Civil Society Organizations in Central and Eastern European Countries: Introduction and Terminology

1. Introduction

2004 has been a decisive year for Europe. With the expansion of the European Union to incorporate the Central and Eastern European countries, the Union has taken on a new dimension that opens major opportunities. For too long, the so-called Iron Curtain cut off the Central and Eastern European countries from the dynamics and the societal developments in the West. At the same time, Central and Eastern Europe was robbed of its cultural cohesion. All this has come to an end. What always belonged together has been brought together again. The successful future of Central and Eastern Europe’s communities is based on a dynamic civil society from which emanates a decisive impulse for empowerment, democracy, cultural exchange, and mutual understanding.

The broad organizational spectrum of civil society is the focus of this handbook, whose objective is to provide practical know-how for lecturers, students, staff, and volunteers of civil society organizations. Against this background, the handbook distinguishes between the normative and the down-to-earth understanding of the term civil society. As a term of political theory and political philosophy (Klein, 2001), civil society stands for a political program, indeed a political utopia toward which democracies are struggling to develop. In its down-to-earth understanding, the term civil society is closely linked with the broad spectrum of organizations that – belonging to neither the market nor the state – constitute the infrastructure and organizational bedrock of democratic societies (Kocka, 2002; Salamon et al., 1999).

The practical and down-to-earth use of the term civil society is most prominent in the publications of the European Commission, which defines this broad organizational spectrum of democratic societies as “organized civil society”. According to the Commission’s White Paper “European Governance” (2001), organized civil society is of utmost importance for the further development of democracy and the well-being of citizens because it gives voice to the citizenry while at the same time providing goods and services particularly for those members of society who do not belong to the
well-to-do. There are several reasons why the European Commission put a high emphasis on the strengthening and further development of organized civil society in the Central and Eastern European countries as the enlargement of the European Union was approaching. First and foremost, organized civil society offers avenues for civic engagement and active citizenship, thus facilitating integration and participation for the individual citizen, both of which are necessary prerequisites for the deepening and strengthening of democracy. Moreover, organized civil society is in the position to satisfy those needs and demands of citizens that neither the market nor the state is able or willing to serve. And finally organized civil society is able to buffer those societal shocks and upheavals that always accompany processes of political, economic and societal transition and modernization (Economic and Social Committee, 1999).

And indeed, the countries and societies in Central and Eastern Europe are still passing through a period of rapid political and economic change and societal transformation. Civil society organizations are active actors in this transformation process and important partners of the state and the market. However, societal and political modernization is not restricted to the countries of the former Eastern bloc. The same holds true for Western European communities, particularly for those countries like Austria and Germany that, before the crumbling of the Berlin Wall, were characterized as “young democracies” since they had gained a foothold in the Western democratic world only after the Second World War. Germany’s and Austria’s organized civil societies have many features in common. Both share the tradition of subsidiarity as a metaphor for the close cooperation between civil society organizations and government entities. In both countries civil society organizations are primarily funded by government. Currently, against the background of decreasing public support, Germany’s and Austria’s civil society organizations are struggling for alternative funding and increased civic support (see the country profiles).

Although there are still significant differences between Western and Eastern Europe, the Central European organized civil societies have many features in common because they share a heritage of societal organization and civic engagement. This is particularly true for Austria, Germany and the four Visegrád countries, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which in the Middle Ages were all part of the Holy Roman Empire. With respect to legal traditions, civic attitudes and societal engagement, there is no doubt that in the Visegrád countries the legacy of the former Austrian Empire is still in place. To a certain extent traditions and attitudes towards civic engagement rooted in former Prussia and the German Empire are also still noticeable in the countries that are covered in this handbook. The organized civil societies of the countries under study - Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, respectively - also share some of
the very negative features of Central European history. There is no doubt that
centrism in its most nasty expression as National Socialism was most strongly
in place in Germany. However, at the beginning of the last century, fascist
ideology had many supporters in Austria and the later Visegrad countries.
Indeed in the 1930s, with the exception of the Czech Republic, the countries
covered in this handbook were all ruled by either fascist or authoritarian
regimes (see the chapter by Szabó in this volume). Democracy is indeed a
very recent development in Central and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, it
should not be forgotten while studying the organized civil societies of these
countries that in addition to Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and
Slovakia, also a large part of Germany belonged up until about two decades
ago to the so-called Eastern bloc. In other words, the Central and Eastern
European countries share a heritage that does not work unambiguously in
favor of a strengthening and deepening of civil society and a strong
democracy. However, at the same time, strong civil societies and active
citizenship constitute the prerequisites for a European Union, which, with
respect to citizen participation and civic engagement, tries to become a role
model for other countries and communities around the world.

Strong and societally embedded, organized civil societies represent an
important element of the further integration of the European Community.
There is no doubt that civil society in its practical, down-to-earth meaning
provides an important feature for a bottom-up approach toward democracy,
mutilar understanding, and societal integration. Since Almond and Verba’s
seminal study “Civic Culture” (1963), it is known that civil society
organizations are an essential basis for the education, deepening, and further
development of democracy as well as of cultural unity. It is not a coincidence
that these organizations are dubbed the “social glue” that holds society
together. According to Almond/Verba and other social scientists working in
the tradition of political sociology and political culture research, these
organizations are responsible for both types of societal integration. They
provide avenues for the individual integration of each citizen into society as
such; at the same time they are responsible for systemic integration, which
translates into the integration of the various societal communities into the
political and cultural system of a respective country, a region or most
prominently the European Union. Civil society organizations are able to
fulfill these tasks because they are primarily ruled by norms and values. In
modern societies they constitute the necessary counterbalance to tendencies
of individualization and increasing hedonism, as they are organizations
without the aim to gain power or to make profits.

Besides being a transmission belt for civic and societal integration, civil
society organizations fulfill an additional function as providers of social
services. According to Amitai Etzioni (1973), these organizations are of
special interest for political scientists as well as for public administrators due
to the fact that they are able to combine the positive sides of the market and the state because, as private entities, they are working as efficiently as business enterprises. However, they are not serving the needs of their owners or shareholders but those of the community and the needy. Furthermore, civil society organizations are able to compensate failures either of the market or the state or of both sectors. Thus, the work of these organizations can always be recognized in areas where neither the market nor the state is able or wants to act in the public interest and for the public welfare, and therefore does not provide certain goods and services.

Despite their outstanding importance for societal integration, deepening and strengthening of democracy, and – last but not least – for the provision of social services, up until now there is very little knowledge available about these organizations, their specific problems and potentials, as well as their internal management procedures and functioning. The reason for this striking lack of expertise is twofold: First, up until recently social sciences, while searching for applicable approaches to address the problems of our time, have focused exclusively either on the state or on the market as the avenues for societal and economic improvement. However, both the state and the market have not been able to live up to their promises. Only recently researchers and political experts have started to discover and acknowledge organized civil society as an important problem solver. Second, due to the fact that neither politicians nor social scientists took an interest in civil society organizations, they constitute a significantly underdeveloped area of research. At the same time, civil society organizations are very difficult subjects to investigate because they are deeply embedded in the specific historical, legal, and societal traditions of the various societies. They do not constitute “an island of meaning,” but, on the contrary, each society or community while referring to civil society organizations uses a different terminology with which very different cognitive maps and metaphors of civic activity are linked. Therefore, in the following section the terminology that is used in this handbook will be explained in more detail. Since the terminology of the handbook is closely linked to the achievements of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, the set-up of the project and its main results will also briefly be summarized. Finally, the audience to which the handbook is addressed will be specified and the organization of the volume outlined.

2. Terminology

Structuring the universe of civil society organizations is not an easy task. There are numerous typologies (Schuppert, 1991; see for an overview
Salamon/Anheier, 1992a; 1992b), which attempt to put in order the broad spectrum of civil society organizations. Drawing on the seminal work of Charles Handy (1988), Christoph Sachße worked out a typology that, based on a functional approach, takes specifically into account how the organizations are achieving their aims and goals (See Sachße, 2004). As a member of the German team of the focs project, Christoph Sachße illustrates the typology by referring to German civil society organizations. 1

According to his line of argumentation, there must be differentiation between the terms “civil society” and “nonprofit sector.” As already outlined, civil society is related to a normative concept, i.e., to “a society shaped by a new civic culture of citizen’s self-responsibility, voluntary engagement, and political participation” (Sachße, 2004). The term nonprofit refers to the so-called non-distribution constraint, which means that those organizations that constitute the “nonprofit sector” are not allowed to distribute their profits among members, owners or stakeholders; to the contrary, any monetary gain has to be reinvested in order to support the mission and particular purpose of the respective nonprofit organization. According to Sachße and other scholars (Kocka, 2002; Anheier et al., 2001), the nonprofit sector is closely related to the organizational underpinning of civil societies. In the words of Christoph Sachße (2004): “The ‘nonprofit sector’ plays a key role within that concept of civil society with nonprofit organizations providing the social infrastructure for the realization of citizen participation and voluntary engagement”. Accordingly, the nonprofit sector consists of “a wide variety of organizations largely differing in form, function, and purpose” (Sachße, 2004). Focusing on how nonprofit organizations are achieving their aims, Sachße’s typology differentiates the nonprofit universe in membership organizations, interest organizations, service organizations, and support organizations. Referring to the day-today routines of nonprofits, he further distinguishes these four organizational types:

Membership organizations are shaped by the voluntary activities of their members. Reciprocal activities of the members themselves are the key element of that particular type of organization. Examples are hiking, sports, or bowling clubs, which – among many other kinds of clubs – are very popular worldwide (for Germany, see Zimmer, 1998). They practice socially useful virtues and attitudes just through the particular organizational form of their activities independent of the specific aims and purposes they pursue. They provide important mechanisms for the creation of what Robert Putnam has named “social capital”: “In the first place, networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust. Such networks facilitate coordination and communication,

1 The typology was originally developed in an expertise for the Bertelsmann Foundation (Sachße, 2001). A slightly modified English version is to be found in: focs-CD (Sachße, 2004).
amplify reputations, and thus allow dilemmas of collective action to be resolved” (Putnam, 1993: 67; see also Putnam, 1995; Offe, 1999; Heinze/Olk, 1999). Membership organizations, thus, can be understood as “schools of democracy” (Cohen/Rogers, 1994: 152). Their social usefulness is a result not so much of what they are doing but rather of how they do it. Interest, service, or support organizations may also have members. But membership is not at the center of the organization’s activities. By contrast, those types of organizations typically act – at least in part – through professional personnel. They are characterized by the nature of the particular purpose they pursue, rather than simply the form of their activity.²

“Interest organizations represent and promote interests and values of either particular groups or society as whole, such as minority groups, environmental groups or human rights organizations. They protect nature and environment; they promote health, culture, and religion, or science and education through articulation and lobbying activities – sometimes more spectacular, sometimes less.” Amnesty International and Greenpeace are textbook examples for the type of organization addressed here.

Service organizations provide services either for their members or for a broader spectrum of clients. They run kindergartens for pre-school children, homes for the elderly, hospitals and shelters. They rescue people in peril in the mountains or at sea. The German welfare associations (see German country profile), which account for the majority of social services in Germany as well as the broad spectrum of relief organizations - national and international - may serve as an example here.

Support organizations provide the financial, human, or technical resources to assist the needy or to enable certain activities or projects. They finance research. They financially support the poor. They promote education and culture by contributing to schools, universities, opera houses, and symphony orchestras. The big philanthropic, scientific, and cultural foundations provide good examples for that type of nonprofit organization” (Sachße, 2004).

There is no doubt that many handbooks of nonprofit organizations focus exclusively on service organizations. There are good reasons for not taking the whole spectrum of civil society organizations into account, since from an economic point of view, service organizations constitute the most significant force of the nonprofit sector. However, the team of the focs project consciously decided against this restrictive approach. It should not be forgotten that, in the Visegrad countries, particularly interest and membership organizations acted as key players in the transition process from

² Membership organizations on the one side can thus be opposed to interest organizations on the other.

³ Albert Hirschman (1970) has coined the term “voice” to characterize that particular type of activity.
Introduction and Terminology

authoritarian rule to democracy. Furthermore, as the work of Almond/Verba and others clearly shows, democracy has to be built up from below, and, without any doubt, providing avenues for societal participation and integration constitutes a major task of interest and membership organizations and not primarily of service organizations. Accordingly the focs team decided to broaden the focus of analysis, thus considering interest and membership organizations just as service organizations.

The typology developed by Christoph Sachße is particularly helpful when specific management problems of nonprofits have to be tackled. Compared to membership organizations, highly professionalized service organizations require a different management approach when it comes to the recruitment of personnel or board members. The same holds true for financing. In accordance with the “core functions” of the respective organization, the strategy for safeguarding its financial well-being differs significantly among the aforementioned organizational types. While membership organizations are primarily financed by membership dues, interest organizations have to put a high emphasis on fundraising, and service organizations are either increasingly turning to the market in order to sell their service for profit or they are competing for government grants.

Nevertheless, this typology has also shortcomings, which are very much linked to the very special character or specificity of nonprofit or civil society organizations. In a nutshell, there are only very few nonprofit organizations that limit their range of activities to just one “core function” such as providing services or giving special interests a voice. In his further argumentation, Christoph Sachße clearly outlined, “The distinction of different types of nonprofit organizations provides an analytical differentiation, not an empirical description of the nonprofit sector” (Sachße, 2004). More specifically, Sachße explained that “‘pure-type organizations’ are exceptions. Nonprofit organizations typically are ‘mixed-type’ organizations. Membership organizations provide services for their members or even larger strata of the population. Service organizations promote membership interests and values. Interest organizations organize membership activities” (Sachße, 2004). In other words, a typology based on “core activities” and functions of nonprofit organizations is not applicable as a point of reference for an international comparative project such as the focs project, which covers quite a number of countries and therefore very distinct nonprofit sectors.

Against the background that members of the focs team were already familiar with the terminology developed within the framework of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project (Salamon/Anheier, 1992a; 1992b; 1994), and due to the fact that the Johns Hopkins terminology has become the most frequently used approach for describing and categorizing civil society organizations and nonprofit sectors worldwide, the members of
the team unanimously decided to use this terminology, including the definition of a nonprofit organization. According to the terminology developed within the framework of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, nonprofit organizations are:

- Organizations, i.e., they have an institutional presence and structure;
- Private, i.e., they are institutionally separate from the state;
- Not profit-distributing, i.e., they do not return profits to their managers or to a set of “owners”;
- Self-governing, i.e., they are fundamentally in control of their own affairs; and
- Voluntary, i.e., membership in them is not legally required and they attract some level of voluntary contribution of time or money (Salamon et al., 1999: 3).

Drawing on the terminology of national statistics, nonprofit organizations of a community, a country, or a region constitute in their entirety a sector. Due to reasons of international comparability, the contributions of this volume cover neither cooperatives, nor political parties or religious congregations. In the case of cooperatives the authors decided that from a comparative point of view, it is rather difficult to distinguish between those generally small and community-based cooperatives that are definitely sharing a civil society/nonprofit spirit and those large organizations, such as mutual insurance companies or banks, which with respect to management procedures and organizational culture even perceive themselves as being members of the business community. Thus, cooperatives are not covered by this volume, albeit there are many good reasons for taking a broader approach while analyzing nonprofit organizations. 4 Political parties are excluded because of their major function, i.e., recruitment of political personnel. Due to a similar reason religious congregations are also excluded, since these organizations are primarily involved in worship activities.

Those organizations that fulfill the above listed criteria belong to the nonprofit sector since they are distinct from the entities of the competing sectors, i.e., the market and the state. Therefore, the entirety of nonprofit organizations form a third sector that is set apart from the other two sectors. Within the field of policy analysis, Amitai Etzioni was the first scholar to draw attention to nonprofit organizations that are forming “a third alternative, indeed sector ... between the state and the market” (1973: 314). In his article “Organizations for the Future”, which has gained momentum within the

---

4 As important actors of the social economy currently, cooperatives and mutuals are increasingly gaining importance. According to the social economy approach which is primarily supported by French, Spanish and Italian economists, cooperatives and mutuals are institutional expressions of economic activities that are situated between a socialist and a full-fledged capitalist approach (for more information see Borzaga/Defourny, 2001).
nonprofit research community, Etzioni was looking for administrative structures that could make it possible to combine “the best of two worlds – efficiency and expertise from the business world with public interest, accountability and broader planning from government” (1973: 315). Against this background, Etzioni characterized nonprofit organizations as an institutional alternative besides government bureaucracies and commercial enterprises. Searching for the best way to serve the common weal, he strongly came out in favor of an intermediary function of the nonprofit sector matching and balancing the specific functions of the other two sectors. However, the position of nonprofit or third sector organizations in between the market and the state illustrates just one facet of these organizations. Besides the non-distribution constraint, which exclusively allows re-investment of profits but not their distribution among the members of the organization, the public-private character of nonprofit organizations constitutes a further very specific characteristic of this particular type of organization. Although nonprofits are private entities, they operate within the public sphere. Like public organizations, nonprofits serve the common weal without, however, being formally part of government. Moreover, in many cases, which holds particularly true for interest organizations, nonprofits are very critical towards government policies, thus giving oppositional forces that provide new ideas and initiatives a “voice” and, as in the case of the Visegrád countries, opportunities and avenues to usher in a new decade of political and societal reforms. Particularly the term civil society organization refers to this very important quality and ability of nonprofits: first, to express and mirror societal and political deficiencies, and second, to lobby for a better world by promoting new ideas and initiatives of tolerance, democracy and mutual understanding.

Finally, there is a further quality due to which there is a clear distinction between nonprofit organizations and communitarian entities, such as families or clans. While people are born into communitarian communities, affiliation with a nonprofit organization is based on individual decision. No one can be forced to join, to participate or to work in a nonprofit organization. Thus, being affiliated with a nonprofit organization is always based on a voluntary individual decision. The same of course holds true for the support of nonprofit organizations. Nobody can be forced to contribute time and money to a nonprofit organization. Therefore, in some countries, most prominently in Great Britain, the term voluntary sector is used to describe the entirety of nonprofit organizations. For the same reason, voluntary organization is more frequently used than nonprofit, third sector or civil society organization in Great Britain to refer to those organizations that are located in a societal sphere between the market and the state, and that fulfill a broad spectrum of societal and also political tasks, among those lobbying and interest representation as well as service provision.
Since very recently the term civil society or more specifically “organized civil society” is increasingly used to refer to this broad spectrum of organizations, which constitutes a very specific segment of modern democratic societies with market economies. As already outlined, the change in terminology was primarily initiated by the activities of the European Commission, which in its publications pays more and more attention to the aforementioned set of organizations (Civil Society Contact Group, 2002; European Commission, 1999). The reasons the Commission has taken a considerable interest in nonprofit organizations are manifold.

However, there is one reason that is of particular importance and which is closely related to the multi-tasking and multi-functional character of nonprofit or civil society organizations: These organizations are able to be active on both sides of the polity. While as lobbyists and interest organizations they are supporting as well as criticizing government and thus acting at the input side of the polity, as service providers, however, they are busy at the output side of the polity. In many cases, nonprofit organizations as service providers are working either on behalf of or in close cooperation with government. And very many organizations, particularly the large and old ones, are engaged in both activities. They give voice to the poor and undeserved, thus acting as lobbyists, and at the same time they are heavily engaged in the social service market, running hospitals or kindergartens, and providing care for the elderly. Moreover, despite this double function, many of the organizations are also membership organizations and as such are simultaneously deeply embedded in social milieus, thus providing avenues for participation and societal integration and therefore constituting the so-called “social glue” that keeps modern societies together.

In many ways, this specific multi-tasking and multi-functional character of nonprofit organizations makes them interesting partners for EU policy planning. Due to their societal embeddedness, they are able to work in the direction of the development of a European identity by providing opportunities for membership activities and social integration. At the same time, as interest organizations and lobbyists, these organizations offer alternative ways for democratic political participation. In other words due to their specific political functions, they may contribute to the reduction of the so-called democratic deficit of the European Union. Finally, as service providers they are partners for the European Commission in its efforts to improve social policy-making at the European level, thus safeguarding the European model of the welfare state.

However, as clearly documented in the chapters of this volume, nonprofit/civil society organizations do not always fulfill these functions and tasks simultaneously and with the same intensity. While many organizations are simply membership organizations providing opportunities for sports or leisure activities, some specifically focus on lobbying in order to raise public
Introduction and Terminology

awareness for particular topics and issues such as ecological or social problems, and some of them for sure have developed into pure service organizations, which are acting instead of either public institutions or business enterprises. Nevertheless, the entirety of nonprofit/civil society organizations, the nonprofit or third sector in each community or country covers the entire spectrum of the aforementioned functions and tasks. This, however, makes the sector very interesting from a scientific point of view, albeit at the same time a very difficult topic to investigate.

In today’s societies, there is an immense diversity of nonprofit/civil society organizations. They are active in the arts and culture, in social services, in advocacy and community-related issues. Hospitals are organized as nonprofit organizations, as are symphony orchestras and sports clubs. Although all of these organizations are working in different fields, fulfilling a variety of societal tasks, the sector approach underlines the fact that these organizations have specific features in common. They are public regarding their organizational goals and intentions, but they are private with respect to their administrative structures and working procedures.

3. Building on the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project

Thanks to the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, which was initiated by Lester Salamon and Helmut Anheier more than a decade ago, data and information on the nonprofit sector of more than thirty countries worldwide are now available. According to Lester Salamon (1999: 5), the sector is a “lost continent” because there is still a considerable lack of information concerning size, composition and funding of the sector in numerous countries despite the efforts of the Hopkins research initiative. Nevertheless, considerable improvement has been achieved during the last decades. The results of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project are documented in the publications of the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies (Salamon/Anheier, 1984; 1998; Salamon et al., 1999) as well as in a Manchester University Press series. These publications cover a broad spectrum of countries and nonprofit research topics, and they are a magnificent source of information.

There is no doubt that the focs project heavily builds on the pioneering

5 For further information, see the Johns Hopkins Nonprofit Sector Series, edited by Lester M. Salamon and Helmut K. Anheier and published by Manchester University Press.
6 For further information see www.jhu.edu/-cnp.
work of Lester M. Salamon and Helmut K. Anheier. Focs may be characterized as a follow-up of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, albeit with another focus and a limited coverage of countries. The purpose of the focs project is to provide down-to-earth knowledge that serves the needs of practitioners or board members of nonprofit organizations. Therefore, as clearly outlined below, the volume devotes a major part of the book to management issues, problems and challenges. Nevertheless, the handbook has more to offer than just providing guidelines for effective management. In accordance with the spirit of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, this volume tries to tell a story. It is the story of civil society and its organizations in Central and Eastern Europe, thus focusing on a selected number of countries, in particular on the sector of Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia.

4. Target Audience and Organization of the Volume

The volume addresses a broad audience of undergraduate and graduate students in social sciences, economics, and law, as well as in the growing field of civil society/nonprofit studies in Europe and the USA. It provides useful knowledge serving the needs of employees and volunteers as well as of the members of the boards of civil society/nonprofit organizations in Germany, Austria, and the four Visegrad countries, as well as in the Anglo-American countries, and it is also of great interest for journalists, public administrators, and staff of intermediary organizations such as foundations or other funding entities. It has to be kept in mind that many thousands of nonprofit organizations have been established in the Visegrád countries since the political change of 1989/90. However, also in Germany and Austria civil society/nonprofit organizations are booming, even though there are increasing problems when it comes to the issues of financing and funding. Against the background of administrative reforms going along with the restructuring of the welfare state, the handbook is also useful for educational programs relating to public administration, NPO management, sociology, political science, and education.

The volume is structured into four major parts, each of them consisting of various chapters. Apart from the chapter focusing on terminology, each part of the volume highlights specific aspects of civil society organizations in Central and Eastern Europe. The major parts of the volume address the following issues:

- Traditions and Perspectives
- Regulatory Environment
Part I Traditions and Perspectives draws attention to the fact that civil society/nonprofit organizations are deeply embedded in the political and social traditions of the countries under study. In order to pave the way for further analysis, Traditions and Perspectives starts with a chapter outlining the importance of civil society as a normative concept that is increasingly used for comparative historical research. The chapter by Sven Reichhardt provides a fine overview of the development and the changing perception of the conceptual approach of civil society over time. A further facet of civil society traditions is highlighted by the contribution of Eckart Pankoke who, exploring the nexus between civil society and social movements, specifically refers to the development of social movements and their voluntary organizations during the 19th century in Germany and Austria. Complementing the landscape of civic engagement in Central Europe, Máté Szabó draws attention particularly to the Visegrád countries while describing the ups and downs of civic activity. His contribution provides an historical overview that looks back upon decisive periods of civil society development in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic.

The introductory part of the volume is rounded up by the contribution of Zdenka Mansfeldová, Sławomir Nałęcz, Eckhard Priller and Annette Zimmer, which takes a closer look at civic engagement and nonprofit activity from a political culture and democratic theory perspective. There is no doubt that civic activity as well as the size of the nonprofit sector in the Visegrád countries does not yet meet Western European standards. Compared to citizens of West European countries, even more than a decade after the velvet revolutions East European citizens are less likely to volunteer, to make donations, or to serve on boards of nonprofit organizations. Therefore, the nonprofit sector in the Visegrád countries is still comparatively small compared to Western European standards. Against the background that a societally embedded nonprofit sector, in which citizens invest a considerable amount of time and money, constitutes an important prerequisite of democracy, there is no doubt that civil society in the Visegrád countries is still in a stage of transition.

Part II of the handbook Regulatory Environment also focuses on the embeddedness of civil society organizations. However, the chapters of this part of the volume highlight the institutional embeddedness of civil society organizations, thus focusing on those regulatory environments that are guaranteed by law, institutionalized by public policy conventions, or constitute the outcome of very recent political developments. While the contribution of Petr Pajas and Matthias Freise provides a broad overview of the organizational and legal forms most frequently used in the countries under study in order to organize civic engagement and nonprofit activity, the
chapter by Karla Simon addresses the important issue of tax law, thus giving us a decisive idea about the specific tax regulations and tax incentives in the countries covered by this volume. Another facet of the regulatory environment of civil society organizations is analyzed in the contribution by Marek Rymsza and Annette Zimmer who, drawing on the current literature on government-nonprofit relationships, investigate the importance and the changing role of nonprofit/civil society organizations as partners of the welfare state in public service provision. How nonprofit organizations affiliated with the Catholic Church adapt to modern times and particularly the re-structuring of the welfare states in Central and Eastern Europe is analyzed by Karl Gabriel and Herman Josef Große-Kracht in their contribution, while the concluding chapter of Part II of the volume by Pavol Frič looks upon the decisive changes of the political environment of civil society organizations focusing on the Visegrad countries, and specifically on the Czech Republic, after 1989. That the future of civil society and its organizations in the Visegrad countries is not yet safeguarded but still in a state of flux and uncertainty clearly comes to the fore in this chapter.

Thus Part III of the volume *Central Topics of NPO Management* provides practical knowledge on core management topics in order to empower civil society organizations in the countries under study to meet the current challenges related to the fiscal crisis and to the re-structuring of the welfare state as well as to the decentralization policies that all over the world are inaugurated in accordance with the new public management approach. Particularly this part of the volume addresses those everyday problems of nonprofit/civil society organizations with which nonprofit employees, volunteers or members of the board have to struggle. After an introductory note by Dudo von Eckardstein and Ruth Simsa, which locates the following chapters within a certain tradition of the nonprofit and business administration literature, specific aspects of general management are highlighted. While the contribution by Stefan Toepler and Helmut Anheier draws our attention to the nexus between organizational theory and nonprofit management, the chapter by Patricia Siebart and Christoph Reichard highlights the important topic of governance of nonprofit organizations. In the following chapters core management functions are introduced. The chapters cover a broad spectrum of management functions which include management of personnel, specifically employees (Dudo von Eckardstein/Julia Brandl) and volunteers (Olga Sozanská/Jiří Tošner/Pavol Frič); financial management (Petr Pajas/Michael Vilain) including fundraising (Marita Haibach/Thomas Kreuzer); as well as strategic (Dudo von Eckardstein/Ruth Simsa), quality (Dorothea Greiling), conflict (Ruth Simsa), and project (Danica Hullová) management. In order to make civil society organizations fit for the future, Part III of the volume includes a chapter focusing on marketing (Jana Nagyová) as well as a chapter dealing
with the tricky topic of accounting and management control (Roland Nagy/John Sacco) and a chapter introducing nonprofit personnel to the topic of evaluation (Elke Rusteberg/Anja Appel/Justyna Dąbrowska), which due to increased competition among NPOs for funds and government contracts has become an import issue of nonprofit management. The chapters of Part III are written in a student-friendly manner, offering an overview of the current state of research and recommendations for further readings.

Part IV of the volume constitutes a specific highlight. After an introductory note by Eckhard Priller, six Country Profiles provide portraits of the organized civil societies of the countries under study, thus emphasizing country-specific characteristics and challenges of civil society organizations in Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The country profiles, written by distinguished nonprofit scholars and practitioners of the countries under study, offer deep insights into the dynamics and current constraints of civil society development in Central Europe. Among the authors are Pavol Frič (Czech Republic), Eva Kutí and Istvan Sebesteny (Hungary), Jan Jakub Wyznanski, Ewa Les and Shawomir Nałęcz (Poland), Annette Zimmer and Eckhard Priller (Germany), who were local research associates for the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project in selected countries covered by this volume. Each of the country profiles, whose programmatic titles give a first idea of the current situation of civil society in the countries under study, also draws attention to the fact that there is still a long way to go until the organized civil societies of Central and Eastern Europe will have developed into a coherent societal force based on common norms and values.

As a concluding remark, the editors of the volume Future of Civil Society in Central Europe would like to thank the Bosch Foundation located in Stuttgart, Germany, for its generous support, which has made this handbook possible. Furthermore, the editors and authors would also like to express their gratitude to Lester Salamon, who as the initiator of the Johns Hopkins Project started an initiative that provided the foundation on which the participants of the focs project were able to build and to further investigate the civil society/nonprofit sector in their home countries in Central Europe. Last but not least, the editors would like to say a big thank-you to all the authors of the volume and to those whose work has turned such an ambitious project like focs into a successful endeavor. A very special thank you goes to Regina List who, backed by her scientific experience originating in the Johns Hopkins Project, was much more than a language assistant. Markus Behr and Oliver Lich did a wonderful job designing and managing the focs web page. Kristina Armonaitė and Sebastian Büttner supported the project by helping to organize the project meetings in Berlin and Prague. Christina Tillmann was responsible for the layout. Ursula Gerlach, Dana Schulze and Thorsten Matolat gave the manuscript the final touch by reading and reviewing every
single page of it. We hope that the readers of the volume will benefit from our work and will enjoy reading every single word.

References

Civil Society Contact Group: www.eurostep.org
Handy, Ch. (1988): Understanding Voluntary Organizations. London
Sachße, Ch. (2004): Nonprofit Organizations in Germany: Organizational Types and Forms. In: focs-CD