

## РОЗДІЛ II

### *Теоретичні аспекти соціології*

УДК 316.2+316.323.2:303.1

*Tomasz Burzyński*

#### **Making Civil Society Work: the «Scottish Moralists» and the Cultural Foundations of Modernity**

The article outlines the importance of civil society in the philosophical discourse of modernity from the perspective of the Scottish Moralists' insights into the cultural foundations of interpersonal trust conceived as an essential element of civic virtue. The importance of civil society springs from its dissimilarity with reference to the discourses of free markets and political hierarches. Hence, the notion may be associated with the modern conception of the citizen conceived as an individual shrouded in reciprocity (*homo reciprocus*).

**Key words:** trust, Scottish Moralists, civil society, modernity.

**Statement of the Research Problem.** Nowadays, the idea of civil society constitutes the *axis mundus* of cultural considerations concerning the effectiveness of policymaking in modern democratic societies. The concept, to cut a long story short, gestures towards the cultural productivity of horizontal social ties which foster the constitution of social networks and other forms of grassroots interactions that render possible the dissemination of political activism, ideological innovation or values of positive political culture<sup>1</sup>. It means that the notion of civil society cannot be seen solely in structural and systemic terms as a concept whose significance boils down to communicative structures and the institutional tissue of associations and social movements. Important as they may be, communication networks merely constitute the overall framework in which the real essence of civil society may exist and flourish. The core element of civil society is interpersonal trust whose function, as emphasized by the theory of social capital [12], it to grease the wheels of collective actions in politics, public life or economy. As Jeffrey C. Alexander sees the spirit of solidarity and interpersonal trust that permeates civil societies: «Civil society is the arena of social solidarity that is defined in universalistic terms. It is the we-ness of a national community, the feeling of connectedness to one another that transcends particular commitments, loyalties, and interests and allows there to emerge a single thread of identity among otherwise disparate people» [1, 2].

The cultural productivity of trust relationships is related to their role in the creation of the culture of dialogue in which all parties are welcomed to share political viewpoints without the necessity to suppress the Other's voice. The emergent «ethics of discussion» constitutes the cornerstone of deliberative, dialogic democracy which is born out of grassroots communication and the egalitarian engagement in civic life [15]. Considering the importance of civil society for democracy, the article aims to investigate into the problem of social trust with special reference to the intellectual origins of the concepts in the philosophy of the selected representatives of the «Scottish Moralists».

**Research Goals.** Looking backward in history, one can observe that the discourse of trust constitutes a problem which has always remained profoundly intertwined within the cultural panorama of modernity. The philosophical discourses of trust, as far as their origins are concerned, can be traced as far back as to the European Enlightenment (or more specifically the «Scottish Enlightenment») and its struggle to make out a vision a new socio-political order from the turmoil of crisis that disturbed the overtly and overly calcified structures of medieval feudalism.

---

© Burzyński T., 2013

<sup>1</sup> A very similar conceptualization is typical of Mark Granovetter's idea of «weak social ties» [8; 9].

The specific research goal is to analyze the «Scottish» discourses of civil society and trust in terms of the Enlightened socio-political constructs conceptualized under the labels of (1) natural benevolence, (2) propriety, and (3) impartial spectator. The notions were seen as remedies for the disintegration of well-settled structures of political power with the concomitant decline of confidence in the Church conceived as the supreme guarantee of moral order in Europe. The aim is also to observe how at the onset of the European modernity – perhaps also at the beginning of a new European identity<sup>1</sup> – the ideas of solidarity and interpersonal reciprocity were subsumed within a model of a state founded upon social commitment as well as voluntary cooperation of relatively autonomous, knowledgeable citizens, rather than the absolute and panoptically organized mechanisms of surveillance, coercion and indoctrination.

**Analysis of Research.** Since, the sociological problems of policymaking are to a large extent rooted in the *milieu* of social philosophy, the research may constitute a form of comparative theoretical study in which diverse interdisciplinary notions are yoked together to create the *discordia concors* of social thought. The overtly sociological problems of reciprocity as well as trust, consequently, emerge as conceptual sub-categories of the philosophical discourse (or philosophical project) of modernity. As Adam B. Seligman aptly observes: «However, the sense remains that trust, or at least its perception, is indeed very modern. It is articulated in early modern political theory, both by proponents of modern natural law (Grotius, Puffendorf, Locke) and by its detractors (Hume, Smith)» [16, 31]. Historically speaking, in the context of enlightened political philosophies, the discourse of trust becomes almost automatically subsumed within a broader conceptual category of civil society which constitutes an alternative in contradistinction to propositions formulated by adherents of the *ancien régime*.

Such an analytical perspective, nevertheless, is in league with early modern inquiries into the sphere of bilateral relations between the Self and the Other which became conceptualized under the common denominator of «moral sentiments» or «natural benevolence». What was glimpsed at the end of the feudal era is the fact that effective as well as dynamic social organizations cannot be based upon the rationale of vertical, petrified structures that are typical of aristocratic courts. Quite to the contrary, societal progress is necessitated by the development of horizontal interpersonal ties binding individuals regardless of their position within institutionalized structures of authority, political power or economy.

The Scottish thinkers of the eighteenth century predicted the very existence of society on something very close to what we have been defining as trust (though to be sure in Samuel Johnson's dictionary of the eighteenth century there is no clear distinction between trust and confidence, which are treated as virtual synonyms) [14; 16].

This argument is far from maintaining that societies cannot entirely be founded upon panoptical structures of coercion towering above an oppressed and reified individual. Such a structure of authoritarian domination – as the history of mediaeval Europe teaches us – purports to constitute a plausible model of societal organization. However, the evolution of political as well as economic structures of modern Europe can be seen as a linear function of the development within the cultural imponderables, such as solidarity and trust that are indicative of civil society<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, the notion of civil society conceptualized, to put it in a cultural manner, as a realm of relatively unrestricted interpersonal communication rests at the heart of the notion of natural benevolence.

**Summary of the Basic Material.** The concept of civil society – to analyze its sociological validity from the perspective of political philosophy – remains greatly indebted to the legacy of John Locke's insights into the departure from the realm of the natural towards the social. The philosophy positioning society in terms of an evolutionary necessity rendering possible the transition from the disorder of nature constitutes the salient element of post-Renaissance ontological postulations concerning the idea of general order and belongs to the *avant-garde* of the rationalist pursuit of structuring principles in the human-made universe. The profound feeling of partisanship towards the notion of lawfulness as well as tireless attempts at finding a golden means that could facilitate keeping balance between human natural dispositions and social or civil duties might be regarded as crucial factors that contributed to the rise of philosophical interest

---

<sup>1</sup> The European Enlightenment aimed at the establishment of a new political discourse that could provide a common moral denominator for the bricolage of national states which were socially disintegrated after years of religious warfare [5, 7].

<sup>2</sup> The hypothesis has been empirically verified by scholars constructing modern theories of social capital [7; 11].

in reciprocity and trust as general axioms of human behavior. Furthermore, the idea enabled scholars to conceptualize both the position of mankind in the universe as well as the origins of society and culture without a necessity to consult mythologies or theology referring to the transcendental order based upon any form of deity-driven teleology [19, 60–63].

Locke's considerations seem to run parallel with insights made by Scottish Moralists, especially with Adam Smith's early liberal doctrine. As opposed to Thomas Hobbes' pessimistic view on the *bellum omnia contra omnes*, Locke believed that people are rational enough to uphold a rudimentary form of social bond in the state of nature. Smith pushes the argument further on. In the latter context, the notion of innate interpersonal sympathy is a function of self-interest and becomes subsumed within the boundaries of so-called «propriety» – an essential element of civic virtue.

The characteristic of propriety is by no means a purely psychological phenomenon. Quite to the contrary, the term is sociological in its meaning and refers to the idea of morality represented by the imaginary figure of the third party observer (the «impartial spectator») whose presence is a source of internalised morality capable of structuring relationships between the Self and the Other. As Smith teaches us: «We endeavour to examine our own conduct as we imagine any other fair and impartial spectator would examine it. If, upon placing themselves in his situation, we thoroughly enter into all the passions and motives which influenced it, we approve of it, by sympathy with the approbation of his supposed equitable judge. If otherwise, we enter into his disapprobation and condemn it» [17, 110].

The idea of impartial spectator constitutes, needless to say, a predecessor with reference to the concepts of the «looking-glass self» and the «me-self» developed respectively by Charles Horton Cooley [4] and George Herbert Mead [10]. From this perspective, it may be assumed that mechanisms which create moral bonds within civil societies are functional with regard to the features of inter-subjectivity and trans-personality of societal, communicative and cultural reality. Similarly to economic markets – in which multilateral economic relationships are organised by the internal principle of the «invisible hand» – the realm of civil society depends on the authority of a generalised spectator who scrutinises interpersonal relations and renders obligation-fulfilment and cooperation possible: «Before we make any proper comparison of opposing interests, we must change our position. We must view them from neither our own place nor yet from his, neither with our own eyes nor yet with his, but from the place and with the eyes of *the third person*, who has no particular connection with either, and who *judges impartially* between us» [17, 135].

The impartial spectator does not have to assume a form of real public scrutinising one's deeds performed on the arena of the social. As a consequence, the discourse of civil society conveys a representation of a commonwealth which is not governed by an absolute and external authority, but rather by the rationale of internalised morality that steers individuals towards participation in the accumulation of the public good. Smith's philosophy, to conclude, is deprived of the naïve conception of a «noble savage» and gestures towards the interpersonal emergence of a common axiology of social exchange which, as the organisation of free markets teaches us, structure individuals without the necessity of institutionalised control.

The conception of civil society as a remedy for the biologically intelligible human wickedness and a means of restoring social order without introducing the figure of the *Leviathan* gestures towards dilemmas of a public good accumulation illustrating diverse inter-personal conflicts restraining the cooperative attainment of socially productive objectives. Locke's and Smith's considerations paved the way for a whole array of theories attempting to provide an answer to the most challenging question of civil societies: how to motivate autonomous individuals to repudiate their own portion of political as well as ontological freedom for the sake of a community and its prosperity.

In the context of civil society, the duration of social order is to a large extent a function of individual's willingness to participate in all sorts of collaborative enterprises that do not seem to convey direct profits for individualised partakers, but are nevertheless indispensable for the survival of a community conceived as a coherent trans-personal entity. This is indicative of public goods which, by the very definition, constitute resources that do not belong to any particular agent contributing to its accumulation, but, at the same time, are beneficial as far as a community is concerned [3, 315–318].

The theory of public goods is based upon insights into the nature and dynamics of collective action. Collective endeavours may be conceptualised in terms of a series of theoretical premises referring to cultural conditions under which autonomous individuals become willing to work in conjunction with one another for

the sake of a larger community (the transgression of self-interest) in the face of the lack of a terrorizing «third party» – the authoritarian regime. Nevertheless, the mechanisms of collective action are furrowed with at least two kinds of perils. The participation in the creation of a public good is often endangered by «free-riding»: the subjective perception of self-interest motivates egoistically rational individuals to benefit from actions undertaken by others.

Another dilemma of public goods accumulation was predicted by David Hume, a philosopher associated with the Scottish Moralists. «The tragedy of the commons» illustrates a situation when interpersonal cooperation cannot become actualised due to the lack of mutual reciprocity as well as trust. While quoting from David Hume's work, Robert D. Putnam recalls the following words: «Your corn is ripe today: mine will be so tomorrow. Thus profitable for us both, that I should labour with you today, and that you should aid me tomorrow. I have no kindness for you, and know you have as little for me. I will not, therefore, take any pains upon your account; and should I labour with you upon my own account, in expectation of a return, I know I should be disappointed, and that I should in vain depend upon your gratitude. Here then I leave you to labour alone. You treat me in the same manner. The seasons change; and both of us lose our harvest for want of mutual confidence and security» [13, 1].

Much rustic as it may sound, the parable conveys an essential truth suggesting that human autonomy (and agency) does not necessarily transfer itself into well-organised structures of collaborative actions. Quite to the contrary, human inborn predilection for rationality often causes distrust towards the Other who begins to be conceived in terms of a self-centred *homo oeconomicus*.

Encounters with Other(-ness) are steeped in moral dilemmas which become, nevertheless, indicative of a larger class of phenomena, not only those referring to a collaboration for economic purposes, which constitute the core problem of civil society. In this specific context, a collective action resembles a kind of entrapment set against rational actors. As Putnam comments on the situation delineated by Hume: «failure to cooperate for mutual benefit does not necessarily signal ignorance or irrationality or even malevolence, as philosophers since Hobbes have underscored. Hume's farmers were not dumb, or crazy or evil; they were trapped» [13, 1]. A remedy for this kind of entrapment is related to the development of robust structures of mutual reciprocity, solidarity as well as trust. This viewpoint signals, to put it otherwise, that teleologically legitimised rationality has its own limitations and the process of cooperation depends upon such intangibles as well as imponderables as trust. Hence, the shift of paradigm associated with the rise of academic interest in trust may be represented by the assumption of the personality model of, to use Howard Becker's illustrative notion [2, 1], *homo reciprocus*, rather than the utilitarian, classical understanding of an individual as the *homo oeconomicus*.

From the perspective of the tragedy of the commons, the discourse of civil society becomes, first and foremost, an ethical edifice. As a socio-political category, this term is endowed with cultural connotations and, as Seligman observes, «it was this moral sense that assured mutuality, compassion, empathy, and so a basis for human interaction beyond the calculus of pure exchange» [16, 110]. Consequently, the notion of civil society has become associated with diverse forms of horizontal societal ties – such as public spheres and the robust tissue of associational life – that form and reproduce themselves in a certain distance from the strict, vertical order of bureaucratic hierarchies and the economic calculus of free markets. In this sense, civil society is widely discussed as a necessary but not sufficient condition for the emergence of modern, democratic societies. This observation can be traced as far back as to the work of Alexis de Tocqueville who was among the first scholars to recognize that the vivid associational life constitutes an unparalleled arena for civic learning: «In their political associations the Americans, of all conditions, minds, and ages, daily acquire a general taste for association and grow accustomed to the use of it. There they meet together in large numbers, they converse, they listen to one another, and they are mutually stimulated to all sorts of undertakings. They afterwards transfer to civil life the notions they have thus acquired and make them subservient to a thousand purposes» [20].

In the light of the passage quoted above, reciprocity and trust must be structurally institutionalised in order not to become meaningless terms whose analytical significance may be valid only at the level of theory. In this context, the tissue of associational life may be seen in terms of the crucial condition for the construction of trust cultures.

**Conclusion.** The legacy of the «Scottish Moralists» teaches us that the discourse of civil society unveils its dissimilarity with reference to the rationales of political hierarchies and free markets. The latter

are based upon the all-pervasive reign of self-interest and the rational, often numerical, calculus which is best conveyed by Smith's ideas concerning the rational nature of social bond within the framework of advanced societal division of power: «It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but their regard to their own interest» [18, 13]. Yet, at the same time, the structuring principles of civil societies are different from the rationale of institutionalised hierarchies where this economic rationale is somehow reproduced and becomes transformed into the sphere of interpersonal relations. This observation is especially evident in the case of the courtly culture where, as Norbert Elias teaches us, the economic calculation gains the upper hand over reciprocity as well trust. Let us adduce his remarks *in extenso*:

The court was a kind of stock exchange; as in every good society, an estimate of the «value» of each individual is continually being formed. But here his value has its real function not in the wealth or even the achievements of ability of the individual, but in the favour he enjoys with the king, the influence he has with other mighty ones, his importance in the play of courtly cliques. All this, favour, influence, importance, this whole complex and dangerous game in which physical force and direct affective outbursts are prohibited and a threat to existence, demands of each participant constant fore sight and exact knowledge of every other, of his position and value in the network of courtly opinion; it exacts precise atonement of his own behaviour to this value. Every mistake, every careless step depresses the value of its perpetrator in courtly opinion; it may threaten his whole position at court [6, 476].

This peculiar position of civil society, its alternative function with reference to the discourses of markets and institutionalised hierarchies suggests, to conclude the article, that this particular form of societal organisation is founded upon a distinct type of cultural «currency». If the two institutional settings depend on a kind of rationalisation and interest-seeking (be it of economic or political origin), the realm of civil society tends to be founded upon moral commitment. As a consequence, the devotion to efficiency becomes replaced by the attachment to values of purely communicative or dialogical origin: in this particular type of societal environment, the logic of corporate endeavours seems to gesture towards the issues of moral sentiments and interactive sympathy as the remedies for tragedies of the common.

#### **Bibliography**

1. Alexander J. C. Citizen and Enemy as Symbolic Classification: On the Polarizing Discourse of Civil Society / J. C. Alexander // *Cultivating Differences* / [eds. M. Lamont and M. Fournier]. – Chicago : Chicago University Press, 1992. – P. 2.
2. Becker H. Man in Reciprocity / H. Becker. – New York, 1956.
3. Coleman J. S. Foundations of Social Theory / J. S. Coleman. – Cambridge, Mass. : The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990.
4. Cooley C. H. Human Nature and the Social Order / C. H. Cooley. – New York : Simon and Schuster, 1930.
5. Davies N. Europe. A History / N. Davies. – London : Pimlico, 1997. – P. 7.
6. Elias N. The Civilizing Process / N. Elias. – New York : Pantheon Books, 1982.
7. Fukuyama F. Trust: Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity / F. Fukuyama. – New York : Free Press, 1995.
8. Granovetter M. The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited / M. Granovetter // *Sociological Theory*, 1983. – Vol. 1.
9. Granovetter M. The Strength of Weak Ties / M. Granovetter // *American journal of Sociology*, 1973. – Vol. 78.
10. Mead G. H. The Self, the I and the Me / G. H. Mead // *Social Theory. The Multicultural and Classic Readings*. – [ed. C. Lemert]. – Boulder : Westview Press, 2004.
11. Putnam R. D. Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy / R. D. Putnam. – Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1993.
12. Putnam R. D. Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community/ R. D. Putnam. – New York : Simon and Schuster, 2000.
13. Putnam, R. D. The Prosperous Community. Social Capital and Public Life / R. D. Putnam // *The American Prospect Online*, 2002. – No 30. – [Online resource]. – Available at: [www.prospect.org/web/printfriendly-view?id=5175](http://www.prospect.org/web/printfriendly-view?id=5175)
14. Johnson P. Frames of Deceit: A Study of the Loss and Recovery of Public and Private Trust / P. Johnson. – Tuscaloosa : University of Alabama Press, 1994.
15. Ricoeur P. Imagination, Testimony and Trust. A Dialogue with Paul Ricoeur / P. Ricoeur // *Questioning Ethics. Contemporary Debates in Philosophy* / [eds. R. Kearney, M. Dooley]. – London and New York : Routledge, 1999.
16. Seligman A. B. The Problem of Trust / A. B. Seligman. – Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1997.

17. Smith A. The Theory of Moral Sentiments / A. Smith. – Indianapolis : Liberty Classics, 1982.
18. Smith A. The Wealth of Nations / A. Smith. – London : Everyman's Library, 1991.
19. Szacki J. Historia myśli socjologicznej / J. Szacki. – Warszawa : PWN, 2004.
20. Tocqueville A. Democracy in America / A. de Tocqueville. – New York : Harper, 1969. – Book 2. – Ch. VII.

**Бужинський Томаш. Громадянське суспільство в дії: «шотландські моралісти» та культурні фундаменти сучасності.** Ця стаття є спробою концептуалізації функції, яку відіграло поняття «громадянське суспільство» для становлення філософського дискурсу сучасності. У контексті думок так званих «шотландських моралістів» сучасне суспільство розумілося, передусім, у вимірі політичної культури: як культурний і політичний організм, який конституюється засобами суспільної довіри та одночасно є базовим елементом громадянських чеснот. Отже, сутність громадянського суспільства впливає з його відмінності стосовно реалій вільного ринку, а також ієрархізованого апарату інституційної політики. Тому це поняття може бути пов'язане з появою новочасної концепції громадянина: особи – активного учасника та співтворця суспільної мережі довіри, базованої на узагальненій взаємності (*homo reciprocus*).

**Ключові слова:** довіра, «шотландські моралісти», громадянське суспільство, сучасність.

**Бужинский Томаш. Гражданское общество в действии: «шотландские моралисты» и культурные фундаменты современности.** Статья является попыткой концептуализации функции, которую сыграло понятие «гражданское общество» для становления философского дискурса современности. В контексте мыслей так называемых «шотландских моралистов» современное общество понималось прежде всего в измерении политической культуры: как культурный и политический организм, который конституируется средствами общественного доверия и одновременно является базисным элементом гражданских достоинств. Сущность гражданского общества выходит из его отличия относительно реалий свободного рынка и иерархизированного аппарата институциональной политики, поэтому может быть также объединено с появлением современной концепции гражданина: личности – активного участника и сотворца общественной сети доверия, базированной на обобщённой взаимности (*homo reciprocus*).

**Ключевые слова:** доверие, «шотландские моралисты», гражданское общество, современность.

УДК 303.01

*Юрій Бондаренко*

### **Соціальний міф як об'єкт соціологічного аналізу: теоретичний аспект**

Задля висвітлення проблеми дослідження соціального міфу як соціокультурного феномену розглянуто основні теоретичні напрями соціології міфу, проаналізовано їхні сильні та слабкі сторони, окреслено перспективи подальших досліджень. Відзначено негативний вплив характерних для представників різних підходів традицій сприйняття міфу на результати дослідження. Звідси обґрунтовується необхідність критичного переосмислення класичних робіт з означеної проблематики й розробки інтегрального підходу.

**Ключові слова:** соціальна міфологія, соціальний міф, міфотворення, ідеологія.

**Постановка наукової проблеми та її значення.** Останнім часом спостерігається зростання інтересу до феномену міфу в різних галузях соціогуманітарного знання, у тому числі й у соціології. Визнаючи значну роль соціальних міфів у функціонуванні суспільства, дослідники все ж не виробили єдиного підходу до розуміння цього поняття. Варіації поняття «соціальний міф» дуже широкі – «від використання як синоніма міфологеми до співвіднесення з розвинутими світоглядними системами, що активізують окремі пласти менталітету, сукупності культурних феноменів та великі групи явищ матеріального світу» [8, 78].

Така ситуація зумовлена низкою причин: міждисциплінарними кордонами; відмінностями в методологічних стратегіях дослідників; складністю самого досліджуваного феномену; неоднозначною оцінкою ролі міфу в сучасному суспільстві тощо. Це, зі свого боку, суттєво звужує й обмежує можливості дослідника повністю охопити сутність міфу як соціокультурного феномену. Тому виникає необхідність узагальнення основних положень найбільш поширених у сучасному