



## **1<sup>st</sup> Copernicus Graduate School Summer School**

### **Models of European Civil Societies.**

#### **Transnational Perspectives on Forming of Modern Societies in Central Europe.**

*Toruń, Poland, 17-22 July 2012*

The subject of the 1<sup>st</sup> CGS Summer School are forms and development level of self-organisation of modern societies. The aim is to study the extent to which civil society influences processes of norm creation, conflict design and preservation of tolerance. It concerns societies created in national way being in a process of modernisation. Another aim is to analyze the extent to which civil society serves as a constructive and regulative element of functionality of modern societies.

The main aspects of the work are presented in a comparative way. It should facilitate a comparably intensive access for different social scientists. They are supposed to debate critically on the thesis concerning self-organisation in the modern world. Basing on case studies of Central Europe they shall also supply meaning patterns for a typology of different ways to a European civil society. Diversity of phenomena in an integrated historic process shall be shown. Such way of working on topics makes a claim of society-related research in which civil society is taken as an explanation pattern and functional imperative. Thus, a dialogue between science and politics can develop.

The research shall be divided into five thematic sections:

### **1. Civil Society Contours of Nation**

It is worth to note that a civil society paradigm in modern nation building processes is hardly used explicitly in the nationalism research. Such an approach would be very suitable as an explanation pattern for the role of democracy and violence as well as the relations of individuals in a large group. Undoubtedly, the modern nation is an organization form of



modern mass societies. It serves to ensure existence conditions, to set objectives and to boost attributes of a civil society. It realizes the promise of solidarity and community, which makes the nation attractive for masses and builds an identity. Without structures of self-organisation in the civil society, the implementation of the national thought is unthinkable. A self-organisational commitment to the nation gives people a sense of bond and mobilises them. Thus, nationalized societies are able to work. Individuals have to adjust their life projects to the society and thus they have their need for security satisfied. A national movement is strong and stable if it understands the necessity and possibility of shaping the society by the idea of nation as well as the functionality of the civil society. Feasibility is perceived here as an essential moment of civilization.

## **2. Tradition und Innovation (Change)**

Changes develop both an innovative and destructive potential. Conversion processes can be interpreted as progress, modernization and advancement, as well as decline, degeneration, and disaster. Deconstructions of the accepted normality are always moments of a great social intensity which need a collective comment and classification in memory culture. The elites adopt an intermediary role between a social event and its interpretation in the true sense of the "positivity of discourse" (Foucault).

The focus is set on the social action, i.e. a conscious process of individuals aimed at creating favourable conditions for their existence. There is an awareness of the need for organizing principles that bring benefits to the stability of the society. Here should be closer considered the hitherto neglected aspect of the persistence of the "old" society, adherence to traditions and accepted standards of behaviour in terms of a canon of values, such as memory culture, regional identity and confession. It should be examined on the basis of self-organisation and answer following questions concerning the communication between politics and society: to what extent reflections of masses and elites about the state of the society agree and to what extent the elites have set it.



Here those elements should be identified that are seen both as traditional and preserving the social equilibrium as well as creating a basis for the acceptance of new values that hold together the mechanism of a society in the reality. How do elites communicate within forms of self-organisation of the society and what role do tradition and values play in it?

### **3. Creating Norms and Preservation of Tolerance (Civil Society and State)**

Civil society has its sources mainly in its own systems of norms. There lays also its responsibility. Actually, it is much more dependent on complying with norms than with the state. The state can ignore its discipline. History shows that it sets norms only to present itself. The state has also means of power to enforce the norms that exclude themselves in a civil society. The state can cope with an anomy (Emile Durkheim) of losing the authority of traditional norms. The civil society ceases to exist in such a case. The state promises security and supports an individual with codification and available tools. The civil society feels responsible for ensuring that the citizen receives orientation and safety. Understanding and inner commitment are essential for the citizen to perceive the limitation of freedom as a responsibility. Living conditions correspond to it in the long term, as such socialization occurs. This is ultimately a social discipline process that generates a new type of behaviour bringing expectable benefits to the society with reliable motivation. However, a self-organisation does not take place outside the state but it is different from the state organisation. In a spontaneous creation of order the distributed knowledge of all people is implemented in the way as the construction planned by a human never could (Friedrich von Hayek).

### **4. Civil Society and Foreign Cultures**

The subject of the research is the role of migration and minorities in shaping social milieus. Modernization processes and social upheavals would lead to a dissolution of traditional life conditions established by migration processes, mutual re-evaluation and socio-cultural mechanisms of distinction. They would also develop a high conflict potential. The focus is set on foreignness and integration in the course of development of modern societies as well as on



the question about the impact of the processes of inclusion and exclusion on emancipation, modernization and development of civil society structures.

It is necessary to examine to what extent the sharpening of social contours has been a part of the ethnic-cultural differentiation within civil society or if it has caused this differentiation. The development of comparable structural elements of civil society and group behaviour may lead within modernisation to a symbiotic effect. That would open the way to the establishment of foreign groups.

### **5. City and Region. Local Perspectives on the Civil Society**

Civil society is not a static or abstract element of a human being's form of existence, but it is a functional priority of group behaviour. Civil societal activity is connected with regulatory framework, which also depends on local and regional prerequisites. It creates behaviour of big and small groups. It also determines specifics of democratic participation in the processes of decision making, identity building and conflict solution. The urban areas have traditionally a high level of self-organisation and serve frequently as a model for introduction of civil societal structures or behaviour patterns in large forms of organisation. On the other hand, local communities have their characteristics which make them develop different communication forms on the basis of their smaller density. The problem field of a city and region is suitable for the research of civil society as micro studies as well as for comparison in land and city perspective. Also the role of smaller structures in the perspective of the whole society may be analyzed.

The summer school is realised within the scope of the project "**Central Europe in 21st Century. Politics – Society – Identity**" and is financially supported by the **Visegrad Fund, City of Toruń and German-Polish Foundation for Science.**

The working languages are English and German.

The participation is free of charge. The accommodation costs will be carried by the CGS. The travel costs can be partly remunerated.

Application deadline: 21.05.2012

More information: [www.cgs.umk.pl](http://www.cgs.umk.pl)

Contact: [cgs@umk.pl](mailto:cgs@umk.pl)

#### Administration:

- Event chair: Prof. Ralph Schattkowsky (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń /University of Rostock)
- Event council: Prof. Milos Reznik (Chemnitz University of Technology)  
Prof. Jaroslav Miller (Palacky University in Olomouc)  
Prof. Arpad Tóth (University of Miskolc)
- Secretaries: Lucyna Czechowska, M.A. (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń)  
Adam Jarosz, M.A. (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń)  
Krzysztof Olszewski, M.A. (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń)

#### Organisers:



Wydział Politologii  
i Studiów  
Międzynarodowych



#### Partners:



#### Honorary Patronage:



PREZYDENT MIASTA TORUNIA  
Michał Zaleski

#### Supported by:



Miasto Toruń