

Dreams of Civil Society Twenty Years After: The Case of the Czech Republic

Jiří Navrátil

Centre for Nonprofit Sector Research and Department of Political Science,
Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno

Miroslav Pospíšil

Centre for Nonprofit Sector Research, Masaryk University, Brno

1. Introduction

Civil society studies explore a variety of issues, ranging from varieties of individual engagement, the quantity and intensity of the engagement or differences in individual engagement across different countries and political cultures to varieties of organizational forms, their inner structures or external relations, strategies or repertoires. However, relations and interactions between these two key forms of civil society activities – the individual and the organized - are seldom targeted.

The starting point of this paper is the presumed weakness of civil society in Central-Eastern European (CEE) countries reported earlier by some observers [Rose 1999; Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer 1996; Howard 2003] twenty years after the regime change of 1989. These claims are usually supported by the reported evidence of sparse organizational civic infrastructure, low membership in civil society organizations, or insufficient community activism and privatism of citizens in these countries. However, in the Czech case at least, we know that there are a large number of active civil society organizations (CSOs) and also that a considerable share of citizens contribute individually to civil advocacy activities and/or support civic campaigns.

In response to this discrepancy, we raise three points in the following pages. First, we argue that the claim of alleged weakness of CEE civil societies stems both from the theoretical and empirical disconnectedness between the individual and the organized parts of civil society rather than from the non-existence of one or both of them. In other words, it is primarily the idea of citizens organizing themselves on the grassroots and community level that lies at the heart of the common idea of “proper” - strong and vibrant - civil society: and so, it is this normative assumption of privileged forms of civic action that also lies at the heart of the critique of the weakness of CEE civil societies.

Second, we aim to demonstrate how the two forms of civic engagement reflected on the way of thinking of Czech dissident activists before 1989: it seems that the original 'dreams' of civil society already contained this cleavage between the collective/organized and the individual and that this cultural pattern seems to be repeated in the Czech civil society today, with practical consequences.

Third, we want to explore how this cleavage between the organized and the individual layers of civil society does or does not manifest itself in the current situation of Czech civil society. In other words, the empirical part of the paper explores the problem of the disconnectedness between the organized and the individual civil society actors in the Czech Republic. It attempts to describe the gap between citizens and CSOs, to explore and to understand the reasons and motives of the relevant actors for keeping their distance from one another, and to compare them with the dissidents' original vision(s) of civil society. We deliberately narrow our focus to the political – advocacy – function of civil society when we try to describe the actual relations between the individual and the organized agents, to identify the key attitudes and opinions of both individuals and (the representatives of) the collective actors, and to find the factors that contribute to their separation.

We conclude our paper by hypothesizing that it is not only the legacy of the undemocratic rule before 1989 that devastated voluntary civic engagement and eroded interpersonal trust in society, but that the current divide between organized collective actors and individual citizens can also be traced back to the deliberations of the most influential intellectual leaders of the anti-communist opposition in the 1970s and 1980s: the suspicion towards organized (political) action and emphasis on individual ethical concerns is consistent with the attitudes of Czech citizens towards advocacy CSOs today.

The structure of the paper is as follows: first, we introduce the theoretical framework of the paper that defines two main traditions of thinking about civil society and of its social science analysis – that based on the perspective of the citizens, which emphasises individual participation, and that of the social movement perspective, which emphasises collective activism. We suggest that these two perspectives stem from different theoretical backgrounds but are equally important in accounts of social reality.

Second, the paper explores the cultural milieu which influenced the formation of civil society theory and praxis after 1989 and presents the key visions as they were developed during the communist years by leading dissident intellectuals. It briefly characterises them

so that these visions can be compared with the situation twenty years after the Velvet Revolution as it appears in our findings.

Third, the paper aims at an empirical exploration of the basic features of both the individual and the collective forms of participation in advocacy activities as apparent in the current Czech context. It attempts to show the extent and the forms of individual participation and to introduce the practices of CSOs vis-a-vis members of the public. Furthermore, the paper offers an empirical exploration of motives, attitudes and opinions of both citizens towards CSOs and, vice versa, of CSOs towards citizens. We aim to show how the two relate to each other, what motivates the two sides to keep the “demand” and “supply” sides of Czech civil society separate and how these attitudes are related to the original dreams of Czech dissidents.

2. Two pillars of the civil sphere

While some of the critical perspectives on civil society propose an ideal type of civil sphere that is populated by a dense network of groups and organizations which aim at citizens’ engagement and activity, we want to show that there are various traditions of theorizing and analysing civil society that focus on different classes of subject, and that the critique of the weakness of civil societies in the CEE countries points to the fact of a detachment of CSOs from individual citizens rather than to poor individual engagement and/or non-existent organized activism as such.

Different perspectives of civil society, stemming from different traditions of civil society research, put emphasis on different types of civil society actors. In political-philosophical terms, one of them seems to build upon the classical notions of civil society’s rise, structure and function that come from the “Rousseau-Hegel-Habermas” tradition. In this perspective, it is the involvement of free and equal individuals in civic associations and collective action that makes it something distinct and valuable vis-a-vis the hierarchy of the family, the anonymity of the market and the instrumentality of the political system. But there is also another tradition of civil society conceptualization - referring to the work of Tocqueville - that puts more emphasis on the civic collective bodies *themselves* as the core civil infrastructure than on their individual members’ involvement.

Both of the aforementioned political-theoretical perspectives find their more empirically oriented advocates among social science researchers. Some of the researchers

put an emphasis on citizens' involvement in collective extra-institutional activities and focus on the individual attitudes and involvement in civil society structures and institutions. The other strand of empirical research is focused on the meso-level and maps the organizational behaviour and the collective processes outside the areas of the state and of the market. It seems obvious that these two competing approaches to the study of the state of civil societies generate somewhat different pictures of reality, in particular when they focus on the Central Eastern European countries. According to the first perspective, which highlights the mass personal involvement and individual participation in the collective organizations of civil society, it is hard to speak about robust civil societies in CEE, since there is a low level of individual intra-organizational participation and trust of civic collective actors, accompanied by organizational passivity and civil privatism of the citizens [McMahon 2001; Howard 2003; Newton, Monterro 2007].

But there is a growing theoretical discontent about analyzing the CEE societies only through the lens of the concepts of grass-roots civil society and mass mobilization that were developed in pre-war Western Europe and the US and which sometimes do not even fit the reality of the developed countries today. The concept of "social movement societies" [Meyer, Tarrow 1998; Rucht, Neidhardt 2002], which predominantly builds upon the mass mobilization capacities of social movements (SMOs) and other collective actors, with their focus on the involvement of citizens, is, on the one hand, being supplemented (or challenged) by the concepts of less embedded civic actors that focus on the horizontal cooperation with other SMOs or on vertical relations (either conflicting or cooperative) with the elites and the system rather than on the engagement of citizens; and, on the other hand, by the studies of new forms of direct individual engagement in civic and political issues (internet activism, political consumerism, e-donations etc.).

In other words, the previous research accent on the building of social bonds is balanced with the focus on the building and maintenance of the organizational infrastructure of civil societies itself (transactions and relations among civic collective actors etc.) [Diani 2003; Baldassarri, Diani 2007]. This shift of emphasis towards the research of inter-organizational behaviour of civil society actors was soon codified in the notion of transactional activism [Petrova, Tarrow 2007; Cisar 2008; Cisar 2010]. The concept was developed in the post-communist context, where the apparent lack of mass social movements and popular mobilizations is compensated for by the plurality of CSOs and

various civic advocacy organizations that focus not on mobilizing people but prefer to promote their goals while making use of professional staff and which tend to be financially dependent on external sources (EU grants, foundations, public funding etc.).

In this paper, we want to integrate these two perspectives by describing the co-existence of the two basic forms of civil society engagement and by making use of the notion of embeddedness of organized civic (advocacy) activities. We try to explore the motivations of citizens and CSO representatives that contribute to the apparent distance and low level of overlap between the individual and the collective forms of engagement in the civil sphere. Before doing so, however, we look at whether and how the two modes of civil society activity were discussed in the thinking of prominent Czech dissidents before 1989.

3. Dreams of civil society before 1989: three variations on a theme

After the defeat the Prague Spring in 1968 through the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion and subsequent occupation of the country by Soviet troops, Czech dissidents had the difficult task of finding effective strategies of defence against the renewed harsh repression by the Communist regime and for the preservation of basic human and citizen rights, free thought, independent culture and national and individual dignity. It is believed by many authors [e.g. Keane 1998; Deakin 2001] that in doing so, they (and other dissident civic activists in the other late Communist regimes of the Soviet bloc) rediscovered and rethought an idea that could be used both as a possible solution to the oppressive situation of people under totalitarian rule in the East as well as a way out of the political crisis of traditional liberal democracy in the West: the idea of civil society. In the Czech context¹, the idea found most influential and explicit expression in the thinking of three authors, Jan Tesař, Václav Benda and Václav Havel, each of whom, however, pointed out a different aspect of, and saw a different use for, a shared vision of strong civic engagement.

3.1 Jan Tesař: Civil Society as Antidote to Totalitarian Regimes

Chronologically, Jan Tesař, an unemployed historian, one of the initial signatories of Charter 77 and a co-founder of the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS),

¹ We examine here only the Czech dissident activity and debate because the developments in the Slovak Republic were largely isolated from those in the Czech Republic (in federal Czechoslovakia) and thus followed a different dynamism.

was the first to use the concept of civil society in his analysis of totalitarian regimes, a theme to which he turned his attention soon after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

After his release from six years' imprisonment for "subversive activities" Tesař published a *samizdat* essay entitled "Totalitarian Dictatorships as a Phenomenon of the Twentieth Century and the Possibilities of Overcoming Them" [Tesař 1977]. John Keane, one of the most prominent theoreticians of civil society, believes it to be one of the seminal and path breaking texts that contributed to the revival of interest in civil society and also a text that greatly influenced his own thinking [Keane 1998: 19]. According to Tesař, in Keane's interpretation [Keane 1998:20],

the various twentieth-century forms of totalitarian dictatorship (Stalinism, Nazism) were born of political instability and 'the underdeveloped structure of civil society'. The origins of these party-dominated regimes show that democracy and totalitarianism are not opposites, for under crisis conditions, when the so-called 'broad masses' suddenly enter political life under conditions of a weakly developed civil society, totalitarian movements and parties feed parasitically upon such bowdlerized democratic slogans as 'all power to the soviets' and 'from the masses to the masses'. Totalitarian regimes are always born of 'a revolutionary crisis in society'.

That is why (again in Keane's interpretation) the protracted struggle for civil society – not sudden revolutions from above or below – is the strongest weapon against totalitarian dictatorship. In Tesař's own words [cited by Keane 1998: 20]

"if the totalitarian systems, as a reversion to absolutism in the twentieth century, arise more easily in an environment where the structure of "civil society" is not sufficiently well formed, then the most reliable means of preventing their genesis is to encourage the development of that civil society".

Tesař's arguments for civil society apparently reflected on the problem of its *structure(s)* and displayed a fear of masses. This may be read as a call for the importance of organization and structuration of activities in the civil sphere that should protect individualized masses from political demagogy and dictatorship of (state) elites. In other words and similarly to Tocqueville, Tesař emphasises the democratizing power of civil organizations, even if he does not explicitly analyse their political role and their relation to the state. This was something, however, that was much on the mind of another dissident activist, Václav Benda.

3.2 Václav Benda: *Parallel Polis*

While Tesař's essay was grounded in historical analysis, Václav Benda's famous essay was nurtured by the early debates among Charter 77 signatories about the practical solutions to life under communist totalitarianism. It was also written as an answer to the first crisis that the Charter 77 group was undergoing in the face of the feeble response to the initiative by the public and after one year of all-around harsh prosecution of the signatories and their families and friends. While the intellectual fathers of Charter 77, Jan Patočka and Václav Havel, insisted that Charter 77 was a moral and a civic, not political, project, Benda argued that the purely moral strategy of anti-politics had left Charter 77 in a "blind alley" of impotence and decline, making it also unpalatable to the society at large². He offered a practical response to the waning momentum of the group's mission and confusion among the members as to its purpose and direction.

Havel's emphasis on "living in truth" as the prerequisite of any societal change in the communist totalitarian states focused on the individual and on diffuse, noninstitutionalized communities. Benda's idea of the "parallel polis" proposed a more institutional goal. To rejuvenate the Charter 77 movement, he proposed "that we join forces in creating, slowly but surely, parallel structures that are capable, to a limited degree at least, of supplementing the generally beneficial and necessary functions that are missing in the existing [state] structures."³ Such structures would follow the model of the "parallel culture" - notably pop culture⁴ - that already existed in Czechoslovakia. They would encompass a parallel education system, parallel information networks, parallel political discussion fora, parallel international contacts, and a parallel economy.⁵

Unlike some others (most notably Jirous 1975), Benda did not go as far as to subscribe to the anti-political desire to build a societal structure separate from the state and completely ignoring the state. As a highly subtle thinker and as a much more practical political animal than Havel, he demanded that his polis should, as a matter of course, influence, and gradually change, what the state did. He argued that, "Even if such structures

² [Benda 1978: 35 – 36]

³ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴ Benda refers to Ivan Jirous' "Second Culture" as "the most developed and dynamic parallel structure. It should serve as model for other areas." [Benda 1978: 38]

⁵ [Benda 1978: 38 – 40]

were only partially successful, they would bring pressure to bear on the official structures, which would either collapse or regenerate themselves in a useful way.”⁶

Benda’s idea of the parallel polis was developed as an answer by a practical political thinker to the radical ethical demands that underpinned the policy and tactics of Charter 77 at its inception. Benda believed that in a situation when no dialogue with the totalitarian state power about human rights and economic and political freedoms was possible, there was no other way for society but to turn to “self-help” and start developing organized structures of a *parallel polis* that would at least to a small degree substitute for those functions that the state did not fulfil. The structured and organized civic activities that challenge the political elites and the state thus clearly point to the advocacy function of civil society, which is carried out by specialized groups of civil society representatives.

4.3. Václav Havel: Living in Truth and Nonpolitical Politics

Václav Havel, a writer, playwright, thinker and activist had always been a public figure but what made him into an icon of the dissident opposition movement were his activities and his writings after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. His most important text is undoubtedly “The Power of the Powerless” [Havel 1978.55-133], which amounts to Havel’s political manifesto and which was the strongest influence on Czechoslovak opposition initiatives throughout the 1980’s. Written early on in the life of the Charter 77 movement, it introduces Havel’s two fundamental concepts, namely “living in truth” and “non-political (or anti-political) politics”, which he later commented upon, explained and exemplified in later essays and texts.

In the essay, he described the state of the “post-totalitarian” society in Czechoslovakia in the era of ‘normalization’, when it was no longer necessary for the state power to use brutal coercive action to subdue the population. Instead, it uses the “soft” threat of the removal of employment, consumer and social securities to extort conformity with the regime from people. However insincere and formal that conformity may be (however much one “lives within a lie”), it supports the regime, making each person an accomplice in sustaining it. Each person in such a system is both manipulated and manipulator, governed and governor, at the same time. Ideology serves to hold the regime together through a system of rituals and slogans (“lies”), which both the manipulators and

⁶ Ibid.,37.

the manipulated mechanically perform. Havel's analysis, however, does not stop there: the specific situation of post-totalitarian societies that he describes is only one manifestation of a more general crisis of our contemporary technological civilization as a whole. Even in the western "democracies", all the natural relations of people to the world, social and physical environment, working environment, and to one another are equally corrupted, even though through "subtler" and less perceptible manipulation than in the eastern dictatorships: through bureaucracy, propaganda, politicking, business, advertising, consumer manipulation, etc. The West, therefore, does not provide us with a viable alternative to our situation. The way out must be sought in people reclaiming their natural identities and relations so that they can return to their "authentic selves": what is needed is an "existential revolution" [Havel 1978: 126].

In his essay "Politics and Conscience" [Havel 1989: 33-51] Havel explicitly calls his vision "antipolitical politics", a radical alternative to "political politics". Antipolitical politics is not politics as "the technology of power and manipulation, of cybernetic management of people, or as the art of the ends justifying the means, the art of intrigue and behind the scenes manoeuvring", it is rather one of the ways "to seek and to achieve meaning in life, to protect it and to serve it." "Authentic politics (...), the only politics that I am willing to engage in, is simply a service to thy neighbour. Service to the community. Service to the next generations even. Its original source is moral, because it is nothing other than a materialisation of one's responsibility to the universe and for the universe." [Havel 1989:49]. An antipolitical politician, like the greengrocer in "The Power of the Powerless", is required to "live in truth", ie. to act responsibly and authentically, not to seek power for power's sake, and to defend the "natural world", "natural language" and "authentic human identity". Such politics is best achieved not through routinized institutions, formal elections and established political parties but rather through the ongoing civic engagement of citizens and their organizations and representatives ("antipolitical politicians"). Such structures should be "open, dynamic, and small" since "beyond a certain point, human ties like personal trust and personal responsibility cannot work. (...) They would be structures not in the sense of organizations or institutions, but like a community. Their authority certainly cannot be based on long-empty traditions, like the tradition of mass political parties, but rather on how, in concrete terms, they enter into a given situation. Rather than a strategic agglomeration of formalized organizations, it is better to have organizations springing up ad hoc, infused with

enthusiasm for a particular purpose and disappearing when that purpose has been achieved. (...) These structures should naturally arise from below as a consequence of authentic social self-organization; they should derive vital energy from a living dialogue with the genuine needs from which they arise, and when these needs are gone, the structures should also disappear." [Havel 1978: 129-130].

Unlike Benda (and Tesař), Havel extends his analysis to cover the crisis of the whole western civilisation, and he goes deeper - to the individual level. His proposed solution is an existential revolution in each individual which requires him/her to reject the "life within a lie" and embrace a "life in truth". Havel clearly rejected organized advocacy activism as inadequate and treated organized expression of interests with suspicion because of its resemblance of institutional politics.

It is useful to remind ourselves here that all the three concepts sketched above were written at or around the time when Charter 77 was established and, unfortunately, they were not systematically further developed in later years because of the persecution of their authors and because it was so difficult to lead a meaningful critical dialogue under the omnipresent eyes of the secret police. Because of the absence of a serious discussion the isolated dissident groups failed to develop comprehensive theoretical account of civil society or a realistic and feasible action plan that would lead to a political solution to the crisis of the communist totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia in the 1980's; and they thus remained unprepared for the regime change, which finally came in November 1989. The first post-1989 federal Czechoslovak and national Czech governments were populated by the former dissidents but they proved unable to offer to the public a convincing comprehensive policy project that would incorporate the visions of a free democratic civil society that they had dreamed about in the 1980's. On the other hand, there are also other ways how ideas may enter public life and become part of social reality - they may come to underpin the thinking and the activities of opinion leaders, civil society activists and citizens and gradually become part of political culture. In the next part of the paper, we shall look at what has become of the dissidents' dreams twenty years after the Velvet Revolution and how contemporary Czech civil society reflects their visions. The next section of the paper is devoted to the empirical exploration of both levels of civic activities - the organized and the individual.

4. Data and methods

Our empirical data were collected in the framework of an international comparative research project on the embeddedness of civil societies in seven CEE countries ("Has Our Dream Come True? Comparative Research of Central and Eastern European Civil Societies"). The project was focused specifically on the advocacy function of the CEE civil societies, the reason for the focus was twofold: firstly, the original expectations of some of the dissident elites who had expected our societies to become areas where citizens stand for their political rights and interests, organize themselves to express their preferences, thus providing the day-to-day basis of democracy; secondly, the alleged weakness of our civil societies, which might be due to excessive Westernization of the civil society analyses (see above). The concept of embeddedness of civil advocacy became the central notion of the research, and the research focused both on the level of organized civil society and on the level of citizens in an effort to explore their mutual relations and to suggest possible explanations of the current situation and its possible roots. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. In the quantitative part, a telephone survey (N=800) was conducted, in the qualitative part the focus group and interview methods were used. The survey was used in order to find out in which advocacy areas citizens are the most/least involved (either through their support, participation or knowledge). The aim of the qualitative methodology was to get a picture of the embeddedness of advocacy organizations and their campaigns from the perspective of the collective actors. The focus groups were designed to explore the attitudes of the collective actors towards the involvement of citizens. Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the representatives of 31 CSOs. The interviews were connected with the survey through the sampling strategy: the sample was based on the combination of three basic criteria – the advocacy area in which the group was active (groups from the 4 most and the 4 least embedded advocacy areas were invited), territorial focus of the group (15 nationwide and 16 local) and the level of its embeddedness (15 involving citizens and 16 not involving citizens). The interviews were conducted in the course of January 2011.

5. Individual participation in civil advocacy activities

This section aims at the exploration of the activities of Czech citizens and CSOs in various advocacy areas.

First, we turn to the general aspects of public participation in civil advocacy activities among Czech citizens. The general level of participation seems quite high: almost one third of the respondents declared their personal involvement in civic advocacy activities. Even if people are not actively engaged at the moment, they may become involved later. Even though the answers to questions about intended future action may not be very reliable, it may nonetheless indicate some trends. The data on possible future engagement reveal that 13% of the people that are currently not engaged are thinking of future involvement.

In the next step, it is interesting to look in more detail at what the most popular reasons are that people give to explain why they are not engaged in civic advocacy (Table 10). The two most important reasons are consistent with several theories of civic engagement that put an emphasis on the resources that condition participation and which are absent: in the Czech case, these (lacking) resources are time and money. The third most important reason is an attitude towards civic actors and activism as such: it enables us to see one of the signs of general public distrust of (collective) civic actors that we want to explore in the next section.

Table 10: Reasons for non-involvement in civic advocacy activities

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>no time</i>	68,3%	31,7%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
<i>have no money to support them</i>	63,0%	36,3%	0,5%	0,2%	100,0%
<i>solving those problems should be done by other actors, not by civic ones</i>	47,5%	43,4%	9,1%	0,0%	100,0%
<i>I do not believe that civic activism could change anything</i>	34,0%	61,5%	4,5%	0,0%	100,0%
<i>health conditions do not allow me to be active</i>	26,2%	73,8%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
<i>not interested in principle</i>	21,3%	75,3%	3,4%	0,0%	100,0%
<i>I had been active but I got disappointed</i>	19,9%	79,3%	0,8%	0,0%	100,0%

Source: Czech Survey 2010

But what is the structure of citizens' actual involvement? What are the most favourite types of individual involvement? The data suggest that there is an obvious disproportionate preference in citizens' individual participation that partially "neutralizes" the relatively high level of active participation in civil advocacy activities (see Table 11): a vast majority of people that are active in advocacy prefer donation or some other form of loose support

rather than engaging more “directly”, e.g. as a member of an CSO or as a voluntary worker. This helps us explain why so many Czech citizens easily declare themselves to be active in civic advocacy. On the other hand, there is still a decent share of respondents that do voluntary work – unlike membership in CSOs.

Table 11: Forms of personal involvement in civil advocacy activities

	%
<i>donation</i>	89,8
<i>supporter (signing petitions, participating in campaign)</i>	52,4
<i>voluntary work</i>	37,0
<i>chatting, blogging etc.</i>	26,5
<i>member of an CSO</i>	20,3
<i>other (promoting ideas and attitudes)</i>	5,3
<i>don't know</i>	,2

Source: Czech Survey 2010

This general look at the basic structure of citizens’ reported engagement may be further differentiated and detailed if we focus on various issue areas of civil advocacy (see Table 13) and differentiate between the attitudes of citizens towards organized activities in these areas, their perception of organized activities and their own - both real and planned - engagement in these areas.

First, we assess the “attitude dimension”, or the importance of CSOs’ engagement in these areas as perceived by citizens (Q: How important is it that advocacy CSOs should be active in the following areas in your country?). Not surprisingly, the areas where the organized activities are perceived as the most important overlap with humanitarian issues and with the most vulnerable, or tender, social groups – disabled people and children. A reflection of the current political discourse may be found in the massive preference for the anticorruption issue. On the other hand and quite surprisingly, animal and environmental issues – which tend to be over-reported in the mass media - are somewhere in the middle of the list, together with security, education and consumer protection themes. Finally, and again not surprisingly, the least support for organized advocacy activities was expressed for national/ethnic minority rights (presumably tied to the issues of the Roma minority) and LGBT rights (presumably a consequence of a feeling of mission accomplished: registered (civil) same-sex partnership was established in Czech law in 2006).

Table 13: Ranking of advocacy areas according to the importance of CSOs activity, perceived CSO activity, and personal involvement

<i>ranking</i>	<i>Importance of CSO advocacy activities in the area</i>	<i>Perceived activity of civil organizations in the area</i>	<i>Personal involvement in the civil activities in the area - actual or planned</i>
1	rights of children	rights of children	rights of children
2	disabled people's rights	environment	animal rights
3	anti-corruption	national minority rights	disabled people's rights
4	citizens' security	animal rights	environment
5	human and citizens' rights and freedoms	disabled people's rights	human and citizens' rights and freedoms
6	environment	human and citizens' rights and freedoms	citizens' security
7	education, health, social policy	women rights	education, health, social policy
8	consumer protection	education, health, social policy	consumer protection
9	animal rights	international and global issues	women rights
10	women rights	consumer protection	anti-corruption
11	economic policy	citizens' security	international and global issues
12	work of democratic institutions	LGBT rights	work of democratic institutions
13	international and global issues	work of democratic institutions	economic policy
14	national minority rights	economic policy	LGBT rights
15	LGBT rights	anti-corruption	national minority rights

Source: Czech Survey 2010

The next – cognitive - dimension of embeddedness of advocacy areas covers the perceived activity of CSOs in particular areas (Q: How active are CSOs in your country in the following advocacy areas?). The data reveal several aspects of how citizens relate the importance of CSO activity and its perception. It seems that the rights of children are perceived as well covered by CSOs. But many other issue areas where the importance of collective activism is deemed very high are thought to be neglected by CSOs - or, CSOs are believed to devote too much effort to issue areas that are not important. In other words, their activities may be perceived as wasted on low-priority areas and, as a result, in short supply in high-priority areas. This is the case of environment, national minority rights, animal rights etc.

Finally, the third dimension - i.e. both the real and the planned personal involvement in various advocacy areas - is consistent with the preceding lists in a particular way. There are basically two key patterns here: first, the rights of children is still the most important issue area, which is consistent with the previous stance. But otherwise it seems that the ranking of the advocacy areas follows the priorities in the perceived need of CSOs' involvement rather than the perceived actual activities of CSOs.

It is therefore quite obvious that citizens perceive the activities of organized civic actors as inconsistent with their own opinion of the needs for coordinated action in particular advocacy areas and with their own individual engagement. First, there are areas (disabled people rights, anti-corruption, and citizens security above all) that are a) perceived as important, b) evaluated to be relatively insufficiently covered by CSOs and (therefore?) c) people (report that they) engage in these areas. On the other hand, there are areas (environment, women's rights, national minority rights, LGBT rights above all) that are a) perceived as not so important, b) evaluated to be relatively sufficiently covered by CSOs and (therefore?) c) people (report that they) do not engage in these areas. Consequently, there may be two possible mechanisms operating behind the scene: first, people have their own preferences in the importance of various issues and they try to follow them in their individual engagement in civil society (and thus compensate for the different focus by CSOs), or, citizens evaluate the extent of the actual activity of organized collective actors and then avoid their own engagement in the areas where the activity of CSOs is believed to be high enough. Be it one or the other option, this is an important signal of a distance between individual citizens and organized civil society actors (with the only exception of the area of the rights of children).

6. Social embeddedness of organizations

After the overview of the activities and the preferences of Czech citizens towards collective agents of civic advocacy activities, we make a step further and explore the organizational level of civic activities and the strategies of CSOs towards the citizens.

To analyse the level of embeddedness of collective civic advocacy, we focus first on the actual involvement of citizens and the forms of such involvement in 31 CSOs from the 4 most embedded (17 organizations) and the 4 least embedded (14 organizations) advocacy areas (and both nominally open and closed to citizens, and both local and nationwide). We then compare the attributes and strategies of these two groups of CSOs and their campaigns.

One of the most important indicators of how much CSOs are willing to integrate citizens into their structures and activities is the institution of membership: there are elite, closed and professionalized CSOs, but also grass-roots and community oriented groups. So

what is the situation in our sample? And how does it relate to the most/least embedded advocacy issue areas cleavage?

Table 18: Types of individual membership of CSOs and their distribution

	<i>formal</i>	<i>informal</i>	<i>none</i>	<i>total</i>
<i>CSOs from most embedded AAs</i>	13	4	1	18*
<i>CSOS from least embedded AAs</i>	7	2	5	14

* One CSO reported both types of membership – both formal and informal

Source: Czech SMO Interviews 2010

Our data suggest that organizations in the most embedded areas of advocacy are slightly more likely to be based on (individual) membership than the others (see Table 18): even the informal membership, which is usually more exclusive than the formal one, is often found there. What are the reasons? Some organizations argue that their legal form does not enable them to have formal membership. In other words, these organizations were founded and officially registered without the intention to have members (one CSO from the most embedded advocacy areas and three from the least embedded). Another type of reasoning ignored the problem of the legal form of the organization and openly stated that the aim of the organization from the very beginning was not to have members, but to provide people with education or information.

Membership-based CSOs had various criteria for accepting new members: there were formal, informal or no criteria. Most often, some formal criteria for membership were applied (see Table 19).

Table 19: Types of membership criteria and their distribution

	<i>formal</i>	<i>informal</i>	<i>none</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>total</i>
<i>CSOs from most embedded AAs</i>	8	2	5	2	17
<i>CSOS from least embedded AAs</i>	8	0	1	5	14

Source: Czech SMO Interviews 2010

Formal criteria of membership are very similar throughout the sample: these are typically membership fees, identification with the purpose and the constitution of the

organization, or age. Only one national minority organization conditioned the membership by formal membership in a (Jewish) religious community.

After a brief overview of the formal aspects of membership, we look at how the CSOs expressed their attitude to involving new members: 7 CSOs from the most embedded issue areas expressed willingness to seek new members, while 9 CSOs denied this effort. On the other hand, 6 CSOs from the least embedded issue areas claimed they were looking for new members, while 3 opposed it. One of the important aspects of CSOs' openness to new people is their strategies for attracting new members. CSOs from the most embedded areas usually try to find new people through public action and the media (campaigns, recruitment at their events, and dialogue with supporters); while the CSOs from the least embedded issue areas tend to rely on the recommendation from existing members or from the leaders of the organization, or through informal contacts among friends and cooperating organizations.

Apart from the strategies for involving new people as members, there are other aspects of embeddedness of CSOs, or, their openness towards the citizens. One of them is the extent to which other people than members, employees or volunteers are allowed to participate in the annual meetings of the groups and organizations. In the case of organizations from the most embedded areas, 12 out of 17 organizations require that only members, employees or invited guests may participate, while the annual meetings of the other 5 CSOs are open to anybody. In the case of the 14 least embedded CSOs, just one organization admits that they invite people from outside the organization, but only on the condition of being approved in advance by the members of the organization.

The strategies of the civic organizations were somewhat more balanced in the case of formulation of their goals, which is one of the most important strategic activities: 4 of the 17 most embedded CSOs declared the possibility for the public to have influence on the shaping of their strategies, while the same was stated by 3 of the 14 least embedded groups. But what is the precise inner structure of these strategies? What type of stakeholder is more restricted from participation in the formulation of collective civic actors' strategies? What type of stakeholder do CSOs listen to? Basically, the priorities of CSOs in both types of the advocacy areas are the same: not surprisingly, the most welcomed were the opinions of employees. The second most important class of opinion-maker were cooperating CSOs, closely followed by members and experts. It was only here where the general public came

into play, followed by the donors (most embedded areas) and the community (least embedded areas). Finally, and not surprisingly, the least favourite stakeholder to be included into the process of strategy formulation of the group were politicians.

We may assess the openness of CSOs towards their environment also through the comparison of the extent to which various categories of stakeholder and the public and various subjects are involved in the process of preparation of campaigns and projects. We build our comparison upon the same categories of subjects as in the case of the involvement of the public in the formulation of CSOs' goals. Within the first group (the most embedded advocacy areas), the most important are – again - the employees of the organization, which seems quite obvious. And again, the next most important factor for these groups was their collective partners and counterparts – cooperating CSOs, closely followed by members, while experts had the same ranking as the public. These were followed by donors, the community and, finally, politicians. Nonetheless, the ranking within the second group of CSOs was somewhat different: the most important companions in the process of preparing projects and campaigns were the cooperating groups, followed by employees and members. The next important partner was the public, which preceded the experts and the community. The least favourite ones were the donors and the politicians, rated equally badly.

Apart from including citizens in the process of the formulation of goals and strategies and in the preparation of projects and campaigns, we also explored what emphasis CSOs put on their contact with a narrower social group that may provide them with some correctives of their activities – their sympathizers. Generally, however, this type of contact of advocacy organizations with their close environment mostly had a unilateral form of information for their followers (if any contact happened at all) through the “classic” media such as newsletters, magazines, mailing lists (10 of the 17 CSOs from the most embedded areas, and 7 of the 14 CSOs from the least embedded areas). The rest of the organizations declared more “direct” and interactive exchange of information and opinion with their sympathizers via social networks, face-to-face meetings, phone, or public discussions and events. As far as the periodicity of these activities was concerned, these were usually held several times a year (9 of the 17 groups from the most embedded areas); and several times a month (9 of the 14 groups from the least embedded advocacy fields). It seems that even the sympathetic public is quite restricted from direct access and communication with advocacy CSOs.

We have mentioned two important parts of organized advocacy activities and campaigns: including people in their structures and in the process of formulating their goals. However there is one more important moment that needs be stressed: the process of evaluation of the advocacy activities. How do the civil society actors obtain feedback about their advocacy efforts? How do they evaluate their campaigns? Here the role of the public is similar to that in the process of formulating the goals of CSOs: only 9 organizations (4 from the most and 5 from the least embedded areas) mentioned that they try to get some feedback from the broader public via questionnaires or even research, or from direct recipients of their activities (participants in the events, seminars etc.). The rest of the organizations are more inwardly focused: their evaluation is based on inter-organizational discussions, on the feedback from cooperating CSOs, or on the reflections from relevant elites (donors, politicians).

So, in conclusion, how do CSOs – according to their own words - incorporate people into their activities? The groups from the most embedded areas declare that their goal is to try to have an impact on the public rather than to involve the public into their campaigns: citizens tend to only be involved locally and in the form of some logistical support (volunteering during events, help with the promotion of actions and campaigns, distribution of leaflets, spreading the information, help with collecting signatures for petitions, organizing camps, translating materials, or performing some minor tasks within the organization). CSOs from the least embedded areas enable people to get closer to their activities: they use the public as a source of information, use them as experts, tutors, include them in the cooperation on particular issues, enable them to focus on problems of their own in the framework of the activities of the organization. At the same time, a small part of these groups also use people as logistical support during petitions, as help with the organization of events and happenings etc. So there seems to be a slight difference between these two groups of organizations – the former treats citizens more instrumentally and enables them to participate on the periphery of their activities, while the latter lets them get closer to the decision-making and provides them with a certain degree of autonomy.

We may make several generalizations out of this overview: generally, CSOs take a very practical stance in the development of their goals, activities and strategies as they privilege the subjects that may be coordinated most easily – employees, cooperating groups, members. Our structured comparison reveals that there are hardly any significant

differences between the organizations from the most and from the least embedded advocacy areas: both sets of CSOs are based on membership (though the CSOs from the most embedded advocacy areas somewhat more) and both prefer formal membership to informal; they also prefer formal criteria for membership to other types of criteria. This indicates that their inner procedures follow fairly rigid rules and written regulations. Also the willingness to recruit new members is relatively balanced between the two sets of CSOs - even though the groups from the most embedded areas are less interested in the enlargement of their membership base; there are also some differences in the methods of recruitment. Both sets are similar in their attitude to inviting people from outside to their annual meetings. The comparative analysis of the preferences for the inclusion of various subjects/publics/stakeholders in the process of formulating goals and in the preparation of projects and campaigns reveals that CSOs clearly prefer relying on their employees, members and cooperating groups to opening their deliberations to external experts or the public.

7. Patterns of alienation: mutual attitudes of citizens and CSOs

Following on the preceding sections, which showed a considerable gap between organized and individual participation, we now focus on understanding the motives and attitudes of both sides of the gap. We will first deal with the citizens' attitudes to, and opinions of, CSOs.

The first dimension to be explored is the trust of individual citizens in the ability of CSOs to deal with the problems in the respective issue areas. Our data show that civil society organizations are widely perceived as capable of solving important issues of Czech society (78%). Moreover, the view that CSOs do not focus on the problems which citizens encounter does not seem to be prevalent (28 %).

On the other hand, it seems that general trust in civil society organizations as social institutions is a problem. CSOs are ranked very low compared to other social and political institutions. Our findings confirm the ambiguous and mostly negative attitudes towards CSOs, which thus resemble the attitude to the least trusted area of Czech public life – the political institutions. It seems that there is a considerable lack of trust in Czech civic and political society actors, people only trust their closest social environment – i.e. their family and friends. The most trusted public institutions are the police and the local authority: Czech

citizens seem to refuse the intermediary level of civil society organizations when solving their problems and tend to rely either on personal ties or on direct communication and negotiations with appropriate bodies that are closest to their locality.

Table 12: Probability of contacting following subject in case of any problems

	<i>likely</i>	<i>neither, nor</i>	<i>not likely</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>family</i>	85,8%	7,3%	6,5%	0,1%	0,2%	100,0%
<i>friends</i>	69,8%	19,6%	9,9%	0,4%	0,2%	100,0%
<i>none, I try to solve it myself</i>	60,2%	18,7%	20,0%	0,8%	0,2%	100,0%
<i>the police</i>	53,7%	28,2%	17,5%	0,4%	0,2%	100,0%
<i>local authority</i>	43,4%	28,3%	27,6%	0,5%	0,2%	100,0%
<i>colleagues at work</i>	34,7%	29,1%	28,6%	6,2%	1,4%	100,0%
<i>local government representative</i>	31,0%	29,1%	38,8%	0,9%	0,2%	100,0%
<i>media</i>	21,7%	22,7%	55,0%	0,4%	0,2%	100,0%
<i>MEP and the European Parliament ombudsman/ EU institutions</i>	16,7%	14,6%	67,1%	1,4%	0,2%	100,0%
<i>civil society organization</i>	15,9%	28,4%	53,9%	1,6%	0,2%	100,0%
<i>government agency (ministry)</i>	11,9%	21,3%	65,1%	1,6%	0,2%	100,0%
<i>member of parliament</i>	9,6%	15,0%	74,5%	0,6%	0,2%	100,0%
<i>church community</i>	8,8%	9,2%	80,3%	1,5%	0,2%	100,0%

Source: Czech Survey 2010

Another aspect of the distrust of citizens towards CSO was revealed when respondents expressed their attitudes towards CSOs themselves. This more detailed inquiry into the citizens' view of CSOs finally introduces a more nuanced picture of the attitudes of citizens towards CSOs: almost two-thirds of the respondents are persuaded that CSOs do not represent civic interests, and more than a half of them think that they are not effective, are too tied to political parties and do not deal with important issues. Namely the last opinion again confirms our hypothesis of the "mechanisms" operating behind the scenes.

Table 17: Attitudes towards CSOs

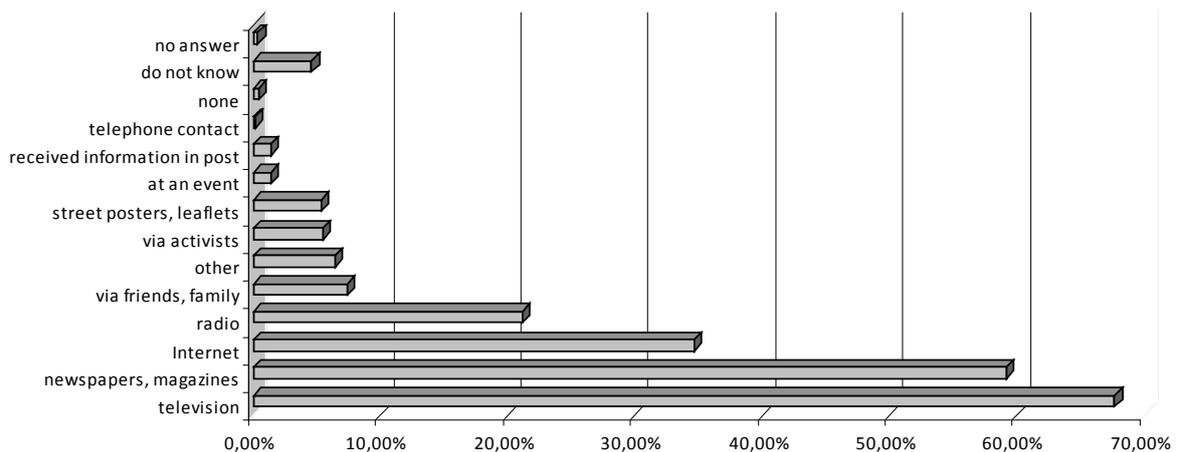
	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>total</i>
<i>I think that they represent business interests, not civic ones</i>	57,6%	31,3%	11,1%	100,0%
<i>I don't think these organizations are effective</i>	56,4%	25,9%	17,7%	100,0%
<i>I think these organizations are vehicles of political parties</i>	53,0%	36,1%	11,0%	100,0%
<i>I don't think they deal with problems that are really important</i>	52,3%	39,4%	8,3%	100,0%

<i>I think these organizations concentrate on their own financial benefits</i>	45,2%	44,5%	10,3%	100,0%
<i>I do not know anything about the activities of the CSOs</i>	39,1%	58,6%	2,3%	100,0%
<i>They represent foreign interests</i>	26,9%	58,4%	14,6%	100,0%

Source: Czech Survey 2010

An important aspect of the relation of citizens to CSOs that defines their mutual distance is communication - be it direct transfer of information and knowledge, or mass-produced pictures of CSOs that are offered to citizens by the media. This is one of the systemic features of opinions of citizens towards CSOs. Now we explore the most influential ways how people become acquainted with the collective civic actors, their events and activities. The data (Figure 5) offer a predictable picture: the most influential media are television, newspapers and the Internet, the least relevant means of getting information about CSOs are the telephone, the post or direct communication at events or from activists.

Figure 5: Channels of information about CSOs and their activities



Source: Czech Survey 2010

Based on our previous considerations and the presentation of the survey data, we can make some concluding remarks about the attitudes of Czech citizens towards collective civic actors and the main reasons for the apparent distance of citizens that they express towards organized civic action. The data suggest that people simply do not trust CSOs and perceive them as being too tied to politics (which, in the Czech case, equals to an unforgivable sin) or business, and as not reflecting their problems very well. Furthermore, there is also the issue of perceived effectiveness of CSOs: even if they are considered capable of solving problems in particular areas, their activities are believed to be ineffective. The question remains

whether and to what extent this distance of citizens towards the CSOs can be explained by the sort of reporting that citizens receive about CSOs and their activities from the media – above all television, newspapers, and the Internet.

Now we shall consider the attitudes of CSO representatives towards citizens and their engagement in collective civic activities. In the preceding empirical part, we compared several types of subject with regard to the extent to which their opinions are reflected in the formulation of goals and strategies of advocacy organizations. But how do CSOs and their representatives perceive citizens? Are they seen as active contributors to collective advocacy activities or as recipients and end-users of these activities? Are they considered to be a resource or a target for the organizations' activities? Both groups from the most and from the least embedded issue areas of civil advocacy have remarkably similar attitudes: 13 of the 17 CSOs and 10 of the 14 CSOs respectively see citizens as a target of their advocacy activities; the rest of them see the role of citizens as more balanced – either both as a resource and the target or just as a primary source of inspiration and rationale for their activities. This trend of treating citizens as a target rather than a resource group of advocacy activities is clearly noticeable also in the process of agenda setting: 12 of the 17 CSOs from the most embedded advocacy areas choose their issues in response to circumstances but they do not directly consult citizens: they are inspired by the experts in the field, they consult their fellow organizations, their members, employees or managers; sometimes they state that they have long-term goals that do not change, or that they just follow the principles and the statutes of their organization. 10 of the 14 CSOs from the least embedded areas predominantly followed those issues and cases for which they had acquired funding and/or for which funding was available from national or supranational institutions; they also followed the advice of experts, members or cooperating groups; sometimes they even asked politicians. The remaining organizations declared that citizens might be – among many other subjects – a source of their agenda setting. To conclude, a large majority of CSOs see citizens as a social group that may benefit from their advocacy activities, but they do not respect them as originators of these activities: sometimes, citizens are perceived as patients that have to be cured but are not consulted about the disease.

The different ways of treating citizens (as depicted also in preceding section) are likely to be based on slightly different reasons: What are they? Why is there such a distance and scepticism towards engaging, communicating and cooperating with the general public?

The first set of CSOs' arguments is basically that people are generally not interested in the work of CSOs, and particularly in actively working for them. These organizations feel that there is considerable distrust of the non-profit sector and that (Czech) society has been developing towards selfish individualism; that people are too busy, and that it is too demanding and expensive to win them and to make them actively interested in public issues generally and/or the particular issue that their organization deals with. Representatives of CSOs complain about the unwillingness of people to participate in public affairs. They attribute it to a number of various reasons stemming from Czech political culture: ignorance, lack of interest and motivation, laziness, passivity, pessimism about the abilities of CSOs to influence things, and the bad image that they believe the whole non-profit sector has due to negative campaigning by the political elites:

I definitely don't think (...) that the mentality of the Czechs ... even though I hate it when someone speaks about Czech national characteristics ... that the mentality is somehow shaped ... and if you can expect that some wave or some social movement for something would emerge and be successful in the United States, it does not necessarily mean that it takes root here because the Czechs are not used to getting involved that much and I think it is necessary to keep that in mind (...).

Source: Focus Group Interviews (representative of the CSO from the least embedded advocacy area)

Another set of reasons refers to the "expert knowledge" of CSOs and the highly detailed focus of the organizations: in other words, citizens do not possess the education and the expert knowledge that is necessary to understand the nature of the problems the CSOs deal with, and consequently are unable to participate in their solution. The CSOs complain that people have insufficient information, are prejudiced against CSOs in the particular area that they are active in, and that they are far too much oriented towards "populist" solutions to problems. Complaint of a similar type consists of defining the target groups of CSOs: sometimes the primary target of the CSOs - namely in the environmental sector - lies outside society and consequently there is no need to enter into a dialogue with any social groups and citizens:

"I was thinking ... as you asked who formulated [the goals] ... if the advocacy issue is environmental protection ... it is - among others - about articulating the interests of nature ... let's say ... which means that people that formulate the goals often speak in the interests of the environment and not of a particular target

group... of course that metaphorically speaking the target group is the population as a whole, whose being is conditioned by the existence of a functional ecosystem ... which means that there is no such things as a specified target group that could be addressed ... which means that ... I really know that those people [environmentalists] are systematically observing public attitudes towards particular problematic issues in the area of environment but of course there is no direct demand ... simply because ... there is always someone speaking on behalf of nature and basically this is one of the roles of the environmental CSOs: that they articulate the interest of nature in the public discourse."

Source: Focus Group Interviews (representative of the CSO from the most embedded advocacy area)

Another argument that is used by CSOs' representatives is similar but instead of expert knowledge it builds upon the claim of universality and autonomy. CSO leaders are suspicious of politicians and, to a degree, of donors, as the spheres of politics and economy are usually seen as threats to the independence and objectivity of CSOs. Therefore, the distance of some CSOs towards citizens might be also due to the fact that civil advocacy organizations usually raise more universal issues than immediate community/business/policymaking interests. Therefore there is quite a clear sense of uneasiness of some CSOs towards the influence of donors on CSO activities:

"What I lack ... and I've actually been the leader of the CSO for a year and a half ... is the ability within the advocacy area and within the organization to choose the goals, the campaigns and the directions without restraints ... which I think ... the way that we are funded and project-oriented ... we lack the freedom to do so."

Source: Focus Group Interviews (representative of the CSO from the least embedded advocacy area)

Last but not least, we should not ignore the question of resources, which is frequently explored in the studies of transactional activism [Čísař 2008; Čísař, Navrátil 2012]: despite the fact that the organization-donor relationship (or even dependence) is usually downplayed by the civil society actors, the role of resources still seems highly relevant for their relationship with the citizens:

"I would say that we focus more on the authorities, not on people ... because if you want to work somehow, you have to get the money ... you can only get the money from Europe, or from the government, or from the regional government, or from the city or local government ... so for us it is important to get the money and with the money I can realize my agenda ... I can do almost nothing without the money ... and it is the authorities that decide on the distribution of the money, not people ..."

Source: Focus Group Interviews (representative of the CSO from the least embedded advocacy area)

Conclusions

The paper addressed three interrelated problems. First, it attempted to define two ways of how to theorize and analyse civil society - through the organized and collective entities, or through the participation of individuals. It suggested that this dichotomy had also been present in the best-known Czech dissident analyses of civil society: while the organized activities and politically structured civic action were supported in the works of Václav Benda and Jan Tesař, the most prominent representative of anticommunist opposition – Václav Havel - proposed ethical and individualized way of establishing and forming civic activities and expressed suspicion of the sphere of politics and of organizations.

The empirical results of our study show that the tension between the individual and the collective/organized is also empirically observable in contemporary Czech civil society. We observed a clear distance of citizens towards practical (pro-)active engagement in CSOs' activities and a tendency on the side of the CSOs to ignore the citizens and to rely on technical expertise and their employees in fulfilling their missions. Both the citizens and the CSOs are active but they do not connect very well. The CSOs thus fail to perform the role of the intermediary between the individual and politics, and the citizens as a rule do not make use of CSOs when they encounter a societal problem.

In an attempt to explore the motives of this separation, we turned to the attitudes and opinions of both citizens and CSOs (CSO representatives) to one another. We discovered similar cultural patterns that were discernible in the works of Czech dissident writers nearly forty years before: citizens display considerable distrust of organized civil society actors in that they rank them (negatively) next to political institutions and they do not think that CSOs represent civic interests but business ones; they easily identify themselves with charitable, social, humanitarian and health issues, but are far from any organized engagement there. On the other side of the gap, civil society organizations seem quite happy with such an arrangement. They welcome financial support, but not demands by, or even conversation with, the public. CSO representatives share four main types of excuse when they explain why they are not keen to engage people in their activities and keep CSO activities separate from the community: first, they doubt that Czech citizens are interested in civic activism at all, second, they argue that CSO represent expert knowledge that simply cannot be generated from people's opinions, third, they claim to represent much wider or long-term interests

than is the immediate interest of the community, and fourth, in an attempt to achieve their goals, CSOs must rely more on their contacts with authorities and institutions to get adequate economic resources for action.

It therefore seems that some patterns of a political culture that were articulated forty years ago are still alive and well and factually shape the contemporary face of Czech civil society: while the attitudes of citizens basically reflect the principles of anti-political politics, CSOs and their leaders profess a more instrumental - political - relation towards the community which - as they believe - will help them to be more successful in challenging the authorities and the state.

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