

Questions of Civil Society

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Edited by

Ralph Schattkowsky and Miloš Řezník

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Questions of Civil Society:
Category-Position-Functionality

Edited by

Ralph Schattkowsky and Adam Jarosz

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P U B L I S H I N G

Questions of Civil Society: Category-Position-Functionality
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INTRODUCTION

RALPH SCHATTKOWSKY
AND ADAM JAROSZ

Never before was the call for the civil society so clearly audible as in the present. It is omnipresent and appears as a cure for all and the last instance in the times of high instability, huge challenges and enormous opportunities. Within the civil society, the eschatological aim of development seems to be reached, as does the old question of relations between the state and society or masses and power seem to be answered, at least for the potential that is prescribed to it.

The term of the civil society overtakes the fate of all phenomena, which are subjugated to the stringent categorising and reach a certain level of classic, but at the same time are subject to great generalizations, in which the concept of the civil society develops the tendency to strong randomness. Its analysis is still not critical enough and reflections fail to address its dynamics, which it historically possesses, and finally what can be demanded from it.

This book is the second volume of the Copernicus Graduate School Studies, and is devoted to these questions and research problems. Mostly young scientists develop various approaches to the position and functionality of civil society, examining different examples from history and the present based on the theoretical approaches to the category of the civil society. As a result, interdisciplinary perspectives have been developed which enable the identification of various levels of the concept of the civil society and allow us to look into its multiformity, in terms of the reality of the civil society, or its interpretation and depiction as a means of policies and social self-determination.

The book does not provide fixed interpretation patterns or work with the terms of civil society in definitional mode. The aim of the editors and authors, as well as the main objective of the volume, is to refresh and stimulate the discussion together with pointing out exemplary fields of research which bring interesting explanations and impulses to the formulation of innovative research questions on the matter. Finally, the book will contribute to explaining and underlining the main role of the

civil society in the upheavals of the twenty-first century as well as to understand it as a fundamental structural element of the necessary renegotiation of the relations between state and society.

Toruń, January 2013

PART ONE

THE CATEGORY

CHAPTER ONE

ABOUT THE ADVANTAGE
OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY IDEA
IN SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

RALPH SCHATTKOWSKY

The omnipresence of the term “civil society” is more than just an upward trend. The introduction and use of this term has met with an intellectual sphere and a great need for explanatory models on social processes, formation processes and social conflict arrangements has developed, as well as the courage to express important problems.

The realization that the age of ideologies has already ended was also a process of general disillusionment and the certainty of the loss of usual stable orientations after the fall of the Eastern Bloc and the existing socialism. In association with that, the focusing on the problems of social developments formulated—by necessity in the transnational dimension—clear demands on social sciences to a relatively clear practical profile of statement and use. The question of the advantage of the social scientific research for society and politics is asked over and over again, and is formulated especially succinctly when social conflict situations are coupled with ideas about the necessity, or rather feasibility, of controlling and manipulating the social processes.

In historiography there have always been attempts to find suitable subjects and fields in order to convey the form and evolution of existence. The visions of *Histoire totale* were not satisfying because of the division of the historical sciences into separate subjects and because of a freedom of movement within the science of history. It appears that after the dispute about social history¹ a way out has been found that could be regarded as an

¹ H.-U. Wehler, *Historische Sozialwissenschaften und Geschichtsschreibung: Studien zu Aufgaben und Traditionen deutscher Geschichtswissenschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980).

answer to the challenge of the new history of civilization.² It is not only because the society as a dominant organizational form of human existence gives thorough information and is also accepted as a real alternative to event history. It is also not only because the society supports the interdisciplinary access and is the central object not only of science and history but also of sociology, anthropology, political science, cultural geography and many other sciences. The practicality of the phenomenon of society itself is an apparently unfathomable field of socio-scientific research, extremely loaded with theory and bitterly disputed. Historians, in comparison to sociologists, appear as emotionless observers but have accepted the access very quickly and also presented extensive investigations.³

Writing the history of the society is therefore unquestionably an advantage, but apparently contrary to this a certain tiredness of the theory and also a refusal of methods in the science of history are to be observed. The debates have already begun.

The planned impetus for associating history more with place and area⁴ and also the stringent expressed demands for transnational perspectives⁵ did not have a significant effect because they, even though in different ways, were just not up to the developed research perspectives and the common research practice. It can therefore be suspected that this development has corresponded too quickly with the predetermined conventions of theoretical debates, in which an indispensable necessity of the right to have a say could be seen as a guideline and also a break. It is a good time to put the questions and consider the tasks, which are worth keeping back or which could be paid attention to. This trend is passed on by the term of the civil society in its different manifestations, which has developed into the central subject of intellectual discourse and also presents elementary problems that were missing for a long time.

² R. Vierhaus, R. Chartier, *Wege zu einer neuen Kulturgeschichte* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag 1995); C. Conrad, M. Kessel (eds.), *Geschichte schreiben in der Postmoderne: Beiträge zur aktuellen Diskussion* (Stuttgart: P. Reclam, 1994); C. Conrad, M. Kessel (eds.), *Kultur und Geschichte: Neue Einblicke in eine alte Beziehung* (Stuttgart: P. Reclam, 1998).

³ H.-U. Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 5 Bde (München: C. H. Beck, 2008).

⁴ G. Fouquet, A. Reitemeier (eds.), *Kommunikation und Raum: 45. Deutscher Historikertag in Kiel, 14–17. September 2004, Berichtsband* (Neumünster: Wachholz, 2005); K. Schlögel, *Im Raum lesen wir die Zeit: Über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2003).

⁵ *Einladung zur Diskussion*, “Geschichte und Gesellschaft” 27 (2001): 462–498; *Diskussionsforum*, “Geschichte und Gesellschaft” 28 (2002): 145 and foll.

Therefore, it is also interesting because it creates a comparably intensive access for historians and political and social scientists, and also undergoes this access. However, it is also predetermined by chronological social events and by existential problems such as explanatory models and functional imperatives by politics and media, which could be a basis for the development of dialogue between science and politics, as if it were a practice test.

About the Ideas

Expectations

The expectations towards the civil society are very high. It has to do with searching for and determining the adequate forms of the modern society which are faithful to their emancipatory character in the same way as to their dynamism, steering in the direction of individual participation safely and permanently established as a counterpart to the power of the state as if it were a social reinsurance. This marks the civil society as a logical and necessary debate, breaking with tradition and extremes.⁶ The tendency to use the civil society as an universal tool of socio-scientific research is without doubt in favour of extensive efforts to reach a certain clarity of the historical analysis and a social result through the nature of the modern society, which assigned a key role to the European continent in world history and is also able to show social and political perspectives. By using this “political signal” term, not only “good” from “bad” societies can be separated,⁷ but also the explanations for the relation between the mass of people and the power, state and society, and individual and group can be provided. This means the same as the identification of the role as an individual in the social process and also behaviour, motivations and perceptions of this individual. The individual is practically rediscovered as the driving force behind history and is also verified for virtues and basic values in communicative human behaviour. In searching for a determining idea, based on the practicality of the society and the Western core values of democracy, freedom and civil duties which characterize the society and separate it from the power of the state are analysed, also in terms of a

⁶ E. Hobsbawm, *Das Zeitalter der Extreme: Weltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (München–Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1995).

⁷ F. Adloff, *Zivilgesellschaft: Theorie und politische Praxis* (Frankfurt am Main–New York: Campus Verlag, 2005), 7.

blueprint of future-oriented usability.⁸ The term of civil society therefore has a double cause: “It helps us to understand how the civil society actually functions and how it differs from the alternative forms of society. In the same way this term help us to get a clearer consciousness of our social norms, our values and of the reasons, why they give us the acceptance.”⁹

In the scientific research and also in the media there are three different forms of civil society. In the historical analysis it is a model for the description of social development quality with the criterion of political participation and social nationalization. In contemporary social studies it is in terms of critical self-reflection of the existence of mature citizens as a correlative to the state. Finally, as a utopia it is the eschatological goal of the social evolution of citizens as an alternative to the state and as a result of individual maturity, and also of considered and reasonable social formation processes.

However, these manifestations of the civil society exist neither in an order nor a sequence and interact with each other strongly. They are the result of a general postponement of the meaning of the term civil society “from the self-description of certain actant classes within the society to an ideal of the social order in toto.”¹⁰ How high the evaluation of the term civil society really is shows the interdisciplinarity of the access in the methodical range that reaches over the natural-scientific order systems of the self-organization and enormous abstraction of the system-theoretical considerations. Nonetheless, this also occurs through the intensity of the term derivation. The archetype of the civil society is derived from the Greek Polis and the Aristotelian ideal of the *societas civilis*, and is associated with the possibilities of the free development of the individual

⁸ A. Klein, *Der Diskurs der Zivilgesellschaft: Politische Kontexte und demokratietheoretische Bezüge der neueren Begriffsverwendung* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 2001), mostly 278 and foll. Referring to Herfried Münkler see M. Hettling, “Bürgerlichkeit” und *Zivilgesellschaft: Die Aktualität einer Tradition*, in R. Jessen et al. (eds.), *Zivilgesellschaft als Geschichte: Studien zum 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2004), 64–63.

⁹ E. Gellner, *Bedingungen der Freiheit: Die Zivilgesellschaft und ihre Rivalen* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1995), 222.

¹⁰ D. Gosewinkel, D. Rucht, “History meets sociology:” *Zivilgesellschaft als Prozess*, in D. Gosewinkel et al. (eds.), *Zivilgesellschaft—National und Transnational* (Berlin: Ed. Sigma, 2004), 29–60; H.-J. Lauth, *Zivilgesellschaft als Konzept und die Suche nach ihren Akteuren*, in A. Bauerkämper (ed.), *Die Praxis der Zivilgesellschaft: Akteure, Handeln und Strukturen im internationalen Vergleich* (Frankfurt am Main–New York: Campus Verlag, 2003), 31–54.

through the realization of a “right life” for the community.¹¹ In the age of enlightenment the term civil society received its modern significance and developed into an anti-feudal tendentious term.¹² Hegel then created a distance between the civil society and the state and Marx gave to it the character of class struggle with his term “Bourgeois.”¹³ However, it was Antonio Gramsci who finally created the modern term of the civil society and led it in the direction of the modern classical age by comprehending it as a democratic organizational principle of the modern state.¹⁴ Not necessarily conclusions, but more formulations of questions, are taken as a basis for this derivation, which means the same as the dictum of Simmel: “How is Society Possible?”¹⁵ It is obvious that the tendency of a recollection of predetermined basic values, like worrying for the community, for tasks, rights and duties of the individual and for their maintenance, and also values like moral qualities, are positively connoted in general, despite the fact that the idea of the civil society is vague. These basic values are formulated as key terms, which have a categorical character and influence the civil society in diverse ways.

¹¹ M. Walzer, *Was heißt zivile Gesellschaft?* in B. van den Brink, W. van Reijen (eds.), *Bürgergesellschaft, Recht und Demokratie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995), 44–69; F. Adloff, *Zivilgesellschaft: Theorie*, 17; J. Schmidt, *Bürgerschaftliches Engagement von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart: Texte und Kommentare* (Hamburg: Rowohlt-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2007).

¹² A. Ferguson, *Versuch über die Geschichte der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, Z. Batscha, H. Medick (eds.) (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1986); F. Adloff, *Zivilgesellschaft: Theorie*, 20 and foll.

¹³ J. Kocka, *Zivilgesellschaft als historisches Problem und Versprechen*, in M. Hildermeier et al. (eds.), *Europäische Zivilgesellschaft in Ost und West: Begriff, Geschichte, Chancen*, (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2000), 13–39; J. Kocka, *Zivilgesellschaft in historischer Perspektive*, “Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen” 16 (2) (2003): 29–37; R. Jessen, S. Reichardt, *Einleitung*, in R. Jessen et al. (eds.), *Zivilgesellschaft als Geschichte*, 7–27, Footnote 1.

¹⁴ F. Adloff, *Zivilgesellschaft: Theorie*, 41 and foll.; A. Gramsci, *Gefängnishefte: Kritische Gesamtausgabe auf der Grundlage der von Valentino Gerratana im Auftrag des Gramsci-Instituts besorgten Edition*, Deutsche Gramsci-Projekt: W.-F. Haug, K. Bochmann (eds.), Band 4 (Heft 6, 7) (Hamburg: Argument-Verlag, 1992).

¹⁵ G. Simmel, *Soziologie: Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung. Gesamtausgabe, Bd. 2* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1992), 42–61.

Opinions

The range of formulated opinions corresponds to the enormous and diffuse expectation towards the term of the civil society. A complex choice of definitions tries to resolve this tension, and methodically and traditionally oriented empirical studies serve as a verification of this choice. It starts with the formation of the term civil society or citizen society reflecting not only the diversity of opinions but also an expression of different methodical accesses and of basically diverse fields of application, which do not need to be classified as different subject disciplines. The opinions and perceptions in this case revolve around the definition of modern society by description of area and understanding of the practicality of a society and subordinately by the relation of masses and power, or more definitely society and state, which operate the legitimating factor. The last aspects were strongly bombarded by opposing forms of organization in the former Eastern Bloc countries, which led to the downfall of the state-owned power.¹⁶ The basic factors exist relatively independently of what it is about—a historical analysis, a recent social result, or maybe political perspectives of social development. In this case the politologico-sociological conception has been furthest developed—civil society is a social area, which develops certain forms of communication. They are characterized, through institutions and their contents, by voluntarism and are also bound by democratic participation. The non-governmental form appears as a fundamental principle and is associated in this way with generally positive connotations.¹⁷ In exactly this comparison the civil society functions as a kind of “unpolitical protected area” of free development and organization, which is in opposition to the prescribing and rule-establishing state and represents the mode of nationalization. The actant of this civil society is “in principle the politicized active citizen” who fills up the communicative space between the state and privacy. This “social figure of the civilized Citizen” decides on the type of social behaviour and also on the character of the public space.¹⁸ Therefore, it

¹⁶ G. Ekiert, J. Kubik, *Rebellious Civil Society: Popular Protest and Democratic Consolidation in Poland, 1989–1993* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

¹⁷ About the functions of the civil society see A. Croissant et al., *Zivilgesellschaft und Transformation: ein internationaler Vergleich*, in W. Merkel (ed.), *Systemwechsel 5. Zivilgesellschaft und Transformation* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 2000), 9–49.

¹⁸ The critical survey of the conceptual usage of the civil society with the attempt of the definitional ascertainment by F. Adloff, *Zivilgesellschaft: Theorie*, 8–16; A.

would surprise nobody that there is mention of the term “citizen society” as a synonym to “civil society,” and that the status of the citizen becomes a central category passing on all virtues of the civil society.¹⁹

The positive verified structural qualities of the civil society are also moral qualities like common sense or striving for harmony which allow for an existence without the financial and organizational basis, based only on intellectual structures and mentalities.²⁰ This opinion on the civil society as a conduct is included in the whole theory and means the same as a virtue, and finally a depolitization. It describes an essential aspect of dealing with civil society, namely the inherent doubt about its real continued existence and given possibilities, and sees civil society as a social ideal which can be reached or rather approached. The political ideas of the opposition movements in Eastern and Central Eastern Europe have increased this impression and in this way have also essentially influenced the considerations.²¹ At this point it is less about the very well-made

Demirovic, *Demokratie und Herrschaft: Aspekte kritischer Gesellschaftstheorie* (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 1997), 156 and foll.; K.-M. Schmals, H. Heinelt (eds.), *Zivile Gesellschaft: Entwicklung, Defizite und Potenziale* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1997), 9–16; D. Gosewinkel et al. (eds.), *Zivilgesellschaft—National und Transnational*, 11–26; A. Croissant et al., *Zivilgesellschaft und Transformation*, 9–49; J.-A. Hall (ed.), *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995); S. Kaviraj, S. Khilnani (eds.), *Civil Society: History and Possibilities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁹ R. Darendorf, *Über den Bürgerstatus*, in B. van den Brink, W. van Reijen (eds.), *Bürgergesellschaft, Recht und Demokratie*, 29–43; B. van den Brink, *Die politisch-philosophische Debatte über die demokratische Bürgergesellschaft*, in *Ibid.*, 7–26; K. von Beyme, *Zivilgesellschaft: Karriere und Leistung eines Modebegriffs*, in M. Hildermeier et al. (eds.), *Europäische Zivilgesellschaften*, 41–55.

²⁰ J. Křen, *Die Tradition der tschechischen Demokratie*, in M. Hildermeier et al. (eds.), *Europäische Zivilgesellschaften*, 179–202; L. Heidbrink, A. Hirsch (eds.), *Verantwortung in der Zivilgesellschaft: Zur Konjunktur eines widersprüchlichen Prinzips* (Frankfurt am Main–New York: Campus Verlag, 2006), 13–35; J. Nida-Rümelin, *Demokratie als Kooperation* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1999).

²¹ G. Konrad, *Antipolitik: mitteleuropäische Meditationen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1985); B. Geremek, *Die ‘Civil Society’ gegen den Kommunismus: Polens Botschaft*, in K. Michalski (ed.), *Europa und die Civil Society: Castalgandolfo-Gespräche 1989* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1991), 264–273; V. Havel, *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens against the State in Central–Eastern Europe*, J. Keane (ed.) (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1985); A. Michnik, *Polnischer Frieden: Aufsätze zur Konzeption des Widerstands* (Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, 1985).

Western example of the top-down civil society or the Eastern example of the bottom-up civil society,²² but is especially about the keenness of the self-reflection of the established democratic countries for the purpose of critical review and the derivation of the visionary examples of the evolutionary social progress,²³ just as they are prominently presented by Jürgen Habermas on the subject of the general public and communicative behaviour.²⁴

About the Usage (Fields of Research)

Modern research on the civil society since the middle of the 1980s started with the citizen.²⁵ At this point, the determining of the category of citizen in its complexity from the beginning and the “citizen society” as a phenomenon related to society as a whole, as well as an open research problem, were recognized and also effectively comprehended above and beyond the “civil age” of the nineteenth century. With this, the new accesses to the structure and evolution of the European modern age should be opened and a contribution to the conception of a European social history should be made. This conceptualization meant, from the beginning, a complex understanding of the social sub-areas and granted a privileged place to the individual. However, within a short space of time it was obvious that the concentration on the category of citizen gave only a limited access to the understanding of the phenomenon of the civil society, although the bourgeoisie was increasingly understood as a nationalised form of special levels of the society from the mentality of the cultural habit.²⁶ The heterogeneity and fragmentation of the civil groups and their social and mental positioning set early limits for the research objective

²² A. Arato, *Civil Society gegen den Staat: Der Fall Polen 1980/81*, in R. Fenchel, A.-J. Pietsch, *Polen 1980–82: Gesellschaft gegen den Staat* (Hannover: SOAK Verlag, 1982), 47 and foll.

²³ U. Rödel et al., *Die demokratische Frage* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), 62 and foll.

²⁴ J. Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987); J. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990).

²⁵ A first overview of researches and desiderata by U. Haltern, *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft: Sozialtheoretische und sozialhistorische Aspekte* (Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchges., 1985).

²⁶ R. Lepsius, *Zur Soziologie des Bürgertums und der Bürgerlichkeit*, in J. Kocka, *Bürger und Bürgerlichkeit im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 79–100.

with the demands of the essential view of the civil society,²⁷ and orientated the civil society on a productive research of the milieu and diverse associations.²⁸ The perspectives of the civil society were therefore developed mainly institutionally. The same goes for using the civil society in the modern nation in Europe. They are often interpreted by the research as “twins,” which “belong close together.” However, Jürgen Kocka rightly points out that “the historical results are more complicated,”²⁹ presenting the counterargument that “the civil societies can be defined neither conceptually nor empirically as national entities,” because they are in the territorial, meaning “an open conception” persists as a thesis.³⁰ The fact that the civil society was built up by politics as an alternative concept to the nation is probably due to the connection of the nation/nationalism with the “age of extremes,” and should not therefore mislead the social scientific research. It is remarkable that the civil society paradigm of the modern processes of nation building are hardly used in the research about nationalism, the more so because this research field has already been declared dead,³¹ and through this very new perspectives can be produced. This kind of approach could be used as an explanatory model for the role of the democracy and power in nationalism and for the relation between the individual and the majority. Without a doubt, the modern nation is an organizational form of the modern mass society, operated by conditions of existence, objectives and the attributions of the civil society. Because the nation *per se* is not any type of society or government at all, and it can be assumed that the nation takes on the existing subsystems, the civil society seems therefore to be not only an adequate offer but also just the right

²⁷ H.-J. Puhle, *Bürger in der Gesellschaft der Neuzeit: Wirtschaft–Politik–Kultur* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 8 and foll.; D. Gosewinkel, D. Rucht, *History meets sociology*, 33.

²⁸ S.-L. Hoffmann, *Geselligkeit und Demokratie: Vereine und zivile Gesellschaft im transnationalen Vergleich 1750–1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003); W. Hartwig, *Macht, Emotion und Geselligkeit: Studien zur Soziabilität in Deutschland 1500–1900* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2009); A. Hofmeister, *Selbstorganisation und Bürgerlichkeit: Jüdisches Vereinswesen in Odessa um 1900* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

²⁹ J. Kocka, *Zivilgesellschaft in historischer Perspektive*, “Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen” 16 (2) (2003): 29–37.

³⁰ D. Gosewinkel, D. Rucht, *History meets sociology*, 31.

³¹ R. Schattkowsky, *Nationalismus in Ostmitteleuropa: Tendenzen und Aufgaben der Forschung*, in R. Schattkowsky, M. G. Müller, *Identitätenwandel und nationale Mobilisierung in Regionen ethnischer Diversität: Ein regionaler Vergleich zwischen Westpreußen und Galizien am Ende des 19. und Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2004), 1–27.

thing as a part of the development of the national project and as a drive belt of its popularization. The nation realizes the promise of the social solidarity and the community and this promise lets the nation appear to the crowd as an attractive and identity-forming idea. Without those self-organizational structures of the civil society the implementation of the national concept is unthinkable and the self-organizational duty of the nation brings strong ties and the mobilization potential for that permanence, which makes the functioning of the nation possible. It also makes the nation socially effective and is capable of establishing it as a form of government.

The empirical results about civil society and its formation processes in modern Europe could be read as a social history of the national movements, and in many cases these results abolish national differences. However, it is not appropriate to derive an absolutely transnational character of the civil society from this, and this attempt seems to be a current research trend following the existing tendencies of the formation of the transnational European civil societies. However, this perspective does not hold out against a consistent historicization and, on the basis of the modern nationalism research, the sentences about the civil society as precondition of the building of the nation³² could be set with the same right against an opposite assertion and have the same effect, just like the question about the chicken and egg. It is certain that in the relation between the civil society and the nation a tension with a great explanatory potential is being opened up, able to make the social practicality of the nationalization processes clearer. On the other hand, this points out the basic problems of the existence and theory of the civil society. Even Gramsci saw a research task in the nationally-specific models of the building and development of civil societies,³³ and transformation research especially followed this in the last twenty years. This kind of research rejects an incompatibility and points to a close interconnection of the state, ethnicity and citizen status within modern societies, in relation to “functional interdependence.”³⁴ A dominance of the civil society over the traditional exclusion and inclusion models, by means of ethnos and denomination, can be noticed which determines the character of the nation

³² D. Gosewinkel, D. Rucht, *History meets sociology*, 31, 39.

³³ S. Kebir, *Die Internationalisierung der “Zivilgesellschaft,”* in *Die Linie Luxemburg—Gramsci: Zur Aktualität und Historizität marxistischen Denkens* (Hamburg: Argument Verlag, 1989).

³⁴ P. A. Kraus, *Nationalismus und Zivilgesellschaft in Transformationsprozessen*, in W. Merkel (ed.), *Systemwechsel 5. Zivilgesellschaft und Transformation*, 71–88.

(i.e. the shade the nationalism takes).³⁵ This perspective means the same as the verification of Habermas' interpretations of the civil society as a task wherein the better point is the common act criterion in a "deliberative" democracy.³⁶

By asking for the civil society approach of the nationalization processes from the historical perspective, this approach seems to be absolutely ideal, typically realized in "organic work." This term was first connected to the Polish history of the nineteenth century and is now being used for the self-organizational modernization bottom-up processes in Central-Eastern Europe countries and beyond.³⁷ At this point, the society is organized considerably and systematically³⁸ and the citizen accepts their demands of freedom for the crowd and negotiates the strategic concepts and tactical capabilities for establishing or maintaining the practicality of the society in a communicative space. The spheres of influence, which constitutively have an effect for the modern society and which make out its dynamic ability to act, here become flexible. The project is developed against the (power) state and is realized by a violence-free claim. This civil social formation process happens in constitutively national circumstances. Working against the state means working in the state at the same time, and the nationalisation of the citizen has to do with the nationally typical, ethnic and denominational exclusion and inclusion processes. Since the organic work has not yet become conspicuous, a model could be impartially worked on because the civil social character of the organic work is not denied and the empiric result also persists, which decides on the theoretical approach and the validity of its fundamental elements.

³⁵ M. Walzer, *Was heißt zivile Gesellschaft?* in B. van den Brink, W. van Reijen (eds.), *Bürgergesellschaft, Recht und Demokratie*, 60

³⁶ J. Habermas, *Drei normative Modelle der Demokratie: Zum Begriff deliberativer Politik*, in H. Münkler (ed.), *Die Chancen der Freiheit: Grundprobleme der Demokratie* (München–Zürich: Piper, 1997), 11–24.

³⁷ L. Trzeciakowski, K. Makowski (eds.), *Samomodernizacja społeczeństw w XIX wieku: Irlandczycy, Czesi, Polacy* (Poznań: Instytut Historii UAM, 1999).

³⁸ M. Janowski, *Polen im 19. Jahrhundert: Europa an der Weichsel?*, in C. Kraft, K. Steffen (eds.), *Europas Platz in Polen: Polnische Europa Konzeptionen vom Mittelalter bis zum EU-Beitritt* (Osnabrück: Fibre Verlag, 2007), 131–155; M. Janowski, *Gab es im 19. Jahrhundert in Polen eine Zivilgesellschaft? Erste Überlegungen*, in A. Bauerkämpfer (ed.), *Die Praxis der Zivilgesellschaft*, 293–316; C. G. A. Bryant, E. Mokrzycki (eds.), *Democracy, Civil Society an Pluralism* (Warszawa: IFiS Publishers, 1995), 37 and foll.

About the Problem Areas (the Critical Questioning)

On the condition that the civil society is recognized, it has to be interrogated for the usefulness and character of its constitutive elements. It starts with the civilization as the central category, which concentrates all positive attributes. At this point the imperative harmony approach of the civil society also intensifies, which gives to the whole project the character of an island motif in the logical consequence of the socio-scientific way of thinking and which moves this project into the future. However, civilization is not a value by itself and hardly any other category is subject to the traditional and situational attributes.³⁹ The European East-West dualism adequately describes this predicament where it is still thought about in the categories of insufficient civilization, or rather in the category of the dilution of civilization in the eastern direction.⁴⁰ The civilization implies the patterns considerably and constructively, but it does not exist by itself. The acting actant which wants to be constructive has to deconstruct and therefore has to be destructive—has to make disorder for the purpose of making a new order. The symbol for this behaviour is “civil disobedience” as a necessary virtue for the implementation of expectations of the civil society. If this aspect can be also classified as the positioning with the right to exist towards the power in the form of a state, as is increasingly formulated, there is the supposition that the civil society is based in the first place on a mechanism of exclusion and inclusion, of which development consists in the modification of the forms and groups, which are subject to this process.⁴¹ This again provokes the question of how open the civil society really is and necessarily leads to the need of separation from the idea of the complete assumption of this term by the liberal democracy, and also to taking partial societies as a base. Finally, it can be established that there is no civilization or civil society without

³⁹ J. A. Hall, *Reflections on the Making of Civility in Society*, in F. Trentmann (ed.), *Paradoxes of Civil Society: New Perspectives on Modern German and British History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 47–57.

⁴⁰ M. G. Müller, *Die Historisierung des bürgerlichen Projekts—Europa, Osteuropa und die Kategorie der Rückständigkeit*, “Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte” 29 (2001): 163–170.

⁴¹ K. Hagemann, *Familie—Staat—Nation: Das aufklärerische Projekt der “Bürgergesellschaft” in geschlechtergeschichtlicher Perspektive*, in M. Hildermeier et al. (eds.), *Europäische Zivilgesellschaften* 57–84; Apart from the sexual specific aspect see also the other statements. In addition, the association’s research puts the aspect of distinction increasingly as the central point. See S. L. Hoffmann, *Geselligkeit und Demokratie: Vereine und zivile Gesellschaft im transnationalen Vergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).

differences or conflicts⁴² and that the dissociation towards “the other” is absolutely a precondition for honouring the solidarity promise.⁴³ This is where the research comes to a critical point, being a matter of the basic understanding of the civil society—the question of violence. Even the research regards non-violence as an indispensable precondition for the existence of the civil society. The occurrence of opposition movements in Eastern and Central-Eastern Europe, which are giving impetus for the whole discussion about the civil society, have led to a certain “shift of borders,” which vacates an ambivalent area “in which the protest and violence could become not only a part but also a precondition for the civil society,”⁴⁴ for which the term “civil disobedience” is stimulated.

While non-violence is recognized, it is therefore not about the absence of conflicts but about dealing with them, about their regulation and also about the description of violence which corresponds to the historical context, determined by the civil society which provides at the same time a valuation standard for the civil society. The willingness and ability of conflict management are surely not denied as substantial characteristics of the civil society, and the minimizing of the constraint “which forms the basis of almost every communitisation”⁴⁵ is a symbol of the bourgeois way of life. The civil society does not therefore have to be regarded in terms of the absence of violence but rather in terms of the particular legitimate pressure of the violence. It also implies the existence of the power and formation of power structures⁴⁶ as an inherent factor of the civil social ability to act, and this factor does not have to contradict the radical democratic claim. Without understanding freedom—which means self-restraint for the purpose of the welfare of the community in terms of the interconnection of concepts of the positive and negative freedom as a

⁴² S. Reichhardt, *Gewalt und Zivilität im Wandel: Konzeptionelle Überlegungen zur Zivilgesellschaft aus historischer Sicht*, in D. Gosewinkel et al. (eds.), *Zivilgesellschaft—national und transnational*, 61–81.

⁴³ P. Nolte, *Zivilgesellschaft und soziale Ungleichheit*, “Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen” 16 (2) (2003): 38–45; F. Adloff, *Zivilgesellschaft: Theorie*, 15.

⁴⁴ D. Gosewinkel, *Einleitung*, in D. Gosewinkel et al. (eds.), *Zivilgesellschaft—National und Transnational*, 12 and foll.

⁴⁵ M. Weber, *Über einige Kategorien der verstehenden Soziologie*, in M. Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1988), 427–474.

⁴⁶ A. Evers, H. Nowotny, *Über den Umgang mit Unsicherheit: Die Entdeckung von Gestaltbarkeit der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), 84.

normative basic for acting⁴⁷—the civil society cannot be realized or, in other words, a civil social democracy can be thoroughly confronted with the official one. However, the convincing result can be reached only by working on an empirical object.⁴⁸

At this point the relation to the state is also very important, which can exert a certain pressure on violence and also considerably determines the conflict areas. But if the relation of civil society and state is, in principle, accepted as a conflict area, from which the existence of the civil society is derived by adopting an opposition attitude towards the state as an essential task of the civil society, at this point not only the determining of the suitable extent of violence towards the other and the state becomes difficult, but also the determining of the *a priori* positive connotation of the civil society, also of necessity for the civilization.

Who then is the arbiter, the “impartial observer”⁴⁹ or rather the “third party”⁵⁰ who carries out the evaluations? The Weimar Republic serves as an example, where thoroughly established civil social structures existed and which worked towards the dissolution of the parliamentary order. However, it is not that easy to deny the civil social character of the Weimar Republic only because of this incident,⁵¹ unless the civil society is reduced to an absolutely associative level on which the anti-democratic elements can be developed.⁵² Therefore, when we define the civil society as depending on the existence of the state, it has to be asked what will happen to it, and if the state no longer exists does it mean that the civil society also has to disappear, or that at least one of the essential conditions

⁴⁷ J. Cohen, A. Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge–London: MIT Press, 1992), 455; I. Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

⁴⁸ S. Reichhardt, *Gewalt und Zivilität im Wandel: Konzeptionelle Überlegungen zur Zivilgesellschaft aus historischer Sicht*, in D. Gosewinkel et al. (eds.), *Zivilgesellschaft—national und transnational*, 61–81; E. Gellner, *Bedingungen der Freiheit*, 194 and foll.

⁴⁹ About the importance of the “impartial observer” with historical perspectives of the research see A. Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Harvard University Press, 2009); S. Schmidt et al. (eds.), *Politik der Zeugenschaft: Zur Kritik einer Wissenspraxis* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2011).

⁵⁰ S. Reichhardt, *Gewalt und Zivilität*, 69 and foll.; V. Heins, *Das Andere der Zivilgesellschaft: Zur Archäologie eines Begriffs* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2002), 14.

⁵¹ S. Reichhardt, *Gewalt und Zivilität*, 69 and foll.; V. Heins, *Das Andere der Zivilgesellschaft*, 14.

⁵² S. Berman, *Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic*, “World Politics” 47 (1998); S.-L. Hoffmann, *Geselligkeit und Demokratie*.

of its existence is taken from it? By the confrontation of power (state) and countervailing power (civil society) alone there is almost no possibility of explaining this, because this confrontation does not even allow sufficient access to behavioural patterns. This approach conveys one-dimensionality, for which we do not need the term of the civil society. This term is only useful when we interpret its complexity in terms of a system that develops the permanent and profound effect for the society as a whole. Is it not therefore the ability of the goal formulation and the capability of an individualized society of the modern age to being a self-organization, the formation of groups and finally the will to change the characteristics which make up the civil society? A worthwhile goal therefore needs to be found which could be compared with the individual outlines of another's life. At this point an antagonism or enemy image can be a substantial element, but is still not the bearer. It is true an enemy can temporarily constitute and motivate a large group, but they are not able to produce such large and broad areas which the civil society really needs and especially the necessary durability of the individual commitment, and in addition the self-imposed duty character cannot be reached. However, the years of experience show that the civil society generally does not work against the state but on the state, or rather it severs its ties with the state and goes to make up its civility. Ultimately, the communication of the citizens is in the end ineffectual when they do not "join the resolutions of the legislative corporations."⁵³ Examples of this are the nationalist movements in the nineteenth century and the opposition movements in the Eastern Bloc, which saw their civil society task in the improvement of the state, and the totalitarian regimes in which the structures are not opposed to the state.⁵⁴

There is a lot of useful information allowing for the judgement of the civil society more by its internal tasks and for explaining it from the terms of modernity, mass society and structural transformation as from an

⁵³ J. Habermas, *Faktizität und Geltung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992), 211; J. Keane (ed.), *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives* (London–New York: Verso Books, 1988).

⁵⁴ A. Demirovic, *Demokratie und Herrschaft*, 149; J. Bradley, *Subjects into Citizens: Societies, Civil Society, and Autocracy in Tsarist Russia*, "American Historical Review" 107 (4) (2002): 1094–1123; J. Hackmann, *Civil Society against the State? Historical Experiences of Eastern Europe*, in N. Götz, J. Hackmann (eds.), *Civil Society in the Baltic Sea Region* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), 49–62; A. W. Gouldner, *Civil Society in Capitalism and Socialism*, in A. W. Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms: Contradictions and Anomalies in the Development* (London: Seabury Press, 1980).

antagonism. It is a matter of extension of the practicality of the society under the aspects of the civil society, or rather the expansion of the part-societies or “civil social parcels,”⁵⁵ in terms of the civilisation of the society. First of all that is a process of education and enlightenment which is led by basic conditions, also determined by the state. In the middle of this learning process is the “mature citizen,” who increasingly divests themselves of their origins from the society and intelligence in the research and appears without affiliation to any social class.⁵⁶ However, the way this subject of the civil society is conventionalized by the literature as a basically politicized active citizen shows them to be a fictional character. The citizen appears both on the event scale and time scale only selectively. This makes them not only predictable on the linear basis but also, considered purely on their own merits, an unstable factor. They are dragged into public far too much and by acting this way it is also denied that the society takes place in private life as well. This is one of the biggest mistakes of the research—to construct the civil society as an area with clear dissociations between the state and private life. Exactly as the inclusion of the state in the conception of the civil society is necessary, so the private sphere is also not an area of retreat into which the politicized active citizen can move back whenever they want to, just to quasi-recover from the civil social commitment.⁵⁷ However, the society and the public also reach into this area.⁵⁸ Apart from the fact that privacy can now be barely isolated, the truth is that the determining impulses come exactly from the private sphere and lead to civil consensus-building. With this kind of dissociation the research has deprived itself of a very important tool for the explanation of civil behaviour. It is also not just the presence of the citizen which makes up the effectiveness, it is rather the representation of their civil social points of view which come out in group behaviour, in the competent authorities and also in the “shining lights.”

⁵⁵ J. Nida-Rümelin, *Demokratie als Kooperation*, 202. Manfred Hildermeier speaks in his research about the Russian city of “local societies”; see M. Hildermeier, *Rußland oder Wie weit kam die Zivilgesellschaft?*, in M. Hildermeier et al. (eds.), *Europäische Zivilgesellschaft*, 113–148.

⁵⁶ D. Gosewinkel, D. Rucht, *History meets sociology*, 37 and foll.; A. Klein, *Der Diskurs der Zivilgesellschaft*, 271; M. Janowski, *Polen im 19. Jahrhundert*, 135.

⁵⁷ G.-F. Budde, *Das Öffentliche des Privaten: Die Familie als zivilgesellschaftliche Kerninstitution*, in A. Bauerkämpfer (ed.), *Die Praxis der Zivilgesellschaft*, 57–75; A. Sales, *The Private, the Public and Civil Society: Social Realms and Power Structures*, “International Political Science Review” 12 (1991).

⁵⁸ J. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990), 226.

They determine their self-conception and are also a criterion of their behaviour. In an ideal situation the citizen comprehends the state as their own matter and does not have to abandon it if they recognize their self-image in the politics.⁵⁹

About the Dealings with the Civil Society (Problem-Solving Approaches)

The civil society is barely criticized and seems to be already gone. It is increasingly taken as a catch-all-term, which slips into randomness⁶⁰ and decays to an “empty significance.” There is also a lot of fundamental criticism which sees us as “having come at the freezing point of a semantically declining history,”⁶¹ and which also considers the civil society as a tool to diagnose the social conditions and regard the understanding of the reality as unsuitable.⁶² The others try to save what still could be saved and plead for “the overcoming of a normatively very flat understanding of the civil society” and also for its conceptual interpretation as the civil-part sphere, which is subject to the constant change in an action-oriented way.⁶³ They probably hit the nerve of the time, which recognizes a certain weariness of the definition and the term.⁶⁴ We are extremely enticed by the subjugation of an effusive terminology and by working with metaphors, which we did not adopt and which do not belong to us. This supports a way of thinking which is unable to discover something new.⁶⁵ Like everything in the media society, the ultimate presence of the term has at the same time the potential to deal the deathblow to itself and makes the moral dealings with this term more difficult. However, the rescue attempts can be observed and the question, if it is worthwhile, is basically answered in the affirmative.

⁵⁹ U. Volkmann, *Die Privatisierung der Demokratie*, “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,” February 26, 2010, 9.

⁶⁰ F. Adloff, *Zivilgesellschaft: Theorie*, 8, 12.

⁶¹ V. Heins, *Das Andere der Zivilgesellschaft*, 17.

⁶² N. Luhmann, *Die Politik der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, 2000), 12.

⁶³ D. Gosewinkel, *Einleitung*, 14; D. Gosewinkel, D. Rucht, *History meets sociology*, 30, 52.

⁶⁴ H. U. Gumbrecht, *Dimensionen und Grenzen der Begriffsgeschichte* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2006).

⁶⁵ J. Gray, *Endgames: Questions in the Late Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 161.

The age of the definitions seems to be, at least for now, finished, and the all-round protection of the theoretical and methodological framework as a starting precondition for working on a topic does not seem to be necessary anymore. This arranges the work not only more dynamically and in an open-minded way but also makes possible another way of working with conceptions. It has been tested on important subjects like discourse and identity and the working on the civil society is still topical. The fact that it is not possible to work without the terms and the understanding of the conception is perfectly obvious and is predetermined by the structural necessity of the complex and especially interdisciplinary communication. And yet, the demand for “the parting from the history of the terms” does not seem to be unpleasant and forces reflections. Our demands of an extensive perspective of the historical processes surely defies the use of it and also the stringent orientation on a definitional pattern, which, mostly in the generation gap of different research perspectives, is adjusted wave-like and in strict time to the attributed revisionism or avant gardism. It seems to be more effective in describing the dynamics of the development with rather more universal and neutral elements, which are oriented on a term that strives for and makes the interdisciplinary agreement possible. These elements should always be ways and means and not the final point of the understanding. When the term loses its function as a method, or rather in a broader sense as a means, then it becomes tendentially useless. Therefore, it makes sense to carry out the return of the research to the civil society in terms of basic methodical and theoretical orientation guides, just to overcome the social history, which brings the usability of the term civil society into question circumspectly. At this point it is not about the definition, but rather the development of a concept, by which the existing relations of the problem and function can be exposed and the social processes can be explained.

With this new approach a purposeful acting of actants is the centre of attention,⁶⁶ which orientates itself toward the practicality of the society. With that, the basic parameters of the organisation of the social coexistence, and also the individual with their interests and moral concepts, become the centre of focus again. The organizing and communication principles are necessary for this results-oriented acting. At this point it does not seem to be important who determines them but rather how they are arranged, used and accepted. Under the fundamental aspect of the practicality of the society, the determining, negotiation and preservation of the behaviour patterns and the regulation mechanisms are

⁶⁶ Helpful suggestions by S. Reichhardt, *Gewalt und Zivilität*, 66, 76.