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THE SOCIALIZATION OF ELITISM
NEW CIVILIZING ARRANGEMENTS
IN THE USA AROUND 1900

HERMANN SCHWENGEL

In looking at the history of the United States, from the Populist challenge in the last two decades of the 19th century until the end of the Progressive era and the entry of the USA into World War I, one can find enough proof for the validity of the arguments of the theory of the elite as well as for its weaknesses. On the one hand there is the rapid emergence of functional professional elites—in the technical-economic sector, in public service and in the new branches of popular culture—concentrated on social centralization and the orderly interaction among money, power and opinion. The way in which the interests of the elites came together in certain projects can be shown, but the mechanics of establishing a general cohesion and consensus remain unclear. It was here, on the other hand, that the idea of a power elite found fertile soil. There was the rise of the business elite, the crushing of oppositional movements, the political self-correction of the overconcentration of power, the cooperation between new political and social elites, and, as in all periods of the “American creed” (Huntington), the discovery of new networks of internal communication and representational media. The ways in which the ruling elites were able to translate their insights into functional programs in a competitive and complex situation remain uncertain, however. This period is, beyond a doubt, an adequate field to explore the controversies over function and class, structural power and the concentration of power.

The most interesting historical-sociological message of this epoch, however, which opens up totally different avenues of investigation, came in the “elitist” reform processes of behavior or expected behavior, which almost appear as byproducts of economic development, institutional change and social struggles. I am calling them “civilizing arrangements” to suggest that they
appear to be located below the level of the processes of civilization that were analyzed by Elias, Nelson or Foucault but above the historically manifest rules of political-social activity insofar as they contain ordered reflexive standards which would promise a self-sustaining dynamism. They affect the expectations as regards rights, conflicts, everyday life, and the family.

It is not only historical-sociological curiosity, however, but also a certain tiredness of the established concepts of the theory of the elite that speak for a change in perspectives. The elite appears to be previously either a complement to the ruling class, in borderline cases a substitute, or a complement to functional societalization, in borderline cases disappearing in the functional process. Original elites appear, as by Pareto and Mosca, between their operative and normative meaning, their technical and aristocratic origins, to be unable to achieve an influence appropriate to modernity.

One can learn from history and theory that by the subject "elite" the elites are not so important as the substance of that which is elitist. This was already apparent at the birth of the elite in the 17th century as elite was defined through the exalted quality of its process of choice, its choices and its own chosen position. Where this process of choice ventures into new territories that were previously understood as "given," where natural conditions or historical hierarchies limit the choice, where the option of choice is tried out on new objects and the loss of the safe conditions and social ascribability must be experienced and endured, and where this process as a whole has to be made permanent in the first civilizing arrangements, is the hour and situation of "elite"—not necessarily of the elites, as they themselves would generally insist. The elite pushed forward with modernization and modernity, had its chance as these two come into conflict—around 1900—and showed at this point how much its representatives were tied to the hollow compromise between the bourgeois and the aristocracy.

It suggests itself that the "elitist" process of choice that we have identified would move to places where non-feudal conditions allow the dynamics of modernization and modernity room to develop as well as to remove the prerequisites for the dialectic of state and revolution. It was, however, only indirectly new social arrangements that were formed during the Populist-Progressive
epoch, not a direct continuation of independence and revolution.

The arbitrariness that goes along with the ability to choose is a part of the elitist substance just as much as the extreme diversification of equality. How to handle the options and obligations (Dahrendorf), how to make them permanent, how to find roundabout ways when their antagonisms threaten peace, prosperity and happiness, how to give the contradictions a form in which they can move: these are questions that must be dealt with by civilizing "elitist" arrangements.

Such arrangements can hardly sustain themselves permanently as separate islands. One has to assume a system in which they support each other, with the tendency to rely more and more upon this system and less upon their own history. This system is called "the social" following Donzelot, Deleuze and Foucault, a sector within the society like economics and political administration, in which the civilizing modelling of modern societalness is worked on continually as a specialized field without having the society come in conflict with "community" or "kinship."

In the following discourse I will be attempting an historical-sociological sketch of the Populist-Progressive era with this goal in mind. I will be starting with general historiographic descriptions and will then attempt to highlight the civilizing arrangements in a stricter sense.

With two simple circumscriptions we can come nearer to the question of why and when the field of experimentation on "the social" appears in America of all places, and why the elitistic definition of "community" receives its first identifiable contours there. The field presupposes, firstly, developed capitalism and an industrial society whose detraditionalizing and civilizing forces have had enough time, and above all enough social space, to restructure complex experiences of generations relatively continuously, even reaching into deeper levels of behavior. With Arno Mayer one can question whether the European societies around 1900 had enough time, space and social supporters to reach such a level. This is not a question primarily of rates of growth, degrees of industrialization, growing independence from the agricultural sector, etc., but rather one of whether the traditional, cultural and political structures were adaptable enough to carry out the modernization while, at the same time, the cultural and political modernity were already forming the
institutional and normative framework. Secondly, the idea of a system of "the social" implies the relative weakening of the old European connection of federally centralized institutions and politically formed, individualized consensus elites\(^4\) that were a central variable in the early phase of the modernization history of capitalism and civilization. This institutional framework which was fruitful for the first processes of innovation such as compensatory modernization becomes doubtful when it can only offer the new sweeping powers that are ready for mobility and equality the same old "aristocratic" political liberalism (Simmel) as form, and can as contents only refer to programs that are even older than the liberal societal contract.\(^5\) This admonishment could, in fact, make the obvious irrelevance of this framework completely visible, but much more likely is that it would only further the traditionalization in liberal guise. Positively formulated: consensus elites around 1900 had to be complexly organized, simultaneously federal and anti-federal and also normative and contractual, in order to still represent a fitting counterweight to the modernity of capitalist societalization. The finer one spins out these conditions the more they lead to the United States as the embodiment of the formula for modernization. Developed capitalism and a post-federal tradition of order is the formula for the head start toward modernity that the USA is assumed to have, and is the central mythology of the American historiography. The post-federal tradition of order, however, has increased the level of government, not let it die out. Political consensus elites, who agitate periodically anti-federally, need in principle only a "minimal state"\(^6\) in order to give a framework to the self-sustaining, mobility, equality and identity producing forces of political market societalization—not only of capitalism. The so-called Progressive Era (from 1900 until World War I) takes on such a central historical-symbolic role because it appears to blend liberally the specific of the American modernity with the take off of modern corporate capitalism after the Civil War in a very short period of time, and that World War I and the decline of the older European powers only put an international seal on an established process of modernization that was already exhibiting tendencies toward world hegemony.

The first politically modern answer to capitalism in general was not Progressivism but rather Populism, which accompanied and
challenged the unfolding of the modern economy after the Civil War and its transformation into rationalized corporate capitalism, and was destroyed in the process. Populism upset appreciably the idea that there were no alternatives to the liberal version of modernization. Three things became apparent—firstly, the close structural relationship between American and European capitalism, secondly the similarity of the European workers movement with American Populism, and therefore thirdly the doubtful character of American uniqueness. The hypothesis becomes problematic again, however, if one inverts it into a “triumph of conservatism” (Kolko) or attempts to fit American history into a universal series of class struggles. In this case the Progressivism that actually existed would disturb the mythology of nation and struggle. It is therefore advisable to order this constellation under a new figuration.

There is, in fact, a specifically American social innovation. It is based on Populism as well as on Progressivism but dissolves both of them in a third moment, the tying of civilizing arrangements into “the social.” Up until the 1890’s it appeared as if, despite all of their differences, the processes of modernization and self assertion in the USA and Europe, in successes as well as crises, were moving toward each other. After World War I, one can speak, *ceteris paribus*, of the interrupted but irreversible convergence of European societies with central elements of the American model: World War I broke the constricting political-cultural chains. There is in between a short but very important step of social innovation which explains why the congealment into an “old regime” as well as the revolutionary equivalent could be avoided, a positive “equivalent” to the European war, which preserved decisive developmental advantages for decades.

The innovation was not a case of the fusion of determined planning and consequent implementation. The Progressive movement had, just as the Populist’s, no stated goals for politics and political means, and did not offer the blueprints for an age of reform. There was also, in any case, no common Populist-Progressive working program. It was rather that the curriculum revealed itself in political learning, in conflict experiences, in the diverse successes of enforcing and defining rights on the local, regional and federal level. Only two things are presupposed: the realities and contradictions of the general processes of western
civilization, which had similar fixed problems and results in the USA of the 19th century as in other countries, and a political-constitutional framework which had just been proved in the Civil War, which furthered common sense and experience, concrete religiousness and conflict, directness and simpleness of perception as well as experiment and scrutiny. No civilizing innovation grew out of such conditions alone. Populist and Progressive elites functioned as catalysts who extracted the dynamism that was contained in the civilizing standards, and which would have otherwise been scattered in esoteric sects or exaggerated nationalism, in private hypochondriacal behavior or public monumentalism. There were enough such outlets in this period.

These civilizing arrangements can be pinpointed in four fields. The combination of the civilizing control and internalization of behavior—a central hypothesis of the theory of civilization—with the emotionally based assertion of inalienable rights (constancy of rights) is the first field. The dialectic of Populism and Progressivism is quite clear here. Toqueville's praise of the precapitalist America of simple commodity production portrayed a liberalism of basically European orientation which was politically only just capable of producing an aristocracy, that is, capable of distancing itself from bourgeois society (a point which also was fascinating for Burke), which continually wanted to expand its aristocratically biased constitutional freedoms in an egalitarian fashion, but without leaving any doubt about the dominance of the concept of constitutional freedom over that of social equality. Toqueville would like to have taken this political liberalism and its political class to Europe. The American civil war and overextravagant industrial capitalism tore up the conditions for this figuration and the "consensus elites" that represented it until the egalitarian northern republicanism and the paternalistic southern criticism of capitalism occasionally appeared to be closer to each other than to the central elements of the old liberal and republican establishment. That is the historical situation of Populism. It offered in the old constitutional forms the right to unconditional equality as new contents. The right to unconditional political equality meant that questions of societal development would not always be divided between the self-determination of the communities and the determination of government through the constitution and free, equal elections. The entire process and all dimensions of equality
would have to be politically examined and revised from time to time. What “politically egalitarian” means for each individual, for all of the individuals, and for all of the communities is, itself, subject to an egalitarian process with many possibilities and compulsions for decisions. In this, Populism referred to the ideals of the Revolution and the Civil War (in borderline cases to both) and is, however, an answer to the new age of “enterprise.”

The immediate political success was considerable, but limited. Its indirect civilizing influence is much greater however. The fascination with radical politics, with the municipal body made up of neighborhoods, and with a local concept of equality which can compete with that of free individuals survives the establishment of a dominant urbanity after 1920 and the national, bureaucratic and social-political way of looking at the situation which is becoming common at this time. As a constitutional alternative, Populism would have been a mass democratic version of Toqueville’s aristocratic liberalism, radical in regard to its own contradictions, periodically heated up, reversibly constituted, and always newly decentered in the process of finding its own social consensus. This alternative arose with the process of forming the Peoples Party and in the struggles of the early 90’s and collapsed with them also. After the defeat of the Democratic candidate Bryan in 1896, whom the Populists supported after bitter internal conflicts, the movement broke up for the most part. However, the reality of its alternative of the right to unconditional political equality did have civilizing results, though not as direct as was intended.

The case of the Progressive movement is apparently totally different. It rapidly gathered its forces after 1900, at the end (1912) forming its own party. This movement was generally urban and middle-class oriented with moderate sympathy for the organized workers movement, but with an exceedingly strong individual and personal sense of justice and a philanthropic inheritance. It was the expression of an older middle class whose status was being modified through organization and technical advances, as well as of the professionalization and problem consciousness of the rising middle class of specialists, qualified employees from organizations, different freelance professionals and opinion makers. It was negatively shaped by its rejection of a modern bureaucratic socialism as well as of an uncontrolled cooperative capitalism, which are perceived as “accomplices” of historical
development. Progressivism was neither a political-constitutional alternative nor necessarily politically egalitarian. However, it also cultivated the ideas of the freedom and independence of the common man, widened the ideas of what can be professionally, politically and culturally chosen, and remained, like the Populists, equally reserved against “trusts” and “government” even if capable of cooperation. The conception of equality is rooted not so much politically as socially, that is, in the separate organizations and problem areas and a civil right rather than a community right. But Progressivism was also not victorious (if one doesn’t want to simply label the Harding-Coolidge era as progressive). It divided its forces among separate issues, remained as a political point of reference for two decades, but fizzled out as a movement. What remains, however, is a new third civilizing power field between Populist and Progressive reform.

It appears, between the threat of a business dictatorship or Populist revolutionary dynamics on the one hand, and the factual evolutionary dynamism toward a corporate capitalism or a technocratic socialism on the other hand, that a compromise resulted in the form of a complementary renunciation. Neither the political claim to equality that would include individual, community and political society, nor the continual expansion of social independence caused by power, profession and advancement are able to assert themselves. It is rather that the constancy and the claim, as ideas overlapping basic civilizing patterns, become separated from their historical contents “family” and “religion,” color themselves mutually, and allow the political, social and individual determination of rights to merge. “Rights” are the common denominator. Rights were already inalienable for the Revolution, but they now become a matter of belief in concepts and offer emotional protection and orientation. “Rights are rights” becomes a powerful conceptual tautology which escapes criticism. One does not ask of rights if they are constant on a deeper level of individual and social biography. They are simply valid, one uses them and one cannot conceive of their absence. The collective emotional energies of the social movements of Populism and Progressivism appear to have flowed into the confirmation of rights and the symbolic rejection of all destructive dichotomies. These dichotomies could have allowed the Populists to be forced into the corner of traditionalism and the Progressives into that of
naked individualism and the cool professional power of the experts. Beneath the legal and historical meaning, rights achieve the character of patterns of interpretation and behavior which are emotionally secure, highly condensed, constant, and which transcend the divisions of labor between possession and work, city and country, man and woman, intuitive knowledge and controlled practical experience. Vagueness is their tool, history their memory; they form a center of experience without allowing themselves to be fixed. Countless generations exercise these rights, strengthening them through their usage, thinking first on themselves and thus on the nation, rights become an “absent center.” People define their family in the context of such rights and not as members of higher “community.” The constancy of a protestant ethic cannot convey stability anymore where the difference of interests and definitions of life penetrates all relationships. In this situation only the abstract emotionally reinsured political constancy of rights can help—it participates again and again at each level of the definition of equality. The civilizing underpinning of legal rights depends on a permanence that has to be based on the constancy of behavioral expectations in the general process of civilization, and cannot only be achieved through democratic struggles.

The constancy of rights requires elites as advocates of this constancy. What these elites represent and what many citizens love is not the final liberation of humanity, but rather an elitist process itself, an easy contact with worlds of self-contradictory choices collected together in a simple arrangement. The model does not “solve” conflicts that are primarily rational but rather keeps the contact with selectivity open and bearable. If the process is “elitist” so is its representation, but the path leads from elitism to the elite, not the other way around. If the constancy of rights is a civilizing arrangement, this naturally does not mean a disappearance of socioeconomic classes, differences in power, and the unequal distribution of the chance to exert influence. But the possibility that the owners of capital will become the ruling class is not only limited by the power of the working class, but also through another principle of social leadership, that of the “elitist” process of the social and its elites. The constancy of rights does not allow the traditional resources of community formation (family, municipality, nation) to anomalically disappear; in fact it frequently
emphasizes just these elements in contrast and conflict. But it places them under modern civilizing conditions of assertion, which eat at the traditional substance. He who sees the rise of the social professions chiefly as a revolution or conservation of status for new and old middle classes, that is, a field for new unegalitarian "un-elites," is overlooking, above all, the civilizing effect.

If the first field can be classified as "constancy of rights" then the second, which is very closely tied to it, can be classified as "political intensity of social conflict." In this point Populism and Progressivism tend more and more to converge. The nationalization of America in the last third of the 19th century, that is, the closing up of the open spaces, the shifting of the mentalities of outer borders to the inner ones, the renewed qualitative broadening of the cultural spectrum, reaching the critical mass of urbanization, and above all the interdependence of the internal markets and the opening of the world market through other corporate strategies are the background for a need to change the awareness of conflict. One can learn from Carl Schmitt that the rationalization and institutional circumscription of enmity inside and between social systems does not at all do away with the extremely political intensity of the differentiation between that which is one's own and that which is foreign. On the contrary, the process of rationalization also creates the risk of an increased concentration of political intensity. Exactly under confusing conditions—those the process of rationalization always creates on its borders—is the chance great that one will concentrate the differentiation between "own" and "foreign," from self and family configuration up to nation and world, on the most extreme intensity of that which is political, the distinguishing between friend and enemy. The rationalization of that which is foreign in the United States after the institutional clarification of the Civil War, which excluded modern slavery and its specific paternalistic racism, becomes a permanently growing compulsion. Only a small portion of its costs could be shifted into an exterior imperialism and they overtaxed the traditional small-town municipal structures.

Why then is the concentration of political intensity, the deep emotional confirmation of one's own and rejection of that which is foreign, relatively limited despite every extremely violent clash between races, classes and nationalities when measured against
the permanent compulsion toward rationalization of that which is foreign as well as against the historical alternatives? The concise answer is that for historical reasons the conflicts were neither authoritarian and paternalistically limited nor could they be spatially, temporally, or socially concentrated. The answer that could lead one further would be that this was only possible because the political intensity of the relationship friend/enemy was partially separated from the concentration on persons, groups and nations and appeared to be tied to the process of conflict itself: conflict is the productive source of that which is one's own, the promise of disharmony of the American dream is creative, not a necessary evil in the body of the community. This civilizing arrangement was introduced and represented by elites who showed the readiness and capability for conflict. The Populist-Progressive history is full of "conflict elites." As was the case with the advocates of the constancy of rights, their appearance meant simultaneously their tendency to recede. The belief in the productivity of conflict became self-supporting at some point. It runs together with all social actions but without determining the contents of the conflicts. The sense of such civilizing arrangements is not to teach the belief in conflict, but rather to fit them into the premises of actions as if they were natural. The conflict itself is thus unimaginably harsh, personal and institutionally relentless. But in the conflict-budget of the society it is spread out and decentralized—in a sense through insight into the vulnerability and exhaustibility of this source. The relationship between intensity and conflict also limits the intensification from conflict zones into structural class and group conflicts because they are at first regarded as episodes which, added up, do not bring forth an historical logic of "struggles and victories." Although force is always in play, its configuration changes permanently.

Above all, the inflating of the importance of conflicts—in terms of blood and origin, or youth and community—is prevented to a certain degree. Authoritative institutions of judgment—below the immediate judicial level—cannot, in a republican system, still be interpreted as rulers. If conflict is the source of the definition of self, then they cannot be socially and emotionally considered as father (or mother), a fact which impedes every form of modern paternalism. The self-restriction of intensity was undoubtedly not fully achieved in this epoch. And, more importantly, it cer-
tainly had immense costs for the authenticity of the parties in conflict and of the collectives. These costs are, however, for this reason not concentrated—they localize, temporalize and separate the readiness for, and ability to deal with conflicts. They therefore further a zone of loose and unbinding harmony in everyday life, especially in the peaceful middle-class territories of the fields of conflict. But this zone wins its stability from the fact that the conflict is not regarded as an inexhaustible or invulnerable source of “the social.”

Only in a crisis, when the force involved with the interaction of the foreigners, which had been progressively institutionalized in conflict, is turned outward and breaks loose, will this structure be empirically obvious: the primary demand for social harmony which usually dominates, and the secondary readiness for conflict against outsiders (race, class, nationality and life-style) turn the normal interconnection of conflict and harmony around, and thus bring it to the surface. The inflating of the importance of social conflicts in terms of familial interaction points in the same direction (one’s own group as one’s “family” and outsiders as a threat to it). That resources for solving conflicts in the family were withdrawn and that they were left on their own, is one of the successes of the civilizing arrangements. These become especially visible when the specificity of familiarity is turned against the civilizing arrangements.

Another important aspect of the sanctification of conflict is that it is the instrument which W. James had searched for in a different context, a moral equivalent for war, more exactly for the Civil War, whose actuality was made clear in the late 19th century.

The further the description removes itself from rights and conflicts, the more it becomes clear that it was insufficient to interpret “the social” only as a mutual learning process of social movements and their elites. The institutionalization would be either explainable through the pressure of the Populist masses or urban-progressive middle classes or through the far-sightedness of ruling and political classes. But how is the permanence of far-sightedness and learning to be explained when the other alternative of “industrial barons” and revolutionary workers movement was also given? Is this really only the inheritance of the non-feudal history where it is demonstrable that a civil war, stormy industrialization, mobility and immigration had not even
revolutionized all conditions of life? The more one removes himself from the experience of conflict and rights, the more strongly Populism and Progressivism dissolve into a new, self-sustaining system of the social whose introduction was supported and represented by social elites. From this point of view, constancy of rights and intensity of conflict can again be newly interpreted, as the mass-civilizing controlling of societal experience in the society itself. Elites are then less rising functional holders of positions or far-sighted classes, than they are limited demonstrators and representatives for the civilizing dealings with selectivity. They are temporary intermediary forces—operators of laboratories for the societal dealings with that which is foreign, for the formation of social organizations, and for the practicing of society. Why then were the conjuring up of the family as opposed to the city (Sennett), that of the evangelical institution and revival as opposed to the cold modernity, and the use of force and the unconditionalness of the will to power so extreme? Because a new framework for societal behavior was establishing itself here, which tore up old limitations and mediations for a period of time before the new framework was totally effective, and the old order emerged from the power of its self-evidence and articulated itself loudly. Insecurity is shifted into the speaking out of the one or the other.

The third field of innovation is the association of actual empirical life and transcendental justification. The religious revival movements in the late 18th century were concrete, dealt with everyday problems, and subversive in regard to their own pattern of representation which had been handed down. One demanded from religion the confirmation and motivation of the empirical "here and now." But it was less traditional security against the fluctuations of modernity that was asked for as new forward-reaching combinations of the social question, the plurality of religions (heightened through the spectrum of immigration), and scientific challenging of the old beliefs—even when it meant that the individual aspects could be only provisionally dealt with, each for itself. Everyday life should, as everyday life, simultaneously express its transempirical validity. It was not an aesthetic outdoing of earthly scarcity that was wished, but rather a simultaneity of the earthly way of life and transempirical validity.

Up until the 1870's the religious communities could offer the individuals only communality and a moderate joy in living, re-
responsibility and relief through commitment, things that were increasingly insufficient for modern individuals. The chance for reorganization and redefinition was used, without that, or exactly because, the theological challenge and the answer to the social question did not have to be resolved. It is, on the other hand, a civilizing arrangement which connects religious and social behavior without identifying them. A process of the justification of everyday life is established, which can break down, but not because of theological or social questions alone. The arrangement remains stable as a rule. Catholicism reformed itself in this process to new American figurativeness and rhetoric; it tied admonition to “social temperance” with confirmation of the modern life. Elites illustrating the mutual modeling of communal-religious and social acquisitions of reality retreat as soon as the process becomes more common. Near the end of the century however, this political-theological “populism” appears to have reached its limits.

It would have hardly confirmed and modernized the intimacy of flag and prayer book—an intimacy which did not have anything to do with that of throne and altar of the Germans—if its formula had not been that of the progressive reversal and democratization of a second social institution that was almost as old: that of the passion of the old upper classes for demonstration and distinction. On the eve of the first World War large sections of the population, if not the majority, had reached a degree of prosperity which had shifted overspending, beating scarcity, and the elevation by means of everyday life into the circle of possible forms of expression of a new social and cultural freedom. The justification of the relative mass-consumption could not be moral-rational because the work ethic and small-town America’s demand for moderation lurked there. It could also, however, not be “aesthetic” like the sublimated desire for style of the old upper classes and their elitistic inheritance, which the New York upper class still wanted to celebrate, but finally only made ridiculous. Thus the timidity of the well-to-do, their compensatory donations and gifts, and their desire for distinction still exist today, immediately next to the demands for moderation and equality. That which asserts itself structurally and determines the direction is neither the moderate-egalitarian model of consumption and show, nor the excessive and stylized model. The urban-
progressive lifestyle apparently still had place, quite early, on the civilizing background of the transempirical validity of everyday life. Style is not only that which pleases—the critique of culture also comes this far—but rather everything that pleases wins in the civilizing arrangement the unjustifiable capability to become style, that is to express their transempirical validity and justification over and above the empirical choice. In the final judgement, rational, moral and aesthetic decisions over single choices are perhaps arbitrary but the production of this arbitrariness gives the empirical life its dignity.

The old stratificatory desire for distinction appears sublimated, without losing the desire for demonstratively outdoing everyday life. The civilizing arrangement connects this process with the transcendental elevation of the concrete, the social reorganization of religious communities into the factual and temporal concentration on the here and now, and the social concentration on differentiated equality. Where that which is religious becomes private that which is private becomes conversely, religiously sanctified—this was a fear of Carl Schmitt a little later, in which he had the nightmare of the deinstitutionalization of the public in mind. In America one finds a partial neutralization of this connection, beyond the dichotomy of public and private, in a relatively autonomous sphere of the social in the society. It gives the public character of religion a societal form in which it can move, and gives societal time, space and chances for private work on modernity as well. Where the freedom of religion is not only a governmentally sanctioned neutralization of the religious civil wars, not only a morally founded offer of tolerance, but also sanctifies the arbitrariness of life forms, then the modern statehood has been partially outdone in its level. Unconditional belief and social agreement were not tied together as a zero-sum game but rather their energies were shifted to a third party.

This process is neither generally democratic, so that it would include all, or at least the most of the people, nor is it free of charge or does it divide the costs of this innovation equally. It does, however, create standards, and to circumvent these standards is tied together with costs that would hardly be justifiable.

The fourth field next to the constancy of rights, the intensity of conflict, and the transempirical justification of everyday life is, without a doubt, that which is most far removed from the
economic and political-sociological characteristics of the constancy of rights and can be least understood as a Populist-Progressive process of learning. On the other hand, in respect to the theory of civilization, it is the deepest level which is here revolutionized and contributes to the constitution of the social: the interest in the family. Carl N. Degler\(^{13}\) closes his far-reaching attempt at a synthesis between the history of the family and the history of women in America with the classic opposition of two principles, which ideally should be reconciled but whose history shows only permanent tension: the modern individualistic demand of women for autonomy, which is chiefly in a line with market, contract and democracy, and the older anti-individualistic institution of familial reproduction, which exists in a line with the large collective social movements from nationalism to the great world religions. One way to say it is that he conjures up a "civilization" of familial reproduction which is as deep-reaching and contradictory as that of religion since the early period of modernity.

Degler portrays in detail the formula in which the tension is stabilized, the modern family, which has been established since the beginning of the 19th century, and for him, despite all of its rifts, would allow no alternatives. Since its beginnings it tied two qualitatively different relations of production together at the price of an inner—modern patriarchal—asymmetry in the relationship between the sexes: it is primarily the man who participates, or is systematically subject to, the relations of production of the capitalist market and only secondarily the woman. In regard to the relations of production of cultural and physical reproduction is the situation exactly reversed. After a time, men and women were able to participate equally in political election processes (in contrast to children)—at first it was only the men and then the women. The political selection processes are, however, only the democratic superstructure of a mediation of ways of production which lie deeper, and cannot really allow their discrepancy to work further. The capability for productivity and independence of the modern family type has to exist in order to mediate between the two ways of production especially as they belong to two different historical levels. In respect to the market this capability is based on the bonds, development and concentration of love between man and woman as well as between parents...
and children which has existed in part since the 17th century, but has become more elaborate, more general and more strained since the end of the 18th century. But where is the basis for the complementary ability of the modern family for differentiation in respect to the production relations of reproduction? The answer was a civilizing arrangement which was first worked out in its contours in the USA up until the eve of the first World War and had no complement in Europe. In the way in which it resolved civilizing contradiction it was comparable to the other arrangements. Not the family in and of itself, "at bottom nothing more than a relation between a man and a woman and their offspring" (Degler) but rather the "interest in having a family" was the specific American version of an institution which was already modern, and which also kept its distance from the division of labor within the family. Love and interest are two different matters. But exactly because they are different, and can offer resistance to different divisions of labor, they are more able to determine the internal life of the family than either an overconcentration of romantic love, or alternatives which are more conscious of individualism and problems. As love has historically attached itself to thrusts of individualization, so has the "interest in having a family" attached itself to the "modernization" of necessary conditions of human existence in which direct primary human relations do not "express" institutions but rather are institutions.

At the end of the 19th century there was undoubtedly a consciousness of how far the feminist challenge to society, and especially the family, above and beyond suffrage and social feminism extended. Degler said that the subject "family" would have been too radical to have directly been an issue in the struggle. The fight for the right to vote and the emphasis and protection of the social and moral role of women for society appeared thus either as an inevitable but unfortunate reduction or partial neutralization of its explosive nature. On the other hand, this avoidance appears to me as a productive civilizing arrangement. The institution of the modern family was not directly attacked by mainstream feminism, but rather forced to justify itself anew and to compete with other possible choices. Albert O. Hirschman demonstrated the subtle penetration of interests into older conditions of validity on the example of the arrangement between passions for power and economic interests: the interest civilized the passions almost
unnoticeably until, at the end, the sovereigns are not the same as before, economically motivated capitalists instead of traditional rulers. The traditional-patriarchal history of the modern family could be modernized just as indirectly after the other pillar, the modern legal-economic dynamism of individualisation and equality could be enriched—and better yet outbidded—with love. The family is, in contrast to the old sense of reproduction, a common interest from men and women in emotional satisfaction, permanence and the joys and burdens of having children. But interest is not an institution, that is, it can and must be examined with its own logic, be chosen or rejected, independently of how often the possibility is used. This process appears at first only to affirm the validity of the family. However, there where it is accepted, it changes the historical experience and rationality of actions of all participants, especially of the women, but also of the men. Nothing can be the same as before although the topos “family” appears to be more firmly established than ever before. The “interest in having a family” has been increased, not “the family,” an interest that includes distance as well as love and which can simultaneously strengthen the individuals for, as well as against the marketplace, democracy, and the ability to make contacts. The structure of conditions for this innovation is, although apparently not related to Populism or Progressivism, structurally familiar from the other patterns. The Populist answer to modernity and capitalism was also a catalyst for the linking of family and feminism with politics. The temperance and protection movement was the ideal starting point because it was traditional in its expression and however—like Populism too—already a specific response to the onset of general capitalism and modernization. The family question first becomes political here, and not already in the Revolution, namely, the question of the quality and extent of modernization. Admittedly, the limits for the future after the peak in the first half of the 90’s—parallel to Populism—were already set by these inner contradictions. But moderation and moral and emotional constancy do not remain unchanged in this process, but rather clarify and bequeath two consequences beyond 1900: that the feminine resources must be recognized, developed and protected and a political veto right results from the violation of these resources. The other, the progressive modeling of feminism, can start up here.
The historical concentration upon the right to vote allows the fact to be forgotten that this second, feministic progressive-individualistic package also had its own characteristics: above all the gainful employment of women, which met with the same problems of acceptance later, after 1945, as the right to vote at the turn of the century, and the American specificity since the late 19th century, the normality of divorce, which had a rate of growth in the ‘50s that was three times the rate of population growth. Divorce is still to a limited extent more to be interpreted as a strengthening of special “Populist” individualistic principles of family than as a necessary corrective to the modern affective family. The general employment of women goes further however. The demanding of the right to vote lies between the two. It was the totally legitimate goal of a part of the movement because, in a time where less than 4% of the married women worked outside the house, it embodied the future and dynamism of the progressive-individualistic feminism, just like the civilizing choices of Populism. It was the main point of criticism especially because it touched on a real issue. On the other hand, these dynamics clarified and bequeathed two consequences: divorce is also a right to choose and examine the political and societal quality of the family, and a general qualified gainful employment of women is the foundation of the capability to distance oneself from traditional reproduction.

That neither of the sides was able to establish itself alone, but also that neither has disappeared is a characteristic of the “interest in having a family” as a civilizing arrangement which widens the evolution of love. The right of veto and divorce mark out a field of tension which does not only remind the partner of certain limits, but also society of the general conditions for the interest in having a family—these are a universal equality of choice, and, simultaneously, the acceptance of the qualitative differences between the sexes. In the tension between gainful employment and sex-specific resources and capabilities, the criticism of traditional reproduction is tied together with the criticism of the universalized instrumental labor of modern industrial production. This differentiated interest in having a family pervaded many reform projects of social work and education—the educational and public relations work of countless organizations, committees and leagues which were founded in this period, from the settlement

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houses up to the Consumer's League. It placed the family in a network of social institutions, behavioral expectations based on an orientation toward equality, and the abilities to discern between love and family interests.\(^{16}\) That this interest became capable of being instrumentalized on the other hand is the risk of all modernity.

The protagonists, the intellectual and life-style avant-garde on different sides of the barricades, were to a high degree elites, but not because their middle-class background made them so (what for many populistic and progressive women would not have held up in any case), but rather because they worked on “elitist” material and crossed over historical frontiers of selectivity and definitions of equality. Tied together through a network of informal relations of “movements,” organizations and campaigns—untraditional and unconventional also where they support values that are apparently conservative—they represent a civilizing arrangement which introduces selectivity into the most intimate core of societal reproduction.\(^{17}\) They have, in a way, the “definition of community” at their disposal, as they construct and express the societal ability for self-definition. An elite is, from this perspective, those who define community. Seen from the perspective of the advocates of the constancy of rights it is he who defines society elite. But in both cases the elites recede behind a civilizing process of associated “elitistic” arrangements which were relatively weak compared to the historic forces opposing them, but showed a common structure and dynamics. Community and society did not come into conflict because the socialization of the elite opened a new space where the contradictions could move.

The four fields were not so much structurally effective on their own, but rather in a mutual cooperation. Their elements were differentiated out of powerful traditional historical blocks: constancy and sexuality, rights and interests, intensity and religious communities, conflict and nobility, before they became elements of “the social.” But specific to the American invention is their correspondence, mediated through social movements, massive conflicts, reforms of government and business, which had achieved a degree of self-reference by the eve of the first World War that seemed irreversible. The course of the 20’s and 30’s also attests to this. Each attempt to cast doubt on the constancy of
rights could not reckon with the “interest in having a family” in the same way as a successful political romanticism could reckon with the occasional subjectivism of the mythology of the family. On the contrary, it had to reckon additionally with the intensity of the conflict as opponent, and would also have the transempirical elevation of the concrete against it. In short, each attempt to change one civilizing arrangement would have to reckon with resistance, at least with delay, from the entire network of these arrangements. It is not a revolutionary transformation of the institutions: one can just as well describe the history of the family, the religious communities, the municipalities and the neighborhoods as gradual, without experiencing this period as a discontinuity, as a differentiated further development of the processes of modernization which had begun much earlier. The civilizing arrangements are at first enzymes which modify, redirect and increasingly shape the “way of production” in the old institutions, almost unnoticeably, but eventually, and then suddenly, they do not work any more on the conservation and consistency of these institutions, but rather first and foremost on the system and process of “the social.” The shock of the reorientation to modernity is experienced earlier in the aesthetic, in the pores of everyday life, and in the fringes of the communities than in the institutions. The Populist elites were surely totally different people than the Progressive elites. The farmers, preachers and railroad workers were different than the socially involved municipal settlement-worker, local politicians, teachers and journalists. The Populist masses were certainly also quite different than the Progressive middle-class base. But it is equally clear that their closeness in comparison to the persistence of the old regime in Europe had qualitatively increased. The understanding of nation as society, of societal interaction between foreigners, of decentralized organization and political unity is stronger than anywhere else. Elites are advocates, representatives, carriers and translators of the establishment of “the social,” determined more through the historical material of the elitistic as by their heritage. The historians have described their biographies, their contradictions and their shortcomings in great detail. It remains sociologically to ask how long such a structural innovation can last and under which conditions. The idea of “the social” goes naturally much further than this historical sketch allows us to illustrate. But one has to be
careful not simply to continue the analysis, without considering that the appropriate sociological theorems change in the course of space and time.

So much can still be added. The basic arrangements of "the social," once they have been established, function as new social crystallization centers for a civilizing constitutionalism. New societal system formations and innovations, like the rationalization of older ones, cannot be based on economy and political administration as structural cores any more, but are now defined principally through the structure and dynamics of "the social." The course and the limitation of the social-political reform processes of the New Deal can be explained to a certain extent by the interests of the ruling classes, the economic and political-administrative system necessity, and the massively represented demands of the working classes. The fact that a center of aggregation of reformistic social and political action already existed on a subpolitical level can and must also be considered. The political-administrative means for a successful economic policy that would be appropriate to the worldwide economic crisis presented themselves less in the USA than in Europe. However, instead of a fixation on the democratic or authoritarian state that came through tradition, there were political-civilizing arrangements ready as an alternative which provided social time and space, and made possible a learning contact with new ideas, programs, and institutions.

That which I. Kristol said about the New Deal was probably to a greater degree true for the historical dialectic of Populism and Progressivism: the attitude to this epoch can give information about the attitude to the "cultural revolution" of the Sixties and to the following period of social and political conservatism. But this question goes far beyond the scope of this paper.

Where elites are understood as informers of functional systems or ruling classes, then they can only show gradual displacements in the respective orders of function and class. Elite fits in there where the theory of class or of the state, and of economy or of society do not appear to fit together. The elite is here the "zipper" between class and function. Elite, understood as civilizing resource, with selectivity then also to be able to function when all the supports of tradition, nature, and history are weakened, retreats into the background. In this case the "zipper-theory" of the elite
must draw on autonomous resources. Generally it is the personal informal relationship network of elites, however, below the determinants of class and function, and not the historical evolution of choice, which completes the zipper-theory. Each concept of elite which negates this difference only extends the deficits of the sociological theory of the elite.

The elitistic resources can only be used there, where the historical parallelism between “elite” and “government” has not been intensified (elitistic form of government or government of the elite), but rather is interpreted substitutively (elitistic general selectivity instead of governmental regulation). The elitistic material contains a selectivity of life-forms which the governmental-administrative sector or even the economic sector cannot take over without overtaxing themselves. However, it does not remain in a pre- or transsocietal space of the “life-world.” Socialization of the elite means, as an ideal type, the propagation, enrichment with innovative institutions of social self-determination, and interconnection of civilizing arrangements into a culture of choice, up to a point where they follow an own “way of production” and form a system. The extent to which this process has taken place remains an historical and empirical question. This figure is empirically more promising than the infinite refinement of the four-functions schema.

A structural limit to this process can at least be theoretically formulated. A “completion of the social”—Jean Baudrillard’s airy metaphor has a rational core—means the limits of a self-referential functional system. That has consequences however. Elite could no longer function as a zipper between function and control, but rather would be socially dispersed: The elite would rule, but as a scattered elite, in a paraphrase of Walter Benjamin. Above all, however, the selectivity of the social could not refer to anything more than the exchange process of societal systems, to itself and to a complex environment. The difference in levels of the orders of control and function, or of politics and functional societalization, which had previously made the differentiation easier, would actually be dissolved. All costs, non-simultaneities, and promises of societalization and the process of civilization would, in the end, concentrate themselves in the system of the social in the third sector and possibly overtax it. Its effects would have to become noticeable quite a while before reaching this
fictitious limit. It is not surprising that the historic limits of the social make themselves noticeable where it first arose. In this respect, the neo-conservative termination of the New Deal in the 70’s reflects the end of the American solution to the antagonisms of modernization and modernity.

One should, however, probably proceed from the assumption of a generalization of this model in western societies. Thereby arises renewed the problem of the difference between the political Leviathan or its heirs and modern functional-capitalist societalization, complete with its third sector. Exactly there, where the last elements of an ancien regime in government were most thoroughly sorted out, where “the social” had outbid the old form of government and the revolution on their own level, the question of the concept of “the political” returned with all clearness. A new concept of the political exists only after the self-reflection of this indirect mediation between Leviathan and subject, for which modern America had made the baking form. A simple falling back on Max Weber and Carl Schmitt, affirmatively as well as critically, is not possible any more because America has disregarded them.

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NOTES

1. I thank Edmund Leites, Dick Howard and the members of the research project “Politics of Life Styles” (Freie Universität Berlin) for discussion and suggestions.

2. The more science grasps the difficulty of separating the exterior and interior of internalization, the more it is inclined to allow the distinctions to retreat totally, and only to present material. I am assuming that there is a network of reasonable suppositions that are capable of being presupposed about the generally slow, directed process of civilization. This network goes back (at least chronologically) deep into the middle ages and is factually describable on a continuum between Elias and Foucault. The thing that is really explosive between Elias and Foucault is the nature of the monopolistic-governmental or microphysically decentralized (in terms of power) authority, which lends measure and dynamism to the learning process of power, such as the internalization of exterior behavioral compulsions. How does a civilizing headquarters of the type “Elias” turn into one of the type “Foucault”? Is this change in the axial period from 1780 until 1830 to be expected, as Foucault and the recurring defence of the Enlightenment would suggest? Is it rather on the threshold to the 20th century to be found, or is it still to appear?
3. The idea of the sector of “the social,” which appears at first glance to be a bizarre mixture of public and private institutions, was first formulated in the Foucault school by Jacques Donzelot (and supported in Deleuze’s epilogue): “. . . ‘the social’ is not the society, understood as the entirety of the material and moral conditions that signify a form of living together. It is in this case rather the entirety of the means that free societal life from material pressures and political-moral uncertainties, the spectrum of procedures that offer the members of a society a relative protection against economic fluctuations, that keep its relationships flexible enough and its motivations convincing enough to prevent a dissolution of the society because of differences in interests or beliefs. The most astounding fact is the degree of plausibility that “the social” has achieved in our heads” (translated from: Jacques Donzelot, Die Ordnung der Familie (Frankfurt/M, 1980). p. 15). The idea remains by Donzelot, however, finally an instrument of a subtle repression hypothesis which explains the “peculiar police character” of our societies (p. 21).

4. The alternative to the “old regime” would then have to fulfill two criteria in the ideal case (not only one as by Mayer): democracy and the same level of capability of development to a modern government. The differentiating out of civilizing arrangements or a system of “the social” in the USA meets both requirements for the most part, but is in principle not superior to the “federal” solution in Europe.

5. The United States around 1900 was a good example for the fact that the principle of consensus elites, who could deal with their problems and contradictions “compensatorically,” was not sufficient to reach stability. A certain civilizing pretension to political peacekeeping was necessary in order to transform the sheer rejection of resistance into politics.

6. The two basic risks are clear: on the one hand the danger to define nothing politically for a long time and then to overheat in the “hot” terminology of good and evil (Walter Lippman had seen this danger in A Preface to Politics (New York and London: 1912) p. 2ff.). The other is the danger to have no political means in reserve, when that which is political is only created in periodic awakening processes.


8. If “blood” (like skin color) is used as a characteristic for discrimination—which of course it is—this does not necessarily mean that the “analytic of blood” will be dealt with in a civilizing manner (see Michel Foucault, Sexualität und Wahrheit, Vol. I. Der Wille zum Wissen (Frankfurt/M, 1979), p. 175ff. The “analytic of blood” means an order of affiliation and self-perception that is based on descent and classification from birth on, an alliance that cannot be checked and an absolute superiority. That affiliation can also be socially chosen and created, presupposes that the old orders of preception have been deprived of power. This could be partially achieved through the deep conflicts and the playing out of the last resources of definition.

9. It was especially in Populism that the civilizing reorientation of small-town thinking with its conventional basis to a more strongly univer-
alist point of view was practiced before it was to surface later. The constitutional point of view always provided that the universalism did not thin to an abstract construction that was not capable of politics. The conflicts between nationalities in Populism were thus work with the risk of racism, and to a lesser extent participation in it.

10. That societal experience in society can be systematically institutionalized is inconceivable in a traditional society because the regulative idea of reproduction is thus disturbed. The "social" was so natural there that it did not provide anything of its own. "As one shows how the rise of the social justifies the recognizability of the family, one notices that the social becomes more foreign at the same time, as if the puzzle had only changed places" (trans. from: Jacques Donzelot, Die Ordnung der Familie (Frankfurt/M., 1979), p. 15). Societal experience works thus on the foreignness of the social, not on its naturalness. Foreignness appears when the elements of the social (still) conceal its structure.

11. From an American viewpoint an alternative reading of the book from Pierre Bourdieu (Die feinen Unterschiede (Frankfurt/M., 1982) suggests itself. Next to the popular and legitimate tastes there is not only an "intermediate," which never loses its subsidiary character in Bourdieu's construction, but also one which defines legitimate popularity from the middle (introduction of the concepts by Bourdieu on p. 36f.). All of the second class preferences, compromises and borrowings of the "intermediate" taste could also be viewed as work toward the civilizing overcoming of the old duality between the aristocratic consciousness of distinction and peasant-revolutionary pride. Bourdieu could be read thus from the perspective of his unloved "intermediate."

12. The bringing about of political peace on a highly uncertain theological, historical and anthropological basis is the achievement of the large Leviathan, which appears dark and ungovernable for this reason. The bringing about of peace without touching the issues of the large Leviathan, in an institutional network of the social, would be the equivalent of realizing a small Leviathan. Compare Herrmann Schwengel, "Der kleine Leviathan" (Habilitationsschrift, Freie Universität Berlin: 1987).


14. The demand of the woman for autonomy is no longer only an expression of the market economy, but now is related also to the "interest in having a family," by which a look at the conditions for the discrepancy between the two is directed. When a new women's movement appears in the 70's, it does not have to make up for the "mistake" of the first one, the orientation on the right to vote, but can rather use exactly the "trap" that the first movement had set, namely to use "their" right to vote to introduce an alternative culture of voting in the political process.

15. The suggestion of Linda Kerber that the connection of politics and domesticity is an original American contribution (as opposed to the old European culture) appears to me to be plausible, but this contribution is not made in the Revolution, but rather in the Progressive-Populist period. See: Linda Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the

16. The tearing apart of the Populist-Progressive compromise in the 70's can only be interpreted as doubts as to its reality and future.

17. Foucault's portrait of a sexuality that is not suppressed, but rather allowed to multiply, differentiate and speak (cf. Foucault p. 28ff.) does not only allow force as an acceptable subject of this process, but also institutionalized social selectivity. Next to its central role in processes of identity and relationship formation, it is above all able to be decisive, that is to provide an expression for different social arrangements and selectivities. The "interest in having a family" can express itself in its varied positions in sexuality, but the end of this interest can still be conveyed.