



## **Contentious Politics within Civil Society**

How the rise of new cleavages and the far right transform civil society

### Workshop

**Organizers:** Christin Jänicke, Hans Jonas Gunzelmann, Swen Hutter

**Location:** WZB Berlin Social Science Center

**Date:** Thursday/Friday, 7-8 November 2024

Contemporary societies in Europe and beyond have seen the emergence of new cleavages, often driven by far-right challengers and cross-cutting traditional political divides. Importantly, these new cleavages have not only put traditional political parties under pressure but have also resulted in a profound **politicization of civil society**. This development can be observed in a series of trends. For example, a large number of civil society organizations with sociopolitical objectives compared to leisure activities has emerged. At the same time, established civil society organizations (from unions, religious associations, to sports clubs) have been challenged also from within their own ranks by the rise of new political parties and movements and forced to take sides in controversial political debates. The growing politicization of civil society poses a number of **theoretical and empirical questions**: How do nativist and nationalist actors politicize civil society? What are differences and similarities of politicization dynamics across different civil society fields? How do established civil society actors respond to these challenges? How do they deal with conflict within their own organizations? What kind of counter strategies work? What are the implications for cleavage politics, social cohesion, and democracy?

At this workshop, we would like to discuss these questions with researchers interested in far-right contention and the politicization of contemporary civil society in Europe and elsewhere. Thereby, we would like to **bridge traditional divisions** between social movement studies and civil society research. On the one hand, social movement studies have been primarily interested in conflict between challengers and the state and have paid less attention to contention within civil society. On the other hand, civil society research has focused on the realization of social cohesion, civility, and respect and has been less interested in the “dark side” of civil society. We suggest that integrating both areas of research more closely is key to understanding the politicization of civil society.

## Workshop Program

### Thursday, November 7

- 11.00 am  
12.00 pm      *Arrival and Get-Together (Wintergarten)*
- 12.00 pm  
1.00 pm      *Lunch Break*
- 1.00 pm  
1.30 pm      *Welcome by the Workshop Organizers (Room: A300)*
- 1.30 pm      **Panel 1: Dynamics of Civil Society Politicization** (Room: A300)  
3.00 pm      *Hans Jonas Gunzelmann & Christin Jänicke: Mapping Far-Right Contention*  
*Lucrecia Rubio Grundell & Joana Lilli Hofstetter: Turning the Lens: Feminist Anti-Prostitution Campaigns in Europe as Instances of Anti-Gender De-democratisation*  
*Grzegorz Ekiert: Transformation of Civil Society and Contention in Poland 1989–2022*  
**Discussant:** *Priska Daphi*
- 3.00 pm  
3.30 pm      *Coffee Break*
- 3.30 pm      **Panel 2: Responding to Politicization 1** (Room: A300)  
5.00 pm      *Angela Bourne: Mapping Civil Society Opposition to Populist Parties in Multi-Level Europe*  
*Inés Campillo, Eduardo Romanos, Igor Sádaba and Guillermo Fernández: From Confrontation to Avoidance: Feminist Responses to Anti-Gender Mobilization in Spain*  
*Christin Jänicke, Teresa Völker, Hans Jonas Gunzelmann, Swen Hutter: Counter-Strategies Against the Far Right. A Systematic Review*  
**Discussant:** *Erik Lundberg*
- 5.00 pm  
5.30 pm      *Coffee Break*
- 5.30 pm      **Public discussion: How to Counter the Far Right?** (Room: A300)  
7.00 pm      *Grzegorz Ekiert, Heike Radvan, Heike Kleffner*
- 7.30 pm      *Workshop Dinner*

## Friday, November 8

9.00 am **Panel 3: Responding to Politicization 2** (Room: A300)

10.30 am

*Gala Nettelblatt*: Negotiating Counterstrategies Against the Far Right in Cottbus: Shifting Relations Between the State and Civil Society

*Davide Rocchetti*: Contentious Responses to Far-Right Politics: A Local Comparative Analysis

*Erik Lundberg*: The Role of Civil Society in Combating Political Extremism: Organizational Responses Explored

**Discussant:** *Rosa Sanchez Salgado*

10.30 am

11.00 am

*Coffee Break*

11.00 am

12.30 pm

**Panel 4: Collaboration and Dialogue in the Face of Politicization** (Room: A300)

*Alejandro Ciordia & Miranda J. Lubbers*: Civil Society Participation, Everyday Discursive Strategies, and the Civic Fabric: How Political Diversity Survives or Dies Within Activists' Personal Networks

*Priska Daphi, Larissa Meier, Pál Susánszky, Sebastian Haunss*: Cooperation Before and After Crises: Examining Shifts in Cross-Sectoral Civil Society Collaborations in Protests

*Rosa Sanchez Salgado*: Talking to the Enemy? Analyzing the Prospects for Dialogue with Groups That Criminalize Civil Society Organizations

**Discussant:** *Davide Rocchetti*

**Panel 5: Conceptual Debates: Civil Society, Movements, and Conflict** (Room: A310)

*Gregory Jackson & Sumrin Kalia*: Contextualizing Civic Engagement: The Dynamics of Civil Society Organizations and States

*Alex Mierke-Zatwarnicki, Endre Borbáth, Swen Hutter*: Cleavage Theory Meets Civil Society

*Etienne Höra & Lena Wittenfeld*: Growing Bridges from the Roots? "Grassroots" as a Liminal Space Between Civil Society and Social Movements in the Context of Politicization

**Discussant:** *Angela Bourne*

12.30 pm

1.30 pm

*Lunch Break*

1.30 pm 3.00 pm	<p><b>Panel 6: Civil Society in Times of Autocratization and Illiberalism</b> (Room: A300)</p> <p><i>Grzegorz Piotrowski</i>: Politicization of Civil Society Actors in Illiberal Democracy</p> <p><i>Áron Buzogány, Márton Gerő, Rafael Labanino</i>: Professionalization and Movementization. How Civil Society Organizations Cope De-democratization</p> <p><i>Pravin Prakash &amp; Julia Wießmann</i>: Political Violence and Bottom-up Autocratization in India</p> <p><b>Discussant:</b> <i>Rebecca Kittel</i></p>	<p><b>Panel 7: Protest Dynamics</b> (Room: A310)</p> <p><i>Christopher R. Fardan, Anita Nissen, and Iris B. Segers</i>: ‘No Racists in our Streets’: Local Responses to Far-Right Anti-Islam Mobilization in Norway and Denmark</p> <p><i>Lennart Schürmann, Endre Borbáth, Swen Hutter</i>: Protesting the Cost-of-Living Crisis: The Rise of Left-Conservative Challengers after Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine</p> <p><i>Bruna Távora</i>: Hate Speech against the Landless Rural Workers Movement in Brazil</p> <p><b>Discussant:</b> <i>Belén Díaz</i></p>
3.00 pm 3.15 pm	<p><i>Coffee Break</i></p>	
3.15 pm 4.45 pm	<p><b>Panel 8: Far-Right Threats and Shrinking Civic Spaces</b> (Room: A300)</p> <p><i>Lesley Hustinx</i>: Far-Right Surveillance of Civil Society: The Case of the Social-Cultural Sector in Flanders, Belgium</p> <p><i>Thomas Laux</i>: Civil Society as a Conflict Zone. Analyzing the Conflict Dynamics for the Shrinking Space for Political Education</p> <p><i>Beate Küpper, Fabian Mertens, Tina Leber</i>: Threats to Civil Society Democracy Work</p> <p><b>Discussant:</b> <i>Gala Nettelblatt</i></p>	
4.45 pm 5.15 pm	<p>Concluding Discussion (Room: A300)</p>	