a new public sphere. Together with the birth of a new language, East-West dialogue began in Europe and reflected a hitherto unprecedented global consciousness and responsibility.

In 1985, HAVEL wrote:

It seems to be that all of us, East and West, face one fundamental task from which all else will follow. That task is one of resisting vigilantly, ... but at the same time with total dedication, ... the irrational momentum of anonymous, impersonal and inhuman power – the power of ideologies, systems, bureaucracy, artificial languages, and political slogans.⁵⁴

East-West dialogue certainly expanded the space for a new European and global public for East and Central European movements, which successfully filled up the new public space. The artificial division of Europe, its military and bureaucracy became unacceptable to younger generations that had not witnessed the terror of the 1950s. For them, the new language and thinking was a natural given. Suddenly a new *Zeitgeist*, a new “feeling,” began to dominate the discourse of the 1980s. The attitude: “I have the right to make my voice heard” characterized not only the rather weak peace movement in East Central Europe but also clubs, student organizations and environmental groups. It was exactly this common feeling that bound them together and created a common language for civil society.

This corresponds with MARC NERFIN’S prediction about the growing importance of the citizen and the general mood of protest in other parts of the world. Despite widely different political and cultural contexts, there was a fundamental consensus among the participants of the East-West dialogue that one could no longer remain silent on fundamental political, social and ecological issues. The new language became the common denominator for all of these public concerns and provided the loose, rather psychological connections among members of independent civil movements and initiatives.

KALDOR also argues that the Western peace movement contributed “transnationalism in practice” to the new discourse of the emerging Central European civil world. END and the European Network of East-West Dialogue demonstrated that networks can be effective and that crossborder networking is not only possible but fruitful in terms of protest, defense of human rights and the elaboration of new concepts and ideas. It is also remarkable that concepts such as empowerment, participation, deliberation, transnational and European public sphere, or global civil society were born in the mid-1980s. All these concepts, ideas and phrases then became objects of academic research and a new language of power in the 1990s. Curiously enough, there is very little investigation of and interest in their recent origin.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Vaclav Havel, *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Eastern Europe*, edited by John Keane (London: Sharpe, 1990).

⁵⁵ The term “European civil society” was introduced in the public debate in the late 1980s. See Mary Kaldor, *Europe from Below* (London: Verso, 1991). See also Michael Muetzenfeldt and Gary Smith, “Civil Society and Global Governance: The Possibilities for Global Citizenship,” *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2002).

**AFTER 1989: INSTITUTIONALIZED DEMOCRACY
AND THE LINGUISTIC TURN IN THE CIVIL SOCIETY DISCOURSE**

The rapid establishment of new institutions of representative democracy radically changed the dynamics of civil society. An overwhelming majority of former civil society activists became members of the new political elite and occupied the highest positions of leadership in the new institutions and political parties. Accordingly, their perception of civil society versus state relations changed dramatically. The leaders and the ideologues of the new political elite claimed that the time for social movements was over. They stated that grassroots mobilization was unnecessary, if not downright dangerous for new democracies. Political parties provided an efficient arena for the competition of ideas, ideologies and social-political alternatives. According to this neo-liberal and at the same time statist credo, the everyday political participation of citizens is unnecessary. Their role should be restricted to maintaining the new institutions and to legitimizing the political regime by voting every four years in “fair and unharrassed elections”.

ALAN FOWLER identifies civil society as the place where interest groups turn themselves into political parties, competing to become the ruling regime.⁵⁶ In the case of East Central European countries, one has to alter this general truth according to the special socio-economic and historic context. A gap developed historically between the rulers and the ruled due to the lack of a strong middle class who, after the phase of saturation of wealth, would act as donors and support the social and cultural sphere. In the absence of a strong democratic culture, the values of solidarity, social responsibility and citizenship could not develop. Citizens view themselves and were indoctrinated to view themselves as helpless, exposed subjects at the mercy of the state and its authorities. For good historical reasons citizens (who are still called “state-burghers” after the German *Staatsbürger*) and official authorities were – and in many transition countries still are – mutually suspicious of each other. This special relationship between the rulers and the ruled is important to recognize in order to form a realistic picture of the present state of civil society in East Central Europe.

Although this attitude towards power started to change in the transition period, the survival of paternalistic and authoritarian elements are significant determinants of the relationship between civil society and the political elite. The attitude that “it was always like this and will always remain this way – so what can I do?” which characterized post-WW II East Central European societies was challenged by the new social movements of the 1980s. But after the first democratic elections in 1990, the new government and the political elite, did their best to restore old clichés and attitudes. Continuity is strong in public institutional life. The restoration of authoritarian patterns of behaviour, between citizens and their institutions, remains tenacious (MISZLIVETZ 1997, 1999).

THE NGO WORLD AND NGO LANGUAGE

The breakdown of the communist party-states in East Central Europe, coupled with the retreat of the welfare states in the West, naturally gave birth to NGOs both in theory and practice. The negative definition of NGOs, similar to terms like “post-communism” or “post-Cold War,” refers to the lack of something, to the uncertainty and unpredictability of the transitory

⁵⁶ Alan Fowler, “Strengthening Civil Society in Transition Economies,” in Andrew Clapton, ed., *NGOs, Civil Society and the State, Building Democracy in Transitional Societies* (Oxford: INTRAC, 1996).

epoch. This situation is naturally comprised of positive tendencies as well like the further articulation of the need for social democratization and participation of citizens in decision-making by civil societies. NGOs could play a vital role in buttressing and facilitating social democratization and citizen participation. This is far from guaranteed, however. In many cases, NGOs are not genuine agents of authentic civil society. In weak and feckless democracies they are often creatures of governments, politics or individuals who employ them to enhance their power, prestige and material interests (JENSEN and MISZLIVETZ, 1998).

One of the main problems with the new NGOs, in East and Central Europe and other “underdeveloped” parts of the world, is their lack of legitimacy in the local societies. The legitimacy problem stems from the scarcity of resources and local donors. NGOs either turn to the state, automatically losing their independence, or look for external resources. In both cases accountability and transparency become questionable. It is also very often the case that western (mostly American) donors, sometimes with the best motives, have not analyzed local, social, political and cultural conditions and are therefore unable to select the most appropriate civil society partners. In many cases those who receive internal financial support are those who are already in the external circle of a global NGO elite. They possess not only the necessary language, internet and application-writing skills, but are able to “talk civil society” fluently using the most trendy and exclusive pseudo-professional and fashionable buzzwords (ONGOs, DONGOs, PONGOs, etc.)

On the other hand, East Central European NGO and CSO (Civil Society Organization) development reveals a consciousness about their role in strengthening democratic values, mobilizing society for participation, and contributing to a new civil culture of decision-making and dialogue. This is required to strengthen the bargaining capacity with authorities on local, national and international levels, but this is also not a given. LARS JORGENSEN formulated this precisely:

There are some risks in taking on civil society. It is of course perfectly legitimate for NGOs not to be openly political or to take sides in whatever constellation of parties or factions which is forming at a given moment, but they must recognize that their work has political aspects and relate to the authority of the state and to the political development of their society.⁵⁷

An unbalanced and undemocratic relationship, based on a new dependency between western donors and eastern NGOs can seriously undermine and bias this potential. Therefore, a critical assessment of their relationship and its development during the transition period is of crucial importance. Sometimes well-intentioned donors superimpose their values or policies on recipients who then act rather as dependent agents than genuine actors of their local civil sphere. The scarcity of domestic resources, a growing dependency on state support and an uneven, dependent relationship with western donors, combined with a growing rivalry rather than solidarity among NGOs, has seriously undermined the spirit of an independent civil society in transition countries. This tendency is reinforced by the emergence of a global and local NGO elite with high technical skills and “networking capital” that contributes to the fake image of a civil society constructed from above, a frequent characteristic of feckless democracies.

⁵⁷ Lars Jorgensen, “What are NGOs Doing in Civil Society?” in Andrew Clayton, ed., *NGOs, Civil Society and the State: Building Democracy in Transnational Societies* (Oxford: INTRAC, 1996), p. 36.

From Dialogue to Cooptation

Civil society, with its proliferating interfaces, provides a remarkable asset for the global, regional and domestic representatives and configurations of the new postmodern Prince and Merchant to approve and demonstrate their "good intentions". With the help of this newspeak, "talking civil society" and nominating and signifying "civil society" they themselves become part of civil society: "We are working towards the same goals, but with different means." The slippery language and the new praxis of "dialogue with civil society organizations" initiated by non-CSOs (from above or from the outside) dissolves sharp contradictions and antagonisms. Civil society speak can smoothly annihilate diametrically opposing interests and provide results for "mutual satisfaction". This process we call the "cooptation of civil society," a danger and tendency MARC NERFIN has also referred to.

"Talking civil society" provides the common denominator for western donors, the new NGO-elite, and national governments who want to coopt them. It can be lucrative to display the "right" liberal democratic values and at the same time avoid the uncomfortable consequences of strong and genuine civil societies. Coopting and over-taking means surpassing and weakening. A new network of dependent NGOs undermines not serves the interest of genuine civil society.

However important and inevitable the institutionalization of civil society is, we can only move beyond the practical and theoretical impass if we assume that civil society is not equivalent to the sum total of NGOs. The permanent slipping between the terms "civil society" and "NGO" is a source of theoretical inconsistency, practical misunderstanding and political or ideological manipulation.

THE LACK OF TRUST:
WEAK CIVIL SOCIETIES IN FECKLESS DEMOCRACIES

If we accept JEFFREY ALEXANDER'S conceptualisation, that civil society can be viewed as the universal expression of social solidarity, we might also say that without trust there is no civil society. In East Central Europe, illusions rapidly vanished at the beginning of the 1990s. The central values of civil society were quickly marginalized. In an unpublished manuscript, ALEXANDER observed the following:

Just when intellectuals in Poland and Hungary were celebrating the return of civil society as an idea ... [they] are not at all sure they want it... The practical task of social reconstruction makes these social ideals difficult for the intellectuals to sustain.⁵⁸

Amidst the joy of bringing down the communist state everything indeed seemed "civil". Numerous institutions and movements took up the adjective "civil". BORISLAW GEREMEK said in August of 1989: "we don't need to define [civil society], we see it and feel it"⁵⁹. JIRI DIENSTBIER'S famous formulation, that "civil society is in power" quickly became ironic. The former spokesman for Charta '77 was certainly correct in observing the great stream of former "dissidents" towards positions of power.

⁵⁸ Jeffrey Alexander, *Real Civil Societies: Dilemmas of Institutionalization* (London: SAGE, 1998), pp. 1-2.

⁵⁹ Geremek is quoted by Aleksander Smolar in, "Civil Society After Communism: From Opposition to Atomisation," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 7, No. 1. (January 1996), p. 24.

With the formation of political parties, however, civil society really lost its moral constituting power. The new political elite believed that moral civil society, along with its movements, had fulfilled its destiny, and should now stop stirring-up the waters - some even stepped forward openly against the idea of civil society. VACLAV KLAUS went so far as calling it a perverted idea, seeing in it the ideology of collectivism and an ambiguous third way.

In short, civil society went through a real metamorphosis after 1989. Certain parts of it disappeared altogether; others were transformed, several movements turned themselves into political parties; local initiatives either faded away, or were coopted by local politics, and many civil organisations were forced to sell themselves in a financial or political sense to survive. A desperate struggle awaited those who managed to preserve their identity: they needed time, willpower, money and expertise to continue to operate. In the meantime, a process of disintegration and atomization rather than civilization swept the region of East Central Europe. ELEMÉR HANKISS observes:

Millions of people have lost, or fear that they may lose, their traditional roles and positions in the sphere of production and distribution. They have lost their way in the labyrinths of social and industrial relationships, which are in the midst of a chaotic transformation. People no longer know what the rules of the new game are, what their duties and rights are, what they have to do for what, what is the cost and reward of what? There is no authority to tell them; there are no values to refer to.⁶⁰

During the last decade sociological literature - especially in Poland and Hungary - has repeatedly called attention to the continuity in institutional and social mentality. ALEKSANDER SMOLAR speaks directly of a new “socialist civil society”. “Shadow society”⁶¹ is the term he uses to describe the collection of informal social relations that were created by people in the 1970s and 1980s to defend themselves from the existing form of socialism. These informal networks of social cooperation contributed greatly to the acceptance of shock therapy and the initial hardships of the transition. In time, however, as enthusiasm for “a return to Europe” receded and the pain caused by the reforms intensified, the emphasis shifted to the defence of material interests. The re-strengthening of the antiliberal, etatist hierarchy of values came together with a nostalgia for the socialist state that had offered a certain kind of protection and security. The effects this had on Hungarian and Polish political and social life are well-known. In societies that have uncertain futures, democratic politics with half-established and not entirely accepted rules and practices frequently deter or alienate rather than attract the majority. Informality, a hotbed for corruption, e.g., the trust invested in informal family relationships and close ties of friendships then gain weight.

SMOLAR calls this phenomenon the irony of history that real socialism found refuge precisely in the very world of civil society that it had previously sought to strangle. Even though this phenomenon is not characteristic of the ever-changing sphere of civil societies in East Central Europe as a whole, it reveals a number of deep contradictions that determine social values and personal life strategies. The presence of trust at the social level provides the basis for order and dependability. After a short-lived rise in social trust, cooperation and solidarity, the societies of democratising East Central Europe are once again characterised by distrust and a strong tendency towards atomization.

⁶⁰ Smolar (1996), p. 34.

⁶¹ See Smolar (1996), pp. 35-38.

In the post-Cold War period the challenge for civil societies in East Central European countries is twofold: globalization and European integration. In order to address these challenges, local NGOs and CSOs have to link their domestic activities to the global – or at least regional – context. Escaping from their narrow and parochial framework and political climate, they need to find donors who are able to cooperate as partners and equals with commonly shared values and goals. Networking is already very much present, but its full potential has not been utilized.

CHAPTER II. EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT

In the second half of the 1980s, it did not seem illusory that East-West dialogue would lead to the sustained cooperation of civil society which would strengthen autonomous, democratic social space in the East and revitalize democracy in the West. After the 1989 transformations, however, the situation changed fundamentally. With the disappearance of the bipolar logic of the Yalta world order, the common foundation for wide social mobilisation also disappeared. Opinions on the unity of Europe were too divided. Once the main political and ideological barriers fell, economic, welfare and security concerns came to the forefront. In contrast to unconvincing rhetoric, the reality showed that the western half of Europe was turning its attention inwards. It cautiously closed itself off, while in the eastern half fragmentation and disintegration became the main features. The concept and language of civil society did not altogether disappear, but it went through a metamorphosis in comparison to the practice and visions of the 1980s⁶².

Increasingly professionalized civil organizations and NGOs replaced bottom-up initiatives and movements. In places where the ethos and mentality of civil society was preserved from the 1980s, it was either incapacitated against nationalist tyranny (as in several republics of the former Yugoslavia), or it was pushed into the background as in Hungary, Poland and former Czechoslovakia.

A new world was created by the mid-1990s: the world of professional NGOs, civil organisations and foundations. Most of these NGOs took over some of the responsibilities of the state, and they do not have particularly warm feelings about the civil ethos or new forms of cooperation. Those civil organisations, however, who carry out their work in the fields of human rights, minority questions, education, culture and the protection of the environment, have every right to regard themselves as institutions of civil society. Most of these have integrated into international - predominantly Eastern or Western European - networks, as a result of which their weight and ability to survive have increased considerably. In the second half of the 1990s, the symptoms of fragmentation and inward-lookingness also seem to have diminished. The idea of Central European cooperation has once again gained modest influence in the civil sphere, just as we are witnessing similar signs in political life.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP IN THE NEW EUROPEAN SPACE

If we consider civil society to be the sphere of solidarity, we need to be able to answer the question: What causes and maintains this solidarity? This question is especially important in the post-1989 period within the framework of the European Union and European integration. There have been many criticisms of the EU's unification policy and the concept of a European social and political community. These critiques usually agree that in a social sense it is impossible to talk about a unified Europe; there is little reward in having a European *telos* if there is no European *demos*.⁶³

⁶² For more on this see the paper written with Jody Jensen, "A civil társadalom metamorfózisa 1988-1998," in Ferenc Miszlivetz, ed., *Közép-európai változások* (Szombathely: Savaria University Press, 1998), p. 141-170.

⁶³ See among others Timothy Garton Ash, "Europe's Endangered Liberal Order," *Foreign Affairs* (March-April 1998), pp. 51-65.

It is true that EU member states have voluntarily given up a considerable part of their national sovereignty in order to create a supranational “pooled” sovereignty. In general, European nation states have indeed become weaker in the period after WW II. They are no longer capable of exercising control over a great number of economic, political and ecological processes. Thus, the framework in which democracy had previously operated has weakened, and in certain cases it has fragmented. This would not present a problem in itself had a new political form replaced the old. This has become the focus of the present debate: Can we accept Europe as the new framework, or are we to accept the re-strengthening of European nation states? Or?

At the moment, there is one point on which the advocates of both the strengthening and the weakening of nation states agree, namely that Europe as a political and social framework still lacks coherence. It is therefore unclear what the basis and framework of a Europe-wide civil society could be. VICTOR PÉREZ-DÍAZ argues that neither international markets nor transnational voluntary associations and bureaucracies have the capacity to create the solidarity and trust that could form the basis of a democratic European community⁶⁴. As many authors argue, without a vivid European public sphere or rather interconnected “publics”, there will not be European citizenship.

During the decade after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, European society has been predominantly made up of national societies whose citizens are concerned mostly with problems at the national or domestic level. The discourse of agitation for Europe used to be inconsistent with the actual policies of the main political actors and, as a result it was not easy to formulate narratives that would contribute to strengthening the feeling of belonging to a European community.

According to DAHRENDORF’s definition:

A civil society is a society of citizens who have rights and accept obligations, and who behave in a civil and civilized manner towards each other. It is a society which tries to make sure that no one is excluded, and which offers its members a sense of belonging as well as a constitution of liberty.⁶⁵

How strong are these values in the societies of the EU member states? What are the chances that they might be extended to the societies of Central and Eastern Europe which will soon be part of the European Social Space?

The answer to the first question is contradictory. Recent empirical studies have shown that nationalism has decreased significantly within the EU, and the willingness to cooperate between former adversaries has increased decisively. In contrast, certain social groups and countries who have suffered material losses as a result of the ongoing process of expansion have employed tactics that are far from civilized.

However much the most important constituting values and elements of a civil society might be present Europe-wide, the common public sphere that would facilitate the evolution of a

⁶⁴ See Victor Pérez Díaz, “The Public Sphere and a European Civil Society,” in Jeffrey C. Alexander, ed., *Real Civil Societies* (London: SAGE, 1998), pp. 211-238.

⁶⁵ Ralph Dahrendorf, *After 1989: Morals, Revolution and Civil Society* (Oxford: St. Anthony College, 1997), p. 78.

transnational civil society has not yet developed. The creation of a European public sphere, which is of utmost importance for the development of a European civil society is, according to PÉREZ-DIAZ, hindered for a number of reasons:

- 1) Due to economic and political uncertainties public interest is focused predominantly on questions inside the framework of the nation state (such as levels of unemployment, the question of the welfare state, etc.);
- 2) The conduct of the European transnational political establishment contradicts its rhetoric; on the level of day-to-day management it follows the vested interests of nation states;
- 3.) The criterion of accountability is missing;
- 4.) The logic of the founding fathers is still in effect, according to which any step forward in the realm of economics or finance will induce a chain reaction on a European level and will facilitate social and political interaction;
- 5.) The fragmentation arising from the diversity of languages and cultures is further accentuated by the lack of common myths and a common historical narrative.

PÉREZ-DIAZ is certainly right to point out that the expansion of a European public sphere will be the result of active citizenship, and not exclusively the work of a transnational political class, and “secondly, this citizenry could develop a certain critical awareness towards performative contradictions in European policies...[and it can] devote more attention to the problems of reconsidering their remote and recent historical narratives.”⁶⁶

At this point we enter a vicious circle: the commitment and attachment of Europeans will only strengthen once their institutions guarantee them a greater number of substantial civil rights than any other political medium. Without this it is indeed hard to imagine an efficient European civil society. But who in fact will convince institutions of this necessity? Who else but the sporadically dispersed elements of transnational civil and social networks and institutions, together with the citizens who make them function? The act of creation and emergence must be an act of magic worthy of BARON MÜNCHAUSEN.

The EU’s soft spot is that its institutions are not thoroughly transparent and do not possess full democratic social legitimacy. The democratic deficit during the 1990s continued to grow. The consensus that was symptomatic of the integration-orientated elite drained away after WW II. This consensus played a key role in the regular and effective cooperation of the Western European governments and societies. This is no longer clear in the case of eastern enlargement.

The Director of the European Policy Centre, JOHN PALMER, mentions a growing turmoil and doubt in connection with “the fundamental aims of the European integration”.⁶⁷ PALMER comes to the conclusion that the “Future of Europe” debate - owing to the uncertainties surrounding the fundamental aims - cannot mobilize a critical social mass. This is underpinned by the public opinion polls from the *Eurobarometer*, the lack of social resonance after the Convention debates, and the aloofness of the Western European political arena. The Amsterdam and Nice Treaties attempted to implement long-term reforms in order to reach “a civic engagement to the broader political community or the creation of a normative order that

⁶⁶ Pérez-Díaz (1998), p. 236.

⁶⁷ John Palmer and Paul Gillespie, *The Mission and Values of the Europe We Need* (<http://europa.eu.int/futurum/documents/other/oth2002>, The European Policy Centre (20 September 2001).

is maintained by the independent source of the input-orientated legitimacy”⁶⁸. These forced attempts from above to create a common identity or the public comprehension of public good have regularly flopped. DIMITROS CHRYSOCHOOU neatly indites “Amsterdam as having failed to incorporate any substantive civic rights in a formal ‘constitutional’ document addressed to the citizen directly, thus reflecting the insistence of sovereignty conscious states on codifying existing trends in both jurisprudence and legislation”⁶⁹. In other words, national interests shadow the broader vision. Amsterdam and Nice - adjusted to fit the EC’s and the EU’s developmental history, were under the necessity of creating and/or addressing the political community, in spite of which policies were produced and developed.

CHRYSOCHOOU’s critique of European elites – in accordance with the opinions of numerous European social scientists reaches the gist of the problem:

The significance of tying the self-image of the elites to the dialectic between citizenship and demos-formation is that no common civic identity may come into being unless all major actors engaged in European governance see themselves as part of a polity-building exercise that has to evolve from the lower level upwards. Likewise, a transnational political space must be built up in the everyday networks of civic engagement, instead of being constructed from the top down.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Dimitros Chrysochoou, *Towards a Civic Conception of the European Polity*, Working Paper 33 (University of Exeter, 2001), p. 5.

⁷⁰ Chrysochoou (2001), p17.

CHRYSOCHOOU’s chart models the present state of the European polity and the civil society.

Typology of Civil Governance⁷¹

Nascent	<p>CIVIL SOCIETY (functionalist demos)</p>	<p>CIVIL SPACE (interactive demos)</p>
civil identity	<p>PUBLIC SPHERE</p>	<p>CIVIL COMMUNITY (organic demos)</p>
Formed		

There are emerging signs of transnational civil society at the EU level; therefore the EU occupies the upper left box. It is restricted in this position because it has not been institutionalized at the European level. CHRYSOCHOOU argues that without the normative frames of transnational civil society, institutionalization at the European level will not occur.

The “Europeanization” of civil society could significantly influence future reforms and aid in the creation of a civil identity from “the present fragmented demos”. In the light of agreements based on costs and benefits which are inadequate to generate civil engagement, it is difficult to say, however, what these fundamental reforms would look like.

CIVIL SOCIETY DISCOURSE AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

When we contemplate civil society we encompass more than just society with the notion. The phrase contains added value. When we discuss the notion of European civil society it connotes a further qualification. If we study present European societies with their democratic forms of government and, on the other hand, the lack of democracy at the transnational level of the EU, it reveals why the notion became so relevant to decision-makers, bureaucrats, politicians, regional planners and also for civil society activists. These actors, one way or another, are the architects of the New Europe. The future of Europe depends on to what extent they will be able to cooperate, compromise and mobilize their social environments on the questions that will determine the future of the European constitution, political community and society.

Today, European civil society is rather a promise than a *fait accompli*. Caution is necessary when employing the notion, otherwise we could easily fall into the traps of wishful thinking and over-ideological expectations. For the time being, we have to deal with open and unanswerable normative questions. Can the formulation of European civil society become instrumental in the handling of social exclusion and open new channels of social affiliation? Will this result in the implementation of new policies, thereby activating participation in the processes of integration and Europeanization? Or, on the contrary, will there be only protest? In other words, is there any substantive change in attitude on the part of civil society

⁷¹ Chrysochoou (2001), p18.

organizations towards more effective, task-oriented and problem-solving transborder cooperation and networking?

The need for new players and movements ensures prominent status to the concept of European civil society. It is often the only tool to link the contradictory processes of integration, Eastern enlargement and Europeanization. It suggests that there is a European Way to restructure and unite disintegrating elements of society, political community and culture. All this can happen under the conditions of equal access to opportunities, democratic participation, individual freedom, peace, social welfare and civility.

For centuries the development of civil society was exceedingly inequable in Europe. It was confined to certain segments of societies in Western Europe. From its rebirth through the 1980s it has gained newer and newer connotations and conquered wider social spheres. In the meantime, the notion itself has been democratized.

Today Europe is a broadening, multi-level social space. Individuals, NGOs, and coalitions provide its colours. Social innovators, independent media, and trade unions act out the European drama. At the end of the 20th century, the lack of bipolarity, the acceleration of globalization and widening European integration led to the beginning of an era different from the last 250-300 years when civil society was principally evoked inside the borders of the nation state. Today its activities and networks increasingly cross national borders and there are signs that its leaders perceive the complexities of this new period. Many civil society groups in Europe lobby governmental organisations, form coalitions with international associations and experiment with new forms of crossborder cooperation.

These new crossborder networks can potentially create new identities or resuscitate old ones in new forms. In this way, they contribute to the Europeanization of Europe in as much as they are capable of stimulating “awareness among the inhabitants of Europe that (despite considerable differences of language and history) mutual understanding of different ways of life is becoming a practical necessity, that Europeans are being drawn into the first genuinely European civil society.”⁷²

When attempting to understand the transnational mobilization of interests groups, sub-national agencies and citizens, we need new notions and a new central concept. JOSÉ MAGONE suggests the same when examining European civil society as a heuristic device.⁷³

THE “GREAT SIGNIFIER” IN *THE WHITE PAPER*

The gap between rhetoric and reality is uncontested. From the documents analyzed it seems that civil society serves as an umbrella and shelter, the redeemer of the European Project. The European elite needs its own civil society as well as national governments and political parties do. Under these conditions, European civil society discourse could easily become the new language of dominance and power if genuine civil society is unable to articulate itself at the transnational and European levels. The crucial question is whether the frames and structures

⁷² *Towards a European Civil Society*, Research Proposal (Berlin: WZB, January 2002).

⁷³ José M. Magone, *The Modern World System and European Civil Society. A Reconstruction of the Long Dureé of Modernity in the New Millennium* (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2000).
(<http://essex.ac.uk/ECPR/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/copenhagen/ws9/magone/pdf>).

needed for the development of a transnational, European civil society will come into existence in the near future. This would be the moment for simultaneous democratization both from below and above. At this point, the alienated and unspeakable techno-bureaucratic language that determines the operation and ethos of the EU would lose omnipotence. However distant this may be, it is not impossible that the language of unilateral bureaucratic “provisions” will be superseded by the language of social dialogue. How can we overcome the present situation? Can the EU escape from its crisis of legitimacy and perpetual monologue disguised as dialogue? If we want to look for answers, it is worth examining the EU’s own self-reflections.

The White Paper on European Governance released by the European Commission in July 2001 was produced on the demand for strong self-reflection and can be recognized as an attempt to start real dialogue. What counts most from our viewpoint is that civil society and the citizen stand at its core:

Democratic institutions and the representatives of the people, at both national and European levels, can and must try to connect Europe with its citizens. This is the starting condition for more effective and relevant policies.⁷⁴

The White Paper emphasizes that immediate reforms are needed. At the same time, the authors make clear that the power of the Commission alone is not enough:

The Commission cannot make these changes on its own, nor should this White Paper be seen as a magic cure for everything. Introducing change requires effort from all the other Institutions, central government, regions, cities, and civil society in the current and future Member States. The White Paper is primarily addressed to them.⁷⁵

The most important recognition in the *White Paper* is that (similar to many official EU declarations released in the past years) the continued success of integration depends on stronger and more effective interaction between “regional and local municipalities and the civil society.”⁷⁶ At the same time, authors of the document hold the nation states responsible for what invariably refers to the survival of state-centred thinking and a hierarchical approach. The Commission disengages itself from responsibility to:

Establish a more systematic dialogue with representatives of regional and local governments through national and European associations at an early stage in shaping policy.⁷⁷

The *White Paper* can be regarded as a change in the self-interpretation of European construction. It signals a crisis with the official recognition that the process is not proceeding on the right track. The community method has reached its limits and to develop further it needs to find new players as well:

⁷⁴ *The White Paper on European Governance* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2001), 428 Final, p. 3.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

European integration has delivered fifty years of stability, peace and economic prosperity ... Yet despite its achievements, many Europeans feel alienated from the Union's work.⁷⁸

At one point the self-criticism becomes especially deep and elicits, *expressis verbis*, the possibility of the paralysis of the Union:

The decreasing turnout in the European Parliament elections and the Irish "No" vote also serve to show the widening gulf between the European Union and the people it serves. ... There is a perceived inability of the Union to act effectively where a clear case exists, for instance, unemployment, food safety scares, crime, the conflicts on the EU's borders and its role in the world.⁷⁹

Then the critique turns against the Member States:

By the same token, Member States do not communicate well about what the Union is doing and what they are doing in the Union. "Brussels" is too easily blamed by Member States for difficult decisions that they themselves have agreed or even requested.⁸⁰

After the critique and expression of frustration, the *White Paper* examines the role and possibilities of civil society. This is a new development in the history of the EU that reveals the birth of a new rhetoric, i.e. the *White Paper* emphasizes civil society's outstanding role in the creation of the future Europe. There is a whole sub-chapter on the topic of civil society entitled, "Involving Civil Society" (pp. 14–15). This chapter not only enhances the possible role of civil society, but also emphasizes its responsibility in the shaping of good governance. The first recommendation of the closing chapter ("From Governance to the Future of Europe") also speaks about civil society. It recommends the restructuring of the EU's relation to civil society in order to promote mutual responsibility and accountability. The European Union admits the need of civil society, so it urges dialogue with it. In as much as this experiment continues according to the five fundamental principles laid down in the *White Paper* (promotion of transparency, participation, accountability, efficiency, and coherence), it can create a new context driving the process of integration and Eastern enlargement through new channels. If it remains just rhetoric, it can only worsen the already tarnished credibility of the EU in the circles of institutionalized and non-institutionalized civil society.

Acknowledging the crises and accepting the problems coupled with the recognition that there is a need to create a new relationship with a wider circle of actors is noteworthy. The tacit suggestion of *The White Paper* gives the impression that the community method, amended with the civil society method could be an efficient mechanism on which to base the future of European integration. It is also remarkable that the notion is not limited to present EU countries, but is extended to the civil societies of the accession countries as well.

It is questionable, however, whether the initiative to establish transnational dialogue with civil society will meet the expectations, aims and visions "from below". Developments so far are not reassuring. At present, most European societies – both old and new members – are fairly sceptical about influencing European affairs. There are some refreshing exceptions such as

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 7.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 7.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 7.

the Internet publication entitled “Common Europe,” published by independent Polish intellectuals and NGOs in 2001 who identify themselves as “the voice of Polish non-governmental analytic centres”. They share and support a vision of Europe “where solidarity is a common standard, which is not divided between better and worse Europeans, and which is not founded on a fear of unification.”⁸¹

Similar to the *White Paper*, they believe that the involvement of citizens in the process of shaping the new political and social image of a common Europe is the key to the real and democratic legitimization of European integration.

The voice of European citizens is increasingly heard as a result of the activities of various civic organisations – associations, foundations, churches and informal groups. We are witnessing the birth of a European civil society, which, despite all its deficiencies, is a real expression of the concept of solidarity, the fight against social exclusion, discrimination, and for a clean environment and education. The activities of the organizations of civil society reach into those areas where the state cannot act effectively, and stop integration being limited to elites.⁸²

Echoing the challenges of the *White Paper*, the authors of the document encourage “civil dialogue” and the involvement of civil organisations.

Despite several seducing calls from different corners of Europe, the mindset and language of decision-makers is still determined by an economic and technical efficiency that is controlled from above by governments and intergovernmental or supra-national organizations. According to LARRY SIEDENTOP we are still “sacrificing at the altar of economic growth instead of citizenship.”⁸³ SIEDENTOP, while analyzing the evolution of European democracies and the historical differences between them, purports that Europe, which is principally covered by a French political design, was basically engendered in economic terms.⁸⁴ Similarly to CHRYSOCHOOU, he criticizes first of all the European elites who he thinks are the cause of a moral and institutional crises in Europe. One can agree that European elites fell victim to “the tyranny of the economy language.”⁸⁵ The re-discovery of civil society at a European level, combined with the introduction of openness, participation and accountability from above, can be regarded as an attempt at rectifying this imbalance.

It is undeniable that since 1957 European construction arose primarily through economic mechanisms. Consequently, it has its own peculiar reasons for employing the language of market efficiency and bureaucratic control which has blanketed the language of politics and does not allow for the development of the language of civil society. The need for a new way of thinking about “constructing Europe” is obviously present, but a common language for the European public has not yet crystallized. At the time of eastern enlargement and the unfinished symphony of European constitutionalization, we are witnessing an interesting experiment, i.e. the creation of a new European language and public sphere simultaneously from below and from above.

⁸¹ See Common Europe: <http://www.common.org.pl/>

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Larry Siedentop, *Democracy in Europe* (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 217.

⁸⁴ Siedentop (2000), p. 226.

⁸⁵ Siedentop (2000), p. 226.

**EUROPE'S NEW ROLE?
THE EUROPEAN PROJECT IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT**

The protection and enlargement of the values of the European social model is unthinkable without a European Union that takes a leading role in world politics. Politicians, visionaries and social scientists like DELORS, JOSPIN, HABERMAS, FISCHER emphasize plausibly and consequently that a European constitution would increase the ability of Member States to act together by providing the legal framework. In this way, too, something that was lost at the national level could be regained – the ability to have a voice in world politics. On the one hand, there is fundamental agreement upon this among leaders, experts and analysts of the European Union; on the other hand, there is no consensus on what kinds of changes and reforms are needed to strengthen and make more effective the representation of European interests and values.

As questions about the European construction and Europe's role in the world increase, world system theory can increasingly be found under the surface in analytical essays. JOSÉ M. MAGONE, who set out one of the most complex and comprehensive approaches, borrowed the title from IMMANUEL WALLERSTEIN, *The Modern World System and European Civil Society: A Reconstruction of the Long Durée of the Modernity of the Millenium*.⁸⁶ MAGONE based his analysis on post-national constellation and continues by analyzing the slow, but fundamental change in the international system. He argues that this change resulted in a paradigm-shift in the field of international relations, and that essentially the nation state is no longer the only or central actor in international society. The EU which itself is a “result” of this slow but radical change, significantly contributed to this much-analyzed paradigm-shift.⁸⁷

MAGONE's approach is new, because he connects world system theory and European integration to the change in the role and function of European nation states and the transnationalization and Europeanization of civil society. Other notions, however, like democracy, civil society, sovereignty, regionalization, representation, identity, multi-level governance, etc. need rethinking. MAGONE considers the European Union as a political system *sui generis* that was created by a set of treaties.⁸⁸ In his remarkable study MAGONE first examines what impact the world system and the capitalist world economy has on the realignment of the European space; whether a new political economic structure could be created as a counter-balancing force to globalized financial capitalism.⁸⁹ This question is relevant because while the European nation states have matured to the level of intergovernmental cooperation, in other parts of the world completely different trends are proceeding. Consequently, the sharing of power and hegemony at a global level is greatly asymmetric. The international system, especially as represented by international organisations, only reacted slowly. MAGONE's important recognition concerning the future of Europe is that “although a global multilevel governance system is emerging, it is asymmetrical in its integration in different places of the world.”⁹⁰ This asymmetry and

⁸⁶ José M. Magone, *The Modern World System and European Civil Society: A Reconstruction of the Long Durée of Modernity in the New Millenium* (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2000).

⁸⁷ See for example, the works of Jürgen Habermas, Jeremy Rifkin, Iván Vitányi, etc.

⁸⁸ Magone regards this phenomenon so important that he introduces a new term: “treatism”.

⁸⁹ Magone (2000), p. 3.

⁹⁰ Magone (2000), p. 2.

dilatory institutional reaction opens the door to civil society in the new, enlarged European space as well as in the global arena. A fundamental question arises at this point concerning the not-so-distant future: Will the European Union as a political system *sui generis* together with civil society mobilize towards the paradigm-shift; in other words, diluting national-orientated capitalism with “proactive cosmopolitanism.”⁹¹

MAGONE clearly does not consider the EU or European civil society as a blueprint for the world or a completed project. He emphasizes that it is half-made and speaks therefore about tendencies and possibilities. According to his diagnosis, the Westphalian system of international relations is now being transformed into a post-Westphalian system in which the emphasis is on cooperation between states. In the new world of increasing complexities and interdependencies, the much appreciated institutions of global governance like the UN, IMF, World Bank or WTO have to be restructured in order to survive. Echoing a widespread hope, MAGONE is convinced that the American model of 20th century capitalism must be replaced by a “global negotiated model”⁹², and into this new model the EU could transfer genuine and innovative elements. This is the point where European civil society enters the scene since its role has become indispensable, at least in theory.

According to some optimistic scenarios,⁹³ “*Pax Democratica*” will follow a long period of *Pax Americana* in the 20th century. Rethinking WALLERSTEIN’s concept, MAGONE summarises the metamorphosis of the modern world system in a chart.

⁹¹ Magone (2000), p. 3.

⁹² Magone (2000), p. 14.

⁹³ James Robert Huntley, *Pax Democratica: A Strategy for the 21st Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998)..

Table 2:THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE MODERN WORLD SYSTEM

Phases of Capitalism		ECONOMY	POLITICS	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	STRUCTURE OF INTERNATIONAL POWER RELATIONS
Agricultural Capitalism(Early Capitalism) 14 th -18 th centuries		Expansion of market economy in nation-states; economic theory of mercantilism and physiocratism	The making of the nation-state. Absolutism Internal pacification	The making of inter-state system. Final settlement in Peace of Westphalia in 1648 No international bodies	<i>Pax Britannica</i> in 19 th century Hegemonic Design of strongest nation-states.
Industrial Capitalism 19 th -20 th centuries	Liberal Capitalism 19 th century – 1945	Industrial revolution; Imperialism of 19 th century; taylorism as new system of production organisation	Consolidation of nation-state. Democratization Citizenship	Consolidation of the Eurocentric inter-state system; Colonial empires; Emergence of USA as global peacemaker; Emergence of the Soviet Union;Emergence of several new independent European countries in 19 th and 20 th century League of Nations in interwar period(1919-1939)	No Hegemonic structure, Regionalism, isolationism of the USA
	Organized Welfare Capitalism 1945-1989	Industrial society; Taylorism continued; mass society and culture; stability created by redistributive state; Socialist planned economies and experiments in post-colonial countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America; Global economy	Europe:Nation-state Mass democracies Social and economic citizenship Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe: Centralised political systems Developing countries: In search of new models of democracy	Institutionalisation of inter-state system Gradual challenge of eurocentric model by postcolonial states. Bretton woods systems and United Nations as global governance institutions Gradual increase of number of states and non-governmental organisations. Growth in complexity	<i>Pax Americana</i> based on ideological containment strategy against the growth of influence of the Soviet Union. Military, political and economic hegemony
Financial, services Capitalism 1990- 21 st century		Services society; New forms of production based on more flexible systems of production;globalisation strategies of large Transnational corporations; new technologies based on internet and telecommunications	Europe:European Union as a shared sovereignty device Collapse of socialist empire; developing countries moved towards liberal democracy and market economy	Multilevel global system of governance.(Agenda of Reform of global institutions) Regional continental integration:European Union, Mercosur, Nafta, APEC, Asean, CIS. Emerging of Global Civil Society.	<i>Pax Democratica</i> Globalisation of peace and democracy as essential elements of a postnational system of international relations.

**THE EUROPEAN AGENDA:
PUBLIC SPHERES AND NETWORK GOVERNANCE**

Those who are concerned about the possibilities of an emerging European *demos* understand well that a common currency or the single market are not sufficient to establish a political community in the minds of people. Eurosceptics and opponents of a more deeply integrated Europe deny the democratic legitimacy of an supranational institutionalization, claiming that a European *demos* as such does not exist. Consequently, the process of constitutionalization lacks its subject: there is no European collective singular. HABERMAS strongly disagrees with this view, arguing that a political community does not necessarily presuppose a community of common origin, common language and common traditions. On the other hand, it is true that in the course of European history democracy and nation states developed in a circular process, strengthening and consolidating each other. Civil society could be interpreted primarily within the boundaries of the nation state:

There are two lessons to be learnt from the history of the European nation-states. If the emergence of national consciousness involved a painful process of abstraction, leading from local and dynastic identities to national and democratic ones, why, firstly, should this generation of a highly artificial kind of civic solidarity — a “solidarity among strangers” — be doomed to come to a final halt just at the borders of our classical nation-states? And secondly: the artificial conditions in which national consciousness came into existence recall the empirical circumstances necessary for an extension of that process of identity formation beyond national boundaries. These are: the emergence of a European civil society; the construction of a European-wide public sphere; and the shaping of a political culture that can be shared by all European citizens.⁹⁴

Although the political structure of a democratic European Union still needs to be constructed, HABERMAS believes that the process of construction has reached a critical point where conscious polity-construction can take the lead. In other words, the process of constitutionalization plays a decisive role in further development.

The importance of a new, European public sphere and interrelated publics is salient. Without it, it is impossible to imagine overcoming the democratic deficit and the crystallization of a positive European identity. This new European public sphere will most likely take the shape of a network which, in the words of HABERMAS, “gives citizens of all member states an equal opportunity to take part in an encompassing process of focused political communication.”⁹⁵

One of the inevitable consequences of the European transformation process is that the European nation states are increasingly losing their all-encompassing ability to control. The demand for collective control over negative externalities transferred a lot of power to the supranational level that used to be under national control (environment, migration, the fight against illegal trade, etc.). The establishment of the single market required a set of measures that would be impossible to control at the national level.

⁹⁴ Jürgen Habermas, “Why Europe Needs a Constitution?” *New Left Review* (September-October 2001), p. 16.

⁹⁵ Habermas (2001), p. 17.

The process of the sharing of power for the time being favours Brussels over national governments and modifies the relation between central institutions and municipalities. This change is quite advanced in the case of the West European societies, but still remains a long-term aim for the acceding East Central European countries.

If new players, e.g., independent social groups, movements and initiatives, successfully adapt to the possibilities provided by new supranational structures, their survival will not only be assured but will also expand the narrow national public spaces. In the words of YVES MÉNY (2001), they will contribute to changing national squares into a European circle. These attempts, however successful they may be, will not immediately and automatically lead to the evolving of the public sphere as suggested by HABERMAS.

Between Identity and Institutions

WILLIAM OUTHWAITE also believes that the European integration process requires “some sort of civil society dimension.”⁹⁶ He tries to answer the question whether we can talk about an emerging European civil society by looking at European identities and European institutions.

A European identity might be seen as taking shape in opposition to, on the one hand, national or subnational identities of a traditional kind and, on the other, alternative supranational identities such as an Anglo American Atlantist identity ...⁹⁷

OUTHWAITE understands the significance of the European experiment to establish transnational, European identity via postnational citizenship and constitutionalization for global citizenship and global governance.

Europe is pioneering a mode of governance, this time transnational rather than national, which gives some practical embodiment to the current extension of democratic thinking into conceptions of cosmopolitan democracy.⁹⁸

This European experiment and the talk of European civil society both from above and from below (and, to a certain degree from in-between by social scientists) certainly contributes to expanding horizons including linguistic ones, even if the existence of such a civil society (to what extent, in what forms and how efficiently?) still invites inquiry.

⁹⁶ William Outhwaite, "Towards a European Civil Society," *Soundings* (2000 November 16).

⁹⁷ Outhwaite (2000), p. 135.

⁹⁸ Outhwaite (2000), p. 136.

CHAPTER III. GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY: FROM EAST EUROPEAN DISSIDENTS TO WORLD BANK PARLANCE

If there's one phrase I could do with hearing less of during 2002, it's "civil society". I'm not alone. Many of my friends, community activists and organizers in a number of countries also cringe at the ritualized, ubiquitous usage of the phrase. We shudder at the thought that we might be mistaken for being part of it.⁹⁹ (AZIZ CHOUDRY, 2002)

No emancipation is possible in the modern world ... without a strong civil society that can strengthen the public sphere and can provide a haven from and a center of resistance to the Behemoth State.¹⁰⁰ (ALVIN GOULDNER, 1980)

CIVIL SOCIETY, GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Analysis of the impact of civil society on citizenship remained for a long time within national boundaries and more recently within the European Union (CALLAHAN, 1996; CASTELLS, 1998; DAVIDSON, 1997; DE SWAAN, 1997; HEATER, 1996; HUNTINGTON, 1993; HUTCHINGS, 1996; WALZER, 1994). Theoretical and empirical analysis of the emerging global civil society was sporadic in the 1990s and started to accumulate only around the turn of the century (LIPSCHUTZ, 1992; FALK, 1995, 1998; FLORINI, 2000; SCHOLTE, 1999, 2002; EDWARDS, 2002; BARKER, 2001; MAGONE, 2000; KALDOR, 2003; KEANE, 2003, etc.).

Most authors would agree with MUETZELFELDT and SMITH (2002) that analysing global civil society presupposes the analysis of global governance and the democratic deficit on the global level. Somewhat mechanistically, they formulate:

Just as states may facilitate or obstruct the emergence and development of national civil society, so too, global governance institutions may facilitate or obstruct an emerging global civil society.¹⁰¹

The suggestion of MUETZELFELDT and SMITH to use the "mutually emergent" approach (which proved to be successful in the case of East Central Europe) for understanding emerging global civil society seems to be acceptable since it focuses on the interdependence among the major players in the global arena. Their main question, whether civil society is able to extend its reach "in step with the globalization of markets and systems of governance, and with what effects?",¹⁰² again echoes MARC NERFIN's model and the most recent literature on global civil society.

Emerging institutions of global governance like the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO focused both in their activities and their language on pursuing their original aim of developing

⁹⁹ Aziz Choudry, "All This Civil Society Talk Takes Us Nowhere," *GATT Watch* (5 January 2002), p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ Alvin Gouldner, "Civil Society in Capitalism and Socialism," in *The Two Marxisms* (London: Macmillan, 1980), p. 371, quoted in Krishan Kumar, "1989 Revolutionary Ideas and Ideals," *Contradictions* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. 148.

¹⁰¹ Michael Muetzfeldt and Gary Smith, "Civil Society and Global Governance: the Possibilities for Global Citizenship," *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2002), p. 56.

¹⁰² Muetzfeldt and Smith (2002), p. 59.

and supporting global finance and trade markets. This socially and politically rather one-sided and insensitive approach and behaviour went through a significant change during the second half of the 1990s. First the World Bank, then the IMF and the WTO recognized that they could not achieve their objectives anymore without trying to create some harmony between the economic, social and political aspects of global development. In order to do so, they have to convince some major players (INGOs and social movements) about the correctness of their activities. In other words, they have to enter a structured and regular dialogue with identifiable actors of global civil society (SCHOLTE, 1998, 1999; WOLFENSON, 1998; O'BRIEN, et. al., 2000, etc.). This has opened a new period of intermediate interfaces that gave new impetus for both political debates and social scientific analysis.

Since the mid-1990s, there is a growing consensus among global civil society representatives that their activity can be instrumental in solving transnational issues which individual governments or intergovernmental organizations are unable to solve by themselves (KALDOR, 2003; FLORINI, 2000; EDWARDS, 2002).

This new optimism has been reflected in the recent literature on global civil society. LESTER SALAMON's (1994) phrase, "associational revolution," whose significance, according to him, equals that of the rise of the nation state, is a good example of the academic/activist optimism which provoked more support than content. As KEANE (2003) and others (MUETZELFELDT and SMITH, 2002, etc.) repeatedly point out, this optimism is often unfounded and reflects the growing desire of many intellectuals to identify actors who are able to solve the mounting problems of the world. Nevertheless, it is hard to deny, on the other hand, that there is an unprecedented shift on the global stage in the activities and organizational capacities and as a consequence in achievements of global networks, movements and organizations, including *ad hoc* initiatives. To separate ungrounded and therefore sometimes irresponsible optimism from real progress and civil society empowerment is not easy, but nevertheless it is one of the major tasks ahead.

JAN AART SCHOLTE in his pathbreaking article¹⁰³ offers a reconceptualized theory of civil society. His starting point is that global civil society played an important role in recasting politics in the late 20th century, since it offers new chances "for enhancing security, equity and democracy in the contemporary world...". Similar to other authors, SCHOLTE defines civil society outside of the market, yet he is aware of overlaps and interfaces.

...the distinction between market and civil society is in practice sometimes far from absolute. ... Companies often fund and organize non-profit bodies, meanwhile business lobbies like chambers of commerce and bankers' associations promote market interests even though these organizations do not produce profit.¹⁰⁴

Not satisfied with the negative terminology of non-governmental organizations and non-profit sector etc., he provides another focused and practical definition:

"... civil society exists when people make concerted efforts through voluntary associations to mould rules: ... 'Civil society' is the collective noun, while 'civic' groups, organizations etc.

¹⁰³ Jan Aart Scholte, "Global Civil Society: Changing the World?," *CSGR Working Paper*, No. 31 (1999).

¹⁰⁴ Scholte (1999), p. 3.

are the individual elements within civil society;”¹⁰⁵ and a little later: “... civil society exists whenever people mobilize through voluntary associations in initiatives to shape the social order”.¹⁰⁶ He believes, that further generalization is difficult since, in reality, existing civil society is greatly varied and diverse.

Even if the history of transnational or international organizations goes back to the 19th century, global civil society is a relatively new phenomenon. “Talk” of global civil society emerged only in the early 1990s. (See FALK, 1992; LIPSCHUTZ, 1992, and SHAW, 1994 among others.)¹⁰⁷ Global civil society surfaced with many related terms, like international non-governmental organizations, transnational advocacy networks, global social movements, new multilateralism etc. heralding not only an associational but also a linguistic revolution. SCHOLTE aptly observes that among the different meanings associated with the new phenomenon of globality: that of internationalisation, universalization, Westernization/Americianization and deterritorialization, only deterritorialization can be seen as a distinctive trend which signals a turning point. Deterritorialization means that territorial locations, distance, borders, etc. no longer have a determining influence. “In global space, ‘place’ is not territorially fixed, territorial distance is covered in effectively no time, and territorial frontiers present no particular impediment. Thus global relations have what could be called a ‘supraterritorial’, ‘transborder’ or ‘transworld’ character.”¹⁰⁸ Deterritorialization does not mean, however, that territorial geography has lost all of its relevance, emphasizes SCHOLTE: “we inhibit a globalizing rather than a completely globalized world.”¹⁰⁹

Territoriality and non-territoriality as demonstrated in the case of the European Union and European integration (TUNANDER, 1997, etc.) exist in a rich amalgamation and interdependence. This coexistence however, does not blur the fact that we are at the beginning of a new epoch. “...while territoriality may continue to be important, globalization has brought an end to territorialism (that is a condition where social space is reducible to territorial coordinates alone).”¹¹⁰

Inventing and introducing a new vocabulary, SCHOLTE identifies globality as supraterritoriality and constructs his notion of global civil society accordingly. “If we identify globality as supraterritoriality, then what does global civil society involve? In short, global civil society encompasses civic activity that: (a) addresses transworld issues; (b) involves transborder communication; (c) has a global organisation; (d) works on a premise of supraterritorial solidarity. Often these four attributes go hand in hand, but civic associations can also have a global character in only one or several of these four respects. For example, a localised group that campaigns on supraterritorial problems like climate change could be

¹⁰⁵ Scholte (1999), p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ Scholte (1999), p. 7.

¹⁰⁷ See, R. A. Falk, “The Infancy of Global Civil Society,” in G. Lundestad and O. A. Westad (eds), *Beyond the Cold War: New Dimensions in International Relations* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1992), pp. 219–39; R. D. Lipschutz, “Reconstructing World Politics: The Emergence of Global Civil Society,” *Millennium*, 21 (1992), pp. 389–420; *Citizens Strengthening Global Civil Society* (Washington: CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation, 1994); M. Shaw, “Civil Society and Global Politics: Beyond a Social Movements Approach,” *Millennium*, 23 (1994), pp. 647–667.

¹⁰⁸ Scholte (1999), p. 7.

¹⁰⁹ Scholte (1999), p. 9.

¹¹⁰ Scholte (1999), p. 9.

considered part of global civil society even though the association lacks a transborder organization and indeed might only rarely communicate with civic groups elsewhere in the world. Conversely, global civic networks might mobilise around a local development like the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.¹¹¹

What are those new conditions that can be seen as responsible for the expansion of the vocabulary, the horizon and the further development of the language of civil society? What are the causes of such an enormous change? First of all, there is the worldwide restructuration of power-relations, i.e. the rise of the postnational constellation, the emergence of new transnational units, crossborder frameworks and regional institutions. SCHOLTE explains that: “In contemporary politics civic associations often operate in regional and global spaces as well as in local and national contexts,” and as a consequence: “Conceptions of civil society need to be recast to reflect these changed circumstances.”¹¹²

This is a significant conclusion that is based on the recognition that we have reached a new epoch of global civil society development. This is certainly highly relevant for students as well as activists and clients (partners, interlocutors) of civil society organizations. The new vocabulary is a reflection of diversified meanings and, as a consequence, the language of civil society has gone through significant change: the new epoch gave birth to a new discourse.

This does not mean, however, as emphasized by many of the recent authors that the remarkable intellectual and political history of civil society theory has become obsolete or irrelevant. Quite the opposite: present development in civil society discourse, the linguistically expanded horizons throw new light on previous concepts and conceptualizations. Retrospectively, it is becoming more clear why the term had such rich potential from the very moment of its resurfacing in the second half of the 1970s in Latin America and East Central Europe. This potential has been unfolding in present political and academic debates on global, transnational, European, regional, etc., civil society, and is manifested in the 4.2 million shots on the Internet search of the different species of civil society. The table below represents one type of categorization by subject. It is impressive nonetheless to look at the breadth and variety available under the heading “civil society”.

¹¹¹ Scholte (1999), p. 10.

¹¹² Jan Aart Scholte, “Civil Society and Democracy in Global Governance,” *Global Governance*, 8 (2002), p. 285.

	Google.com	Questia.com	Amazon.com	EBSCO
European civil society	1.270.000	29.176	29	105
Trans-national civil society	229.000	213	1	52
Democracy + civil society	1.070.000	110	149	377
Language of civil society	1.280.000	32.556	22	29
Public spheres + civil society	143.000	7	0	9
Citizenship + civil society	388.000	49	68	98
Globalization + civil society	370.000	2	17	106
Development + civil society	2.170.000	34	74	461
Citizenship + civil society	388.000	49	68	98
Social movement + civil society	994.000	93	25	96
Networks + civil society	823.000	5	17	43
Governance + civil society	797.000	4	25	124
Media + civil society	1.630.000	21	25	86
Civic discourse + civil society	40.900	4	4	6

This retrospective evaluation is not simply a *post festum* justification of the ongoing civil society debate in academia. It is rather an attempt to explain the perseverance and proliferation of the concept, on the one hand, and the growing demand of the market of ideas and intellectual innovations, on the other.

It has been a reflection of a broader and more fundamental social need and an expression of interest by various groups and associations in society to find the proper way to create a common denominator so their voices will be heard.

As this report has indicated, civil society literature started to grow from the late 1980s and with certain ups and downs continued to grow through the 1990s. In the early 1990s there was a stronger tendency of scepticism about the usefulness of civil society as a social scientific category. Some authors (SELIGMAN, 1992; KUMAR, 1994; TAMÁS GÁSPÁR MIKLÓS, 1994, etc.) expressed strong opinions about the uselessness and inadequacy of the category, in the first place mentioning its blurred character and its normative and political-ideological loadedness.

In 1992, RONNIE LIPSCHUTZ in his article “Reconstructing World Politics: The Emergence of Global Civil Society,” reasoned that “the growth of global civil society represents an ongoing project of civil society to reconstruct, re-imagine, or re-map world politics”¹¹³

Many political and academic analyses in the 1990s revealed that it was a necessary but outdated and nostalgic expression of the heroic decade when the struggle was waged against weakening dictatorships and authoritarian regimes. Since – the argument goes – that epoch is over, we no longer need unclear, overstretched, undefinable categories to describe or analyse

¹¹³ Ronnie D. Lipschutz, *Reconstructing World Politics: The Emergence of Global Civil Society*. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (1992), p. 391.

economic transition and social democratization. They believe that the concept and theory of democracy and market economy sufficiently serve intellectual and analytical demands.

This proved to be entirely wrong. From the mid-1990s onward, we can observe a surprising growth and expansion of interest in the concept, both in the fields of praxis and in theory-building, as the abundance of literature shows (see our *Concise Bibliography of Civil Society*). According to the strong argument of SCHOLTE, the old concept of civil society needs restructuring since its meaning has gone through significant change at the dawn of the new millennium. He convincingly argues that accordingly other related categories – first of all democracy – need to be reconceptualized under the radically new political-economic constellation. HABERMAS calls this new constellation postnational for good reason.¹¹⁴ Both democracy and civil society (not to speak of some even broader categories such as society) belonged to the era of modernity which overlaps with that of the modern nation state. Within this era, the natural unit of both political life and social analysis used to be the universally perceived nation state.

The nation state paradigm has dominated throughout the 19th and 20th centuries; the two world wars fundamentally undermined its claim of absolute sovereignty and relativized its practical usefulness. Although the constellation has significantly changed since the end of WW II (and even during the war), the domination of the nation state paradigm has survived fundamental changes and transition towards crossborder, trans- and supranational and even global structures first in the economic then in the political and social realms. The belatedness of the social scientific grasp of this fundamental restructuring is partly due to the rigid categorization and conventional/conservative character of our system of knowledge production and its institutions.

The emergence of global civil society at this particular juncture has been seen as a response to the “leaking away of sovereignty from the state both upwards, to supranational institutions, and downwards, to subnational ones... Global civil society is emerging as a functional response to the decreasing ability and willingness of governments to undertake a variety of welfare function.”¹¹⁵ The state, we should be reminded, had its origins not in the desire to provide welfare service, but rather to sell protection whether we want it or not. WWII destroyed the compact between society and the state because in its pursuit of security the state was willing to sacrifice millions of people. State incompetence with regard to managing highly complex problems (like global mass media, environmental problems, illegal arms trade), rather than the traditional ones of war and finance has led to increasing societal competence (See LIPSCHUTZ, 1992).

Identification with the nation state as the primary social grouping has begun to wither partly in response. At the same time identity based on consumption and the market was insufficient for establishing new identities. Therefore we have seen a rise in new forms of collective identities, new nationalisms in some places but also the creation of cosmopolitan identities and a global consciousness (See LIPSCHUTZ, 1992).

¹¹⁴ See Jürgen Habermas, *The Post-National Constellation: Political Essays* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

¹¹⁵ Ronnie D. Lipschutz, “Reconstructing World Politics: The Emergence of Global Civil Society,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (1992), p. 399.

When faced with such diversity, one discovers the importance of re-contextualizing the concept. This is what SCHOLTE suggests as well. Globalization constitutes the sort of contextual change that requires new approaches to democracy and civil society.¹¹⁶

One of the recent discoveries of students of civil society, facing unprecedented diversity, is the political-historical contextualization of the concept. This is what SCHOLTE suggests as well:

Democracy is constructed in relation to context and should be reconstructed when that context changes. ... Contemporary globalization constitutes the sort of change of situation that requires new approaches to democracy.¹¹⁷

SCHOLTE recognizes the democratic deficit on the level of global governance, and wonders whether and how civil society can contribute to reducing it, dynamizing the process of global democratization. More precisely he wants to know “what role can civil society play in a reconfigured democracy for global governance?” In this approach, the distinctive feature of globalization is deterritorialization, in SCHOLTE’S term the rise of “supraterritoriality”. Along this line, he continues

Globality refers to a particular kind of social space... a realm, that substantially transcends the confines of territorial place, territorial distance and territorial borders. Whereas territorial spaces are mapped in terms of longitude, latitude and altitude, global relations transpire in the world as a single place, as one more or less seamless realm. Globality in this sense has a “transworld” or “transborder” quality. A supraterritorial phenomenon can appear simultaneously at any location on earth...¹¹⁸

This theoretization of the postnational constellation or, in SCHOLTE’S formulation “supranationality,” is not to deny the continuity and significance of territoriality and its institutions and geographic as well as metaphoric identities. SCHOLTE and many others strongly emphasize that globality has not taken over territoriality but “territoriality no longer has the monopoly on social geography...” In other words, he says, “we no longer live in an territorialist society.”

One can argue with good reasons about the unequal character of globalization along the faultlines of, for example, urban–rural, South–North, affluent–poor, male–female categories, but we can agree with SCHOLTE that “globality” is an undeniable and significant phenomenon of a new epoch. If this is true, it has significant consequences for the social sciences, political praxis and social relations.

SCHOLTE emphasizes that “territorialist governance” has become impractical in the age of globality.

National and local governments are quite unable by themselves to effectively regulate phenomena like global mass media, global ecological problems, global arms trade, and global finance.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Scholte (2002), p. 285.

¹¹⁷ Scholte (2002), p. 285.

¹¹⁸ Scholte (2002), p. 286.

¹¹⁹ Scholte (2002), p. 287.

Crossborder cooperation strengthens “supraterritorial networks” which provide new loyalties and regional identities. As a consequence, there is a shift in the “geography of values” which supports the argument for an emerging global civil society.

...many people in the contemporary globalizing world have become increasingly ready to give “supraterritorial values” related to say human rights and ecological integrity a higher priority than state sovereignty...¹²⁰

As the wide literature on European integration has emphasized in the last decade – “governance” involves many more layers than the state; and in contemporary multi-layered governance civil society is supposed to play a significant role.

SCHOLTE draws our attention to the growing discrepancy between supraterritorial spaces and the territorial self-determination of the nation state paradigm. He sees this growing tension as the major cause of the crisis of democracy while social relations are gaining more and more global dimensions, “practices of democracy have largely failed to keep pace.”¹²¹

Remaining entrapped in the old paradigm, we keep our expectations *vis-à-vis* the territorial nation state as a “house of democracy;” but as SCHOLTE argues:

Yet even if territorial (national regional and local) mechanisms for regulating global spaces were maximally democratized, it would still not be enough. The state, being territorially grounded, cannot be sufficient by itself as an agent of democracy *vis-à-vis* global relations. Territorial democratic mechanisms are not adequate to bring transborder actors and flows under the collective control of the people they affect. Democratic governance cannot be derived from democratic government alone.¹²²

Previously, society was defined by the borders of the nation state. Democracy meant self-determination for the nation. Integration, as in the case of the EU, has loosened the links between territory and collective destiny. Transborder solidarity networks were already strengthening during the 1970s and 1980s; in other words, cosmopolitan bonds have been growing. The meaning of “people” has certainly lost its unequivocal or predominantly nation state oriented character. Globalization, the process of European integration and the re-emergence of historic regions along with new crossborder Euroregions are making claims for their own “people”.

Global governance, however, is not an embryonic form of a world government modelled after the modern nation-state. “Instead,” argues SCHOLTE, “global relations are regulated in a ‘poststatist’ fashion that has no single center of authority.”¹²³ Civil society, therefore, serves a different function than in the previous epoch and has to find new ways for establishing itself within this new global, postnational constellation. As a consequence: the governance of supraterritorial spaces is characterized by democratic deficit, since “global governance is not democratically legitimate.”¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Scholte (2002), p. 287.

¹²¹ Scholte (2002), p. 290

¹²² Scholte (2002), p. 289.

¹²³ Scholte (2002), p. 289.

¹²⁴ Scholte (2002), p. 292.

Many authors, SCHOLTE, KOCKA, KALDOR, and others talk about “the democratic promise of civil society.

Globalizing civil society potentially

- Can give voice to stakeholders and even empower them; by doing so enhancing participation on the global level;
- Can contribute to the quality and scope of public education since the complexities and rapidly changing “realities” of globalized information societies need permanent learning and education;
- Can foster discussions about actual challenges of global governance – locally as well as on the supranational level;
- Can contribute to enhancing the transparency of global governance;
- and can increase accountability, etc.

Altogether these opportunities, if realized, would give legitimacy both for global governance and for civil society actors playing on the global stage. “Engagement between civil society and regulatory mechanisms can ... enhance the respect that citizens accord to global governance.”¹²⁵

SCHOLTE is very explicit about the role of civil society in global governance:

Civil society can offer a means for affected publics to affirm that global governance arrangements should guide – and where necessary – constrain – their behaviour. Likewise civil society can also provide a space for the expression of discontent and the pursuit of change when existing governance arrangements are regarded as illegitimate.¹²⁶

THE ASSOCIATIONAL REVOLUTION

In the 21st century, civil society will have a voice in world affairs, if not a vote, and both governments and NGOs must share in the task of structuring those voices in ways that promote genuine diversity on the global stage.¹²⁷

During the 1990s, both the engagement and the representation of civil society organizations and networks shifted from monitoring to active participation in governance.¹²⁸ BENJAMIN BARBER (2001) speaks about “signs of an emerging internationalism”¹²⁹ around transnational civil institutions, global social movements, and a world public opinion. This dramatic shift can be grasped clearly from the mid-1990s, even if, as many observers argue, the roots of international NGOs are to be found at the beginning of the 20th century or even earlier.¹³⁰ There is a growing consensus in recent literature that an “associational revolution” (LESTER SALAMON) took place during the 1990s on all possible – global, regional, local – levels. As

¹²⁵ Scholte (2002), p. 294.

¹²⁶ Scholte (2002), p. 294.

¹²⁷ Michael Edwards, “Herding Cats? Civil Society and Global Governance”, *New Economy*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2002), p. 76.

¹²⁸ See, among others, John Foster (2001), Benjamin Barber (2001), Michael Edwards (2002).

¹²⁹ Benjamin Barber, *Globalization Nightmare or Global Civil Society? Freedom in the World*, 2001 (<http://freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2001/essay2text.htm>)

¹³⁰ See John Foster, *Knowing Ourselves: A Brief History of Emerging Civil Society* (Washington, D.C.: 4th CIVICUS World Assembly, 2001); Kaldor (2003), among others.

FOSTER emphasizes, the development of social movements, NGOs and civil society organizations is uneven worldwide, but “growth in number and reach around the world is unquestioned.”¹³¹

The move from monitoring to governing (actively shaping decision-making and participating in confrontative dialogues with decision-makers) is partly a result of the dramatically changed global economic and political constellations which lead the UN to initiate a series of world conferences on very contested issues like environment protection, human rights, gender and global economic policies. This opened up rather closed supranational organizations or MEIs (multilateral economic institutions) such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO towards dialogue and cooperation. On the other hand, it is a result of the growing global consciousness and sense of responsibility, in other words, the changing values of an unprecedented and permanently growing number of citizens who not only protest, gather and organize themselves across frontiers, but are consciously developing their networks of networks on a more or less permanent basis. As a consequence, in FOSTER’s formulation, the World Conferences of the 1990s resulted in a cumulative vision of a desired future.

Many non-governmental representatives participating in the world conferences found a brutal disconnect between visions of social emancipation and environmental care and the global economic policies of the MEIs and large corporations.¹³²

The growing discrepancy between the civil society language used by representatives of the Merchant and the Prince on the one hand, and genuine civil society discourse of Citizens on the other, proved creative and became an expression of the growing role of civil society in settling global matters. Looking at the rewards of subsequent parallel summits and significant changes in global issues as a result of protest and structured criticism, FOSTER seems to have a strong argument when he claims that the associational revolution is extended by an organizational revolution on the side of civil society.

THE IMF, WTO AND WORLD BANK: *QUO VADIS?*

Intergovernmental institutions like the IMF, WTO, and World Bank have come under increasing pressure from criticism by a coalition of civil society networks with regard to their decision-making process and operations. This has resulted in attempts by each of these organizations to somehow address, with more or less success and sincerity, to engage elements of what they define as civil society actors to some extent in their discourse.

Increasingly vocal and concerted criticism that fostered weaker and stronger attempts at dialogue can be reviewed in the framework of a general mistrust of organizations that operate in a culture of secrecy, and who are viewed as having exacerbated economic and social development in under-developed, peripheral countries for decades to the benefit of developed countries. This has reduced the human resource potential of under-developed countries through implementation of policies that have destabilized and undermined economic development.

¹³¹ Lester Salamon, “The Rise of the Non-Profit Sector,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73 (1994), pp. 113.

¹³² Foster (2001), p. 5.

The lack of transparency and exclusionary decision-making processes evidenced in their operations, and the human and social costs of their implemented programs erupted in violent protests against these institutions in an unprecedented manner – unprecedented because of the cross-issue, transnational character of civil society's response.

For example, the message to the WTO by the Seattle to Brussels Network (a pan-European network of 99 associations) was "Shrink or Sink!" The WTO, in its Marrakesh Agreement, provides for the potential relationship with NGOs in Article V (2):

The General Council may make appropriate arrangements for consultation and co-operation with non-governmental organisations concerned with matters related to those of the WTO.¹³³

However, further guidelines adopted by the General Council of the WTO states:

... there is currently a broadly held view that it would not be possible for NGOs to be directly involved in the work of the WTO or its meetings. Closer consultation and cooperation with NGOs can also be met constructively through appropriate processes at the national level where lies primary responsibility for taking into account the different elements of public interest which are brought to bear on trade policy-making.

This expresses a typical argument against NGO observership or participation as representatives of national interest groups whose concerns should be met at national levels. Another argument runs that the WTO is a forum for negotiations between governments not societies and a third, practical argument, relates the increased magnitude of proceedings with NGO involvement in terms of physical space to accommodate their presence. Smaller WTO members would then fear that most negotiations would be held in private, marginalizing them, and the sessions of WTO bodies would become mere public relations exercises.

The IMF has also been reticent to open up their policy-making process to what they may observe as undisciplined if not openly hostile representatives of civil society. And why should they?

In the contemporary context it seems evident that there will be increasing probability of conflicts between such institutions as the WTO, IMF and WB and the societies in which they work. More challenges to the system will be made including the questioning of power relations. The challenge to these institutions takes the form of questioning their democratic structure and decision-making processes, their lack of transparency, legitimacy and capacity to deal with an increasing range of complex and divisive issues.

¹³³ This should be compared to the text of Article 71 of the UN Charter: "The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence ..." In fact, comparison of the texts suggests that the WTO's inclusion of the word "co-operation" reveals a more positive attitude had the article been implemented which it has not. There are no consultative arrangements between the WTO and NGOs to date. See Peter Willetts, "Civil Society Networks in Global Governance: Remediating The World Trade Organisation's Deviance from Global Norms," presented at the Colloquium on International Governance (Palais des Nations, 20 September 2002).

Besides securing better access to information emanating from the agencies which would increase the possibility of building public trust in their operations, inclusion of civil society advocates in a serious way promotes accountability at the global level. In the emerging arena of global governance, Ngo-nized civil society has an important role to play.

... NGOs do of course have a great impact ... In recent years, we have seen the successes of the campaigns against landmines, for reducing developing country debt and for creating the International Criminal Court. These three campaigns demonstrate, in a spectacular manner, the power that NGOs can exercise, because success was achieved against the opposition of the United States government.¹³⁴

This new force on the global stage may be expected to increasingly influence the global agenda, decision-making and policy implementation.

Although the United Nations lead in the engagement of civil groups in its proceedings,¹³⁵ today the World Bank, among the mentioned institutions, has made the most assertive attempt to speak the language of civil society with what could be termed the highest profile at least with regard to appearance. Its new (as of 28 May 2003) website: www.worldbank.org/civilsociety, could be taken as a model for the new discourse and resultant organizational restructuring. The World Bank boasts a Civil Society Team(CST), the Civil Society Group (CSG) and over 80 Civil Society Country Staff (CSC). The stated purpose of these new structures and the website is “to provide CSOs with information and materials on the World Bank’s evolving relationship with civil society throughout the world.” This is taken in response to what the WB sees as the significant growth of civil society involvement in the area of international development which has lead to partnerships that effectively reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development.

¹³⁴ Willetts (2002). Other successes can be found as well including the role of civil society in raising awareness of global environmental crises (global warming, protection of biodiversity) which has been instrumental in bringing governments together to attempt to address these issues. Also, in Doha, NGOs and developing countries successfully united to confront pharmaceutical companies on the issue of patents in fact against the objections of countries like the US, Germany and the UK. See Mark Ritchie, “Fighting to a Draw in Doha,” *Agribusiness Examiner*, No. 134 (26 November 2001) at <http://www.organicconsumers.org/corp/doha112601.cfm>.

¹³⁵ Participation of NGOs in the UN system are characterized as: 1) Unstructured, open access, 2). Structured, open access, 3) Indirect, open access through a network, 4) External campaigning by a network, 5) Limited access to the secretariat, 6) Limited access to delegations. See Willetts (2002).

COMPARATIVE TABLES OF NGO PARTICIPATION IN A SELECTION OF INTERNATIONAL BODIES

	WTO	ITO	ECOSOC (UN)	UNCTAD (UN)	CBD Convention on Biodiversity	UNCED (UN)	NGO-World Bank Committee	OECD	JPAC (NAFTA)
Who selects the NGOs?	Secretariat + Member States consent	Member States on rec. of the Secretariat	Member States on rec. of a Cite on NGOs composed of Member States	Member States on rec. Of the Secretariat	Member States on rec. of the Secretariat	Member States on rec. of the Secretariat	The NGOs themselves	Member States on rec. of the Secretariat	Member States individually
Main criteria for selection	NGOs 'concerned with matters related to those of the WTO'	Expertise ECOSOC accreditation	Expertise Representivity NGO supports UN's work and principles Democratic structure Accountability	Expertise Representivity NGO supports UNCTAD's work and principles International structure	Expertise May be admitted unless 1/3 of the Parties present object	Expertise Representivity NGO supports UN's work and principles Organic structure ECOSOC accreditation	NGOs elected by regional assemblies of NGOWB Expertise Geographical representivity International /National structure	Expertise Representivity International structure	Criteria set by Member States individually
Form of participation	<i>Ad hoc</i> consultation	<i>Ad hoc</i> consultation + Advisory Committee	Consultative Status (General, Special, Roster)	Consultative Status (General, Special, Register)	Consultative Status	Consultative Status	NGO Advisory Committee at global and regional levels	NGO Advisory Committee - obs status at some meetings	NGO Advisory Committee
Who administers NGO participation	Secretariat	Director General	Secretariat (NGLS, UN Department of Public Info., etc.)	Secretariat (NGLS, UN Department of Public Info., etc.)	Secretariat (NGLS, UN Department of Public Info., etc.)	Secretariat (NGLS, UN Department of Public Info., etc.)	NGOs and Bank staff	Secretary-General + Liaison Committee with NGOs	JPAC Member + Council
Access to meetings of the org.	None except Ministerial Conferences	None except Ministerial Conferences	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Can propose agenda items	No	Only for the Annual Conference	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Can speak at some meetings	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Circ. Written statements	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Access to information	NGOs only have access to derestricted documents	Receive copies of all unrestricted documents	The Secretariat is authorised to distribute docs as appropriate in its judgement	The Secretariat is authorised to distribute docs as appropriate in its judgement	NGOs have access to official documents	NGOs have access to official documents	The Bank may distribute docs as appropriate in its judgement	The Secretariat is authorised to distribute docs as appropriate in its judgement	Members may receive information including confidential doc from the Secretariat, the Council and the Parties

Source: ICTSD, *Accreditation Schemes and Other Arrangements for Public Participation in International Fora*, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, Geneva, November 1999.

A NEW ERA IN GLOBAL POLITICS

The “organizational revolution” beyond the surface of public events and street confrontations at parallel summits that one-sidedly attract the media is expressed by

- the expanding impact of Internet (information, communication, shrinking of time-space);
- growing networking among a great number and variety of locales;
- the reemergence of transnational social movements, including civil society networks, etc.¹³⁶

Beyond the teargas clouds of riot police and the violence of a small group of protesters (often coupled with police violence), movements and broad alliances of NGOs, CSOs and concerned individuals started to reshape global “realities” and introduced new habits in dealing with world affairs. The worldwide civic movement against landmines, initiated by JODY WILLIAMS, enacted a treaty subscribed to by most nations. Jubilee 2000, an anti-debt movement achieved putting international debt on the agenda of world leaders. A rapidly growing number of NGOs and CSOs are creating new alliances and gathering in transnational organizations such as the World Forum on Democracy, People’s Summits at the WTO, or Summits of the Americas, etc. Far from being “one-issue movements”, as many of their predecessors from the 1970s and 1980s, these new post-national social movements are not only protesting, networking and raising a critical voice against outstanding injustices, inequalities or power monopolies, they have also begun work on “alternative futures.”¹³⁷

As MICHAEL EDWARDS, the director of Governance and Civil Society at the Ford Foundation, reports, more than 49 million people joined the “Hemispheric Social Alliance” to control the Free Trade Agreements of the Americas, and more than 30,000 INGOs are active on the world stage, along with 20,000 transnational civil society networks.¹³⁸

To his own question why to involve civil society? EDWARDS gives a clear answer: In theory ... civil society can make two contributions to effective global governance: First, improving the quality of debate and decision-making by injecting more information, transparency and accountability into the international system, based on a recognition that government and business have no monopoly of ideas or expertise. The Jubilee 2000 movement created enormous pressure for debt relief, but it also put new models and policy suggestions on the table that gradually worked their way into the international establishment.

Second, strengthening the legitimacy and effectiveness of decisions ...by providing a broader spectrum of those whose support is required to make them work. Governments can confer authority on decisions but rarely a complete sense of legitimacy, especially in a ‘wired world’ ... In this scenario, the weight of public pressure will be felt much more keenly by decision-makers ... and support from non-actors will be crucial in ensuring that decisions are actually implemented ... This was part of the rationale behind the success, for example, of the landmines campaign in

¹³⁶ Foster (2001), p. 6.

¹³⁷ Foster, (2001), p. 6.

¹³⁸ Edwards (2002), p. 77.

1997, the international certification of the diamond trade in 2000, and concessions at the Doha world trade talks in 2001 around intellectual property rights.¹³⁹

What we are witnessing since the turn of the millennium is that all of these above mentioned civil engagements and crossborder, transnational networking activities, combined with a growing civil responsibility on the one hand, and a growing global democratic deficit on the other, lead to a strengthening global representation of civil society, combined with the articulation of common – globally shared – visions, goals and proposals.

Civil Society and Cultural Change

While academic interest in the relationship between emerging global civil society and global governance is growing, the cultural aspects of the emerging global civil society are often neglected. Changes in the value system, as emphasized by ELEMÉR HANKISS,¹⁴⁰ do play a decisive role in shaping international relations and institution-building. MANUEL CASTELLS (2000) stresses that cultural shifts are expressions of the changing location of power, and that civil society does play a role in shaping the mindset of humanity. FOSTER goes even further by suggesting that:

Perhaps the greatest opportunity arising from the shifts in cultural terrain is the potential for reassessing the essential measures of value in human society. The Gross National Product, with all its limitations, along with the even more skewed Dow and Nasdaq and the ever active currency exchange rates dominate the news and continue to bias the decisions of economic and political actors. But a growing number of networks are developing and applying new measures to the impact of human activity, whether assessing the weight and width of our environmental footprint, revising the gender indicators in the Human Development Report or working with ever more sophisticated “quality of life” indicators.¹⁴¹

The Other Side of Global Civil Society: The Less Optimistic Picture

Even its strongest proponents acknowledge that the actual reality and the progressive potential of global civil society are very far from each other. MICHAEL EDWARDS, who talks enthusiastically about the positive impact of global social movements on decision-making and their ability to reduce the democratic deficit of global governance, also formulates the dilemmas of global civil society. He soberly warns that the outcome of civil society involvement depends, among other factors, on whose voices are heard in global debates, and “whether civil groups are effective in playing the roles assigned to them in the evolving international system.”¹⁴² The danger he is talking about is real: in the absence of accepted rules of the game, the loudest and the strongest groups will dominate the discourse. It adds to the cacophony that besides the globalizing anti-globalism networks, there are pro-globalization networks campaigning for “free trade” interests.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Edwards (2002), p. 77.

¹⁴⁰ Elemér Hankiss, “Balancing the Accounts. Credit and Debit in International Relationships,” *ISES Discussion Papers*, No. 2 (Szombathely, 1997).

¹⁴¹ Foster (2001), p. 8.

¹⁴² Edwards (2002), p. 72.

¹⁴³ See, for example, the International Consumers for Civil Society (<http://www.internationalconsumers.org>).

Equalling NGOs with civil society further enhances the chaos.

According to some calculations, international development NGOs were outnumbered by NGOs representing business interests at the WTO ministerial meetings in Doha in November 2001...¹⁴⁴

Another often repeated criticism is the lack of legitimacy on the side of global civil society actors. This claim is somewhat over-exaggerated, since as they represent their own views and values and should be judged upon their achievements and activities compared to their mission statements. They are not elected governments and should not become such; there is, however, a strong tendency among internationally recognized, efficient and well-funded NGOs to develop a neo-liberal, bureaucratized “professional” language, reproducing thereby power relations and hierarchies. Doubling the contested world is a self-generating way of cooptation.

Even less optimistic and more sobering views were expressed by STANLEY HOFFMANN in one of his latest articles called, “Clash of Globalizations.”¹⁴⁵ Answering his own question about the contribution of the emerging global civil society to world order, HOFFMANN answers that it is still embryonic, and that NGOs have little independence from governments.¹⁴⁶ In addition, what we call “global governance” is partial and weak, “at a time when economic globalization deprives many states of independent monetary and fiscal policies, or it obliges them to make cruel choices between economic competitiveness and the preservation of social safety nets.”¹⁴⁷ In contrast to SCHOLTE and many of the ANTHONY JUDGE’s “pozzy-language” speaking authors, HOFFMANN does not see the rise of a collective global consciousness or solidarity and as a consequence a sense of world citizenship. In sharp contrast with most of the authors writing about globalization, he believes that in opposition to economic life, “human identity remains national.”¹⁴⁸

The EU is viewed as rather weak in terms of institutions where the emergence of a supranational identity has just begun, and the United States as a hegemon being unable to resist the temptation of unilateralism, HOFFMANN’s worldview and forecast is far from pozzy-language:

We live in a world where a society of uneven and often virtual states overlaps with a global society burdened by weak public institutions and underdeveloped civil society. A single power dominates but its economy could become unmanageable or disrupted by future terrorist attacks.¹⁴⁹

EDWARD COMOR, another critic of global civil society enthusiasm, directs his attention not so much to the structural unevenness of the processes of globalization, but rather to what he calls the “GCS progressives” lack of understanding, misinterpretation or superficial analysis of global communication, communication technologies and the deeper interrelatedness between

¹⁴⁴ Edwards (2002), p. 73.

¹⁴⁵ Stanley Hoffmann, “Clash of Globalizations,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (July-August 2002), p. 111.

¹⁴⁶ Hoffmann (2002), p. 109.

¹⁴⁷ Hoffmann (2002), p. 110.

¹⁴⁸ Hoffmann (2002), p.111.

¹⁴⁹ Hoffmann (2002), p. 114.

information and knowledge. He legitimately stresses that most of the “GCS progressives” tend to neglect to see how information becomes knowledge and as a consequence they fall into the trap of Internet-fascination. He brings an important aspect into the global civil society debate:

Human beings ... do not process information in ... necessarily “rational” or instrumental ways. Instead, our mediating conceptual systems are shaped by lifestyles, work experiences, customs, language, mythologies – by cultures.¹⁵⁰

And although “GCS progressives” understand the importance of culture, he is right again to stress that

... GCS literature generally tends to overestimate our collective capacity to be resocialized directly through communications and ideas, the power of individuals and groups to overcome the structural conditions of their lives, and the importance of spatial integration despite the related dismantling of time.¹⁵¹

At the same time, COMOR does not deny the significance of the new role of communication technologies, and their strategic usefulness as organizational tools, but he warns that they might also weaken the human capacities of transborder civic networks:

... the application or even lifestyle appropriation of new technologies by social movements ... may well serve to facilitate the exchange of data and the spatial coordination of activities, but paradoxically they also weaken the reflexive capabilities of collectives, inspiring rapid mobilization but leaving little time for critical reflection.¹⁵²

Clearly, if global civil society is going to develop its own genuine language, it cannot be exclusively based on Internet experiences.

Expanding and Narrowing Horizons of Civil Society

Clearly, from the early 1980s when the concept was reintroduced by small circles of East Central European dissident intellectuals, to the first decade of the third Millennium, civil society has travelled a long way. Myriads of networks, local, regional, global movements, NGOs, INGOs, also donors, intergovernmental agencies, multilateral economic institutions and governments are using it in their everyday parlance in order to attract a sceptical or reluctant audience and sell their policies as “socially and politically correct.” It seemed for a while that after the relative success of the velvet revolutions of 1989, the concept would be forgotten and rendered useless by academia as part of a heroic and short period in East European and Latin American history. These expectations have proved to be only partially correct. Indeed, the mobilizing energies under the banner of civil society, together with East-West dialogue, began to evaporate in East and Central Europe by the early 1990s. This left behind a vacuum and frustration. But the concept of civil society proved to be more durable and resilient than the movements of East European intellectuals: it found new places, spaces,

¹⁵⁰ Edward Comor, “The Role of Communication in Global Civil Society: Forces Processes, Prospects, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2001), p. 395.

¹⁵¹ Comor (2001), p. 405.

¹⁵² Comor (2001), p. 405.

forms and languages for its development. Against forecasts and expectations, it not only popped up in an East-West European form and perspective, but also in more remote areas like Africa and Asia where it has become part of everyday language and research programs. (See HANN, 1996; KARIRAJ, 2001; IBRAHIM SAAD EDDIN, 1996; and the collected studies on India, the Philippines, Iran, Cuba, Nicaragua and Africa in the *Concise Bibliography of Civil Society*). Although many valid arguments can be made about the adequate or inadequate usage of the concept and its Western bias and origin (and we do need more social scientific, interdisciplinary analysis of its widespread usage and proliferating languages), it seems that nothing can halt this linguistic and public expansion. In fact, this is a great manifestation of a need to reinterpret and partly replace the 19th century concepts of political and scientific analysis. Civil society, with its elasticity and “in-betweenness” has proved to be the perfect phrase and metaphor for fulfilling these needs which come from different and sometimes opposite corners of our rapidly globalizing realities. It can represent generically different social contents and political intentions and still offer a promising framework for protest, compromise and legitimacy.

CIVIL SOCIETY AS METAPHOR

If we want to better understand the expanding worldwide usage of the term “civil society” and the more recent flourishing of “global civil society”, we need to dig deeper to find the not so obvious reasons and interests behind its usage. Besides the informative, pragmatic and prescriptive work on the one hand, and grand historical-theoretical analysis on the other, we found that the “civil society as metaphor”-approach offers one of the most genuine and convincing interpretations of the discourse.

In a recent publication,¹⁵³ HAKAN SECKINELGIN makes a sharp distinction between the meaning and image of “civil society” in the 1980s by East Central European intellectuals dedicated to social change and the most recent use of the term which attempts to involve people in the process of development.

According to his incisive observation, one must recognize the “aspirational formation to enable people to act for themselves by attempting to build civil society or strengthen it. This maps an intellectual situation, based on experience elsewhere, onto a target context.”¹⁵⁴ What SECKINELGIN detects here is that the usage of the concept of civil society this way combines two meanings: one is real life experience, the other is an imagined and desired, “would-be” reality. This general aspirational usage presupposes the reduction of different historic and political contexts to one ahistorical concept. SECKINELGIN defines the language of civil society employed by international development organizations and MEIs as a metaphor. He argues that the process of involvement of civil society organizations by MEIs in the development context contributes to the spread of Western, neo-liberal social relations, in other words, it solidifies instead of changes the present state of affairs.

The essential outcome of this process is the establishment of a “new organizational culture based on Western sectoral divisions. In order to ‘unpack’ this language and to understand the implied meaning beyond the veil of ahistorical aspirational form,”¹⁵⁵ SECKINELGIN has chosen

¹⁵³ Hakan Seckinelgin, “Civil Society as a Metaphor for Western Liberalism,” *Global Civil Society*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (2002).

¹⁵⁴ Seckinelgin (2002), p. 357.

¹⁵⁵ Seckinelgin (2002), p. 358.

to analyze two reports, one by the British Department for International Development (DfID)¹⁵⁶ and one by the World Bank.¹⁵⁷

He asserts correctly that:

Each way of speaking *a civil society* ... reflects a way of distinct life and relations particular to that life.¹⁵⁸

Using the ahistorical concept of civil society as a metaphor can be seen as an invitation to participation by the “sender” of the message. The accepted invitation might create the impression of similarity between fundamentally different participants of the linguistic game (sender/recipient). The acknowledgement of similarity creates the impression of community.¹⁵⁹ A crucial point in Seckinelgin’s argument is that the message sent by the metaphor of civil society is not necessarily understood by the recipient in its complexity.

Therefore, the implications of using civil society as a lens based on opaque aspirational understanding for policy interventions could produce unexpected consequences for those who are ascribed to be civil society.¹⁶⁰

Both reports, whose major goal is to find efficient ways and tools to fight poverty, identify civil society as a sum of NGOs. The reports present Ngo-nized civil society as the strategic ally of the private sector which “can promote political empowerment of poor people, pressuring the state to better serve their interest.”¹⁶¹

According to SECKINELGIN’s sharp observations, besides the general, aspirational metaphor of civil society, the metaphor of civil society organizations plays a major role in signifying the “intended” participants of the civil society discourse:

The metaphor of civil society organizations is not a coincidence or an accidental construction. It is produced within a particular cultural context and it fits a certain understanding of civil society. It is clear that the reports posit a particular relationship between civil society organizations, the market and the state for the effective governance of people and their issues. Furthermore, they explicitly attribute an already decided role to the civil society organizations.¹⁶²

As we have tried to show, explicitly and implicitly, the mindset, the cognitive map and the interest of donors or the “sender” of the metaphor is one of the determinants of reality.

¹⁵⁶ Department for International Development, *Making Government Work for Poor People – Building State Capability*, 2001 (http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/tsp_government.pdf).

¹⁵⁷ World Bank, *World Bank Report 2000/2001, Attacking Poverty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹⁵⁸ Seckinelgin (2002), p. 359.

¹⁵⁹ See T. Cohen, “Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy,” in Sheldon Sacks, ed., *On Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 6. Cohen is quoted by Seckinelgin (2002), on p. 361.

¹⁶⁰ Seckinelgin (2002), p. 359.

¹⁶¹ World Bank, *World Bank Report 2000/2001, Attacking Poverty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 99-102.

¹⁶² Seckinelgin (2002), p. 365.

Choosing and selecting the NGOs who are supposed to represent civil society is an attempt to create a **certain kind of civil society** or, using SECKINELGIN's phrase, reformulating the space for civil society.¹⁶³ In other words, the particular language of civil society used by the reports has a transformative effect on the existing civil societies of the recipients.

The context of building civil societies or strengthening the existing ones is only a production of a space through the reconstruction of social relations between people, and between people and their governance structure ... existing associations ... need to work within the neoliberal sectoral arrangements. Both cases are an invitation to participate in a larger community of similar societies that are benefiting from the processes of globalization. By accepting the invitation of the metaphor to participate in development, the receiver also rhetorically takes a step to become a part of a larger community.¹⁶⁴

It is clear from their documents and programs that the World Bank and other MEIs recognize and "accredit" their own civil society organizations according to what fits their criteria. They build and advertise their civil society model upon that empirical base. The civil society – and the civil society language – created that way is not only problematic and ingenuine but also becomes a hotbed for further social, cultural and political tensions. SECKINELGIN formulates it as follows:

The real issue is not about whether or not local organizations should participate in such processes, but how much they represent civil society in their social context.¹⁶⁵

The creation of a particular community called "civil society" via using a particular language and metaphor of civil society, by particularly robust and influential actors, means the exclusion of many other potential players from the game. Therefore, the question of who defines civil society, **who** speaks in its name and **what** language they use is decisive to understanding and mapping the expanding horizons of the concept. International organizations have a great capacity to create and popularize concepts and images, especially by attracting the attention of global media and influencing their member-governments. As SECKINELGIN emphasizes, they are able to foster social changes and alter the way societies and their members function. We can agree with SECKINELGIN that by equating NGOs with civil society, they are

able to show their social and environmental credentials without fundamentally altering their overall ideological framework. Thus, the widely used language of civil society organizations is more about the entrenchment of an international liberal agenda based on a particular form of life in market economy social relations than about engaging with people's expressed concerns.¹⁶⁶

SECKINELGIN sees the way the language of civil society is used as an attempt by western international organizations to continue the "process of civilization" so powerfully described by NORBERT ELIAS. SECKINELGIN grasps an important element of an emerging globalized reality when he argues that:

¹⁶³ Seckinelgin (2002), p. 367.

¹⁶⁴ Seckinelgin (2002), p. 371.

¹⁶⁵ Seckinelgin (2002), p. 373.

¹⁶⁶ Seckinelgin (2002), p. 375.

By using civil society organizations, an attempt is made to bring long-term socio-political change on the basis of Western experience. Therefore, the seemingly technical recommendations made by these international organizations, in which the metaphor is an agent of change for the social functions, ... are actually political interventions, insofar as they intervene in the entirety of society for a change implicitly encoded in the metaphor.¹⁶⁷

This analysis, however fine-tuned and precise it is, reflects only one part of the entire picture. Although the attempt – conscious or unconscious – to continue the process of Western civilization can be seen as powerful and potentially successful, the new post-national condition and information society/economy is profoundly different from the age of early capitalism analyzed by NORBERT ELIAS. As we have shown earlier in this report, powerful international organizations, MEIs etc., are seriously challenged by also powerful social movements, *ad hoc* global alliances, and transnational networks of civil society. These new and old actors are also using their own civil society language to shape reality, trying to occupy or dominate real and virtual social spaces with their own discourse and metaphors. The international or rather intergovernmental organizations – globalized representatives of the Prince and the Merchant – have formidable tools at their disposal, but lack the legitimacy of the nation state which played such a decisive role in the development of Western civilization. In many ways they are rather defensive, trying to attract, seduce or convince their chosen civil society partners (and through them a larger global audience) of their good intentions, usefulness, and inevitability.

As we have argued earlier, to understand the dynamics of conflict and social and political change, and to have a sense of the growing interdependence of local, regional, transnational and global actors and institutions, we cannot rely on the conventional categories of social sciences which are reflections of 50, 100 or 200 year old realities.

MANUEL CASTELLS in *The Rise of the Network Society*¹⁶⁸ offers another challenging and comprehensive conceptual tools of analysis. His main argument is that networks are the “critical sources of domination and change in our society”¹⁶⁹ and consequently social morphology enjoys pre-eminence *vis-à-vis* social action.

... this networking logic includes a social determination of a higher level than that of the specific social interests expressed through the networks: the power of flows takes precedence over the flows of power.¹⁷⁰

CASTELLS sees the network society as a dynamic and open system that can innovate without undermining itself.

The rise of the network society has fundamental consequences for social relations, structures and institutions and redefines the dimensions, scope and boundaries of social action. In this continuously reshaped and radically new reality, it becomes

¹⁶⁷ Seckinelgin (2002), p. 376.

¹⁶⁸ Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

¹⁶⁹ Castells (2000), p. 500.

¹⁷⁰ Castells (2000), p. 500.

increasingly difficult to understand the different roles of old and new actors, their inter-relatedness, interfaces and overlaps.

... while capitalist relationships of production still persist, ... capitalist and labor increasingly tend to exist in different spaces and times: the space of flows and the space of places, instant time of computerized networks versus clock time of everyday life. Thus, they live by each other, but do not relate to each other, as the life of global capital depends less and less on specific labor, and more and more on accumulated, generic labor, operated by a small brains trust ... Beyond this fundamental dichotomy a great deal of social diversity exists, ...: working life goes on. Yet, at a deeper level of the new social reality, social relationships of production have been disconnected in their actual existence. Capital tends to escape in its hyperspace of pure circulation, while labor dissolves its collective entity into an infinite variation of individual existences. Under the conditions of the network society, capital is globally coordinated, labor is individualized.¹⁷¹

CASTELLS emphasizes the fundamental opposition between the “logic of capital flows and the cultural values of human experience.”¹⁷²

It is an open question whether civil society in its globalized, but still fragmented forms reflecting global inequalities in terms of participation and accessibility to technology, is capable or not of creating meaningful links of interdependence between individuals and social groups. The attempt is clearly present. The humanized aims of a global future are formulated, the vocabulary of a global and local civil society is growing. However, different languages are spoken at one and the same time and the institutionalized forms and frames for a more systematic and structured dialogue are still missing. It is too early to tell whether emerging transnational, European and global publics and civil networks will be able to deliver enabling frameworks, institutions and fora which will be powerful and persistent enough to shape a new order we could call “global governance” with global civil society.

¹⁷¹ Castells (2000), p. 507.

¹⁷² Castells (2000), p. 507.

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APPENDIX A

ACRONYMS

ANGOs	Advocacy NGOs
BINGOs	Business + Industry NGOs OR British International NGOs
CONGO	Congress of NGOs-a group of NGOs with consultative status with ECOSOC
DINGOs	Development NGOs OR Australian NGOs
DONGOs	Donor-organized NGOs
EINGOs or EINGOs	Environmental NGOs
ENJOYOs	
GINGOs	General Interest NGOs (Girl Guides)
GONGOs	Government-organized NGOs
GRINGOs	Government-run NGOs
INGOs	International NGOs OR Individual-based NGOs
LINGOs	Labour NGOs
MANGOs	Mafia-Run NGOs
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations OR Needed for Governance Organizations
NNGOs	National NGOs
ONGOs	Operational NGOs
PENGOs	Political-Economic NGOs
PINGOs	Public Interest NGOs
QuNGOs or QUANGOs	Quasi-government NGOs
SINGOs	Social-Spiritual NGOs (Churches)
TRINGOs	Trade-related NGOs (none to speak of, but WTO is looking for them)
CBOs	Community-Based Organizations
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ECOs	Ecological Citizens Organizations OR Environmental Community Organizations
GROs	Grassroots Organizations
GRSOs	Grassroots Support Organizations
GSCOs	Global Social Change Organizations
POs	Private Organizations OR People's Organizations
PVOs	Private Voluntary Organizations
SHSOs	Self-Help Support Organizations
SHOs	Self-Help Organizations
SMOs	Social Movement Organizations
TEAGs	Transnational Environmental Activist Groups
TSMOs	Transnational Social Movement Organizations