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Framing the Field between Established Institutions

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Abstract

Concepts like third sector, nonprofit, voluntary sector, civil society, philanthropy, non-governmental organisations, social economy and public benefit organisations aim to refer to the sphere between established institutions. In spite of more than 30 year history of the discipline, there is not one single term that covers the whole sphere.

This article focuses on the different concepts used in studies and evaluates their content and connotations. As a result of evaluation, it is suggested that attempts to use categorisations would be replaced with Wittgensteinian idea of family-resemblance.

Introduction

Even after thirty years of the emergence of the discipline focusing associations, foundations and other similar organisations, there is no international or interdisciplinary agreement on the name of the discipline or research objects as a whole. Instead, there is a host of concepts that are used either synonymously or differently. Concepts are not value-free. They are based on the root metaphors with which people in different cultures and disciplines (economics, philosophy, sociology, theology) frame their world. These root metaphors of existing concepts (*third sector/nonprofit/voluntary sector/civil society/philanthropy/non-governmental organisation/social economy/public benefit organisation*) draw boundaries that include and exclude various types of organisations differently.

These cultural and disciplinary differences have their historical roots. As Frank Moulaert and Oana Ailenei (2005, 2038) have emphasised, "each epoch has its own socioeconomic conditions bringing subsequent opportunities and challenges to the *lien solidaire* (solidarity bond) which it produces." Consequently organisations founded to deal with those conditions carry a heavy weight of *zeitgeist* of the time. If we apply Clifford Geertz' (1973, 93) theory on religion to science, it would mean that while definitions of those organisations are *models of* them, they became *models for* the frames of scholars.

In the plurality of concepts there are two potential dangers. First, although scholars are normally familiar with the different usage of concepts in various disciplines, there is a possibility that they simply do not understand what the others are talking about. In the last ten years European Sociological Association's Social Movement Research Network has 'adopted' third sector students in their sessions. What has become evident in these sessions is that, on one hand, both research traditions focus on *civil society* but, on the other hand, the concept is understood differently. One needs only read one work of Lester Salamon and Helmut Anheier (1992a,b; 1999) and compare it to thoughts of Marxian writers like Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato (1994) and John Keane (1988) – or

eastern European scholars like historian Bronislaw Geremek (1992) and political philosopher Zbigniew Pelczynski (1988) – or Swedish scholars like Mats Dahlkvist (1995) – and one sees the difference.

Second potential danger of confusion in terminology occurs when concepts are transformed into legislation, they start to live their own life and the definitions will have real consequences. When a definition is written into a law, it treats those organisations differently from those that do not qualify the definition. We can see this in the US, where the Internal Revenue Code treats organisations differently because of their organisation type and/or their activities. The same issue will be faced in Europe if (or when) the EU harmonises its tax legislation. It is not a trivial issue whether tax-exemption is given, for example, to nonprofits or to social economy organisations. If the latter concept will be adopted as it is understood now, numerous large co-operatives and mutual insurance companies might, for everyone's surprise, find themselves tax-exempted. After all, their difference to large American nonprofit hospitals and universities is that they return their extra income to their customer-owners as reduced prices in arrears based on their purchases when nonprofits use their profit otherwise – for example, subsiding some activities which are given below the product cost. In the case of associations, these below-cost services are often given exclusively to members. So, the difference is more conceptual than substantial.

The purpose of this paper is to give tools with which to frame the research field of these concepts. Moreover, it is not just the difference of concepts that create confusion. It is the plurality of interpretations of these concepts that is, perhaps even more problematic. I start with the example of the oldest of the concepts used in the field, namely *civil society.* Then I focus, briefly, on other concepts. Finally, I introduce a method how to frame these different concepts as a whole.

Civil Society

The oldest of all concepts used of the field is *civil society*. In modern usage it emphasises, on one hand, the distinction between the official realm of the state and the grassroots activity of ordinary

people and on the other hand, the distinction between the market and the life world of ordinary people. The concept includes not only all kinds of autonomous associations, co-operatives, social movements, mutual help and other informal groups but families and informal personal networks, too (Bush Zetterberg 1996, 9). During the last 30 years the concept has been used frequently but, as one can see from historical evaluations of it (Cohen & Arato 1994; Ehrenberg 1999; Trägårdh 2006, 1-9), there are several different meanings of the concept.

The meaning of civil society depends on how one frames the state, society and the 'basic' institutions of the society. Basically there are two extreme ways to frame the state and these frames give different meanings to the civil society. On one hand, the state can be 'our business' – a citizens' co-operative that guards the rights of people. In this frame, the state is the civil society. On the other hand, the state can be a social fact outside and above the grassroots level – "The state – it's me!" as it has been put in the mouth of the Sun King (Louis XIV). In this frame the civil society is separate from the state. Variations of these extremes can be seen in the definitions of civil society.

The basic institutions of the society can be seen, like in economic nonprofit and third sector theories, as state and market. In this frame, the civil society is the third sector. If we see that the basic institutions of the society are state, market and the family, then civil society is the fourth sector. If we add the organised religion as the fourth basic institution, then civil society is the fifth sector – unless one or more of these institutions are included in it. Actually, this is the case in most definitions.

In its **classical meaning** civil society refers to the political sphere where independent citizens can arrange their government. Both the Greek *koinonia politikhe* and Latin *societas civilis* mean civilised society as opposed to chaos and barbarism (Dahlkvist 1995, 172; Ehrenberg 1999, 3). Basically, all communal relations in the Greek world were *philia*-relations. *Philoi* were all those things and people that were "my own." Inside the household (*oikos*) it meant family, relatives,

subordinates, quests, etc. Outside the family the relations were reciprocal *philia* relations – mutual friendships, political alliances or economic companies. (Belfiore 1998, 143-7) *Polis* was basically a military alliance. It was not based on kin and tribe-relations as in Orient but on citizenship. (On Greek reciprocity and *koinonia*, see, for example, Hands 1968; *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* 1998; Schmitt-Pantel 1991) Thus, civil society in Antique meant the whole society – including the state (*polis*, *civitas*).

In the **medieval city system** this same pattern was changed a bit. The basic institutions of the *bürg/*borough/city were guilds and families. People were first and foremost members of them. However, life in cities required a mechanism that would enable members of different guilds and families to interact and organise the life of the town. It must be remembered that cities were autonomous from states in that time and sometimes their alliances (like Hansa-league) were more powerful than any state of the time. The fourth major institution was the church which was also autonomous from the state. In some respects monasteries and fraternities resembled guilds and families: monks and nuns were in the same way members of these institutions and other were seen as outsiders.

According to Heikki Lehtonen (1988a,b), *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (town society, bourgeois society) did not emerge on the basis of the community relations but quite opposite. Since non-members of guilds, families and fraternities were strangers, "civil society institutionalised and normalised these stranger-relationships and provided for the first time in Medieval Europe a mechanism that did not require communal relationships (Lehtonen 1988b, 9 - my translation from the original Finnish)." The civil society became a realm between families, guilds, church and the state. It is important to note that the state meant the king or emperor, not city's own organs, like magistrate and officials, which were part of this civil society.

This classical meaning is used today, for example in Nordic countries where *socielt sammhälle* (civil society, lit.: social community) means the same as *medborgarsammhället* (citizen's

community – note the etymologies in both Swedish and English: *borg*, city), i.e., the whole society with its democratic organs (Dahlkvist 1995, 161; Micheletti 1995). For Nordics, the state is not something outside and above them but some kind of their own co-operative.

In its **liberalistic theories** of the 18th and 19th centuries the mediaeval idea of civil society as a separate field of the state as sovereign was established. For John Locke civil society (or Commonwealth, as he called it) preceded the state and was based on "Compact of all the Commoners." Like in Mediaeval cities, it was the independent realm between the state and families where one could pursue his private interests. For him, the state was a protective organ of the civil society: "The great and *chief end* therefore, of Mens uniting into Common-wealths, and putting themselves under Government, *is the Preservation of their Property*." This is the meaning that 17th, liberal thinkers gave to the concept. For them the core of civil society was based on individual property and, thus, their civil society was the market. (Ehrenberg 1999, 84ff; 96-108)

Alexander de Tocqueville was in the same lines. In his *Democracy in America* Tocqueville (1988, 521) writes: "In civil life every man can, at a stretch, imagine that he is in position to look after himself. In politics he could never fancy that." Thus, like for classical liberalists, civil society was for Tocqueville a private sphere that was separate but interwoven with the political sphere, i.e., the state which, in turn, was the arena of political associations (idem.).

According to Lehtonen (1988b, 7) it was not until the 19th century classical sociology when community (*Gemeinschaft*) and society (*Gesellschaft*) were seen as opposite. When this distinction was added to the old meaning we get what could be called **corporatist meaning** which frames civil society as a separate sphere between state, market and families. This is the meaning of the kin term *intermediary organisations* as well. It grew from the same roots and, as Jaques Defourny (1992, 31) states, aimed "to fight against the isolation of the individual which was the taint of liberalism and against the absorption of the individual into the State, which was the Jacobinist trap."

Hegel's understanding resembled the liberal view of the civil society although he departed from the medieval *burg*-system. For him, as Trägårdh (2006, 7) argues was "the sphere in which private interests, needs, and desires play themselves out." The family is the natural phase and tends to suppress the differences between its members because of their common destiny. Civil society is the antithesis of the family and it is marked by diversity and competition. Finally, the state reconciles these two as a synthesis. (Ehrenberg 1999, 122-132; Cohen and Arato 1994, 91-116)

For Marx the state was not an ideal final goal of history as it was for Hegel, but an oppressive mechanism that served the interests of bourgeois civil society. In Marxian philosophy bourgeois (civil) society has been something that has to be eliminated. This explains why the Marxist tradition opposes both civil society and the state. (Ehrenberg 1999, 132-143)

Mats Dahlkvist (1995, 216, my translation), in turn, states that in the 20th century "[i]t were the neo-Marxists and the neo-liberals, later the post-Marxists and the post-liberals who introduced and propagated for the concept of civil society as a special sphere." He continues that when neo-Marxist negative attitude towards the bourgeois class state remained in post-Marxism, the attitude towards bourgeois life world changed. They found an alien ally, namely neo-liberals who favoured the concept from their own point of view. According to Dahlkvist, neo-Liberals reformulated the old laissez-faire principle to justify their negative attitude toward the state. Thus, both found civil society as a suitable concept in their common opposition to state.

A third ally in this discussion was the Catholic Church who has always fought for its independence from the state. In the papal encyclias *Rerum novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo anno* (1931) the church launched the *principle of subsidiarity* (< Lat *subsidium*, aid, help). In *Quadragesimo anno* (1931:80) pope Pius XI stated: "The supreme authority of the State ought, therefore, to let subordinate groups handle matters and concerns of lesser importance, which would otherwise dissipate its efforts greatly." Encyclias actually set a hierarchy of responsibilities and rights from individuals via families and subsidiary organisations to state. The higher level has the responsibility

to make sure that the lower level can take care of its duties and the lower level has the responsibility to take care of its duties. The higher level intervention is allowed only if the lower level cannot perform its tasks. (on subsidiarity principle, see, e.g., Mulcahy 1967; Kelly 1998; d'Onorio 2002)

In the west, this corporatist meaning arises – along with Hegel and Catholic social ethics – from three other roots. First, long before Marx, American Founding Fathers had felt the oppression of the state and since that time Americans have felt some sort of allergy to the state. In this frame, the state as such is seen as outside and above the civil society – just as the medieval king was outside the autonomous sphere of the city. Second, the British liberal tradition had emphasised the separation of state and civil society. Third, scholars in this frame identify civil society to American nonprofit organisations. The latter, moreover are defined as "those falling under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code…, or the smaller, related 501(c)4 category…(DiMaggio and Anheier 1990, 138)." This frame has been used, for example, in Johns Hopkins University's international comparative project (Salamon & al 1999).

Similar frame, but from other roots, can be found from Eastern Europe as well. Ehrenberg (1999, 186) notes that "[t]he intense antistatism that marked the early literature on civil society was a perfectly understandable reaction to the routinized and bureaucratic character of 'actual existing socialism'." Contrary to Nordic social democracies, Easter European communist states were neither social nor democratic much less communistic (in the sense of classless society). Gemerek summarises the usage of the concept of civil society in eastern Europe as follows: "The magic of the word 'citizen', in Poland or in Czechoslovakia, came from the widespread sense that referred less to one's subordination to the state and its laws than to one's membership in an authentic community, a community whose essence was summed in the term 'civil society'." Thus, the focus was on civil rights and civil society existed where they were manifested. In this sense, as Dahlkvist (1995, 214 – my translation from the original Swedish), says: "The concept of 'civil society' in the

Eastern Europe was not used differently from the western use when liberalism once turned itself against the pre-democratic monarchic power of the state."

As seen above, even one concept, civil society, has different meanings – and I only slightly referred its relation to religion (on religion and civil society, see, e.g., Herbert 2003; Berger 2005). Like frames of states are different, the frames of religions differ from culture to culture. In some countries, churches are part of the state organisation. In some others, it is vice versa, states are just branches of the religious sphere. Still other countries have free-church system. In general, established religions are state-like entities – and in many respect more permanent than states. The relation of civil society to religions is almost *terra incognito* in civil society studies.

Other concepts

Like in the case of civil society, other concepts have their variations as well. Another old concept, *philanthropy* has its roots in ancient Sumer where the temples took care of the impoverished segments of the population. Sumerian cities were households of their patron gods and like any *paterfamilia* the city-god had a responsibility to 'clothe and feed' his subjects (van der Toorn 1996, 15, 45). In Byzantion the emperor, according to ancient 'king as the shepherd of his people' and more recent '*imitatio Christi*' ideologies, supported various welfare projects (Constantelos 1991, 25-31). One of the largest European welfare reforms occurred in Byzantion when the state stopped to give its generosity (*panem et circences*) toward the Roman citizens, who formed no more than 20 percent of the population (Hands 1968, 100-106) and directed its aid towards the most poor (Kazhdan 1994, 74-81). In this system, philanthropy was expected from all: from state, from church as well as from private citizen. From the royal family, the practice diffused to nobility and wealthy merchants. In the middle ages the guilds took care of their impoverished peers while the church took care of the most poor. It is only with the rise of the welfare state when philanthropy has been framed as a private issue. In welfare state discussion the crucial point is whether individuals have subjective rights for aid or is the aid given as charity.

Voluntary sector and *voluntary organisations* have also their history that colour the meaning of the concepts. Although today 'voluntary' primarily refers to independence of the state as well as freedom of association and participation (Smith 1993, 53; Van Til & Williamson 2001, 16306), Barry D. Karl (1984) has argued that the etymon *voluntary* refers originally to religious concerns of free will and service to church. From there it spread to military service and agriculture. As a religious term it was bound to call for the service, and it was also linked to brotherhoods and sisterhoods. In military terminology it meant distinguished "men coerced or paid to go into battle and those who offered their service freely." Karl's note reminds that voluntary activity is not limited to associations but exists in state and church-sectors as well.

The concept of *third sector* has, like the concept of *nonprofit sector*, has its roots in the US tax legislation. Actually, as Peter Dobkin Hall (1987, 7f.) has argued, in the beginning of 1970's, the leaders of American philanthropy "realized that both the nature of the tax-exempt universe and public policies toward it had fundamentally changed" because of the 1969 Tax Reform Act. They knew that the new tax policy influenced philanthropic giving but there was no scientific evidence of it. So "they decided to locate and commission 'reliable' scholars to study the subject." These 'reliable' scholars were economists like Martin Feldstein (1974) and Burton Weisbrod (1977), as well as economic sociologists like Amitai Etzioni (1977) whose definitions 'locked' the frame of the nonprofit world as path dependency theorists (see Muukkonen 2005) would describe the development of nonprofit tradition.

In the case of both concepts, the primary institutions of the society were framed as the state and the market. There was no room for families or religions – not to mention other possibilities like the army (as in China and Turkey) or The Party (as in the Former Soviet Union) – as basic institutions of the society. In this world of economics it was the question whether *non-governmental* corporations distributed their profits to their owners or to outsiders, whether organisations were

formal, voluntary and independent or not. The majority of the research focused on organisations that Paul J. DiMaggio and Helmut K. Anheier defined as

> those falling under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code (a category including most nonprofit hospitals, cultural organizations, traditional charities, foundations, schools, day-care centres and foundations, among others), or the smaller, related 501(c)4 category (civic leagues and social welfare organizations, which are denied tax-deductible contributions but which may engage in some political or commercial activities from which (c)3s are barred); these do *not* include such mutual-benefit associations as labor unions, workers or consumers cooperatives, veterans organizations, or political parties, which the law treats separately.

Contrary to this, the French concept of *économie sociale* (*social economy*) includes those excluded in NP definitions. According to Edith Archambault (1990, 293, 295) they are, along with associations, in the core of *social economy*. It is not a clear-cut sector in the same way than nonprofit sector. It has, namely, some common ground with its four boundaries, public sector, local public sector, private sector and trade union sector (Defourny 1992, 37f.). According to Perri 6 (1994, 402ff.), in the European welfare mix it is a norm that sectors are interdependent and the organisational form does not always explain the behaviour of an organisation. It seems that in society everything is related to each other and all the distinctions are only analytical. The old metaphor of society as an organ has some validity because it tells us how the society needs all its components.

The concept of *social economy* evolved in the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was developed in four different traditions, namely socialist, Social Christian, Liberal and Solidarist traditions. Defourny (1992, 27-32) notes that “it was in this melting pot that the first cooperatives and mutual benefit societies of the modern era were born.” However, along with the parting of these movements the importance of the concept diminished. It was adopted again in the 1970s when these movements again grew close to each other. In the next decade it had been accepted by the French

state officials (Defourny 1992, 33f; Archambault 1990, 293). In the EU it challenges the Anglo-Saxon concept of nonprofit sector and has been adopted as a central concept in its administration. Frank Moulaert and Oana Ailenei (2005, 2044) note that "[t]oday, the social economy represents a wide family of initiatives and organisational forms—i.e. a hybridisation of market, nonmarket (redistribution) and non-monetary (reciprocity)."

In Germany the concepts that mean almost the same as social economy have been *public benefit organisation* (*gemeinwirtschaftliche unternehmen*) and *communal enterprise* (*gemeinützige organisationen*). The previous concept covers such economical enterprises that are neither capitalist nor socialist. Its background is the co-operative spirit of the 19th century which led to both co-operatives and mutual benefit organisations in banking and building. The background of the latter term also lies in the 19th century when associations and foundations became involved with the huge social problems of the society. It refers to organisations that are seen to work for the benefit of the society. Today the term is used mainly in the tax legislation. (Anheier & Seibel 1993.)

In the US, the meaning of public benefit is a bit different. Smith (1993, 53) makes a distinction between public benefit and *member benefit organisations*:

> Public benefit nonprofit groups are voluntary groups whose principal aim is to benefit and serve nonmembers (the public) rather than members. Member benefit nonprofit groups are voluntary groups whose principal aim is to benefit and serve their members than outside nonmembers.

Here we can see how the NP concept colours the other concepts as well. Smith's definition would exclude co-operatives (which, according to Anheier and Seibel gave birth to the concept) as well as mutual and self-help organisations. Moreover, the distinction is only analytical: a small local YMCA that serves mainly its members is *de facto* membership benefit organisation but *de jure* a public benefit organisation.

Informal sector or *informal-economy sector* is, according to Rikki Abzug (1999, 132f.) "the illicit production of private goods and services. This can be contrasted with the legal production of public goods or services in the nonprofit sector." According to him, it is both the legality of the production and delivery methods and nature of goods that define the sector. Abzug (1999, 134) quotes also the definition of Bruno Dallago who defines it as "activities performed within the family or in small communities based on relationships of kinship or friendship." Abzug (1999, 134f, 137) argues that there are four phenomena that characterise informal economy: community/social ties, ethnicity/ethnic enclave, trust and an attempt to avoid taxation.

Distinction to state is made in several concepts. The concept of *non-governmental organisations* (with all the subgroups of the concept) is used mainly in the international contexts of the United Nations and other *International Governmental Organisations*. The difference between IGOs and NGOs is that IGOs have been founded by international agreements between the states and, thus, their legal status is defined in the respective agreements. Along the UN and its special agencies, EU, NATO, and even International Committee of the Red Cross are IGOs while organisations like Oxfam, Care, World Alliance of YMCAs, World Council of Churches, etc. are NGOs. (on NGOs, see Nerfin 1986; Gordenker & Weiss 1995, 361f.; Vakil 1997).

Non-statutory sector is loose concept that is used mainly in British social care and health care contexts. There is some wavering in the reports of the UK Department of Health on the meaning of the terminology. It can mean either "voluntary, charitable and independent (private) organisations (The 2006/07 National Survey of Investment in Mental Health Services 2007, App. 7)" or "voluntary, independent and private sector providers (Mental Health Strategies 2006, LIT report 2)." *Independent sector* is "[a]n umbrella term for all non-statutory organisations delivering public care, including a wide range of private companies, voluntary and community organisations (NWG, s.d; similarly Ryan 2006, 5, 23)." Thus, the concepts cover both commercial and nonprofit

contributors from whom the public sector buys statutory services. Even private sole traders belong to this definition.

When most of the above concepts refer to some sort of organisations, the concept of *social movement* refers to non-material and non-economic activity. The traditional difference between social movements and other forms of collective actors is that social movements are regarded more as processes than a 'social things' (Melucci 1992, 48ff.; Della Porta and Diani 1999, 13-20). The old assumption is that a social movement has a life span starting from unorganised activity and ending in becoming an institution when the movement ceases to exist as movement (Hopper 1959, 310-326). However, the American *resource mobilization approach* stressed that *social movement organisations* are essential parts of the social movements as resources of activity (McCarthy & Zald 1977).

The content of the concept is rather unclear. There are two extremes. On one hand, there are Alain Touraine (1978) and Charles Tilly (1981) who include only political movements in the concept. On the other hand, McCarthy & Zald 1977 include also other kind of collective action (like religious movements) in the concept.

Locating the sector in between the established institutions

All concepts dealt with above have special connotations, but in a broad sense they express the otherness of this realm to the major institutions in the society. Nonprofit concept exists in between the state and market. Non-governmental and informal exist basically between public and private. Mediaeval type of civil society locates itself in between families (private), guilds (market) and the crown (state). In general, these three institutions have been the ones most commonly identified as borders of the field that we are talking about.

The theories mostly ignore that established religions (in form a fourth institutional field that follow its own rules.

The concepts of charity and philanthropy have a strong connection to religious bodies.

family, state, market and established religion. It forms the inside of the tetrahedron in the figure 1. This sector or realm is both a host of independent organisations and a field where the basic institutions of society interact. Thus, on one hand it can be seen as an independent sector and, on the other hand, it is a sphere of interaction with the other sectors.

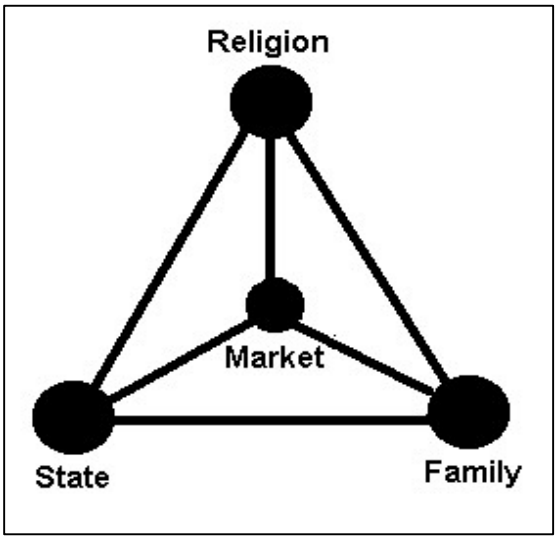

Figure 1: Realm between four basic institutions

Family of Concepts

As seen above, there is a host of various concepts that try to frame this realm from various perspectives. The difficulty arises from the scientific tradition of categorisations. The use of categories always leads to exclusions and these exclusions are often questions of power like in tax legislation. However, the use of power also exists inside pure scientific discussion. A typical example of cultural imperialism is that other concepts are used as synonyms of one's own concept. This is, I think, quite common 'sin' of many scholars. Even those who are doing theory on the basis of international comparison (and should be aware of various connotations) sometimes commit it. The best example is the Johns Hopkins University's Comparative Civil Society Project (Salamon & al 1999) in which civil society is defined similarly to Dimaggio and Anheier's nonprofit sector above. According to Salamon and Anheier (1992a, 135f.; Salamon & al 1999, 3f., 465f. – italics in original)

> the non-profit sector is defined as a collection of organisations that are:
>
> - *Formal*, that is institutionalised to some extent...
> - *Private*, that is, institutionally separate from government...
> - *Non-profit-distributing*, that is, not returning profits to their owners or directors...

- *Self-governing*, that is, equipped to control their own activities...
- *Voluntary*, that is, involving some meaningful degree of voluntary participation...

When one looks closer to these characteristics, (s)he realises that many organisations that are central in European civil society discussion were excluded by this definition. There is no room for social movements, co-operatives, self-help organisations, etc. Moreover, these criteria leave much to debate. Formality-criterion excludes all informal groups which can, actually, be rather permanent. There are occasions that some Bible-clubs have existed for decades without any formal organisation. In the Finnish section of the JHS' second round all estimated 30,000 informal groups were excluded since "their significance as employers remains insignificant (Helander & Laaksonen 1999, 23)." Thus, for the JHS project, civil society was an economic, not a social, sphere.

Other criterions are as vague. The line between private and public is drawn in the water. If the criterion that they should be "governed by boards dominated by government officials Salamon & Anheier 1992a, 135)", would be taken seriously, Harvard is not a nonprofit since in the beginning "it was governed by boards composed of ministers of the state-established church and state officials sitting in ex-officio capacities (Hall 1987, 4)." Non-profit distribution would exclude all associations who reimburse their activities to their members with profits gained in other activities. Self-governing would exclude all Catholic organisations since, in principle, to be a Catholic organisation requires subordination under the church. Independence question can be questioned also from the economic point of view. There are some international NGOs (like Amnesty International) who refuse to take any subsidies from their perspective, no organisation is truly independent if it takes subsidies from the state or donations from enterprises. Thus, from this point of view, few organisations that JHP project focused were truly independent. Finally, as Ram A. Cnaan and his associates (1996) have shown, voluntarism is a continuum from duty to free will.

Salamon and Anheier (1992a,b 1999) approached their research field by classical definitions. However, as seen above, these definitions leave out many such organisations that are essential in

European civil society discussion. On the other hand, as seen, they do not really valid in nonprofit discussion either.

David Collier and James E. Mahon (1993) provide two alternatives for the classical categorisation. First is what they call *radial categories* and the other is Ludwig Wittgenstein's *family resemblance*. They describe the radial categories with an example of the primary category "mother" which has components A (female), B (provides 50% of genetic makeup), C (gives birth to a child), D (provides nurturance) and E (married to father). Now, secondary categories "genetic mother", "birth mother", "nurturing mother" and "stepmother" do not have but only one character in common, namely A. Genetic mother, in its extreme, can be just a donor of the egg and, thus have only the components AB that make her a mother. Womb-hiring is possible and, thus, there is a combination of AC that justify calling a woman as mother. Adopted children call their foster-mother as mother (components AD) and a stepmother (components AE) is also called a mother.

In the case of our organisations, this would mean that only one character would be needed in common that organisations could be included in the sector. If we compare their definition of nonprofit organisations and Melucci's definition of social movements as processes, they might have any common elements with each other. And both nonprofit organisations and temporary social movements are essential parts of civil society. It seems that the tradition of making categorisations simply does not work in this field, but is there an alternative?

The Wittgensteinian concept of *family resemblances*, instead, does not require this sort of categorisation. It describes that specific concepts have something in common without having one single element that they all share. Wittgenstein (1953, §67) writes:

> I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances"; for the various resemblances between the members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way.

When looking at a family picture, we see that one child has similar ears to his father's father and same kind of mouth as his mother's mother. In the case of families we cannot categorise the members of the family by the colour of eyes or the form of nose. All the members are unique but have similar features. The important point is that these common features can only be seen in the family picture.

If we use Wittgenstein's idea of family resemblances in the case of civil society studies we see that there are different concepts (members of the family) that include organisational forms (features) in different ways. This metaphor enables us to see the actors in the field from their own understanding. In many *ad hoc* projects we see this patchwork quilt in practice. Different kinds of organisations come together to work for the common goal even if they are different in form and tradition. This family metaphor also enables us to 'adopt' new types of organisations in similar way as a family can adopt new children. The family resemblance can be characterised with the adjoining table:

Organisation type 1	A	B	C	D	
Organisation type 2	A	B	C		E
Organisation type 3	A	B		D	E
Organisation type 4	A		C	D	E
Organisation type 5		B	C	D	E

In the table we can see that different concepts for different organisation types contain different criterions what to include and what to exclude (A-E). We can also see that none of the concepts is the main category for the others. The important point is that in spite of that the concepts for different organisation types have 80% similar characteristics.

An attempt to this direction has been made by Peter Dobkin Hall (1987, 3) who defines nonprofits according to their activities:

> I define a nonprofit organisation as a body of individuals who associate for any of three purposes: (1)to perform public tasks that have been delegated to them by the state; (2)to perform public tasks for which there is a demand that neither the state nor for-profit organizations are willing to fulfil; or (3) to influence the direction of policy in the state, the for-profit sector, or other nonprofit organizations.

This definition acknowledges that there are organisations that are semi-official (compulsory student associations in Finland, for example) as well as social movements, labour unions and political parties. The problem of this definition is that the emphasis is on the state-nonprofit relations. Unless public is defined as 'all activities outside the family', this leaves out a large portion of private clubs and associations who focus on the interests of their members. However, the wording *includes* such for-profit companies that have a public duty delegation from the state (for example, private car inspection companies and, if roads are seen as public goods, private pay-road companies as well) in a similar way than the British concept of non-statutory sector.. In this respect, the definition resembles Etzioni's third sector, which included those organisations that were not purely state or commercial, as well as that of the British non-statutory sector.

When we apply Wittgensteinian perspective to the concepts mentioned above, we can accept that the given definitions do not catch the whole reality but we are still be able to frame what kinds of organisations they include. The list is not comprehensive but it gives the idea. In addition to the meanings that are taken from writers mentioned above and referred in the table, it must be remembered that almost all concepts have been used as equivalences of nonprofit sector. Moreover, there are also other definitions that can be placed in the continuum between wide and narrow definitions. However, I do not repeat them in the list.

+ = concept includes – = concept excudes	State	Churches	Market	Families	Personal networks	Associations	Foundation	Co-operatives	Mutual organisations	Self-help organisations	Social enterprises	Political organisations
Civil society/classical	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Civil society/mediaeval	–	–	+	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Civil society/liberalistic	–	+	+	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Civil society/corporatist	–	+	–	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Philanthropy/Byzantine	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Voluntary sector/traditional	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
3rd sector	–	+	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Nonprofit sector	–	–	–	–	–	+	+	–	–	–	–	–
Social economy	–	+	–	+	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Public benefit organisations	–	–	–	–	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Non-governmental organisations	–	+	–	–	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Intermediary organisations	–	+	–	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Non-statutory sector	–	+	+	–	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Informal sector	–	+	+	–	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Social movements	–	+	–	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

We can deal the contradictory definitions in two ways. In the *minimal approach* we can try to find what different concepts have in common. In practice this leaves only associations and foundations as a core of the sector. It will leave outside majority of the organisations that are studied under the concepts presented above. In the maximal approach we accept organisations that have *some* elements in common with the others. This maximal approach seems also to be the policy of the *International Society for Third-Sector Research* (*ISTR Call for contributions* 2008).

When we look at the table, we can see that civil society, philanthropy and voluntarism sector in their traditional meanings cover the whole society. In other civil society definitions the state means either the sovereign or faceless bureaucracy that is outside the life-world of ordinary people, the commons. When the government is in the hands of the people, the state and/or municipality is part of the civil society as well – however, in most of liberalist and corporatist theories this remained a utopia. In the case of philanthropy and voluntarism, it is more question of phenomenon than sector. Philanthropy can be found in all institutions and organisations as well as voluntarism.

The inclusion of market into some concepts arises, in addition to aforementioned phenomena, from the idea of civil society as civilisation or sphere of interaction, or as contractual partner of the state. In the first two cases, the perspective is that of a free citizen and in the latter case, that of the public official who cannot employ people to do services but can buy them from contractors.

Churches inclusion or exclusion in the concepts of the table is mainly based on the definitions. In practice, they are often excluded by ignoring them. Relatively few sociological or economic theories in the 20th century have paid attention to churches. However, since Iranian revolution and

collapse of the Soviet Union scholars have started to realise that religions have no intention to fade away like secularisation theories stated. The role and status of religious bodies, as noted above, varies, not only from country to country but also inside countries. For example, in Finland the Lutheran church has its own church law and it is part of the public sector while majority of Pentecostal congregations have organised themselves as associations. In the US, the state has nominally a neutral attitude to religions but churches are there more influential than in many state-church countries.

If we see the civil society research field in the Wittgensteinian way, it allows researchers from different traditions to 'feel at home' in the field and this, in turn, facilitates the creation of common language. My strong conviction is that crossing boundaries normally promotes the development of science and society. This crossing of boundaries has been the strength of civil society studies through the time the sub-discipline has existed. The research field has collected scholars from different main stream disciplines and has gained a much wider perspective of society than what is possible only inside one discipline.

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