

Csaba Varga

Civil Society Associations vs. So-called Non-governmental Organisations



Summary

Domestic language use makes a distinction between organisations established on the basis of the internal needs and initiatives of civil society, and non-governmental organisations, the latter understood as formations created and operated as local agents of international networks, from foreigners' intent and funding. Although their presence in the world is nothing new, the current large volume of such organisations is the product of globalism and the pursuit of global control is the cause of their wide spread, extent and network-like set-up and operation. The one-way direction from the starting point of the influence towards the target areas evokes the situations of classical colonisation, although using the soft and hybrid tools adapted to our era. For this reason, as new forms of foreign intrusion and intervention, they should necessarily deserve the national security attention and approach that was once evoked by the former forms, regardless of how this can be achieved in today's legal situation. However, the lack of distinction and the inherent conceptual ambiguity already *a priori* show the intention to hide the genuine features of the latter.

Keywords: civil association, NGO, network, global control, undermining governments, destabilisation

DR VARGA CSABA DSc, philosopher of law, research professor emeritus, Institute for Legal Studies founded by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, professor emeritus, Pázmány Péter Catholic University Faculty of Law (varga.csaba@jak.ppke.hu).

In a state, the population – population, people, nation, civil society, including minorities as part of them – is always given. By comparison, political party representation is always random – even if it feeds on nothing but its population’s present, past and future aspirations, while its composition and diversity are given by its structure, formed from many strands in the field of daily events, tensions and solutions.

After the fall of the dictatorship that settled on the country after a nearly half-century-long military occupation, the dominant political directions in our region added up, so to speak, in a logical order. According to its main features, this is how the intention of a *radical break*, on the one hand, and possible preservation, on the other, developed. With the end of the role of the former superpower, the direction of the radical break with the previous regime was further divided according to what would serve as a focus or compass in rebuilding Hungary: the country’s more or less taunted and interrupted internal own tradition and national interest, which wanted to survive and we wished to vitalise, or the unconditional connection to the external foreign force and world of values, and alleged community of interests (in which we absolutely believed at that time), embodied in the former official enemy of our former occupier. Obviously, these possibilities did not manifest clearly at that time, and has not ever since. They in themselves do not constitute more than a mere logical potential, and moreover, the fact of our belonging to the West and its awareness, often questioned by our enemies, has been the minimum of domestic aspirations for centuries. After all, politics is not only the art of the possible, but also the need for the wisest compromises possible. This means that any direction rarely appears in a pure or exclusive form, and most often these directions overlap to a greater or lesser extent and in one way or another.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND ITS ORGANISATIONS

Well, in the case of normal development, a *civil society* functions uninterrupted, gradually giving way (stimulating momentums, and at the same time setting directions and giving impulses, depending on social desirability and support) to party political formations that attempt to implement civil society *desiderata* as a state action, parliamentary or governmental, majority or minority forums, according to the outcomes of elections, and then are further shaped at the discretion of the latter.

The essential relationship, however, is throughout the message that unfolds from the depths of the ancient empirical wisdom of *ubi societas, ibi ius*: the first and final reality, and the medium to be served, is society itself, including the human being, endowed with the dignity of *imago Dei*; while compared to this, the state is nothing more than a historically developed – and, in our experience, increasingly formalised and institutionalised – tool.

However, the collapse of the dictatorship forced on Hungary by foreign powers, which was a collapse triggered by the exhaustion of freely available resources rather than a fall due to conscious overthrowing factors, i.e. certain people’s merits, inevitably dictated a path different from the above pattern. Because the activities of the *al-ready* emerging party-like formations hastened and steered it, and in its current stage and condition, it expressed the collapse of the dictatorship, much before civil society

itself could be revived in its visible size, extent and in possession of reserves, and could be organised into its own forms.

The consequences – which were, of course, met by the intelligentsia's betrayal (Benda, 1927), practically inevitably repeated at every historical turning point, which rightly earned the distrust of the rest of society – have so far been given: *civil society* actually has not come into existence.¹ And what was created in its place is – *nolens, volens* – was a Hungary, which seemed to be covered by already established political parties, or in other words, this civility was created as a background, a society divided by party politics, or rather more, activated by these established parties. After all, both the possible directions and the directions to be followed have already been determined by these political parties and behind them by the *press*, acting in their service and by background comprising academic and university *intellectuals*, who mostly also play a servile role. In this way, non-governmental organisations were compelled to adopt some kind of *correlation* (or sometimes outright *alignment*) in their commitment to values as well as in the aftermath of daily political scores (not accidentally seen as apocalyptic with regard to the nation's fate).

Given the dangers threatening the future, naturally, and this must be emphasised, whatever has been achieved on a national level should not be underestimated. Yet, it is not yet a civil society in the classical sense of the word. Rather, it is a necessary product of the given antecedents, which, however, were – or perhaps have been – far from the optimum.

For this reason, it is a self-evident consequence that even our most widely perceived *national affairs* (from the chances of our survival as Hungarians to our educational priorities, to our healthcare system, to the international recognition of our scientific and artistic achievements or to our tourism organisation, in other words, in any specialised matter) could only be perpended and formulated in such a polarised fission. A claim made by one of us may immediately be accompanied by denial from another. Moreover, in many areas, not even the germ of often the slightest consensus can unfold, because it is no longer the logic of co-operation in a civil society that prevails here, but competition between the parties. However, we do have fundamental national interests, national issues, and among them matters to be discussed on a professional basis and yet are social issues, which our entire society is directly interested in discussing and resolving as far as possible. And, of course, there is a long line of actually partial and professional matters anyone can naturally make a contribution to when they are conceptualised and considered, but as these provide the civil society foundations of government policies, they can best be articulated with direct professionalism by the professions concerned. After all, one of the key national issues is that we should consider as such is that even if they are competing alternatives, the individual occupations and professions should at last formulate the optimum future visions of their own field.

I believe that the most influential step in the realisation and in the creation of a civil society was taken not so long ago by the movement of so-called civil circles.² I hope that it will sufficiently develop, in which case it would have a good chance to play not only a socially integrating but also a socially fulfilling and maturing role in local and

professional implementations, genuinely based on civil society. It can be part of any kind of self-organisation, as anyone can participate in it, enhancing and broadening its impact. On the other hand, of course, the party-politicum, and thus governmental action, can also promote the flourishing of a genuine civil society in Hungary in full. In our attunement to resistance to the state – which has so far been recognised as mainstream, and which was generated most markedly by the *Constitutional Court* of the first decade, treated as the *a priori* privileged and pampered child of our re-fashioned state just to grow from a servant to an insolent despot, when it absolutised the individual's rights and protection against the state, as (being one-time dry-as-dust geeks with a mostly professorial background) they thought that the opportunities of the state should be intractably restricted and controlled with suspicion (i.e. it should be treated almost as an adversary, Varga, 1995; 2008; 2013, pp. 73–215) – we usually belittle the expertise of the incumbent governments, despite the fact that they are the most generous buyers of knowledge and simultaneously, they are in possession of the most substantial knowledge through their specialisations.

Well, it is where civil society self-organisation is most encouraged, where this is made available to the public throughout the national knowledge base. In other words, where materials ordered or produced for any national (political or professional) cause are made available with a dedicated library/publisher background.³ Because although the basic units of social self-organisation and the institutional system of the state Moloch are separated from each other in responsibility, competence and procedure, they are united into a unified, ultimate functional community to exchange information and impulses with each other, encouraging or weakening a possible suggestion. Of course, part of this is that the state, with its own means, supports multifaceted and multidirectional social self-development, and thus especially, civil society self-organisation.

THE SO-CALLED NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

In my understanding, the so-called NGOs [non-governmental organisations], encouraged from abroad and financed in part or in full from abroad, completely differ from the above image of civil society (see, for example, Hann and Dunn, 1996). If their legal regulation happens to be the same as the previous ones, it can hardly be anything else than a case of either a conceptual generalisation that turns out to be erroneous, or a case of conceptual indistinguishability according to a legal criterion.⁴ However, the former is not necessarily the case, but, as described below, the resulting situation is nevertheless down right purposeful, while the latter simply does not exist. For example, Hungarian language also sharply distinguishes civil society organisation from the so-called NGO. Moreover, as a term, the latter did not emerge in England, Western Europe or the United States, which are rich in civil society organisations and historical roles, but only as a technical concept, actually as a classification category in the United Nations Charter (1945), and as an umbrella term for the external institutions which may be contacted by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations under the authority of the latter document.⁵

The most certain common point in the literature and scientific and theoretical processing of this mass of institutions, now officially called NGOs, which are mostly gigantic organisations, is that they consider the name for their subject-matters uncertain and ambiguous, and even the actual subject itself non-defined and downright impossible to define. The outburst claiming that “non-governmental organisations” is, as a term, actually misleading is not ungrounded.⁶ However, it immediately turns out that this does not come by mere coincidence, some stupid misunderstanding or an erroneous procedure, as “The term NGO is used deliberately to create an illusion of innocent philanthropic activity” (O’Connor, 2012). In the games played by the great powers, when it comes to a sufficiently overwhelming interest – because of a serious territory occupation and/or profit-making opportunity – it is not uncommon for politics, finance and business, and the so-called science and press, in other words, the genuine forces that ultimately dominate society, to take completely co-ordinated action, and, moreover, with intelligence support, with the naturalness as if a combination of coincidences precluded any other alternative. And its predator nature – the literature calls it *neocomprador imperialism*, if it is mentioned at all (e.g. Petras and Veltmeyer, 2001; Hours, 2002)⁷ – is striking exactly in the alleged model democracies of the Western European and Atlantic world.⁸ For in the present case, too, the name is not simply a matter of consciousness, but of the hiding of the real nature of something in the different nature of something else, and with this, the deliberate and purposeful falsification of both. “Actually, NGOs do not represent civil society; they represent interest groups of varying size and often with quite specific agendas. Nevertheless, donors, scholars and international institutions have developed a habit of treating NGOs as if they were civil society” (Holmén and Jirström, 2009, p. 441).

And indeed, this mass of phenomena, as the so-called “third sector” between the state and the market, has now generated a huge body of literature, which itself is almost embarrassed by the mass and diversity of formations and the actions arising from them, and still manoeuvres in its material (definition, the separation of activities, the characterisation of social weight, etc.) so that the reader does not encounter any single adjective or statement that would be relevant to the subject of this study (typically such as e.g. Salamon et al., 2003).

After all, the phenomenon is not new; what may be new is at most its legal representation or, more precisely, the concealment of its essence in a consciously used form. Its driving force was the same as that of *colonisation* once, and of any extension of power and *conquest* since the beginning of the world. It is no coincidence that a leading politician directly affected by its influence exemplified, “If we replace the term ‘civilising role’ with ‘democratisation’, then we can transpose practically word for word what the newspapers were writing 100 years ago to today’s world” (Putin, 2006). Because already at that time this was process was, and has been ever since then, so to speak, one-way, calibrated from the centre of great powers to the peripheries, as “systematic asymmetry” has existed and remains unchanged between the pathways (Steinberg and Wertman, 2018, p. 3): from Western Europe and North America, the ever-expanding and radiating impact to all parts of the world has since intensified,

while the vector sum, at most, in reverse order within itself, has changed to North America and Western Europe.⁹ The impression of being an outsider, and thus the feeling of having non-native interest, is therefore not accidental: “The question is would you rather live in a world controlled by outside interests and forces over which you have little if any input or control, or in a world controlled, at least to some extent, by local considerations” (Sam [VA] commented (July 18) on Steinberger, 2018)

Civil society organisations pop up in masses, because the conditions of our time are favourable for their establishment. But NGOs are also created in characteristically excessively high numbers as seemingly mixed phalansteries mingling in the masses of the former, because their loose, sporadic, yet complementary and reinforcing set-like nature and their organisation into real, although not directly perceptible networks best serve the background purpose. It is no coincidence, then, that today’s NGOs, as “heirs of the missionaries”, have expanded indefinitely, and are capable of penetrating anywhere with ulterior motives. By a less literary, but more faithful mirror translation, we right away come to a much tougher characterisation, because, according to the same author, by “missionary penetration [...] [t]oday’s NGOs are elephantine, serpentine, and Byzantine” (Roelofs, 2006).¹⁰ In short: well-organised networks covering all the targeted parts of the world (for the concept, see e.g. Ward et al., 2011; Lazer, 2011), which work exactly like covert agencies. As at first glance they are both organisationally uniform and yet not; but their co-ordination can be accurately read from their functioning, their funding reveals their being foreign agents, and both of the previous suggest their hierarchy, which breaks down its intended globalisation into destinations; in summary, therefore, their substantial grounding by the foreign funding centres according to their targeting, and the extent of their local deployment mainly dependent on this funding – and their comparatively surprisingly low, so to speak, sporadic and marginal local support. Therefore, ultimately, their own identity is nothing more than “foreign agents threatening sovereignty and national identity” (Steinberg and Wertman, 2018, p. 8). at least as far as their fear of this very accusation and their rhetoric, which promises transparency against this accusation, and as a possible antidote.

This explains why the other, inherently harmless, and even downright positive-sounding features of NGOs are, upon rethinking their own purposes, significant, as no matter how “coherent, targeted and co-ordinated activity” (Századvég, 2020) characterises them, they serve, for the most part, as local agents of mostly internationalised networks, and the essential precondition for the latter, i.e. embedding in a given place, is the exploitation of the opportunities arising locally,¹¹ in other words, the creation of local variants with the involvement of those in possession of local knowledge.

Because – in today’s typical occurrences – these are primarily initiatives aimed at mobilising some kind of dormant civil engagement not from within, but merely the means of intrusion from abroad and the influence of foreign interests. An analysis, not born of Hungarian antagonism, but made of the phenomenon of this worldwide organisation capitalising on today’s globality, establishes that these are, in fact “Trojan horses: designed to appear as gifts, but containing secret trap doors through which hidden forces can enter the country and covertly undermine the governments” (Cor-

bett, 2015). And if they are intended for an underlying purpose, they are already operated by the professionalism of the initiates as a specific closed society – despite the fact that the banners of this closed society (as we have experienced in the Bolshevik practice of propaganda terminology),¹² as well as the university sciences taught by them in Hungary, carry the manifesto of the *open society*. All of this in itself explains why it is lawful for them that “NGOs often have weak grassroots contacts and [...] they are neither democratic nor as transparent as one would like them to be” (Holmén and Jirström, 2009, p. 443). Their approach is that they are “buying up and thus transforming public debate and global politics outside the normal democratic process” (Phillips, 2020). Accordingly, their most common goal is to artificially rearrange these social forces by loosening and disintegrating the forces arising from within, and thus to introduce an artificially produced mechanism of influence into social and political processes.¹³ The end result is what the dictionaries of American interventionism describe as “destabilisation” (e.g. Korybko, 2015). Thus, they require national security attention even in their infancy, and, if necessary, such treatment, possibly a response that reaches the boundaries of administrative intervention or criminal justice tools.¹⁴ After all, again referring only (albeit more and more exclusively today) to typical occurrences, there is always an undoubtedly pleasing *agenda*, which is the coat of arms or the banner of a specific initiative or institution-building on the part of these so-called NGOs; however, behind the free versions of these (or even more so, the rearrangement efforts of the slogans selected because they are likeable by the recipient group¹⁵), the logical sequence comprises the following steps, which, depending on the status achieved, reveal the underlying goal immediately after the required heavy scripting and practice: first the attempt to exert influence, then the intoxication of its successful testing, and finally the implementation of the underlying interest¹⁶ – which, in these cases, is hardly anything other than an intrusion of power from this external force.¹⁷

And even if this is the case, despite the apparent benevolent neutrality of our government, we cannot be proud to have it written down somewhere that in our region – and thus also in our country – “the history of post-communist transformation is therefore, to a great extent, the history of the Soros foundations” (Åslung in Dahrendorf 2000, p. 233; Åslung, 2002, p. 438).

This story, in addition to its direct message about the current government’s role as a sovereign custodian in state affairs and, in our case, its failure to fulfil this role, is clear in itself by exploring the nature of the NGO’s world, as it exemplifies that according to the rules of the global game achieved by the globalist forces, even a single person can keep the world at bay, and by designing the right trajectory and making the right shift adjustments in stages, he can set a fate for the latter that will prove virtually irreversible after reaching a certain level.¹⁸ Speaking of intervention and/or its standards, the term *soft*, and when it comes to the battle tactics applied to achieve this end, the term *hybrid*, refers exactly to the possibility of intervention and to artificially making the state or national community vulnerable, defenceless and alterable at will.¹⁹ Law expresses itself in freedoms; liberal pressure widens them unfettered; and in this respect, community self-defence is hit hardest of all. After all, in a game like this, everything is a matter of

even personal ability; social feedback and receptivity are no longer relevant criteria in this respect; and here is the realised end result: a world dominated by arbitrary NGO activities can be the result and product of the ambition of a single person.

Our brave new world has crystallised the power of money and those who possess money, with their experience advocated in this circle that “what in most cases would take the social movement to achieve, they can achieve single-handedly [...]. Indeed, a single billionaire philanthropist can leverage social investment to change international norms”.²⁰ This corresponds not only to the terminology that widely refers to one side of the phenomenon as an enabler in the literature, but also to the popular response – “George Soros is the epitome of corruption: penetration and distortion of the political process by obscene wealth” (David [Brisbane] commented (July 18) on Steinberger, 2018) –, which defines its subject matter precisely by personal ability to buy and buy out, viz. by acknowledging that “money is a big part of our ability to exercise influence”.²¹

Thus, if the previously described civil society organisation and the type of NGO just described here – and not only despite their fundamentally different qualities not only from the current governments, but also from the general public – fall into the same legal category, it may be very different from, or the result of, the fact that at the time of drafting the law the latter did not yet exist, or at least did not appear in a mass of systematic organisation from foreign agencies, or simply a product of political blackmail – referring to a structural feature in their current function also denotes the Anglo-American naming practice with the most primitive classification from ancient times, i.e. that they are not part of the officiality of a government. Structurally, from the point of view of legal discrimination and categorisation, this hardly differs from the fact that, in a consciously extreme example, the legislator, for fear of an ever-roaring chorus, could only speak of man alone, without distinctions in terms of age, gender and capacity for action. (Of course, I might add, who knows what else the majestic rule of Western globalism, which has now become a fundamental criterion, may still bring train? The ambivalence, the legal ambiguity, and the indefiniteness are well illustrated by a recent article that concludes the depressing situation in South America with a classic German idea from Goethe: “the best slave is the one who thinks he is free”.²²)

Nevertheless, the proliferation of single-stemmed and single-purpose NGOs in our country does not correspond to the truly humanitarian, and therefore people-centred NGO variants of the United States and Europe, which only make pressure within their own framework, and have spread widely indeed, in large numbers in the past 50 years especially in the third world, i.e. in Africa, East Asia and South-America. After all, the literature based on their generalisation reports exactly the kind of features that, given the above, can make us wonder because in our country they do not exist. An example is that “a non-governmental organisation (NGO) is also a non-for-profit, voluntary citizens’ group” (Kantrowitz).²³ The additional features include that “They only have to be independent from government control, not seeking to challenge governments either as a political party or by a narrow focus on human rights, non-profit-making and non-criminal” (Willets, 2002, p. 1).

Nevertheless, such and similar substantive ambiguities, however, have not yet provoked either politics, science, or the press leading the way in exploration and investigation in certain directions and case types to put their resolution on the agenda – perhaps precisely because it is not in the interest of any of the actors. Moreover, as a decision-making body of the Council of Europe in our narrower landscape, the Committee of Ministers declared almost a decade and a half ago that “NGOs should be free to undertake research, education and advocacy on issues of public debate, regardless of whether the position is taken in accord with government policy or requires a change in the law”.²⁴ As a result, in principle, the so-called *boomerang effect* (e.g. Keck and Sikkink, 1998) prevails without constraints: in other words, created or genuine domestic internal problems are brought to the international arena through appropriate NGO mediation, in the framework of the “naming and shaming” procedure (Keck and Sikkink, 1998), more precisely through the “mobilisation of shame” (Keck and Sikkink, 1999), in order to force a change that is in line with the current international mainstream.²⁵ It is no coincidence then that it is worded at the most casual, pious allusions, for example, that the wide range of activities also gives rise to a wide range of borderline situations, “However, by today’s standards as embodied in the UN Charter, subverting with the intention of overthrowing foreign governments law is a grave violation of international law” (Roelofs, 2006). And the occasional news claiming that their own experts – through regulation by lobbies – demand so-called stricter regulations in the field of the registration of foreign agents is also sporadic, weak, and certainly unsuccessful (Századvég, 2017, p. 9; Atieh, 2010; Smith and Kelner, 2014) because “even democratic states in an era of universalisation set limits on activists’ external ties” (Jalali, 2008, p. 164).

CONCLUSIONS

My conclusion here and now can only be one: as it follows from the lessons of history, ultimately every nation is as happy as it can be in its values and interests with the aspirations of its state. More precisely, as much as its own spontaneity, self-organisation, and ever-immeasurable and depressing mass of leisure time (since, just remember: the so-called third sector serving it is an increasing branch in employment and in using public funds, and an increasingly influential factor in disintegration, deviance, and moreover, criminality) can be used for joyful actions and deeds that harmonise with the above, in the unceasing zeal of encouragement for good. In my own understanding, there was such an age in Hungary, during the last – interwar – period of peace.

But I hope that we will experience a new age of peace among our people, among all of us, as a result of our further efforts, and on one of its poles, on our side, with our civil society, we will be able to leave a lasting mark on our descendants.²⁶

NOTES

- ¹ It is no coincidence that the Hungarian political analyst of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, who evaluated the civil society self-organisation as the most important moment in it (Lomax, 1976; Lomax and Kemény, 1986) in his late, already bitter, study (Lomax, 1997), described the death of civil society, or more precisely the fact that, so to speak, it had never actually been born.

² In previews, I remember the thrill when, during my government service – as a member of the Prime Minister’s Advisory Board in the government of József Antall – when during a visit to Hódmezővásárhely, I realised in the course of conversations that instead of affiliations to the various parties involved in the skirmishes of the capital city or of the government, those people defined themselves as an affluent local community, and as an integral part and one of the creators of a European community that has opened up to them and was also accessible for them.

³ Just to give a single example, in Hungary, the communist regime in the state intended to save costs, provide control and ensure public use at the same time, and consequently, all state-funded translations, i.e. practically all translations, as everything was state-owned and nationalised, were ordered from a single agency, and tear-sheets were provided in designated specialised libraries, in the case of law and political sciences, for example, at the Institute of Political Sciences and Law of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, where – until the recent irresponsible liquidation of this huge body of translations – the translations of soviet studies written with the aim to set up a council system were stored together with papers describing the various methods of coercive interrogation by the dreaded ÁVH (cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_Protection_Authority), and French studies summarising the experience gained in their terror in Algeria.

In Washington, for about a century the Library of Congress Congressional Research Service has been responsible for providing a complete history and documentation of legislative matters. In France, a publishing company under the Prime Minister’s direct supervision, *La documentation française*, is responsible for publishing summaries and analyses in all areas of government and public administration that is of public interest, represented by 13,000 books in their national library. Currently, this state institution has 21,000 publications (including reports, books, maps, statistics and more, and in addition, 18 journals covering each topic), and any of them is freely available for purchase and study.

Essentially another aspect of the same issue is the recommendation I first made to our then Prime Minister at around 1992 (and then again to the same – current – Prime Minister), namely that the records of our successive governments and of the parties within the orbit should be stored in collections that simultaneously operate as research centres in Hungary. The exemplary German foundation solution was already known to us from the co-operation with their Hungarian branches (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parteinahne_Stiftung). This is also a party archive (“Jede politische Stiftung unterhält das Archiv der ihr nahestehenden Partei”). I have also drawn the attention of our government to the American institutions called presidential libraries (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidential_library), which has about 400 million pages of text, 10 million photos and 100,000 hours of audio-video recordings in its 13 collections so far, when I brought back a huge body of documentation back in 1993 about their organisation from the head of their central headquarters in Washington. However, in Hungary, unfortunately, no progress has been made in this; and so I subsequently handed over the bulky file compiled of all this to the Library of Parliament. I ironically note that, in principle, the question of the fate of political background papers was raised most sharply at the time of the scandal when Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s grandson offered for sale the entire legacy of documents considered as a personal asset; cf. Brazier, 1996.

⁴ It is fundamental knowledge for a lawyer that things can be regulated and factualised if they can be described with sufficient distinction, and, moreover, the factuality in question can be proved with sufficient clarity by a relatively simple and quick procedure. With regard to immigrants from the various territories of the former Commonwealth, a whole series of initiatives for the regulation of the so-called race relations and tensions, which had been forced exactly by left-wing circles, failed or became unenforceable in England for this very reason, to the point that after so many failures this otherwise tenable case became temporarily uncomfortable (see Allott, 1980; Varga, 1992).

⁵ “The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organisations which are concerned with matters within its competence” (<https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/ctc/uncharter.pdf>, ch. X, par. 71).

⁶ Because “The term »Non-Governmental Organisations« is actually a misnomer. The NGOs are financed and directed by the various imperialist agencies, the imperialist governments and the comprador regimes”, writes Mudingu, 2006 as a quasi-communist criticism.

- ⁷ It should be noted that the originally Portuguese “compradore” once meant the indigenous service to colonial enterprises in East Asia while in today’s quasi-Marxist use of the term it is usually the service of alien imperialist powers. For such and similar approaches, see e.g. Petras, 1997; Iadicola, 2011; Douglas-Bowers, 2012 (which outlines the institutionalisation of the National Endowment for Democracy, the Freedom House, and the Amnesty International as the underlying institution for the U.S.); Kofas, 2016 (which discusses the adverse experiences of Russia, Ukraine, India, and China); and cf. even Sternberg, 2010.
- ⁸ Cohen, 2000 and Varga, 2007 discuss a case precisely from the practice of the United States, which emerged a few decades ago and fortunately failed.
- ⁹ Cf. e.g. www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/centre-periphery-model and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Core-periphery_structure.
- ¹⁰ It should be noted that the author’s tough critical distance is a result of a few years development, as previously, e.g. Roelofs, 2003, he had assessed this subject more positively.
- ¹¹ In other words, the unspecified, worldwide generality of routine, or “buisness-as-usual,” would be the end itself, since the existence of such NGOs rests on the exploitation of the conditions and opportunities always given then and there; cf. Mendelson and Glenn, 2002, p. 245.
- ¹² During my stay at Lund as visiting professor I realised with dismay from the 1973 liquidation stories of Medvedev, which I obtained in 1977, that the accusations made by the Bolsheviks were, for the most part, projections of their own repressive practice.
- ¹³ What Greenhill calls outright provocative behaviour (Greenhill, 2008).
- ¹⁴ However, in contrast to the intelligence literature, which, together with espionage, discusses not only sabotage, but also the activity discussed here, this topic is no longer in the columns of the Hungarian journals of either the national security division (see e.g. <https://folyoirat.ludovika.hu/>) or of the military national security division (see e.g. www.knbsz.gov.hu/hu/publikaciok.html), or, unlike its predecessor, today’s *Belügyi Szemle* (Home Affairs Review) (<https://belugyiszemle.hu/hu/belugyi-szemle-fooldal>).
- ¹⁵ American analysts reports on Potemkin NGOs (Hemment, 2012) and the “neocolonial hegemony” of the National Endowment for Democracy (Sussman, 2006), which was founded for actions in foreign countries as a US Congress funded *soft power organization* in 1983, at a time when the disintegration of the soviet world power became visible. Its president, Allen Weinstein admitted openly that “A lot of what we do today was done *covertly* 25 years ago by the CIA.” Moreover, the overt interventionism practiced today as soft imperialism has more successes on easier ways, due to its benevolent image (Ignatius, 1991; Blum, 2000, p. 180). Corbett, 2015 opines in similar terms on the US Agency of International Development as well.
- ¹⁶ According to Yilmaz, 2012, “democracy promotion” projects are never self-contained: they are merely complements to the so-called “development” and “dialogue” projects, which are also predominantly American, and their designers often support them for the most part by a strong intelligence/military background.
- ¹⁷ “Appropriation” is therefore accompanied by “resistance”; see Petric, 2012. Carothers, 2006, p. 64 himself, although his writing seeks to rebuild the self-evident American position that has exposed itself and has thus become disliked by the world as a suspicion of interference, admits that in his practice so far, “democracy promotion” has always entailed the provocation of “regime change” under the threat of “US military intervention”.
- ¹⁸ As a reformist alternative to the radical (“revolutionary”) change of law, which was given a special extra hue and topicality in the early 1980’s by the tension between the socialist political regime, already made sclerotic by its own conditions, on the one hand, and the relatively wider elbowroom that might have been opened by the so-called New Economic Mechanism, on the other, cf. Varga, 1986.
- ¹⁹ While a multifaceted overview is given of NGOs, including criticism and doubts about legitimacy, the description given at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-governmental_organisation defines the basic term as intervention-like concept from the outset: it seeks to have an effect on “the lives of other people [...] through activism and services”.
- ²⁰ DeMars, 2005, p. 169, and the quote is from sociologist Paul Schervish, in Kampeas, 2011.
- ²¹ The first president of the Open Society Foundation (1993–2012), Aryeh Neier, was the one who recently (in Stahl, 2015) made clear what was otherwise naturally known to everyone.

- ²² Goethe, 1809, Book II Chapter 5: “Niemand ist mehr Sklave, als der sich für frei hält, ohne es zu sein”, quoted by Pastor, 2019.
- ²³ www.apa.org/international/united-nations/acronyms.pdf.
- ²⁴ Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)14 of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers to member states on the legal status of non-governmental organisations in Europe (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 October 2007 at the 1006th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies) (www.osce.org/files/f/documents/7/0/33742.pdf, par. 12).
- ²⁵ In any case, blackmail by shame has become a new and common element in the exercise of international official relations, more precisely, its distortion. As, among others, Badie, 2017 sums it up, “In international relations some states often deny the legal status of others, stigmatising their practices or even their culture. Such acts of deliberate humiliation at the diplomatic level are common occurrences in modern diplomacy. In the period following the breakup of the famous ‘Concert of Europe’, many kinds of club-based diplomacy have been tried, all falling short of anything like inclusive multilateralism. Examples of this effort include the G7, G8, G20 and even the P5. Such ‘contact groups’ are put forward as if they were actual ruling institutions, endowed with the power to exclude and marginalise. Today, the effect of such acts of humiliation is to reveal the international system’s limits and its lack of diplomatic effectiveness. The use of humiliation as a regular diplomatic action steadily erodes the power of the international system. These actions appear to be the result of a botched mixture of a colonial past, a failed decolonisation, a mistaken vision of globalisation and a very dangerous post-bipolar reconstruction.”
- ²⁶ The first version of this extended and completely reworked article was given a lecture on October 13, 2017 in Kecskemét (Varga, 2017), and with additional literature it was published as Varga, 2018.

REFERENCES

- Allott, A. (1980): *The Limits of Law*. Butterworths, London.
- Åslung, A. (2002): *Building Capitalism. The Transformation of the Older Soviet Bloc*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge–New York.
- Atieh, J. (2010): Foreign Agents: Updating FARA to Protect American Democracy. *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 1051–1088.
- Benda, J. (1927): *La Trahison des Clercs*. Grasset, Paris.
- Badie, B. (2017): *Humiliation in International Relations: A Pathology of Contemporary International Systems*. Hart Publishing, Oxford, www.bloomsburyprofessional.com/uk/humiliation-in-international-relations-9781782256199/.
- Blum, W. (2000): *Rogue State: A Guide to the World’s Only Superpower*. Common Courage Press, Monroe.
- Brazier, R. (1996): Who Owns State Papers? *The Cambridge Law Journal*, Vol. 55, No. 1, 65–88, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0008197300097749>.
- Carothers, T. (2006): The Backlash against Democracy Promotion. *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 2, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20031911>.
- Cohen, S. F. (2000): *Failed Crusade. America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia*. Norton, New York.
- Corbett, J. (2015): How the US Uses NGOs to Destabilize Foreign Governments. *The International Forecaster Weekly*, https://theinternationalforecaster.com/topic/international_forecaster_weekly/How_the_US_Uses_NGOs_to_Destabilize_Foreign_Governments.
- Dahrendorf, Lord [Ralf] et al. (eds.) (2000): *The Paradoxes of Unintended Consequences*. Central European University Press, Budapest–New York.
- DeMars, W. E. (2005): *NGOs and Transnational Networks. Wild Cards in World Politics*. Pluto Press, London.
- Douglas-Bowers, D. (2012): NGOs: The Missionaries of Empire. *Global Research*, www.globalresearch.ca/ngos-the-missionaries-of-empire/29595.
- Goethe, J. W. von (1809): *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. J. G. Cotta’sche Buchhandlung, Berlin.
- Greenhill, K. (2008): Strategic Engineered Migration as a Weapon of War. *Civil Wars*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 6–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698240701835425>.
- Hann, C. M. and Dunn, E. (eds.) (1996): *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*. Routledge, London–New York.

Csaba Varga: *Civil Society Associations vs. So-called Non-governmental Organisations*

- Hemment, J. (2012): Nashi, Youth Voluntarism, and Potemkin NGOs: Making Sense of Civil Society in Post-Soviet Russia. *Slavic Review*, Vol. 71, No. 2, 234–260, <https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.2.0234>.
- Holmén, H. and Jirström, M. (2009): Look Who's Talking! Second Thoughts about NGOs as Representing Civil Society. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 4, 429–448, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909609105093>.
- Hours, B. (2002): *Domination, dépendances, globalisation: Traces d'anthropologie politique*. L'Harmattan, Paris.
- Iadicola, P. (2011): *NGOs and Imperialism*. www.academia.edu/1151694/NGOs_and_Imperialism.
- Ignatius, D. (1991): Innocence Abroad: The New World of Spyleless Coups. *The Washington Post*, www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1991/09/22/innocence-abroad-the-new-world-of-spyless-coups/92bb989a-def6e-4bb8-99b9-462c76b59a16/.
- Jalali, R. (2008): International Funding of NGOs in India: Bringing the State Back In. *Voluntas*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 161–188, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-008-9059-7>.
- Kampeas, R. (2001): *New Philanthropy. Billionaires Decide Exactly Where Dollars Go*. Associated Press.
- Keck, M. E. and Sikkink, K. (1998): *Activists Beyond Borders. Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
- Keck, M. E. and Sikkink, K. (1999): Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics. *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 159, 89–101, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2451.00179>.
- Kofas, J. (2016): *NGOs: Agents of Globalization or Humanitarianism?* www.academia.edu/20162563/NGOs_AGENTS_OF_GLOBALISATION_OR_GRASSROOTS_HUMANITARIANISM.
- Korybko, A. (2015): Wanted: NGO Whistleblowers. *Global Research*, www.globalresearch.ca/wanted-ngo-whistleblowers/5455718.
- Lazer, D. (2011): Networks in Political Science: Back to the Future. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 61–68, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1049096510001873>.
- Lomax, B. (1976): *Hungary 1956*. Allison and Busby, London.
- Lomax, B. and Kemény, I. (eds.) (1986): *Magyar munkástanácsok 1956-ban. Dokumentumok* [Hungarian workers's councils. Documents.] Magyar Füzetek, Paris.
- Lomax, B. (1997): The Strange Death of “Civil Society” in Post-communist Hungary. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 41–63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523279708415331>.
- Medvedev, R. A. (1973): *Let History Judge. The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism* [1967.] Trans. Colleen Taylor, Vintage Books, New York.
- Mendelson, S. E. and Glenn, J. K. (eds.) (2002): *The Power and Limits of NGOs. A Critical Look at Building Democracy in Eastern Europe and Eurasia*. Columbia University Press, New York.
- Mudingu, J. (2006): How Genuine are NGOs? *The New Times*, www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/176/31491.html.
- O'Connor, J. (2012): “NGO”: The Guise of Innocence. *Global Policy Forum*, www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/introduction/51688-qngoq-the-guise-of-innocence.html?itemid=id.
- Pastor, M. (2019): National Endowment for Destabilization? CIA Funds for Latin America in 2018. www.telesurenglish.net/analysis/National-Endowment-for-Destabilisation-CIA-Funds-for-Latin-America-in-2018-20190403-0042.html.
- Petras, J. (1997): Imperialism and NGOs in Latin America. *Monthly Review*, Vol. 49, No. 7, https://doi.org/10.14452/mr-049-07-1997-11_2.
- Petras, J. and Veltmeyer, H. (2001): *Globalization Unmasked. Imperialism in the 21st Century*. Fernwood Publishing, Halifax.
- Petric, B. (2012): *Democracy at Large. NGOs, Political Foundations, Think Tanks and International Organizations*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Phillips, M. (2020): Sanitizing Soros through Guilt by Association. *Jewish News Syndicate*, www.jns.org/opinion/sanitizing-soros-through-guilt-by-association/.
- Putin, V. (2006): Interview with TF-1 Television Channel (France), July 12, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/23700>.
- Roelofs, J. (2003): *Foundations and Public Policy. The Mask of Pluralism*. State University of New York Press, Albany.

- Roelofs, J. (2006): The NED, NGOs and the Imperial Uses. Why They Hate Our Kind Hearts, Too. *Counter Punch*, www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/176/31425.html.
- Salamon, L. M.; Sokolowski, S. W. and List, R. (2003): *A civil társadalom "világnézetben"* (*Global Civil Society. An Overview*). The Johns Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies Center for Civil Society Studies, Baltimore). Acta Civitalis series 3, Civitalis Egyesület, Budapest.
- Smith, B. D. and Kelner, R. (2014): Project on Government Oversight (POGO) Report on FARA (Foreign Agents Registration Act) Misses the Larger Point. *The National Law Review*, Vol. 4, No. 356, www.natlawreview.com/article/project-government-oversight-pogo-report-fara-foreign-agents-registration-act-misses.
- Stahl, D. (2015): Lebensgeschichtliches Interview mit Aryeh Neier, March 3. *Quellen zur Geschichte der Menschenrechte*, www.geschichte-menschenrechte.de/personen/aryeh-neier/.
- Sternberg, E. (2010): NGOs vs Civil Society: Reflections on the Illiberal, the Illegitimate and the Uncountable. *Economic Affairs*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 22–28, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0270.2010.02017.x>.
- Steinberg, G. and Wertman, B. (2018): Value Clash: Civil Society, Foreign Funding, and National Sovereignty. *Global Governance*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-02401001>.
- Steinberger, M. (2018): George Soros: Bet Big on Liberal Democracy. Now He Fears He Is Losing. *The New York Times*, July 17, www.nytimes.com/2018/07/17/magazine/george-soros-democrat-open-society.html.
- Sussman, G. (2006): The Myths of 'Democracy Assistance': US Political Intervention in Post-Soviet Eastern Europe. *Monthly Review*, Vol. 58, No. 7, https://doi.org/10.14452/mr-058-07-2006-11_2.
- Századvég (2017): *Az NGO-k mint politikai szereplők* [NGOs as Political Actors]. Századvég Alapítvány, Budapest.
- Századvég (2020): *Adat- és nemzetbiztonsági kérdések – szabályozott NGO-aktivitás: Az apologetikus szemléletmód létjogosultsága a magyar jogrendben* [Issues of Data Security and National Security – Regulated NGO Activity: The Raison d'Être of the Apologetic Approach in the Hungarian Legal System]. Századvég Alapítvány, Budapest.
- Varga, Cs. (1986): Macrosociological Theories of Law: From the "Lawyer's World Concept" to a Social Science Conception of Law. In: Kamenka, E.; Summers, R. S. and Twining, W. (eds.): *Soziologische Jurisprudenz und realistische Theorien des Rechts*. Rechtstheorie Beiheft, No. 9, Duncker Humblot, Berlin, 197–215.
- Varga, Cs. (1992): The Law and its Limits. *Acta Juridica Hungaricae*, Vol. 34, No. 1–2, 49–56, http://real-j.mtak.hu/782/1/ACTAJURIDICA_34.pdf.
- Varga, Cs. (1995): *Transition to Rule of Law: On the Democratic Transformation in Hungary*. Philosophiae Iuris series, ELTE "Comparative Legal Cultures" Project, Budapest, <http://mek.oszk.hu/14700/14760/>.
- Varga, Cs. (2007): Failed Crusade: American Self-confidence, Russian Catastrophe. *Central European Political Science Review*, Vol. 8, No. 28, 71–87 (and in Varga, 2008, pp. 199–219).
- Varga, Cs. (2008): *Transition? To Rule of Law? Constitutionalism and Transitional Justice Challenged in Central & Eastern Europe*. Kráter, Pomáz, <http://mek.oszk.hu/14800/14851>.
- Varga, Cs. (2013): *Contemporary Legal Philosophising: Schmitt, Kelsen, Lukács, Hart, & Law and Literature, with Marxism's Dark Legacy in Central Europe (On Teaching Legal Philosophy in Appendix)*. Philosophiae Iuris series, Szent István Társulat, Budapest, <http://mek.oszk.hu/14800/14861/>.
- Varga, Cs. (2017): Civilitás, pártvilág – professziók, politikák [The civil and the party world – professions and policies]. In: *A civil társadalmi részvétel alakulása és fejlődése Közép-Európában 1990-től napjainkig* [The formation and development of civic social Participation in Central Europe from 1990 on]. Conference paper, Alföldi Civilekért Alapítvány, Kecskemét, 83–89, <http://alfoldicivilekert.hu/alapanyagok/Zarokiadvany.pdf>.
- Varga, Cs. (2018): Civil szerveződések – állami politikák: Egymásmellettiségek, kapcsolatok, lehetséges torzulások [Civil organisations – state policies: co-ordinations, contacts, eventual distortion]. *Iustum Aequum Salutare*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 133–139, http://ias.jak.ppke.hu/hir/ias/20181sz/07_VargaCs_IAS_2018_1.pdf, and abstract, http://ias.jak.ppke.hu/hir/ias/20181sz/19_SUMMA_IAS_2018_1.pdf.
- Ward, M. D.; Stovel, K. and Sacks, A. (2011): Network Analysis and Political Science. *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 245–264, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.12.040907.115949>.
- Willets, P. (2002): What is a Non-Governmental Organization? In: *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems. Encyclopedia of Institutional and Infrastructural Resources*. Eolss Publishers, Oxford, [www.ihrnetwork.org/files/3. What is an NGO.PDF](http://www.ihrnetwork.org/files/3.What%20is%20an%20NGO.PDF).
- Yilmaz, S. (2012): "Democracy Promotion" as U.S. Civil Intervention Method. <https://acikarsiv.aydin.edu.tr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11547/495/sait18.pdf?sequence=1>.