



# Civil Society, Diversity and Civility

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**International conference „Integration Challenges in a Radicalizing World“  
29 – 30 November 2016, Tallinn, Estonia**



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# Civil Society...

1. ...as the Third Sector and as the Public Sphere
2. ...and Diversity
3. ...and Integration
4. ...and Civility

# 1. Third Sector ↔ Public Sphere

- New interest and debates around the concept from 1980s on
  - Different motives – reduction of public spending (Thatcherism); popular movements and uprisings paved way for democracy in Latin America, CEE and SU
- 1) A sphere of society independent of state and market – associations, foundations, charities... = “the Third Sector”
  - 2) Another formulation of democracy, with stress on pluralism and openness for dialogue – cf. Jürgen Habermas’ view of an ideal communicative situation

## 2. Civil Society and Diversity

- Alexis de Tocqueville in 1840:

I firmly believe that an aristocracy cannot again be founded in the world, but I think that private citizens, by combining together, may constitute bodies of great wealth, influence, and strength, corresponding to the persons of an aristocracy. [...] An association for political, commercial, or manufacturing purposes, or even for those of science and literature, is a powerful and enlightened member of the community, which cannot be disposed of at pleasure or oppressed without remonstrance, and which, by defending its own rights against the encroachments of the government, saves the common liberties of the country.

- => The "Invisible Hand" of Civil Society! Cf.: Social Capital

### 3. Civil Society and Integration

- CS Organizations add to integration through social capital: empowerment, networking – better chances for success in society, better ability for dialogue
- Important that the organizations themselves do not remain powerless and marginalised (e.g., many organizations of refugees are in risk of that)
- The "Uncivil Society" and "NIMBY" ("Not In My Backyard"): where is the line between justified self-interest and hateful ideology?



## 4. Civil Society and Civility

- CS is itself an expression of diversity, and a channel for expressing diversity
- It is also a sphere within which diverse opinions, interests and identities should meet
- A dialogue is possible only when there is readiness to accept each other as negotiation partners – mutual respect, or "Civility" (Edward Shils)
- The closer the participants are to authority and power, the more should be expected from them as to civility

**Thank you for your attention!**







# Presentation given at International conference **Integration Challenges in a Radicalising World**

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