

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

Historical trajectories of contemporary societies

**The development of civil society in Europe
from the Middle Ages until today**

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**Convened by:
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SCIENTIFIC REPORT

1. Executive summary

This workshop started from the observation, in recent research, that the development of civil society can only be understood from a historical and long term perspective. In particular, research influenced by the theories of Jürgen Habermas on the emergence of the public sphere in eighteenth-century England, is qualified. Whereas the club life of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment is generally seen as the cradle of European civil society, a growing number of studies shows that it existed – depending on the definition – long before the eighteenth century and apart from the conditions Habermas sums up, such as the rise of coffee houses and a free press.

Previous European projects have already paid attention to the historical development of the European civil society, but these research networks stressed other aspects of civil society and they did not recognise the medieval and early modern backgrounds of this European civil society. The European Commission, for instance, funded in 2003 and 2004 the European Civil Society Network (CiSoNet) in order to investigate the formation of a transnational civil society in Europe. However, this project emphasized the developments during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries without taking into account the important influences from preceding periods. Other European research networks recognized the legacies of medieval and early modern developments in contemporary society, but these projects did not really examine the long history of the European civil society. The European Science Foundation, for instance, supported a major research project about the historical roots of republican political thought between 1995 and 1997. Although one of the involved scientist referred to the republican nature of Adam Ferguson's 'Essay on the history of civil society', which is usually considered as a crucial text in the history of European civil society, the conclusions of this important research project did not stress the importance of civil society as a concept and an analytical tool. The European Science Foundation also funded a major research project about the origins of the modern state, which resulted in several edited volumes. One of these books was dedicated to the political activities of common people during the late medieval and early modern period, but the concept of civil society was not used, despite the emphasis on civic values, sociability and community building from below.

The workshop in Antwerp benefited from the results of these previous research networks, but it offered new perspectives for future research which were neglected in previous research programs. The Antwerp meeting distinguished itself in particular by emphasizing the crucial connection between social and political history, by combining political theory and daily politics and by considering the formation of European civil society as a long term development from the middle ages until today.

The consequences of this approach, and especially the new chronology, are important. It suggests that not the secular and voluntary associations of the Enlightenment were crucial for the emergence of a civil society, but the Christian corporations and the urban liberties of the middle ages. It also implies that the political impact of the civil society was not simply a question of membership and participation in a social and cultural organization. Instead, crucial questions on representation and on participation in the political realm arise. As a consequence,

the leading question of this workshop was whether and how this new perspective might change our understanding of the political impact of civil society in Europe and beyond. Next to this, this new perspective is to affect also the crucial debate in the European Union about the impact of religion and/or secularization in European society. Both politicians and ideological groups disagree about the role of religion in the coming about of western values and society. An historical perspective is needed in order to help us understand the influence of both religion and secularization. To start with, the new chronological framework suggests that religion was far more important in European civil society than current studies tend to assume.

In order to shed light on it, we assembled historians and social scientists with the aim of exploring the needs for and possibilities of future research. The meeting in Antwerp was convened at the top floor of a separate university building in order to create a real 'workshop atmosphere', away from the classrooms, department offices and the usual academic worries. All participants were lodged in the same hotel for four nights so as to stimulate informal contacts during this three days workshop. It is important to stress that it is already quite difficult to gather people from medieval, early modern and contemporary history, because most history departments are organized according to time periods and these various subgroups do not always communicate efficient in the current academic strife for specialization. In addition, the organizers also invited scholars trained in the social and political sciences in order to enlarge the thematical, historical and methodological scope of the workshop (cf. part 6 of the report).

In the end, 29 people from fifteen different countries participated in this workshop. Most of them are considered as established scholars and their extensive experience in the field certainly contributed to the success of the meeting. The workshop organizers recruited academics from all parts of Europe, but they also invited scholars from the United States, Canada and Australia. This was a deliberate decision, because some of the leading academics in the field are working outside the European Union, and it would be unwise to neglect their knowledge, networks and experiences. The added value of this group of non-European academics was considerable and the participating European scholars surely benefitted from their presence. Next to this, the organizers also invited a small selection of young, promising European scholars.

The workshop was divided in three parts: (1) concepts and methodologies, (2) historical trajectories of different historical regions and (3) comparative perspectives within and beyond Europe. The aim of the first session (3 papers) was to give an overview of different methodologies and approaches to this topic. The second part (17 papers) was to provide an in-depth comparison of the different historical trajectories within Europe. The third and final part (6 papers) aimed at a thorough and comprehensive discussion of the characteristics (diversities and similarities) of civil society within Europe and to reflect on both its uniqueness and its possible impact on non-European regions. The meeting in Antwerp will result in a new European research network on civil society, and it is certainly the intention to examine possibilities to apply for funds to develop a new research program on European civil society.

The outcome of the workshop will be spelled out below, but the main issues touched upon can be summed up as follows:

1. The scope is broadened, not only geographically and chronologically, but also in terms of the types of organisations studied. The comparison of different European regions showed that civil society appeared in various forms, which largely depended on the social and political circumstances. The urban belt in Italy and the Low Countries, for instance, produced other forms of civil society than the less populated areas in Eastern Europe, but these variations went hand in glove with remarkable similarities. Citizens organized themselves in associations all over Europe and they developed, adapted to and/or appropriated certain civic values and behaviour rules.
2. The inclusive or exclusive character of civil society is re-examined for different organisations and from different perspectives. The recognition of religious associations as part and forms of civil society clearly broadens the social scope of the existing research, because religious organisations were more inclusive than other associations.
3. As a result of the inclusion of different geographical (and hence political) contexts in which civil society has taken root, the relationship between civil society and the political system as a whole is revised. Several papers showed that civil society does not have to be entirely separate from state institutions. On the contrary, some of the most successful forms of civil society closely co-operated with and even changed the existing power structures. Both liberal and (neo-)corporative (and even totalitarian) governments can be deeply shaped by civil society, although both political models imply different forms of civil society.
4. The importance of historical contexts and path dependency (next to the invention of tradition) is brought to the fore and has been acknowledged as a fundamental characteristic. Historical trajectories really shaped the different forms of civil society in Europe. As a result, civil society has many faces in European history and the legacy of these historical contexts always influences the characteristics of contemporary civil society.
5. The nature of the internal norms and values of civil society have been fundamentally revised. Historians recently showed that the bourgeois conception of the European public sphere resulted in a normative definition of civil society. This implies that civil society is always the result of power struggles and strategies of representation. However, scholars have to look beyond this normative conception and must be aware of alternative forms of civil society with deviant values and behaviour rules.

2. Scientific content of the event

The workshop was divided in **three parts**:

1. The first session of the workshop dealt with the different concepts and methodologies used in humanities and social sciences. This part of the workshop gave researchers from different (sub)disciplines the opportunity to present the characteristics of the civil society research in their field (questions – methodologies – answers – historical perspectives).
2. Mapping the various historical trajectories of different historical regions was the next task of this workshop. Seven sessions/panels were devoted to the similarities and variations in the development of civil societies in European history. From the start, it was clear that civil society was a different reality in various regions across Europe. Moreover, it was perceived and defined differently in various political and socio-cultural settings. Intra-European comparisons, as a result, constitute a necessary leg up for future research.
3. The last section of the workshop was to offer some comparative perspectives within but also beyond Europe. The search for similarities within Europe enables researchers to identify the characteristics of a 'European' civil society; a comparison with other non-European models is the best way to characterize and qualify the shared visions, values and discourses behind it.

Maarten Van Dijck opened the workshop with a short introduction. He summarized the research questions of the initial proposal and sketched the background of the workshop. Van Dijck pointed at previous research networks and successful projects. The organizers immediately indicated that they considered this meeting as a starting-point for further research. These short remarks were followed by the presentation of professor Gouliamos. He represented the European Science Foundation and pointed at the opportunities for further research in a European context.

Bert De Munck started the **first part** of the meeting with a historiographical overview and a case study in which the conceptual and methodological problems were identified. Traditionally it is assumed that "modern" civil society originated in the associations, clubs, and public sphere of the eighteenth century, as a result of the "liberation" of the individual from the "shackles" of absolutism, religious intolerance, and the patriarchal family. However, recent research goes further back in time. Scholars such as Robert Putnam (sociologist), Antony Black (political scientist), and Katherine Lynch (historian) associate the origins of civil society with the heyday of confraternities and guilds in the late middle ages. This has, of course, serious consequences for our understanding of the characteristics and functions of civil society. Given that confraternities were permeated by religious devotion and crafts were inextricably bound to the (often undemocratic) political establishment, fundamental questions arise about the importance of religion in civil society and the role of associations in the political participation of individuals. Moreover, De Munck tried to identify the important changes in the early modern period, an era of state formation and bureaucratization on the one hand, and of growing "privatization" of the nuclear family on the other hand.

The paper of Dieter Gosewinkel (who did not attend the conference personally due to health problems) tackled the question from the perspective of the German concepts *Bürgertum* and *Bürgerlichkeit* as they were used in the 20th century. He demonstrates that these concepts are fundamentally contested and that using them implies assumptions about the existence of a social formation of *Bürgertum* (bourgeoisie) and the formative power of a cultural system (*Bürgerlichkeit*) – and

hence an interpretation of developmental factors, hegemonic tendencies and breaks in the German history of the 20th century. Since the 1990s, the emphasis on Bürgertum and Bürgerlichkeit has competed with interpretative concepts relating to Bürger, the Latin civis, and which nonetheless are to be differently interpreted: Bürgergesellschaft (citizen society), Zivilgesellschaft (civil society) and Zivilität (civility). Consequently, the paper compares and empirically underpins the analytic reach of some of these competing concepts. The focus is on the interpretative power of a culturally and socially defined system of values and behaviour. How are developments and breaks in twentieth-century German social history to be most exactly understood and best explained: through the concepts Zivilgesellschaft and Zivilgesellschaftlichkeit (civil society and civil sociality), Bürgerlichkeit (for which there is no adequate translation, to be circumscribed as: bourgeois attitude and conduct), or Zivilität (civility)?

The role of religion and the tension between state and society was tackled from a contemporary perspective by Danielle Dierckx. The central assumption of the research project she presented, is that so-called 'faith-based organizations' fill the gap left after the withdrawal of the welfare state in several domains of public life, in particular social welfare and social protection. As a result, she touched upon a crucial domain in the reality of civil society: the need for and drives behind associations to set up charity and mutual aid. This contribution raises important questions about the differences between various confessional groups in contemporary history and the influence of their historical presence in Europe. Indeed, Christian, Jewish and Islamic organizations have created their own resources and networks during the past. The paper of Danielle Dierckx helps historians to understand the importance of historical trajectories, and it also reminds scholars of the influence of religious institutions, which are usually not considered as proponents of a genuine civil society. This view also turned up in the more historical papers (Garrioch, Van Dijck).

The paper of Alain Chatriot was scheduled in the second section of the program, but his paper largely dealt with more theoretical and historiographical problems as well. Chatriot argued that a civil society is never free from state intervention. On the contrary, a civil society is always constructed in relation with state actors. This view was also defended by other participants during the workshop, and this redefinition of the concept can be considered as an important achievement of the workshop. Most of the papers in the second part of the workshop did not start from a theoretical point of view, but their historical analyses confirmed that the current definitions, based on eighteenth-century ideas, is not useful for most time periods and regions (Sá, Van Dijck, De Smaele, Kirli). A reevaluation of the Habermasian notion of the public sphere and the European civil society seems to be one of the most important theoretical and methodological outcomes of the Antwerp meeting.

The **second part** of the workshop was devoted to historical and regional differences within Europe. The conceptual and methodological fields of tension, as they were articulated in the first part, were examined empirically and historically for the United Kingdom (Rosser, Cowan and Morris), Germany and Scandinavia (Schwerhoff, Erikson), Italy (Eckstein, Terpstra), Spain and Portugal (Imízcoz, Sá), the Low Countries (Van Dijck, De Smaele, Furnée, Janse), France (Garrioch, Chatriot), and Eastern Europe (Mannová, Bradly). On the whole, these papers showed that regional differences were indeed important. The social, political and cultural context weighs heavily upon the existence and functioning of any civil society.

However, these papers have also qualified certain clichés and stereotypes – most importantly concerning the relationship between ‘state’ and ‘society’. While Putnam tends to connect a ‘strong society’ with a ‘strong state’ (the latter implying the former) the papers in this workshop clearly demonstrated that a large variety of relationships between state and society were and are possible. Even totalitarian regimes, such as nineteenth-century Russia, could breed a very vivid and important ‘civil society’. As a consequence, questions arise regarding causal relationships. Did a ‘genuine’ civil society guarantee a strong state, or is it exactly the other way around, and was a strong state rather an answer to problems (of exclusion) in the civil society? Here as well, diversity turned out to be the watchword, but perhaps even more important was the observation that history mattered indeed.

Following Habermas, most historians have situated the origins of the European civil society in the eighteenth century, but they usually associate these developments with the rise of new types of secular and autonomous association during the Enlightenment. Both the papers and the discussions in our workshop resulted in the consensus that (1) civil society is to be understood from its historical entanglement with institutional (urban authorities, the church) and mental (cultural, religious) evolutions and (2) civil society is first and foremost an historical construction, rooted in intellectual and political ideas and discourses (be it top down or bottom up).

To start with, most studies have hardly paid attention to the importance of the religious foundations of western civil society. Several papers on the Antwerp meeting made a plea for the inclusion of religious organizations and the church in the definition of the European civil society. David Garrioch, Katherine Lynch and Maarten Van Dijck demonstrated how religion shaped urban life during the eighteenth-century, but other papers also pointed at the importance of religious organizations such as guilds and fraternities (Rosser). The inclusion of these associations has important consequences for the social composition of the civil society, because religious fraternities recruited their members in all social layers.

As to political ideas and discourses, Brian Cowan stressed in his paper that historians should not be obsessed with tracing the exact moment of origin of the European civil society, but he also emphasized that civil society did not suddenly arise during the eighteenth century. Indeed, the emergence of the European civil society was a gradual and pluriform process. Historians can help other scholars to understand that the rise of liberalism during the eighteenth century largely shaped our current ideas about civil society. However, civil society is not a unique characteristic of liberal political cultures. Other societies developed their own forms of civil society and the European past shows that the Enlightenment was not the only father of contemporary civil society. However, further research has to identify the claims of the other precursors of our modern civil society. Next to this, scholars should be aware of the constant strife between several social, geographical and political groups through European history. In the end, European civil society also influenced forms of civil society in other parts of the world, but European ideas were mingled up with indigenous forms. However, both Christian associations and liberal secularism had an enormous impact on the global civil society of the twenty first century.

Henk De Smaele in his contribution demonstrated how the political and institutional context shaped the flourishing Belgian civil society in the nineteenth

century. What is often called the 'neocorporatist' political system in Belgium (with strong and fully elaborated parties, trade unions, consultative structures etc.) seems to be the product of a political culture dominated by liberalism. Christian-democrats and social-democrats used the liberal principles of the Belgian constitution and political culture (that was consciously created in opposition to 'republican' models and ideologies) to create networks of powerful mass member associations. De Smaele therefore asks attention for the importance of political ideas (e.g. on political representation) in the historical study of civil society. Other papers also pointed at the importance of the history of political thought. Van Dijck goes further back in time and points to the connections between republican ideas and civil society in the late medieval and early modern Low Countries. While the plea for a strong civil society is traditionally considered an answer to the rise of capitalism and the spread of luxury during the eighteenth century, he argues that the propagators of civil society in fact asked for a revival of republican virtues, such as direct political participation, social engagement and a moral revival. Indeed, it is not a coincidence that both republicanism and civil society were re-invented during the eighteenth century.

The interconnection between historical realities and contemporary and ex-post ideas was one of the main perspectives of the **third part** of this workshop. Presenting two non-European models, Tamar Herzog and Cengiz Kirli reflected upon the reality of civil society in a colonial context (the Spanish Americas) and a non-European empire (the Ottoman Empire). Demonstrating the similarities of public debate on both sides of the Ocean, Herzog qualified the importance of the geographical gap between Spain and the Americas (as Sá did between Portugal and its overseas territories). She thus redefines seventeenth and eighteenth-century colonialism as an all-embracing reality and poses fundamental questions regarding the relationship between civil society on the one hand and the state and 'governmentality' on the other. In the same vein, Kirli spelled out the influence of the European discourse – the one based on Habermas in particular – on civil society and the public sphere in a non-European intellectual context. In particular, Kirli demonstrated that the concepts of 'the public' and 'public opinion' constituted and justified a series of governmental practices when they emerged as a new element and as a source of legitimacy for the Ottoman government from the 1830s onward. The political practices in question are summed up in the term 'surveillance', a set of practices in which 'the public' and 'public opinion' was constructed while the 'population' became the primary target to be acted upon.

These extremely valuable non-European perspectives proved to be the ideal leg up for the comparative perspective provided by Katherine Lynch, Manon van der Heijden, Antony Black and Arnd Bauerkämper, who, each in their own way, reflected upon the historical trajectories of European civil society in both reality and intellectual discourse. First, Lynch traced the intellectual roots of the concept of civil society and, in particular, its much debated relationship with the concept of the public sphere. Her central argument was that although the concept of civil society may have been of relatively recent vintage, its reality was not. For Lynch civil society is a long-term feature of Western society, as it was related to the impact of the church and the importance of the nuclear family. Starting from a comparison with the Muslim world, Black as well argued that civil society is a typical European phenomenon, although Black situates its roots in the juridical concepts of community and freedom as they were coined in classical antiquity, both Greek and Roman. Both views imply a European *Sonderweg*, but in a much more empirical paper van der Heijden traced the actual evolution of civil society

in the early modern period, arguing that we should examine 'how civic associations and organisations operated (...) in the field of public provisioning'. Van der Heijden thus evacuates the concept from its all too often normative strings and reframes the question of civil society into a question on the active participation of social agents in the political realm. This is also the perspective of Bauerkämper, who focuses on civil society as a transnational reality, which emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Singling out the International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO), he adds weight to a crucial read threat in the workshop: that the reality of civil society is inextricably intertwined with the definition of the concept. In the end, all participants agreed that the definition used, while being politically charged, determines the reality observed.

The workshop ended with a general discussion about the most important conclusions and some recommendations for future research. The organizers indicated that they will ask the participants to contribute to an edited volume on the history of civil society. However, this book will not be the only outcome of the Antwerp workshop. The organizers are convinced that the subject offers several interesting perspectives for future research. These prospects will be discussed in the next paragraph.

3. Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field and outcomes

Inevitably, the chronological widening of the scope towards the (late) middle ages, brings about a whole range of new organizations to be examined – including craft guilds, religious confraternities, poor boxes, shooting guilds and militias, and so on (De Munck, Rosser, van der Heijden, Van Dijck, ...). As a consequence, the workshop predictably added to the diversity and complexity of the phenomenon. However, this is not to say that all previous research has to be relegated to the dustbin of history.

As to the inclusive or exclusive character of civil society, for instance, the workshop has strongly confirmed the multilayered and multifaceted reality of civil society and the associations concerned. In line with recent research on the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the male, bourgeois and elite nature of most organisations was re-established (Morris, Furnée), although not without emphasising both historical transformations and different realities across the social scale. While one had to be chosen and initiated in clubs and (masonic) lodges, typical for the eighteenth century, a more transparent and open but also more pecuniary 'subscriber democracy' emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century (Morris). Organizations associated with this, typically had a clear purpose, which materialised in a culture of meetings, debates and published reports. As joining and leaving was voluntary and every subscriber normally had one vote, this is close to Tocqueville's view on civil society and to Gellner's modular man. Moreover, it is close to the communicative rationality of Habermas, which heavily depends on public debate and print culture. Also in line with Habermas, these organisations are shown to have come to work more closely with the state in the course of the nineteenth century. Gradually the state started to supervise and even supplement their activities. As to the periodisation in a broader sense, these papers rather closely followed Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann's view on civil society, although Maartje Janse, in her paper on the Dutch anti-slavery movement (the first single-issue pressure group) added an extra dimension, namely 'a truly national oriented civil society' which is said to have come about in the nineteenth century as well. Moreover, the inclusion of religious organisations significantly broadened the social spectrum of civil society, because these associations recruited their members in all social layers.

Still, the added value of the workshop was sought for in the broadening of the scope in both a chronological and geographical sense. We have learned a great deal, during this workshop, from papers on the different geographical (and hence political) contexts in which civil society has taken root. To start with, civil society is shown to have emerged in very different contexts, including totalitarian Russia (Bradly) and nationalistic Slovakia (Mannová). As such, this raises fundamental questions on the relationship between the political context, on the one hand, and the characteristics of civil society on the other. Moreover, the inclusion of religion in the definition of European civil society raises questions about some regional differences between Latin and Greek Christianity. Heinz Schilling already pointed at the consequences of this religious schism for the political traditions in both parts of Europe. So, it would hardly be a surprise that these different perspectives on church institutions and the role of lay people also affected the formation of a specific civil society during the late medieval and early modern period. Indeed, Orthodox Christianity stressed the formation of monastic

societies, while parish structures – with an important participation of lay people – became the dominant organisational structure in the Latin part of Europe. The role of lay people was reevaluated during the rise of the protestant and the catholic reforms, but Latin Christianity still shared several characteristics.

The particular character of the connections between civil society and the state was prominent in the paper of Sá on early modern Portugal and its overseas colonies. Sá pointed to the converging interests of the state/prince on the one hand and local elites on the other hand. While the so-called 'misericórdias' were an answer to disruptive religious troubles during the Inquisition – the exclusion and assimilation of Jews – and a real effort to re-create a sense of community, the central authorities and the local elites created a *modus vivendi*: the king granted privileges but the local elites continued to be rather autonomous and could even evolve into hearts of resistance. The paper of Nicholas Terpstra on early modern Bologna makes clear that the political negotiation between central and local political actors can even breed a certain 'invention of tradition'. All involved parties derived concepts and symbols from classical, roman republicanism, such as Tribunes and Senate. In earlier work, Terpstra had already demonstrated that elements of medieval corporatism shaped Bolognese society and economics even into the twentieth century (which is one reason why Robert Putnam identified Bologna's region of Emilia Romagna as the most 'successful' region in modern Italy). In his paper for the ESF-workshop, Terpstra adopted a more inward looking perspective, for he examined the internal dynamics at a local level. It again complicates the picture, in particular with regard to the centre-periphery dynamics of early modern state formation and the oligarchic trends with which this was accompanied. As they did in other European cities, local oligarchs 'played the dual game of invoking older values while undermining older realities, and frequently usurped and redirected charitable institutions in order to strengthen personal patronage networks to the detriment of public 'misericordia'. So any search for causalities regarding the relationship between state and society in future research, will have to deal with an increased complexity. A flourishing civil society does not have to cut off all connections with the state or other power groups. Indeed, a successful civil society can influence the process of decision-making and this would imply a certain relationship with the authorities.

When it comes to explaining differences and similarities, an historical perspective is again indispensable. While guilds could thrive in very different contexts – including centralised states such as late medieval England (Rosser) – the field of tension between the central and the local level could also be characterised by an important path dependency. In his valuable contribution to civil society in eighteenth-century France (and hence, to the end of the *ancien régime*) David Garrioch has pointed to the continuing importance of religious confraternities, enabling him to reflect upon both similarities and differences when comparing them to the early modern religious confraternities. Brian Cowan suggests combining Habermas' theory about the rise of the public sphere with Elias' work about the European civilisation process. Indeed, the rise of the bourgeois public sphere during the eighteenth century can be evaluated as a transformation from a courtly to a bourgeois model for public behaviour. This means that a new interpretation of Norbert Elias can help historians to understand the slow, gradual changes in European civil society.

The workshop also rose fundamental questions about the internal norms and values of civil society. In her well-known book *Individuals, Families, and Communities in Europe*, Katherine Lynch distinguishes 'caritas' and 'misericordia'. While the former implies an obligation to help kin and clients, deliberately strengthening existing strong bonds, the latter by contrast is rather connected to 'weak ties' and to the obligation to help members of a collectivity or a corporate group. Hence, 'misericordia' is associated with the characteristics of a civil society, for it is seen to reinforce or create a more general store of social capital (Terpstra). Most participants to the workshop would agree that this brings us to the heart of the debate, and most authors have also tried to contribute to it. While traditional scholarship has emphasised individual freedom, equality before the law and personal independence as a type of 'minimum tariff' (Lynch and Morris), the focus in our workshop was upon under-examined standards and ideals such as 'misericordia' (Lynch, Sá, Terpstra) and fraternal and guild ethos. These ideals are now seen as having shaped civil society from early on – whether or not in conjunction with the values, norms and juridical prescriptions related to personal freedom and communal liberty as they were described by Black in his book *Guilds and the state*. An interesting new point of view in that respect was Gerd Schwerhoff's, who argued that social inequality (inequality of orders) could be paralleled by civil equality (equality of citizens before the law, i.e. justice). A more unexpected, but no less fascinating idea, was provided by Nicholas Eckstein, who showed that the norms and values in question could be materialized and embodied in a wide range of manners – including humour.

Still, in order to comprehensively understand the particularistic characteristics of European civil society, it is (and will be in future research) indispensable to trace historical evolution. De Munck's paper suggests that several long term trends can be observed when broaching the problem from the perspective of guilds (or brotherhoods). In early modern guilds, the fraternal ideals related to mutual aid and equality appear to have gradually disappeared. Craft guilds stopped being 'brotherhoods' and 'substitute families' and transformed into formal and bureaucratic juridical institutions, while retreating into a sphere separate from household and family. Van der Heijden empirically traced the increasing government control over religious institutions and corporate bodies, which weakened the workings of the institutions of civil society, especially with regard to public order and poor relief – notwithstanding the failure of urban governments in their efforts to take matters into their own hands.

In all, the papers and discussions have led to a clear idea on the necessity of further research. Summing up, further research is bound to examine a wide array of organisations in (1) a long term perspective and (2) a comprehensive manner. Telling from the results of our workshop, the following research questions are in urgent need for special attention:

1. First, we need case studies on the **relationship between, on the one hand, the emergence and the activities of social organizations and, on the other, family and kin ties and the strength of neighbourhood communities**. Special attention should be paid to the following questions: (a) Was membership of brotherhoods, guilds, clubs etc. limited to married men or could their wives be a member as well? Did man and wife join the same organization or not? Did members of the same (extended) family meet in the same organization? How were unmarried men and women related to civil society? (b) Was there a relationship

between demographic changes (high mortality rates, migration patterns etc.) and the emergence of new (types of) organization(s)? Did immigrants join organisations more, and if so, did they form their own organizations or did they rather join existing organizations in their place of arrival? (c) How was civil society related to community life at a neighbourhood level? To what extent did (what type of) social organization recruit geographically? Can a relationship be found between the social cohesion in a neighbourhood and the emergence and activities of brotherhoods, guilds, and clubs? (d) In what sense and to what extent were collective activities related to hardship or the absence of strong social ties? The relationship between the emergence of civil society and social capital in the form of family and kin ties and the strength of neighbourhood communities or other forms of connections between people. The discussion about the importance of civil society in the European history also raises question about the relation with the Hajnal-these about the predominance of enclosed family relations. Both ideas do not exclude each other, but scholars should pay more attention to the link between both developments

2. During the discussions, it has become clear that the **political and public character of the organizations** has to be examined in further detail as well. Most – if not all – participants agreed that associations and organizations are ‘moral communities’, whether it be late medieval guilds (Rosser), nineteenth-century anti-slavery organizations (Janse) or twentieth-century INGO’s (Bauerkämper). But why call it civil society? What is the difference with associational life, and with civic society? Is not the crucial question here, whether or not organizations functioned as ‘schools of democracy’ in the sense Robert Putnam has argued? Central issues are the **inclusiveness, the internal hierarchy, personal commitments and voluntary participation** within civil society. Several participants – both in their papers and during discussion – have pointed out that in order to speak of a civil society at all, there should be an element of ‘active participation’ in political or public matters. Arnd Bauerkämper pointed at the importance of both agency and the adoption of a political goal. Imízcoz rightfully asked in his paper on what the adjective ‘civil’ adds to the noun ‘society’. Put otherwise: How did the individual relate to the ‘political’ community and what changed in this respect during the modernization process? Was there, in the long run, an evolution from participation to delegation or representation – or from representation by a corporate body to representation on an individual level? Was participation in a corporate body substituted with the formation of a public opinion by autonomous individuals? In the end, we could ask whether or to what extent a new sense of self and individuality arose in Renaissance or Enlightenment Europe (without, of course, falling into a teleological or Eurocentric trap).
3. Special attention should be paid to the **late medieval era, the early modern period and the end of the ancien regime**. The rise of new definitions of political participation and new representational techniques, the emergence of the welfare state, and the formation of nation states surely influenced the nature of the European civil society. However, historians should pay more attention to continuities and path dependencies, because most studies emphasize the radical changes with the past during the Age of Enlightenment and the subsequent French

Revolution. Recent research suggests that civil society goes back to earlier forms of organization. Especially the guild republicanism of the late medieval period deserves more attention in the near future, because republicanism stimulated similar values as the eighteenth-century civil society, such as participatory politics and other forms of civic engagement. Next to this, the emergence of lay devotion was highly influenced by a demand for a moral revival and the spread of corporative associations (Van Dijck).

4. The tensions between state formation, bureaucratization, professionalization and civic participation in social and political life needs further investigation. While, civil society is usually considered as an eighteenth-century invention, the **rise of the nation state and the welfare state during the nineteenth century subverted values of civic engagement**, because modern state institutions would replace several forms of social assistance which were traditionally offered by the civil society. The Antwerp workshop demonstrated that these tensions have to be reevaluated, because different political models could function next to each other. The liberal values of the European civil society were in fact highly compatible with the rise of neo-corporatism and socialism (De Smaele). This also implies that the secular associations of Enlightenment Europe were not incompatible with the existing religious fraternities.
5. Future research has to delve deeper into the **ideological construction** of the several forms of civil society in European history. Firstly, historians should investigate the **connections between bourgeois identity, civil behaviour and the rise of the eighteenth-century civil society**. They have already identified different systems of civic values in the past, but a concrete study of the conflicts between these various European traditions should be further elaborated and scholars have to disentangle the complex relations between different regions, social groups and specific sets of values. It seems logical that the eighteenth-century civil society emerged in the most urbanized and economic most prosperous regions of Europe, but this assumption needs further conformation. However, the influence of these ideological and moralistic constructions can hardly be overestimated. It is, for instance, no coincidence that typical forms of western civil society – such as INGO-'s – are today the most fierce defenders of typical liberal values, such as human rights. Historical research can show how these connections emerged and how they gained influence in European and global society.
6. Finally, it is still necessary to trace the **genealogy of the concept and contextualize its use**. All participants agreed from the start that the concept of civil society is an analytical and normative tool at the same time. Hence, the necessity to link its use to the political and intellectual context and to the motives of the actors involved – as Gosewinkel, Lynch, Rosser and Chatriot already did in the workshop. Lynch has pointed to a dual genealogy of the concept: (1) as synonymous with settled society or political society (Ferguson, Locke) and in contrast with a 'state of nature' and (2) as a sphere distinct from the state. Rosser rightfully suggested that the current concern of policy makers and scientist alike to keep the individual and the community in balance is reflected in historical research. Consequently, the thorough discursive analysis of Alain Chatriot is very

helpful. The aim of his paper was to explain how the words 'civil society' were progressively adopted in the political and scientific vocabulary. Focusing on the French case, Chatriot analyzed how social scientists tackled the issues related to civil society in particular by debating classic texts such as those of Alexis de Tocqueville. Linking up with this, he shows how sociological texts always came about as an answer to power struggles between pressure groups in the context of economic and political transformation. Still, it is absolutely necessary to broaden the scope here and to include other regions within and outside Europe. The paper of Kirli might serve as an excellent example of research on the adoption of the concept 'civil society' in a 'foreign' context. What effects does the concept generate outside Europe and how are the boundaries between us and them redefined in using it?

To sum up, further research should disentangle civil society both as a norm and a reality. Although different historical trajectories resulted in a patchwork of diverging civil societies, it is a challenge to look for some similarities as well. To what extent can we speak of a European civil society? To what extent is it a reality or rather a political and ideological ideal? The republican ideas of European antiquity or the spread of Christianity during the middle ages, may have left their marks on European society, but in order to understand it adequately, historical and yet interdisciplinary research continues to be necessary. Therefore, the organizers will try to set up a collaborative research project in consultation with all participants of the workshop in the near future. The EUROSCORES project seems to offer some interesting opportunities to launch such a new research project. The outcomes of the Antwerp workshop will be collected in an edited volume, but the papers and discussions will also be the starting point for future research proposals. For instance, the organizers will organize a session at the next European Urban History Conference in Ghent about the relation between kinship ties, neighbourhoods and civil society. In this way, they are taking-up some of the results and research questions of the Antwerp workshop.

4. Final programme

Note

Professor Brian Cowen (History Department, McGill University, Montreal, Canada) attended the workshop on Friday afternoon and Saturday, but he was not able to give his presentation on Thursday, because he was feeling ill on the first day of the meeting. Professor Cowen was still able to add some valuable remarks to the final discussion.

Professor Dieter Gosewinkel (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, Berlin, Germany) had to cancel his participation, because of serious familial circumstances. However, his paper was discussed at the workshop during the second discussion.

Wednesday 11 November 2009

Afternoon *Arrival*

Thursday 12 November 2009

09.30-09.45	Welcome / Introduction by Convenor Maarten Van Dijck (Centre for Urban History, Antwerp, Belgium)
09.45-10.00	Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF) Kostas Gouliamos (ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities)
10.00-12.00	Morning Session: Different approaches
10.00-10.20	"Civil society and history: conceptual and methodological problems" Bert De Munck (Centre for Urban History, Antwerp, Belgium)
10.20-10.40	Discussion
10.40-11.00	<i>Coffee / Tea Break</i>
11.00-11.20	"The role of civil society organisations in combating poverty and social exclusion" Danielle Dierckx (University of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium)
11.20-12.00	Discussion
12.00-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>
13.30-15.30	Afternoon Session I: United Kingdom
13.30-13.50	"The Romantic Guilds and the Sociable Middle Ages. Ideal and Reality in the English Fraternities" Gervase Rosser (Oxford University, Oxford, UK)
13.50-14.10	"Corporations, Clubs, Associations and NGO's: how civil was civil society: Britain, 1700-2000" Robert Morris (University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK)
14.10-15.30	Discussion
15.30-16.00	<i>Coffee / tea break</i>
16.00-17.40	Afternoon Session II: Germany and Scandinavia
16.00-16.20	"Civic equality and social stratification in late medieval and early modern german towns" Gerd Schwerhoff (Technische Universität Dresden, Dresden, Germany)
16.20-16.40	"Multinational civil societies in 19th century Scandinavia" Sidsel Eriksen (University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark)
16.40-17.40	Discussion
19.00	<i>Dinner</i>

Friday 13 November 2009

- 09.00-10.20** **Morning Session I: Italy**
09.00-09.20 **"Heaven Can Wait: Laughing at Social Capital in Renaissance Italy"**
Nicholas Eckstein (University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia)
09.20-09.40 **"Centre, Periphery, and Vertigo: Playing Humanism and Negotiating Civil Society in Early Modern Italy"**
Nicholas Terpstra (University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada)
09.40-10.20 **Discussion**
10.20-10.40 *Coffee / Tea Break*
- 10.40-12.00** **Morning Session II: Spain and Portugal**
10.40-11.00 **"L'individu entre corporation, hiérarchie et orthodoxie"**
José Maria Imizcoz Buenza (Universidad del País Vasco, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain)
11.00-11.20 **"Managing social inequality: confraternal charity in Portugal and its overseas colonies"**
Isabel dos Guimarães Sá (Universidade do Minho, Porto, Portugal)
11.20-12.00 **Discussion**
12.00-13.30 *Lunch*
- 13.30-15.30** **Afternoon Session I: The Low Countries**
13.30-13.50 **"Civil society and urban development: the Low Countries during the late medieval and the early modern times"**
Maarten F. Van Dijck (Centre for Urban History, Antwerp, Belgium)
13.50-14.10 **"Re-Inventing Parliamentary Political Representation in Modern Belgium: Continuities and Discontinuities with the Ancien Regime"**
Henk De Smaele (Centre for Political History, Antwerp, Belgium)
14.10-14.30 **"Fostering democracy? Social clubs and cultural associations in nineteenth-century Amsterdam and The Hague"**
Jan Hein Furnée (University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands)
14.30-14.50 **"Some remarks on the changing nature of civil society in the 19th century"**
Maartje Janse (Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands)
14.50-15.30 **Discussion**
15.30-16.00 *Coffee / tea break*
- 16.00-17.40** **Afternoon Session II: France**
16.00-16.20 **"A confraternity of one's own: new confraternities in eighteenth-century Paris"**
David Garrioch (Monash University, Melbourne, Australia)
16.20-16.40 **"Perspectives théoriques et historiques sur la société civile en France au XIXe et XXe siècles"**
Alain Chatriot (L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France)
16.40-17.40 **Discussion**

Saturday 14 November 2009

- 09.00-10.20** **Morning Session I: Eastern Europe**
09.00-09.20 **"Civil societies and nationalism. Voluntary associations in Slovakia in 19th and 20th centuries"**
Elena Mannova (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Slovak Republic)
09.20-09.40 **"Associations and the Development of Civil Society in Tsarist Russia"**
Joseph Bradley (University of Tulsa, Tulsa, USA)
09.40-10.20 **Discussion**
10.20-10.40 *Coffee / Tea Break*
- 10.40-12.00** **Morning Session II: Non-European models**
10.40-11.00 **"Defending the Territory: How Claims Were Made in Colonial Spanish America"**
Tamar Herzog (Stanford University, Stanford, USA)
11.00-11.20 **"Constituting the Public in the Ottoman Empire"**
Cengiz Kirli (Bogaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey)

11.20-12.00	Discussion
12.00-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>
13.30-15.30	Afternoon Session I: Comparative perspectives
13.30-13.50	"Using Histories and Theories of Civil Society to understand the European Past" Katherine Lynch (Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA)
13.50-14.10	"Early modern civil societies: shared responsibilities, divided recipients" Manon van der Heijden (Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands)
14.10-14.30	"Concepts of community and freedom in Latin Christendom and the Muslim world from the 11th to the 17th centuries" Antony Black (University of Dundee, Dundee, UK)
14.30-14.50	"Transnational Actors of Civil Society. Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" Arnd Bauerkämper (Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany)
14.50-15.30	Discussion
15.30-16.00	<i>Coffee / tea break</i>
16.00-17.30	Final Remarks and follow-up
19.00	<i>Dinner</i>

Sunday 15 November 2009

Morning *Departure*

5. Final list of participants

Convenor:

1. **Maarten F. VAN DIJCK**
Centre for Urban History
History Department
University of Antwerp

Co-Convenor:

2. **Bert DE MUNCK**
Centre for Urban History
History Department
University of Antwerp

ESF Representative:

Kostas GOULIAMOS
Department of Research
and External Affairs
European University Cyprus

Participants:

3. **Arnd BAUERKÄMPER**
History Department
Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut
Freie Universität Berlin
4. **Antony BLACK**
Politics Department
School of Humanities
University of Dundee
5. **Bruno BLONDÉ**
Center for Urban History
History Department
University of Antwerp
6. **Joseph C. BRADLEY**
History Department
Henry Kendall College of Arts and
Sciences
University of Tulsa
7. **Alain CHATRIOT**
L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences
Sociales (Paris)
9. **Brian COWAN**
History Department
Arts Faculty
Mc Gill University
10. **Henk DE SMAELE**
Centre for Political History
History Department
University of Antwerp
11. **Danielle DIERCKX**
Research Group on Poverty, Social
Exclusion and the City
Sociology Department
University of Antwerp
12. **Isabel DOS GUIMARÃES SA**
Departamento de História
Instituto de Ciências Sociais
Universidade do Minho
13. **Nicholas ECKSTEIN**
History Department
School of Philosophical and
Historical Inquiry
University of Sydney
14. **Josef EHMER**
Institut für Wirtschafts- und
Sozialgeschichte
Universität Wien
15. **Sidsel ERIKSEN**
History Department
University of Copenhagen
16. **Jan Hein FURNÉE**
Leerstoelgroep Nieuwste Geschiedenis
Faculteit Geesteswetenschappen
University of Amsterdam
17. **David GARRIOCH**
School of Historical Studies Faculty of Arts
Monash University
18. **Dieter GOSEWINKEL**
Forschungsgruppe Zivilgesellschaft,
Citizenship und politische Mobilisierung in
Europa
Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für
Sozialforschung
19. **Tamar HERZOG**
History Department
Stanford University
20. **José María IMIZCOZ BEUNZA**
Departamento de Historia Medieval,
Moderna y de América
Universidad del país Vasco
21. **Maartje JANSE**
Instituut voor Geschiedenis
Universiteit Leiden
22. **Cengiz Kirli**
The Atatürk Institute
for Modern Turkish History
Bogaziçi University

23. **Katherine A. LYNCH**
History Department
Carnegie Mellon University
24. **Elena MANNOVA**
Institute of Historical Studies
Slovak Academy of Sciences
25. **Robert MORRIS**
Economic and Social History
School of History Classics and Archeology
University of Edinburgh
26. **Gervase ROSSER**
Faculty of History
University of Oxford
St Catherine's College
27. **Gerd SCHWERHOFF**
Institut für Geschichte
Philosophische Fakultät
Technische Universität Dresden
28. **Nicholas TERPSTRA**
History Department
University of Toronto
29. **Manon VAN DER HEIJDEN**
History Department
University of Leiden

6. Statistical information on participants

A) Age structure participants

age group	number	percentage
20-29	1	3%
30-39	4	14%
40-49	8	28%
50-59	11	38%
60-69	4	14%
70-79	1	3%
total	29	1

B) Gender repartition participants

sex	number	percentage
female	8	28%
male	21	72%
total	29	100%

C) Countries of Origin

origin	number
Denmark	1
France	1
Austria	1
Cyprus	1
Spain	1
Portugal	1
Turkey	1
Slovakia	1
Australia	2
Canada	2
Germany	3
Netherlands	3
United Kingdom	3
United States	3
Belgium	5
total	29

D) Repartition by scientific speciality

specialization	number	percentage
medieval history	3	10%
early modern history	13	45%
modern history	9	31%
political sciences	2	7%
sociology	2	7%
Eindtotaal	29	1