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POWER, MONEY, AND THE GOOD

Civil Society between the State and Market

Abstract: The article focuses upon the recent tendency among Czech intellectuals and politicians to locate the core of civil society in the so called third (non-profit and non-government) sector. It contrasts the theoretically based hopes connected to the idea of civil society (as a sphere of independent activity and non-coerced social integration) with some functional (political, bureaucratic, legal, monetary) imperatives that the third sector activities have to face. In doing so, the text pays special attention to the specific historical conditions in a country that finds itself in the period of transition to the market economy and democratic political regime.

Needless to stress how attractive the concept of civil society has become following the political changes of the late 1980s and early 1990s in East Central Europe. Generally, it is not only the more recent transitional processes taking place in the post-communist countries of the region but the whole global 'third wave of democratization,' as Samuel Huntington¹ calls it, that has been connected to the phenomenon of revitalization of the idea of civil society.² Yet the historical (political, social, cultural) circumstances under which the political upheaval in the formerly communist countries of East Central Europe grew ripe and eventually occurred have rendered the idea and concept in question particularly relevant. It was under these particular circumstances that the notion of civil society could take on the role of a mobilizing political slogan.

Even though the mobilizing effect of the notion of civil society for the popular support of the revolutionary upheavals – i.e. its psychological role as a Sorelian myth – should not be overestimated, the centrality of the concept for un-

¹ Samuel Huntington, *The Third Way. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (University of Oklahoma Press: Norman and London, 1991)

² See for example the chapter "Resurrecting Civil Society (and Restructuring Public Space)" from: Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule. Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore and London, 1986, pp. 48–56); or the chapter "The Contemporary Revival of Civil Society" from: Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (The MIT Press: Cambridge and London, 1992, pp. 29–82).

derstanding the general longing for a (political) change is widely recognized. It was the label of civil society – under which a historically developed phenomenon has been described (though in different manners) since at least Ferguson and Hegel – that appeared well suited to become a catchword for political actors who only gradually formulated general objectives of the changes.

Ernst Gellner beginning his last book³ with a sentence presenting the phrase civil society as a newly born or reborn ideal and slogan, also pursues the event of the (re-)birth first of all in the context of the recent political changes in former communist countries. What is more important is that Gellner, too, finds good reasons to speak about the notion of civil society not just as a conceptual means of theoretical analysis but as a political slogan with certain normative connotations. He joins those recent writers who observe that civil society is no longer a concept that is of concern for just historians of ideas, without any “living resonance or evocativeness.” He stresses that now the phrase “has become a shining emblem.”⁴

To become a ‘shining emblem,’ indeed, the notion of civil society must have contained a certain vagueness. Yet as I have said, it can hardly be understood in terms of a Sorelian myth. Rather, it can be conceptualized as a political symbol in Eric Voegelin’s sense of the word. And this also is the way in which Gellner tends to approach the concept. He treats it as evoking a specific sensitivity, images or expectations as to how society should look and be understood, how social actors should act and understand their action. He presents it as carrying a distinctive mixture of personal independence and non-coerced interpersonal solidarity, sense of tolerance and plurality, universality of certain public claims, security before what stands for political power, etc.

Once the notion is to be related to a specific institutional basis and concrete patterns of behavior, however, there seems to be much less agreement than for example in the case of the market economy, which is another catchword brought up with the political upheavals. This also is why the concept of civil society first stood for a (theoretical) interpretative scheme – though with strong normative connotations – rather than an outright blueprint for political actors. Once the concept is to be concretized in terms of a behavioral pattern or institutional setting, its content suddenly appears as rather flexible and contestable. Yet filling the catchword ‘civil society’ with some content is not just a matter of political actors and interpreters. The context of their action, too, plays a significant role, in this respect. The last decade provides us with good evidence of how different political circumstances endow an idea or concept with different content and meanings.

Speaking of the fate of the idea of civil society in the region – and here I pay particular attention to the Czechoslovak and Czech case – we may observe a

³ See Ernst Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty. Civil Society and its Rivals* (The Penguin Press: New York, 1994; especially the first chapter “A Slogan is Born,” pp. 1–12.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 1.

three stage metamorphosis the idea's meaning has undergone over the last decade or so.

First, the notion was publicized in connection with activities of either semi-independent movements, like the Polish 'Solidarity,' or the dissident movement, like former Czechoslovakia's Charter 77. What especially was at stake at this stage – particularly in the latter case – was a certain minimal level of independence of and protection from the all penetrating state (administrative–ideological machinery). The simple distinction between the state and (civil) society was central.⁵ The two poles were to be strictly distinguished and set against one another in order to gain or defend a protected public space for state-independent activities. While the Polish movement, to stay with our two examples, concentrated more upon the sphere of labor, and by this virtue could not completely abstain from dealing actively with the state in a state run economy, the Czechoslovak one focused largely upon intellectual freedom. Important is – and this also is more apparent in the Czechoslovak case⁶ – that the idea of civil society stands for an essentially defensive project.

In a sense, we might take the Polish Solidarity movement as a transitional case. Already before 1989, the movement bore some elements of the kind of open political engagement that marks the second stage in my sketch of metamorphoses of the idea of civil society.⁷ But it was not before 1989 that the idea, as it entered a quite different political constellation, definitely acquired a completely new meaning. While referring to civil society before 1989 meant seeking protection from the state, now the state alone – the thoroughly disturbed political power structure – was to be penetrated by something like 'public spirit' supplied by the whole society. Institutionally, the change is again better represented by the Czechoslovak case. There the new phase came along with the establishment of the leading revolutionary agent – Civic Forum/Public Against Violence – and its rapidly growing political role in the first months following

⁵ This is reflected in the very title of one of the first books that systematically and explicitly promoted the revival of the idea of civil society in (among others) the at that time communist countries of East-Central Europe; namely, John Keane's [ed.] *Civil Society and the State* (Verso: London and New York, 1988).

⁶ Václav Havel, "Anti-Political Politics"; in: John Keane [ed.], 1988, pp. 381–398.

⁷ As a matter of fact, more detailed accounts of the development of civil society in the countries of East-Central Europe tend to distinguish the dissident movement and 'Solidarity' as two distinct cases. So does for example Johann P. Arnason, in his *The Future that Failed. Origins and Destinies of the Soviet Model* (Routledge: London and New York, 1993, esp. pp. 187–189). For him, too, in the first phase the notion of civil society "referred to the social space which the opposition could hope to protect from state control." The second phase, however, "began [already] with the Polish crisis of 1980–1." Even he retains some doubts regarding this distinction, nevertheless. He admits that "some analysts [...] saw the rise of Solidarnosc as a great leap forward in the struggle of civil society against the state and empire." At the same time, however, he concludes that "in retrospect, it would seem that this reading of the Polish experience obscured its exceptional and problematic character." (ibid.) In my account, obviously, I am accentuating the Czech and Czechoslovak experience.

November 1989. The Forum's spokesmen also tended to present Civic Forum as an institutional base or agent of civil society – as the broadest possible ground on which various opinions were to be discussed and refined as to how to shape the new political life of the country.⁸ Within this context, the concept of civil society became radically politicized: civil society turned into a catchword for political democratization. Within recent theoretical production, perhaps the most outstanding attempt to account for the concept of civil society in this very direction is Jean Cohen's and Andrew Arato's *Civil Society and Political Theory*.⁹

It is an interesting lesson – which is not to be reproduced here, however – to follow the transition of Civic Forum from the originally rather (ideologically and organizationally) amorphous political subject to a set of distinct political platforms, out of which several independent political parties eventually arose. This transition also decisively affected the next (last in my account) metamorphosis of the concept of civil society. As soon as a competitive party system was established, and representative parliamentary democracy was taken as a model for normal politics, a new ground was to be sought for the idea of civil society. Now a new boundary between the state and civil society was to be drawn, and a new meaning and role for both in their mutual relationship was to be found.

Unlike in the previous phases, moreover, a new (third) pole was introduced into the game: the market economy. And it is this point that I want to focus on in what follows, although the question of the prospective political function of civil society should not be lost from sight in the new context either.¹⁰ At the same time, nevertheless, as we will see shortly, the role of the state can by no means be ignored when discussing the relationship between civil society and the market economy.

Although the last metamorphosis of the notion of civil society took a more gradual path than the previous one, at least in the Czech case, there still exists a distinct event we can refer to as to the beginning of the new stage. It was especially Václav Havel's 1994 New Year's speech as the President of the country, in which he initiated the new phase of discussion as for what civil society is, why we need it, and how shall we get it.¹¹ Having admitted that the basic institutions of parliamentary democracy as well as of the market economy had already been established in the country, he pleaded for supporting civic initiatives in areas that provide little or no profit for the market, and in which the state tends to be ineffective or even detrimental. This support, according to him,

⁸ This strategy was in a sense natural, regarding the lack of procedural (legal) legitimacy as well as of political experience on the part of the new political leadership.

⁹ Jean L. Cohen & Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (The MIT Press: Cambridge and London, 1992). It must be added, however, that the authors substantially mitigate the radicalism of their approach by explicitly acknowledging the institutional framework of parliamentary representative democracy with a competitive party system.

¹⁰ In this respect, Cohen's and Arato's book represents a serious theoretical challenge.

¹¹ Speaking generally, these are the three basic questions concerning civil society. We could label the first one as descriptive, the second one as normative, and the third one as practical.

should help establish a viable civil society. By this explicit appeal the concept and idea of civil society were definitely given new content and meaning. From now on, civil society would predominantly be equated with what usually is called voluntary (or third) sector.¹² To be sure, such a definition of civil society is by no means original. It just fitted into the new context within which it was to be discussed and contested.

I say contested because we did not have to wait very long for a controversial reaction. It came from the formally second highest political authority in the state – the prime minister Václav Klaus, in his article “Civil Society or Society of Citizens?,” published in February 1994. Without explicitly mentioning Havel or his New Year’s speech, Klaus questioned two central points of Havel’s appeal: first, the assumption that what one does not for profit is morally better than what is done for profit, and, second, the demand that the state should therefore look for ways how to specifically support some non-profit public activities of the former kind. Klaus thus took Havel’s rather narrow definition for granted,¹³ and he focused upon the normative and practical aspects of the question of civil society.

In the new context, the relationship between the state and civil society is to be redefined, while, as I have said earlier, the new pole of the market economy has entered the game. Speaking in general terms, it is no longer the state but the market from which the sphere of civil society – as having found its institutional core in the third, non-profit sector – is to be protected. In relation to civil society, the state now is to play the active role of a protector. It is a peculiar kind of protection that is at issue here, however. Once the legal protection of the sphere of independent activities – based especially on the respect of certain civil and political rights and freedoms (assembly, association, speech) – has been achieved, the puzzling question of economic protection (or rather support) comes to the fore.

Before I return to the complicated issue of the mutual relationship between the state (or market) and civil society, I want to point out the peculiar consequences that the changes in historical context have had for understanding civil society’s relation to its environment. At the first stage – before 1989 – civil society was expected to burst out and flourish naturally as soon as the state retreated from certain areas of social life. In the second phase – at the time of Civic Forum – civil society was even conceived of as something that was already present, and which only had to be given opportunity to affect and thus democratize the political process of decision-making. At the present (third) stage, contrary to both previous ones, civil society stands for something that needs external (political) help to develop – as something that has to be nurtured

¹² Having labelled the idea of civil society at the first stage as a defensive project, and as an offensive one at the second stage, at this last stage, we could perhaps label it as a balancing project.

¹³ And so did a majority of journalists and commentators right after him.

and cultivated by the conscious and purposeful activity of political and administrative authorities. Civil society is no longer an entity that emerges automatically as soon as the political barriers are torn down.

As a matter of fact, in this very respect, the problem of establishing civil society resembles that of establishing the market economy. Our recent experience seems to parallel – in a condensed way and under specific circumstances – Karl Polanyi's thesis about the state's political involvement in the historical process of constituting market economies at the beginning of modern era.¹⁴ Contrary to what the rhetoric of some proponents of market economy suggests, what we today call market does not seem to come into being naturally, as a result of the state's withdrawal from certain spheres of economic or social activity. The reconstitution of market economy depends not only on certain legal (property rights, individual freedoms, rights of contract, etc.), technical (infrastructure: transportation, information, money in various forms), cultural (education, patterns of economic behavior and expectations), or demographic (density of population) factors that form its background. Market has also found its own political keepers and arbiters in state run institutions like for example the Ministry of Finance or Ministry for Economic Competition, with all their supervising, controlling, and advising functions designed to make the market work.

Assigning the task of establishing civil society and markets to the state not only requires a certain agreement on the normative desirability of both. Even before that, with respect to practical feasibility of the task, it also presupposes that it is sufficiently clear what market and civil society actually are, i.e. what kinds of practices and/or institutions represent them or embody them. This may sound strange. Yet as the propensity of the notion of civil society to change its content according to specific historical (political) circumstances has already been demonstrated here, one also has good reasons to assume that the general agreement on what the market is results from a rather intuitive understanding of the concept. A closer examination would show that the market, too, as well as civil society, functions as a cultural and political symbol in modern societies. And symbols – as it has already been pointed out here – always bear a certain degree of vagueness or flexibility.

Expecting an agent (the state) to purposefully influence the process of formation of civil society or market amounts to reducing the picture of the latter to institutions and/or practices that can be created or shaped or maintained by a purposeful activity of the state. Civil society may become an object of the state 'constitutive' intervention only when understood in a respectively specific way. In short, it is precisely the picture of civil society as institutionalized in a network of so called non-profit organizations (the third sector) that makes it possible to hold the state responsible for civil society and its development.

¹⁴ See Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origin of our Time* (Beacon Press: Boston, 1957)

On the other side – taking the actual situation in the liberal democratic societies into account – little can be strange about holding political authorities responsible for development of the so called third sector; as well as it would be preposterous to deny the authorities' role in making market economies work. The question is, however, to what extent it is possible to speak about civil society and the market today, and still respect the principles attached to these symbols (like for instance 'solidarity with the others,' in the former case, or 'individual responsibility for one's own life,' in the latter). And yet, paradoxically, it is just these principles that are referred to when the state's intervention in these two 'sectors' is to be legitimized.

My task is not, however, to investigate in the paradoxes of modern welfare states. This has been done in much greater detail than I could do here by authors ranging from Claus Offe¹⁵ or Michel Crozier,¹⁶ on the one side, to neo-conservatives like Daniel Bell¹⁷ or Irving Kristol,¹⁸ on the other side. I just want to make a few more remarks on some dilemmas that the post-communist countries have to face when trying to establish civil society with help of the state authorities.

As I have said earlier, the support the state is expected to provide to the third sector is an economic one. Here support appears to be a more adequate term than protection, since both direct subsidies or grants as well as various kinds of tax- and custom-exemptions – which are the two major forms of the state's economic intervention – are rather supportive than protective mechanisms.¹⁹ The problem is that this kind of support (or protection) can not be universal, it always is selective. There always is someone who has to decide either to whom the limited subsidies or grants will go, and how much, or which kinds of organizations are entitled to take advantage of the respective tax and custom provisions. In short, power and money are involved in the game in both cases.

In the former case, the problems with building civil society with the help of state intervention are generally more obvious. This particularly applies to the current conditions in the post-communist countries, where private or corporate funding of non-profit activities is still rather underdeveloped, compared to the Western countries which serve as models. In the Czech Republic – despite the frequent lamentations of the adherents of the anti-statist ethos of civil society – the number of associations or projects in spheres like social care (services), 'extra-curricular' education, culture (arts, minorities), etc. has increased quite dramatically, over past several years.²⁰ On an abstract level, this development

¹⁵ Klaus Offe, *Contradictions of the Welfare State* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, 1984).

¹⁶ Michel Crozier et al. [ed.], *The Crisis of Democracy*

¹⁷ Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (Basic Books: New York, 1976).

¹⁸ Irving Kristol, *Two Cheers for Capitalism* (Basic Books: New York, 1978)

¹⁹ Although it is true that, in a less direct sense, these mechanisms may also be understood as protecting certain spheres of social life – like education, social and medical care, culture (arts) – from an extensive commodification.

²⁰ According to the information of the Foundation of Development of Civil Society, the number

could well be in concert with the liberal stance promoting the idea of a self-sustaining society. Yet behind the liberal image and the actual formal independence of the state on the part of the associations or projects, the latter still are to a large extent funded or supported by the state (i.e. through the budget redistribution), whether on the nation-wide or the local (district or communal) levels.

There is no doubt that, under new conditions, space has been open wide to independent civic initiatives coming from the society itself, uncoerced by the state. Yet it remains true as well that in so far as these initiatives are dependent on state funding, the state still essentially substitutes for a self-sustaining civil society in selecting activities or areas that the society would hold as necessary and therefore worthy of support. The fact that it is society where the initial impulses come from does not erase the problem.

Those who look at the world with suspicious – though they alone would probably say with realistic – eyes will certainly (and not without reason) stress that this ultimately puts the development of civil society in the hands of those who have better contacts to the state authorities and their representatives. This ironic consequence becomes particularly disturbing with respect to areas like social or medical care services.²¹ Another ironic consequence consists in the fact that through the competition of applicants for grants one of the distinctive principles of the market comes back into the game as well, though in a specifically circumscribed context. The agents of civil society seek to sell their ideas and projects to the state or local authorities which, however, are indeed peculiarly powerful customers.

And yet the state's active involvement in constituting the third sector does not have to be seen in a purely negative light. This active involvement may to an extent demystify or dealienate the state which is obliged to act as a moral agent, forced to recognize and respect what is good and beneficial for society as a whole and for generations to come. From the educational point of view, this is particularly important in societies like the post-communist ones, which have long strived (again not without reason) for a (morally) neutral state that keeps at distance from affairs of daily social life. For all the continuing dependence on the state, though still more indirect, the idea of a neutral state is still quite attractive in the recent Czech Republic. After all, the tacit agreement of society with the state that presents itself as neutral and tends to be perceived like this on an ideological level, yet which has to act as a moral agent in particular situations, is not necessarily unhealthy. This internal dilemma or even contradiction

of registered non-profit and non-government organizations in the Czech Republic rose from 2.037 in 1898 to 12.864 in 1991, and to 23.434 in 1993. (in: "Základní informace o neziskovém sektoru v ČR", NROS, Praha: 1994)

²¹ At the very time this article was written, there was a political affair discussed in the Czech media concerning a non-profit organization called 'Magna Res' providing social services in the North-Moravian district of Opava. Thanks to personal ties this organization had with local authorities (the District Council), it was able to gain a virtual monopoly in providing this kind of services in the given district.

may well have a balancing effect in precluding possible excesses on both sides. The picture of the state as a completely neutral and distant agent may be attractive, but, as we know from Nozick²² – perhaps the most famous adherent of the minimal state of our time – such picture can hardly be seriously drawn outside of its utopian resort. Furthermore, an abrupt dismissal of the active involvement of the state does not seem reasonable nor feasible regarding the actual conditions in which the Czech society finds itself at present. For all the arbitrariness proper to the system of state grants and subsidies, namely, state spending is still liable to some public control, which so far seems to be the surest way of balancing the tendency of the emerging private or corporate funders to support primarily activities like professional sport or pop-art shows.

To be sure, the third sector can rely not only on state, corporate, or private funding. In the Czech Republic, as in other post-communist countries of the region, relatively many non-government foundations have emerged since 1989 – frequently with the help of some Western partners. These foundations often specialize in supporting various kinds of activities or projects that otherwise could only be realized with difficulties or not at all. Their positive role in the development of non-profit activities is at hand. One peculiar consequence of the social and institutional milieu in which they operate, however, should not be overlooked.

For all the changes brought about by the 1989 revolutions, Czechoslovaks inherited from the communist regime a highly centralized institutional and informational structure of society. This centralization was even followed by the dissident movement – which in Czechoslovakia always had the character of an elite activity – as well. Hardly anyone can thus be blamed today for the concentration of the social power mostly in the capital, and to a much lesser extent in some other bigger towns.²³ It is then only natural that these foundations, too, have mostly resided in Prague. The peculiar but not much surprising consequence, then, is that as the fundings these foundations distribute tend to go to projects closest to the source, civil society, to put it ironically, has the best conditions to flourish in Prague.²⁴ In a sense, the situation resembles that with the state funding: better contacts bring better chances for getting funds. And yet there is something to this problem that should be kept in mind. Those who are responsible for distributing the funds may find it justified to look for projects run by people they know or by people whose actual dealing with the funds they can

²² See Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Basic Books: New York, 1974).

²³ Although this was a post-communist heritage, after 1989 it became one of the major sources of the Slovak resentment against Czechs (represented for them especially by Prague), which eventually led to the division of Czechoslovakia in 1992.

²⁴ The example of the Foundation for the Development of Civil Society is quite symptomatic, in this respect. In the first year of its existence (1993), more than 90 % of the funds it distributed among applicants went to projects run by Prague based organizations or initiatives.

best control. To overcome the alleged impersonality of the state administration, after all, is one of the objectives motivating the proponents of civil society.

The second case of the state's economic support to the third sector – i.e. through the system of tax- and custom- exemptions – seems theoretically more interesting than the former. It is here, namely, that the question of the relationship between the state and the third sector is *systematically* complemented by the question of the relationship of both to the market. The state – through its legislators – is expected to accord a legal status to the dividing line between market and civil society in order to create a stable economic ground for establishing the institutional framework of the latter. It is here that the tendency to label the third sector as the institutional core of civil society is quite popular. This is done, first, to show that the state can be (and is) responsible for the development of civil society, and second, to gain legitimacy for the state in its granting a systematic advantage to one sort of social-economic actor over another.

As I have said, the controversy accelerated by Havel's appeal and Klaus's response has largely been over the moral status of activities pertaining either to the sphere of the market or to that of civil society. As an instrument that is supposed to provide both moral and empirical criteria for dividing the two spheres, then, it serves the well established distinction between profit-oriented and non-profit activities or organizations. In moral terms, the distinction seems clear: the former evokes selfishness or egoism, the latter solidarity or altruism. The distinction becomes somewhat blurred, however, when it is to be translated into empirical and practical terms. For how should one 'objectively' and, what's more, apriori distinguish an activity that is done for profit from one which is not? This seems to be quite a puzzle, as the label 'non-profit' refers to subjective (psychological) motivations of actors rather than to 'objective' characteristics of their activity that could be operationalized in empirical terms. We can imagine two 'independent' theatres or social service agencies, for example, of which one makes profit and the other does not, as well as we can imagine two bakers or bankers in the same position.

The distinction between the profit-oriented and non-profit sectors is thus made rather intuitively, though it is based on a double calculation at the same time: as 'non-profit' are labeled those activities which are in a way beneficial for society but which do not promise to make enough profit to survive if they were to operate on the market principle of free competition. Yet this consideration can hardly lead to a clear-cut distinction between the third sector activities and the activities carried out under the market conditions. First, which activity – whether profit or non-profit – is more beneficial for society is a metaphysical question. And second, even those who are active in the market place can not be absolutely sure that their activity is going to bring them profit, even though they enter the market relations with the intention to make some. Thus, there still remains a great deal of arbitrariness in distinguishing non-profit from profit-ori-

ented activities, which provides the state with a special responsibility. To put it in a personalized way: civil society passes the task of its differentiation onto the state, and while it is intuitively assumed that the dividing border is quite clear, the border's delineation is largely a political decision.²⁵

This decision actually demarkates and establishes the third (non-profit) sector by an administrative or legislative act, which of course has important consequences. One of them comes to light when we correct a conceptual confusion. What strictly – and in a sense objectively (i.e. with empirically observable consequences) – distinguishes the activities or organizations pertaining to the third sector from those pertaining to the market economy is not that they are non-profit but that they are non-taxed, as Klaus rightly points out in the Czech discussion. Thus identifying civil society with the third sector activities may lead to the ironic consequence that taxation becomes one of the major criteria distinguishing civil society from the market. One could go even further and say that this is the way how the distinction between market and civil society is artificially constructed and institutionalized. In their symbolic meanings, the two spheres of human activity may find common principles – like that of individual responsibility for one's own action – of which we are reminded by the classic figures of the Scottish Enlightenment. Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, and David Hume – to whom various theorists of the market as well as of civil society continue to return – did not distinguish the two spheres. For them, they both were parts or aspects of “a realm of personal autonomy in which people could be free to develop their own methods of moral accounting.”²⁶

To be sure, much has changed since the time these authors wrote their treatises. Alan Wolfe, whom I just quoted, himself makes the point that the moral codes pertaining to the two spheres have disunited, in the course of time, and, moreover, the ethos of self-interest and instrumentality, which he ascribes to the market, tends to penetrate the spheres of activities that have been normally steered by the ethos of solidarity proper to civil society. In fact, the way I have discussed the problem of economization of civil society so far seems to confirm Wolfe's point. Nevertheless, I believe that market and civil society, as cultural and political symbols,²⁷ still overlap in an important respect. Yet I will leave a closer examination of this assumption for another occasion.

In my closing remark, I will rather follow Wolfe's line and return to the Habermasian theme of colonization of the life-world, the latter being understood as an equivalent of civil society (which is most outspokenly done by Co-

²⁵ To mitigate these harsh words, it should be noted that in this case, again, the educational effect is that of dealienating the state authorities as a moral agent.

²⁶ Alan Wolfe, *Whose Keeper? Social Science and Moral Obligation* (University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1989, p. 15).

²⁷ This means as symbols organizing actual political and social life by orientating social and political actors according to a common hermeneutical code.

hen and Arato²⁸). The economization of civil society under the patronage of the state brings about still another effect that goes against the ethos integral to the idea of civil society. The fact that it is the state which grants the status of non-profit organizations to certain activities – by exempting them to some degree from the tax and/or custom duties – renders the state the watchman of their non-profitability at the same time.²⁹ It is needless to stress how this accelerates the growth of administration and the general bureaucratization on both sides – which is precisely the opposite of what has made the idea of civil society attractive. On the part of social actors, it calls for specific bodies of competence – bureaucratic, economic, legal, public relations, etc.

As other points in my presentation, this last one is by no means original.³⁰ Although not much salient in the very recent Czech discussion, it is introduced here to suggest once more what my text has been alluding to periodically. Namely, the instrumentally guided reduction of the concept of civil society to a network of non-profit organizations constituting the so called third sector brings about consequences unanticipated by the proponents of the idea of civil society. This reduction helps to demonstrate the state's responsibility for making the activities possible that are initiated by the free will of its citizens. From the other side, however, by accepting this responsibility the state's active involvement also contributes to decreasing people's capacity to make necessary choices in matters of public interest, to recognize and look for agreement with others on what is important for society as a whole, to select between alternatives with respect to this whole.

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²⁸ See Jean L. Cohen & Andrew Arato, 1992.

²⁹ Typically, the status of a non-profit organization means that the respective institution can not distribute its profit among its individual members but can only spend it on the services it was established to provide.

³⁰ Among other works, it appears quite frequently in the representative case studies contained in: Robert Wuthnow [ed.], *Between States and Markets. The Voluntary Sector in Comparative Perspective* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey, 1991).